**thinkWhere**

# Underpinning Critical Service Decision-making



## Customer

Lincolnshire is a Ceremonial County in east central England with borders to eight other authorities. Lincolnshire is composed of the non-metropolitan county of Lincolnshire, the unitary authorities of North Lincolnshire and North East Lincolnshire and seven shire districts including Boston, Lincoln and South Holland. One of the largest counties in England, Lincolnshire is predominantly agricultural and is home to around 718,000 people.

Lincolnshire County Council (LCC) works on behalf of residents, in partnership with district and parish councils, spending over £1 billion on day-to-day services. The Council maintains a road network of 5,500 miles and recently opened a £145 million "Energy from Waste" plant to burn collected rubbish and produce electricity for 15,000 homes.

## Problem

LCC's ICT infrastructure, specifically involving the storage, management and use of geographically referenced information, was a mix of dispersed databases accessed using old, often unsupported, desktop software. Business critical information was stored on CDs and there was no guarantee that departmental data silos were being regularly updated.

A crucial turning point was reached when the server operating system reached its "end of life" and support was withdrawn. As a result LCC identified a requirement for a new GIS solution to reduce data duplication, and ensuring organisation wide data currency and accuracy.

*"This entire project was about reducing risk by giving users across the organisation easy access to accurate, current and consistent data."*

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## Solution

Following an extensive investigation and review of potential supplier solutions advertised on the Government's digital marketplace G-Cloud, LCC selected thinkWhere's online Geographic Information System (GIS) "Location Centre". LCC's decision was based on system specification, functionality and price. Working alongside thinkWhere, users and data were migrated to the new infrastructure, department by department, over a six month period.

Location Centre includes a securely hosted, fully managed depository for geographically referenced data. Location Centre supports highly reliable, scalable and performant web services, and is hosted on a modern, secure Cloud infrastructure.

Data is supplied, or accessed using Web Maps, Web Services and Web GIS. In the case of Lincolnshire County Council, data is also integrated with an open source, desktop GIS called QGIS.

## In Action

Location Centre includes a datastore containing national GB coverage of the datasets from Ordnance Survey covered by the Public Sector Mapping Agreement (PSMA). Products include the highly detailed Ordnance Survey MasterMap topographic data, AddressBase and full suite of raster background digital maps. The datastore is also home to other third party datasets such as high resolution aerial photography in addition to LCC's own business layers, and currently holds in excess of 1.8 gigabytes of data.

As part of the Location Centre project, LCC also chose to implement QGIS, an open source, desktop GIS application that integrates Location Centre data via a plug-in developed by thinkWhere. Using QGIS, as well as Location Centre's web-based map and GIS functionality, more than 600 users across the Council are now using up-to-date, accurate, current and consistent data. This is helping to underpin decision-making, improve service delivery and inform customer interactions. Users of the data range from super users that create and maintain map layers to casual users who might just look up an address, a location, or print a map.

## Benefits

- Data is securely hosted by thinkWhere who manage data updates from LCC and third party data suppliers
- Efficient deployment and use of large data volumes saving time and resource
- Improved data currency and accuracy
- Consistent use of data across LCC informing business critical service decision-making
- Opportunity to exploit existing and emerging technologies

## Summary

Using Location Centre to store geographically referenced data promotes the use of accurate, current and consistent information to inform business critical service decisions across LCC. Data can be accessed by users with different requirements using different software and data can be shared with partner organisations and key stakeholders.

*"As we move forward with Location Centre we hope to explore opportunities offered by web services improving engagement using smartphone technology."*

*"Feedback to date on both the support and solution provided by thinkWhere has only been positive."*

Andrea Bowes
ICT Data and Information Systems Architect
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**thinkWhere** use leading edge cloud, Open Source and GIS technologies, to develop innovative software and solutions, backed by a wide range of GIS implementation, consultancy, support and training services.

They provide an online platform for storing, sharing and using maps and geographic data, and help solve real-world problems using open data and open technology.