



FINDING NEW SITES FOR DEVELOPMENT

As a local authority, Dudley Metropolitan Borough Council is required to maintain a supply of sites that are suitable for development and other uses. As a brownfield first authority, the Council is especially keen to identify possible brownfield sites for redevelopment.

Dudley's Call for Sites exercise is a consultation that invites individuals, landowners and developers to submit sites for later consideration as part of the Local Plan process. These take the form of a covering letter, application form and a map identifying the boundary of the proposed site.

Processing submissions puts a sizable administrative burden on Dudley's busy Policy Planning team.



Project overview

The need

Dudley needed to renew its Call for Sites in early 2023.

Before doing so, the Policy Planning team wanted to ensure that future Call for Sites submissions would be easier to manage, consistent and of the highest possible quality.

The team decided to implement a new electronic submission process which would eliminate many of the manual steps currently required to process submissions and ensure that maps were based on the same base mapping.

Other requirements

The team needed to make the Call for Sites process easier for website users.

Providing a map window which displays relevant information, such as the location of the green belt or previous planning submissions, would allow users to make informed decisions.

The team also wanted to enable users to generate their own site boundary polygon using the map and automatically transfer key information, such as polygon ID, to an electronic application form.

The new Call for Sites web page and map tool had to be ready before the Council's planned consultation period starting in early February 2023.

Our solution

We recommended developing a customised Call for Sites application that would integrate with Dudley's website and iShare* (our end-to-end GIS).

Users would be able to click around their desired area to draw a polygon. Once complete, they'd be able to save the polygon or start again. Dudley could choose between allowing users to download customised forms or submitting applications via a web form.

*Call for Sites can also be implemented as a standalone solution.

Technical overview

The front-end is a custom ol-ishare LiteMap which makes use of the OpenLayers Draw tool. The other UI elements are written in Svelte. It's hosted on Dudley's iShare Maps cloud instance and configured via iShare Studio. This allows the team at Dudley to use familiar tools to make changes.

A PostGIS database stores data and auto assigns a site ID. A custom Python webapp enables users to download an application form that's pre-populated with the site ID.

Map overview

This solution uses the grey scale version of OS Premium from Ordnance Survey. Base mapping is automatically updated when Dudley loads pre-styled OS data, delivered via [Astun Data Services](#), into iShare's spatial data warehouse.



TAKE A LOOK (DESKTOP USERS)
<https://maps.dudley.gov.uk/custom/callforsites/>

A real-time view

Planning Officers can now access a real-time view of proposed sites via iShare.

Next steps

"Dudley's GIS team now plans to connect its on-premise QGIS to the PostgreSQL instance of iShare Maps. This will allow the Policy Planning team to edit site data, if needed.

As for Astun, our next step is to capture details of users who create a polygon but fail to send in an application. Capturing an email address during the polygon creation process will enable Dudley to email users reminding them to complete their submissions.

Matt Walker
Astun Technology Ltd

Results

The new Call for Sites web page was tested and signed off well before the agreed go live date. As a result, Dudley was able to renew its call for brownfield sites in February 2023, after approving timescales for the borough's new Local Plan proposals.