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Reigate & Banstead Council - using UPRNs to ensure electoral equality and empower insight

Reigate & Banstead Borough Council used Unique Property Reference Numbers (UPRNs) to review its political ward boundaries and, at the same time, empower council leaders with an easy-to-use location data analysis tool.

At any one time, it is estimated that around 30 councils are undertaking ward boundary reviews. These are spatial and statistical exercises, involving the merging and modifying of existing boundaries, using local community identity, demographics and electoral processes to establish new ones. A boundary review is a process that has implications for a council and its residents alike.

With the aim of ensuring electoral quality, effective governance, and respecting community identity across its own borough, Reigate & Banstead saw this as an opportunity to create an intuitive UPRN-driven tool that would also empower its leaders to confidently propose solutions for the problem of a population imbalance.

Built with a statistical forecast of the 2023 electorate, the tool created can now deliver on-the-fly visualisations at an individual property level. This gives councillors a real-time view of the potential impact that boundary changes may have on the population.

With UPRNs providing absolute integrity, senior decision-makers can use an intuitive and engaging tool to interrogate complex data with confidence.



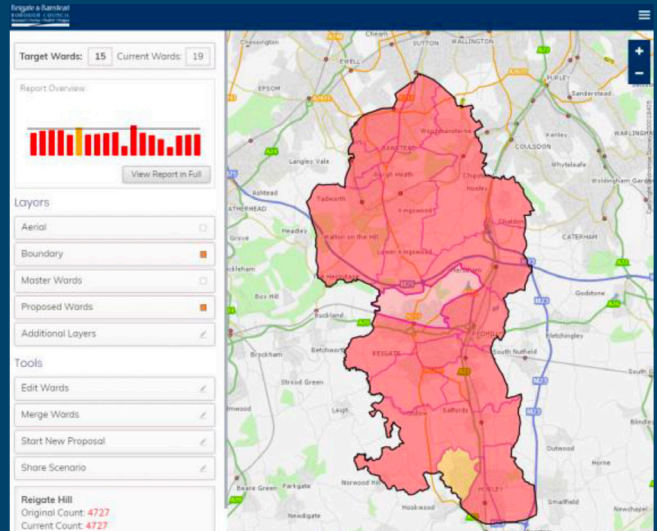
Linking UPRNs

Usually, boundary remodelling is a time-consuming, labour-intensive process for skilled GIS teams; an Electoral Services department; Planning Policy teams and third parties with the local knowledge to provide informed data insights.

With the support of Nautoguide, a specialist GIS developer, Reigate & Banstead commissioned the development of an intuitive tool that could be put in front of councillors and operated without needing professional expertise or special training.

Nautoguide's team created an interactive, map-based tool using cutting edge visualisation technologies. This combines UPRNs from the Local Land & Property Gazetteer with high-resolution electoral forecast data and did so in just five weeks from the project's inception.

In this case, the review drew on demographics, planning, housing, topographic information and the borough's 2023 electorate forecasts. The result is a set of projections at property level, complete with an estimated elector count per property - linking people, with great accuracy, to place.



UPRNs underpin 'on-the-fly' population analysis

Delivering results

'Redistricting' tools do exist within GIS applications, but they are unlikely to be suitable for a group of stakeholders untrained in using GIS, such as the councillors who are best placed to lead a Boundary Review.

This bespoke tool let Reigate & Banstead's teams test adjustments to reveal the potential voter numbers on all sides of an affected boundary with ease, thanks to advanced geometry capabilities and property-level statistical data behind the scenes.

By linking extensive data assets to the most authoritative and geographically-accurate data point - the UPRN - savings were estimated at over £6000 in colleagues' time alone.

For more details, please contact Reigate & Banstead's GIS team: gis@reigate-banstead.gov.uk



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