



# Valuebill

4th edition

February/March 2005

a catalyst for e-government

Welcome to this, the fourth newsletter produced during the course of the Valuebill Programme. Over nearly two years of hard work by Local Authority pilots, early implementers, NLPG and VOA has resulted in serious lessons being learned of the benefits achievable through efficient and effective property data management. We have already started to roll these out, as detailed in this newsletter. Current work in this final phase is set to benefit many more Billing Authorities.



The key components of the work provide best practice property data management, not only for Revenues but also for other functions. The material to help, and contact information is on the Valuebill website.

The improvements to national matching achievable through NLPG work mean implementation of Valuebill is simple and economic for Billing Authorities. Valuebill has been a catalyst for improving the quality of property data held in the NLPG. As property data is the foundation for 90% of LA processes, implementing Valuebill will enable your LA to improve customer services. It's logical, it's here and ready to roll. What are you waiting for?

Barry Tuckwood, Valuebill Programme Manager

“ODPM are currently discussing sustainability of Valuebill with the London Borough of Newham, who are also in discussions about two other National Projects: Customer Relationship Management (CRM) and e-Procurement (NePP), for which the London Borough of Newham is also the lead local authority.”

Steve Pennant, Chief Executive of London Connects and Chair of Valuebill



local e-gov  
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Valuebill Hotline 020 8297 0008  
[www.newham.gov.uk/valuebill](http://www.newham.gov.uk/valuebill)

- Valuebill now in roll-out phase
- NLPG matching status at 9th February 2005: CTAX: 94.2% NDR:60%, plus several Valuebill pilots are enjoying 100% data match across CTAX and NDR. including 3 Valuebill pilot LAs with 100% data match on both CTAX & NDR
- 20 LAs are currently involved in a pioneering pilot of new cleansing routines developed in partnership with NLPG and the VOA. Now LAs newly engaged with Valuebill could start with around an 84% match on NDR. All LAs attending the latest round of Experience Sharing Workshops will get sets of files, showing the results of matching routines on NDR data, greatly reducing the effort required to achieve a 100% match. Some experiences are shared on Page 7.
- The Property Information Exchange launched at Huntingdonshire District Council – enabled by Valuebill. Detail on page 4.
- The Data Observatory launched at East Riding of Yorkshire Council – enabled by NLPG work, enhanced by Valuebill. Detail on page 5.
- Updated Starter Kit in production, ready by mid-April

## News from the NLPG Hub....

*“The NLPG Hub has now established regular and direct updates from 205 of the 310 linked local authorities involved in the NLPG initiative. All 205 local authorities are submitting at frequencies of monthly or better with around 100 supplying weekly updates and 15 sending in daily changes.”*

*“With the enhancement of most LLPG maintenance software in use by local authorities over the last six months together with a more widespread and better understanding of BS 7666 the level of manual intervention required by the NLPG Hub team in order to process these updates is on the decline. It is also hoped that with the sign-off of the XML schemata for Valuebill much more automation will be achieved once the NLPG Hub starts receiving LLPG updates in XML.”*

**Simon Barlow**

*National Land & Property Gazetteer*

## VOA Update

Since mid-February the NLPG UPRN, where it exists at the VOA, has been included in all XML versions of data exported via the Intranet File Transfer System. All LAs using Valuebill schema v3 will benefit from: exclusion of null fields; rateable values now shown as a monetary field of 2 decimal places – although at present deleted rating assessments will be shown as ‘deleted’

*“As the project nears maturity, it’s excellent to see the numerous benefits of seamless working with Local Authorities begin to flow; and to know this value added will proliferate with each authority who adopts the process.”*

**David Hughes**

*Head of Data Strategy, VOA*

### Would you like to:

- Enhance your Revenue collection services
- Have more accurate billing
- Offer speedier property valuation
- Improve staff effectiveness
- Enhance transparency of information
- Significantly improve your CRM
- Cleanse your property data for use organisation-wide and beyond, for example, emergency services and NLIS
- Win accolades for efficiency
- Surpass your Citizen’s expectations and have happy staff

Then look no further . . . Valuebill represents an early, solid opportunity for authorities to tackle their efficiency targets and improve property related services. What are you waiting for.

