

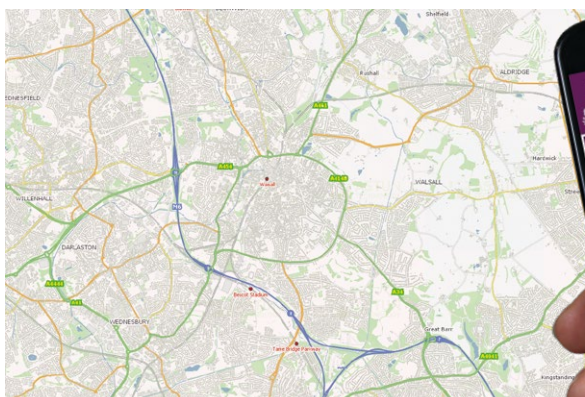


SHARING DATA ACROSS AN ORGANISATION

Walsall Metropolitan Borough Council is in the heart of the Black Country and the West Midlands. It is made up of distinct communities across 20 wards and has a population of nearly 300,000 people.

Regeneration is a constant theme in Walsall as the council seeks to revitalise communities and create employment opportunities. It's therefore vital that the council can turn data into information that supports robust decision making and allows improved service delivery.

Astun's web mapping services have played a key role in this since 2015. Like many councils, Walsall now has a small GIS team that has to carefully prioritise its work. Currently, a team of two manage the data and applications needed by hundreds of colleagues and thousands of web users.



Project overview

The need

Walsall Council had two clear requirements. Firstly, it needed to free up capacity within the GIS team by eliminating time-consuming tasks, such as managing servers and updating map data.

Secondly, it needed to develop a more effective means of data sharing that would support decision making and service delivery improvements.

The challenge

Walsall Council had a sizable holding of vector and raster data for basemaps that needed to be moved to the cloud environment along with their existing iShare (web mapping) configuration. The GIS team also needed to ensure that changes to data held in the back office were pushed to the cloud.

Key requirements

Walsall Council needed a fully-managed data storage and management solution that would:

- Be cost-effective
- Scale as data holdings grow
- Be secure

The team also needed a data sharing solution that could be accessed by staff at different levels across the organisation.

Our solution

We recommended iShare in the Cloud Enterprise, a cloud hosted and managed service. It's a cost-effective way to store, manage and share data.

iShare in the Cloud Enterprise provides an end-to-end GIS including a spatial data warehouse and a public facing web mapping application. A range of plugins can be used to support mini-GIS projects.

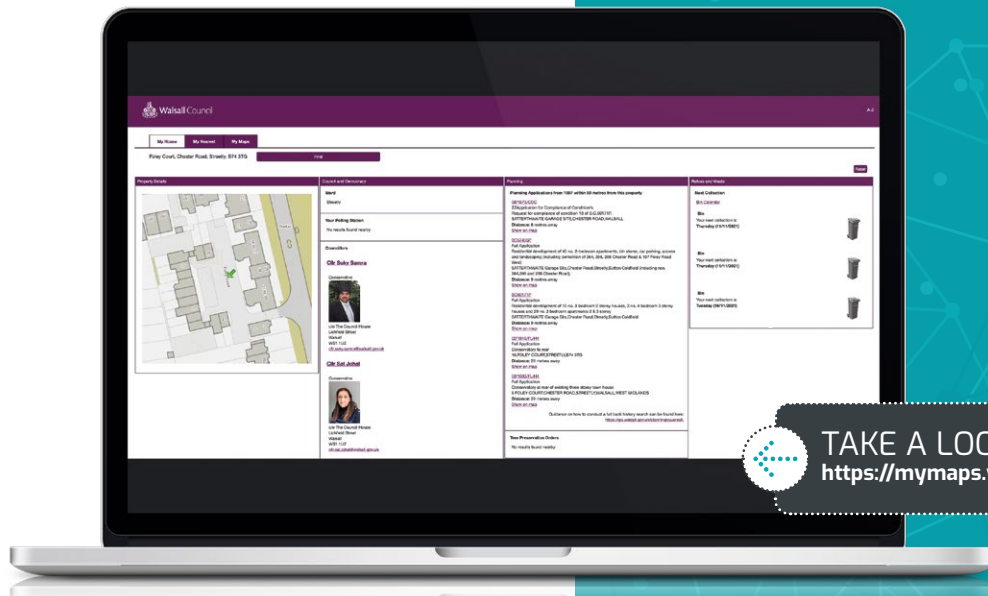
Technical overview

Walsall's iShare in the Cloud Enterprise environment is built on Amazon Web Services (AWS) in the UK. It includes a spatial data warehouse, a rich functionality intranet browser GIS (including editing, spatial querying and printing) and an award-winning public facing mapping application with an API which stores and services Walsall's GIS and Address data. Studio ETL is used to push data held in Walsall's back office systems to the cloud.

Custom plugins allow users to view information from other back office systems, such as Alloy, Walsall Council's waste management platform.

Map overview

Astun Data Services provides Walsall Council with up-to-date, fully functional Ordnance Survey background mapping. This allows iShare users to switch between different views.



“Part of our objective is to encourage channel shift through the deployment of transactional web mapping systems enabling better decision making, by using geographic data integrated with back office data and sharing both internally and to the public for day to day service delivery challenges.”

Tracy Lister
Strategic Geospatial Development
and Support Manager

Results

Our solution has enabled Walsall Council's GIS team to free up resources whilst delivering an enhanced and cost-effective service to internal and external users. Highlights include:

- Fewer enquiries as residents can now self-serve the information they need from the mapping portal
- Standardisation of the capture of addresses in service delivery. Two flavours of address data are served up by one of the iShare APIs and are integrated into the contact centre system (Foehn) and a Track & Trace Power App
- The ability to pull live data from software used to manage gritting bins
- The ability to interrogate all the planning constraint layers and pull together a report that enables officers to populate the planning system with relevant information

Next steps

To help councils deliver an enhanced service to web users, we've developed Spotlight, an embedded map tool. Spotlight enables novice and experienced GIS users to produce single-subject map in minutes and upload it in seconds.

From planning applications to gritting routes, Walsall's web users will soon be able to self-serve the information they need using a simple yet effective map.