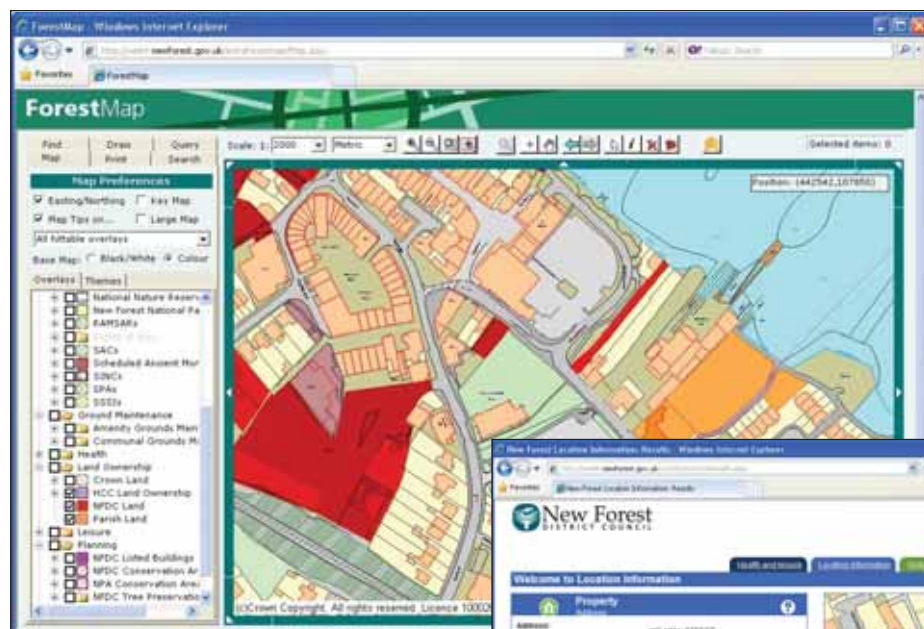


Web mapping at New Forest District Council

A customer-facing web system chronicle described by Martin McGarry, operations director at Cadcorp



New Forest District Council (NFDC) is the second largest district council in the UK by population and geography, with 173,000 residents, covering an area of 290 square miles.

NFDC began using GIS in 1998 and has a corporate installation of the Cadcorp SIS family of desktop and web mapping products. The council's GIS department uses Cadcorp desktop licences for geo-spatial data management and analysis. Data created and managed using desktop licences throughout the council is served to the corporate intranet and Internet sites using Cadcorp's web mapping engine, GeognoSIS.

In common with other local authorities, NFDC holds a Mapping Services Agreement (MSA) with Local Government Information House (LGIH).

Part of this agreement provides NFDC with Ordnance Survey® (OS) mapping and data products.

Public access to this data is provided through two web sites – 'Online Maps' and 'Location Information'. Online Maps provides access to a wide variety of interactive map-based information held by the council such as locations of car parks, leisure facilities and recycling centres. Location Information provides a portal for residents to find information relating to their personal location such as who represents them, council tax details and local planning history. The site uses state of the art service orientated architecture to pull location-based information

from various data repositories within the council and to return that information back to the user.

A recent extension to the MSA allowed town and parish councils (TPCs) to use OS mapping, provided to them by their principal authority for their own business use. Historically, TPCs had to source OS mapping themselves which was then used to mark-up their assets by hand. The result was inconsistent asset management stored locally for use only by the TPC.

As a result of the change in OS policy, NFDC was approached by some of its TPCs to consider setting up a GIS partnership. The objectives of the partnership included data sharing to improve service delivery, provision of access to GIS for the TPCs, to develop and maintain accurate, reliable and current spatial data and finally to gain a holistic view of land and assets for the region (rather than just the district).

NFDC already had an established corporate GIS intranet (known as ForestMap). Following agreement and formation of the partnership in April 2009, NFDC made a few minor alterations

to ForestMap to provide extranet access to the TPCs via a secure login. The application (known as ExtraForestMap) provides TPCs with access to OS, NFDC and third party map layers; a service to capture and maintain town and parish GIS data on a central server; provision of large format hard copy maps as required, together with bespoke data analysis and GIS support.

Use of a common GIS platform and extension of the NFDC system through a secure extranet has provided benefits to all the stakeholders involved. Implementation of the system has resulted in more consistent and accurate spatial data for all concerned while both NFDC and the TPCs have shared access to asset information. Relationships have improved and the TPCs have 24/7 low cost access to GIS and mapping capability hosted by NFDC. Customers and

residents have benefited from improved service delivery, seamless access to information and an ability to find information without having to contact the councils involved.

Future plans include provision of local interactive maps on parish web sites and extending the partnership to other agencies in the area (e.g. emergency planning and long term contractors).

David Shimpe, Clerk to Hythe and Dibden Parish Council said, "The formation of the GIS partnership

represented a major achievement for all concerned. There is now an opportunity for both the TPCs and NFDC to share data and improve the service to our residents and councillors for a modest cost.

Being locally based we get numerous questions on a variety of subjects from litter, grass cutting, planning applications to rights of way. Many of the queries relate to which authority owns the land. ForestMap goes a long way to providing an immediate onscreen answer. The fact that we can have map layers showing our land ownership, trees, equipment etc only enhances the system and will lead to their improved management.

The work undertaken by the partnership so far is just the beginning, the more organisations that we can get onboard to share data the greater the benefit to residents and all concerned".

Martin McGarry,
operations director, Cadcorp.