...working together with Valuebill

# What is Valuebill?

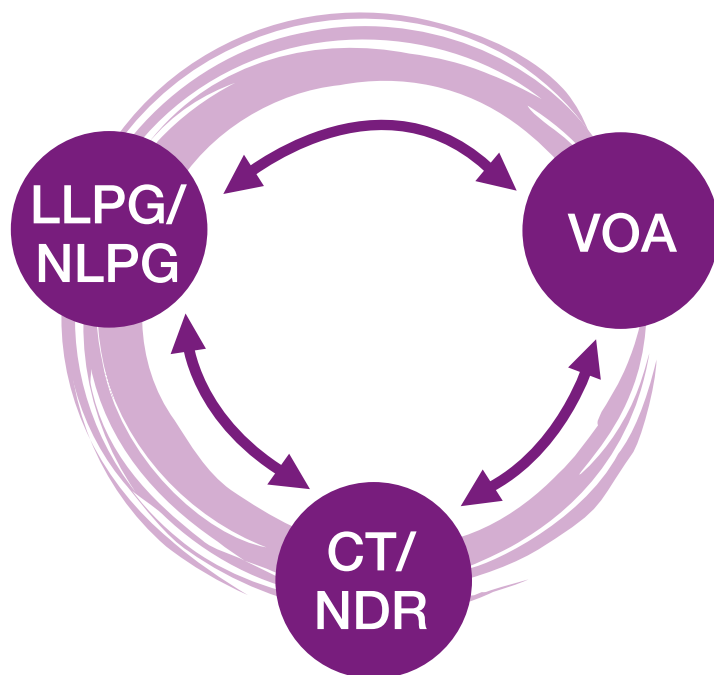
Valuebill enables the electronic exchange of data between local authority billing agencies, the Valuation Office Agency (VOA), and the National Land and Property Gazetteer (NLPG). A number of pilot LAs identified improvements in property data as being beneficial to Customer Relationship Management as well as a host of other services, such as environmental services, social services and education. While the core of Valuebill related to property data specifically for the purposes of Revenues, the resulting improvements to the LLPG are a neat fit with the more strategic need for a single set of accurate property data as a key corporate resource available organisation-wide and beyond.

## The principle elements of Valuebill are:

- Ensure that the property data meets the requirements for Revenues, with the result that it also meets wider needs
  - Data match of Local Authority (LA) data to Local Land and Property Gazetteer (LLPG), then to NLPG and VOA
  - Creation of a new field in the VOA database for the NLPG Unique Property Reference Number (UPRN), which relates to each billable unit within Council Tax/Non Domestic Rates (CT/NDR)
- Enable data exchange
  - Electronic data exchange within LAs and with the VOA using XML schema
  - XML schema incorporated by application suppliers

- Data collection and maintenance
  - Modified internal procedures for data collection and maintenance to ensure that it is kept up to date

The UPRN is the key as it provides a unique reference for each billable unit, whether it is an individual office in a multi-storey block, a flat or a bus shelter – all the people using this reference can be assured they're talking about the same property.



## A vital component of e-government and beyond

*“ There is no longer any excuse for an organisation to have more than one database for property data. The ever decreasing cost of networks has removed the last barriers. All local authorities have networks which connect all their databases. There is no real cost to processing messages between applications and the time saved in creating, amending and deleting duplicate property data is a great prize now available to all. ”*

### Steve Pennant

Chief Executive of London Connects and Chair of Valuebill



# We've already got databases that work fine, so why bother?

*Contemplate just two of the innovative achievements of Valuebill Pilot Authorities, neither of which could have been realised without Valuebill.*

## The Property Information Exchange – Huntingdonshire District Council

Huntingdonshire DC, one of the Valuebill pilots has made further innovative use of the UPRN by introducing the Property Information Exchange. The UPRN links information for building control and development control and displays it as one application on the authority's Intranet so staff no longer have to access systems separately, but can view correspondence, photographs, pdfs and other information via one system.

Soon all property details will be linked directly from the Gazetteer.





Visibility is increased through mapping, as an indicator on the map, displayed on-screen shows if a property is paying NDR or CTAX.

“ Valuebill's full benefits to local authorities will only be achieved if it is implemented as part of a corporate upgrade of their IT systems, incorporating GIS. A corporate GIS makes it possible to easily spot many mismatches and in particular certain geographic 'holes' in property tax data sets. It also allows consideration of new kinds of property tax or at least the creation of property records which could easily become the basis for tax: e.g. for vacant sites and empty buildings, currently untaxed. In my ongoing research, I'm finding that most property tax administrators see considerable benefits in applying GIS to their work, both in appraisal and in billing. ”

**Cllr Tony Vickers** – Member for Northcroft Ward, Newbury, West Berkshire Council

# THE BENEFITS

As one of six National Projects selected to take part in the benefits studies carried out for ODPM by Authorities (LAs). Several benefits have already been highlighted above, but there are many more key

Cost Reduction and Efficiency Savings		Service Improvement / Added Value		Strategic / Intangible Benefits
Transactional / Process	Other Cost Reduction	Increased Revenue	Service Improvement	
 More accurate identification of households liable to pay/Improved internal services		 More households identified for collection and reduced uncollected rates	 Improved accuracy of Local Land and Property Gazetteer data and property valuation cycle  Reduction in number of valuation appeals; faster responses to queries  Enhanced availability of property data for other agencies	 Better visibility of information; Improved staff confidence in data
National Annual Benefit				
Low: £14m Med: £20m High: £25m		Low: £24m Med: £36m High: £48m	Low: £51m Med: £109m High: £167m	

**KEY**  Size of benefit

Source: National projects Benefits Guide – Executive Summary December 2004

# Valuebill plays a key role in e-Government Initiatives at East Riding of Yorkshire Council

“ At the outset it was determined that a Humber-wide Data Observatory would enable registered users to access a common source of data to better inform strategies, planning for business, crime awareness and prevention, democracy, deprivation, health, learning and local labour issues in the East Riding of Yorkshire. ”

**Brad Webster** – Research Group Manager ERYC

More co-ordination between departments is leading to benefits all round in the Valuebill pilot Authorities. Just one example is East Riding of Yorkshire Council (ERYC), which heralds Valuebill as the key to many of its initiatives. A GIS-enabled LLPG has been ‘live’ on desktops organisation-wide, including schools, for over 18 months. Enhanced by Valuebill, it incorporates all cross references, business/house names, UPRNs, plotted plans and much more. The latest development containing the cleansed LLPG is ‘The Data Observatory’ – a web-based resource of demographic, social, economic and environmental information presented graphically or spatially.

ERYC has no intention of resting on its laurels and ideas are in the pipeline to move the project forward quickly in partnership with citizens. Key imperatives are not to duplicate data; to consider how it can best be mapped; to decide what level of processing to devolve to the user and to engage with all potential users of this region-wide resource to ensure expectations and possibilities are fully met. The gazetteer will play an integral role, but many data sets will also be at ward, parish or sub-region level.

Another big step in the right direction will shortly see the Education Directorate at ERYC replacing its current database with the LLPG.

By Capgemini in 2004, Valuebill has proven that e-Government can yield much for innovative Local Government strategic intangibles not included in the monetary benefit below as they are hard to quantify at this stage, but although they will vary from Authority to Authority, we know they are significant.

## Valuebill in support of performance improvement and meeting targets



\*Audit Commission 2005 consultation framework

Source: National projects Benefits Guide – Executive Summary December 2004

The full guide “The benefits of Valuebill” are available at: [www.localgovnp.org.uk/benefits](http://www.localgovnp.org.uk/benefits)

## A Revenues slant on benefits from David Magor

**Chief Executive of the Institute of Revenues, Rating and Valuation:**

*"Valuebill offers numerous opportunities for Billing Authorities to achieve savings.*

- 1. A real opportunity to data match within the local authority to reduce costs of inspection, maximise income, maintain cost efficient tax bases, reduce losses on collection and meet the modernisation agenda with the VOA.*
- 2. Valuebill will improve data management across the local authority and reduce the possibility of fraud in any property related service. It will also add to the existing data matching in housing benefit.*
- 3. The added value to local authority services generally by having common referencing and the potential for interfaced or shared databases eg planning, building control, environmental health, education, housing, social services, electoral registration, waste management and of course the emergency services".*

## How are these benefits realised?

- Think corporate; the benefits are across the organisation for all projects
- Set and monitor targets
- Use cross-functional teams – say No to Silos
- Brainstorm the benefits
- Change the processes
- Combine projects to share work
- With complex projects implement a bit at a time

*At the National Projects EXPO 2005, in a speech to Chief Executives and Members, Phil Hope stated: "In the current financial year the efficiency benefits as a direct result of local e-Government will be £121M, up from last year's estimate of £80M. Efficiency gains are set to overtake e-government expenditure in 2006/07 . . . about a billion of the Gershon target can be achieved through local e-Government alone."*

A link to the full speech can be found on [www.localegovnp.org.uk](http://www.localegovnp.org.uk)

*“ What clinched it for us were the significant improvements in accuracy organisation-wide, combined with speeding up the Revenues process – all vital benefits for Tynedale Council and our citizens, plus a leap towards achieving the e-Government agenda. ”*

**Shirley Hall, Project Manager**  
Revenues and Benefits,  
Tynedale Council

## Rollout . . .

Valuebill is now in rollout phase. Over 40 English Local Authorities are planning to roll out Valuebill before July 2005. According to research undertaken by the Valuebill project last Autumn, among 100 Local Authorities, over 40% have said they intend to implement Valuebill. All 195 LAs at Level 1 of the NLPG are well placed for a speedy implementation of Valuebill and the 125 Level 2 authorities just need to establish an agreed update procedure with the NLPG hub before they can follow suit. Therefore a total of 320 LAs and, more importantly, their citizens could be experiencing the benefits well ahead of the 2005 priority services deadline for e-enabling.

Become a Valuebill implementer now, or be prepared for a rude awakening. A new series of National Project Experience Sharing Workshops, specifically aimed at practitioners, is taking place during February and March 2005– for full details and to register see the National Projects Website [www.localegovnp.org](http://www.localegovnp.org). Valuebill is running a full-day workshop on:

- **23rd February – York**
- **16th March – Bristol**
- **9th March – London**
- **23rd March – Bolton**

There's also a 2-day Local e-Gov EXPO taking place on 20th – 21st April where Valuebill will be running 2-hour workshops – details on [www.localegovnp.org](http://www.localegovnp.org)

The Valuebill pilot Authorities, NLPG and VOA will be there to share their expertise.



# Some experiences of those involved in the pioneering new cleansing routines

*“The new cleansing processes developed by NLPG and VOA have resulted in our 3,790 unmatched NDR records being slashed to 486. Many of these discrepancies have arisen due to un-notified changes in trading names, but with a bit of local knowledge we’ll sort them shortly.”*

**Peter Hood** – LLPG Projects Officer, Basingstoke & Deane Borough Council

## The London Borough of Tower Hamlets Experience

The Valuebill project has significant benefits to London Borough of Tower Hamlets. The disproportionate high level of commercial and non-residential development occurring in the borough (“Docklands” and Canary Wharf) means that there is a need to make the Local Land and Property Gazetteer (LLPG) as complete, current and correct as soon as possible. We have a very high match rate against our Council Tax records, but the initial match against the Non-domestic Rates (NDR) was a very disappointing low.

The work done by the NLPG hub as part of the pilot phase of the Valuebill project showed that the NDR match was significantly higher against traditional single unit and standard commercial and business premises. The non match was significant in that it identified a high level of new commercial and business properties and also some mixed developments.

The benefit of this work has shown a need to improve the internal communication flows between the LLPG team, Development Control and Building Control as well as the NDR team. This is especially important as we are identifying many occasions where a new development passing through the various stages of the planning and build process changes its descriptor of the commercial units according to the stage of development such that at the final valuation and letting stages, it is very difficult to apply the “UnitG6” to the original “RP23” of the planning consent.

*“The Valuebill pilot phase and the work done by the NLPG team has identified a need for a closer information flow between the planning process and the NDR team, especially where change information is applied but not shared authority-wide. It has also identified the need to include NDR specific combined descriptors of detached property units within the LLPG and also, the possibility to include additional descriptors – possibly the business or trading name – to ensure the LLPG can be utilised fully.”*

**John Couzens**

Land and Property Gazetteer Advisor,  
London Borough of Tower Hamlets

## Fenland DC reports on their experiences as an NDR Valuebill Pilot

Fenland District Council covers a large rural area of around 547 square kilometres incorporating 4 market towns. With the Valuebill project now high on our agenda we were delighted to be involved in the NDR data integration project.

I’m sure I am not alone in being slightly overwhelmed by the amount of work and complexity of the Valuebill project and I’d spent many an hour trying to work out where to start! Being provided with detailed matching results with guidelines on actions to take was very re-assuring and gave me the impetus to make a start and gain confidence in what I was doing.

An initial match produced a 72% success rate. The resulting tables of non matches proved to be invaluable in moving towards a complete match.

The majority of anomalies proved to have no matching address, but a match was found with the NLPG street gazetteer. Cases included:

- Property omitted from the LLPG
- Property in the LLPG under a different name
- Property listed under a different street name

I was able to evaluate each case and make a decision as to whether it was accepted and entered as a new property or alternative address simply from the information provided.

The spreadsheets included more than sufficient information to enable easy search criteria to be entered into the LLPG to locate a match:

- The information from various departments was set out in such a way that it was easy to understand and compare and make any additional notes alongside.
- It was helpful to have the Billing Authority reference number to ensure a correct match and double check the LLPG X-Ref
- Inclusion of the USRN made searching for the exact street simple
- The organisation/business name was placed in the suggested PAON field. Although we don’t use this convention, it was useful to populate the organisation field as this had not previously been done.

The exercise was an overall success and definitely started us on our way to reaching that all important 100% match. I believe in the future this will improve confidence in the LLPG across the Council as we are currently integrating into many different systems and trying to promote the uses and advantages of the LLPG. Many thanks to all at Valuebill!

**Louise Hills**

Local Land and Property Gazetteer Custodian, Fenland District Council

# How to do Valuebill?

## You need:

- Software
- Facility for Updating
- LLPG
- Commitment

## THE STEPS TO VALUEBILL

### Data matching

- Obtain data sets from NLPG including unmatched records
- Validate two lookup tables against LLPG, CT and NDR
- Review third lookup table and add appropriate unmatched
- Resolve with appropriate people inc VOA

### Data QA and continuance

- Verify
- Enable regular updates of NLPG from LLPG
- Add UPRNs into local datasets

### Business process change

- Create and agree business procedures for internal exchange and maintenance of property address data; and associated management controls;

### Data transfer

- Enable internal electronic updates
- Enable electronic transfer with VOA

Key Valuebill products including the Starter Kit, schemata, address matching process and case studies can be downloaded from the website [www.newham.gov.uk/valuebill](http://www.newham.gov.uk/valuebill)

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### Websites

[www.newham.gov.uk/valuebill](http://www.newham.gov.uk/valuebill)  
[www.nlpg.org.uk](http://www.nlpg.org.uk)  
[www.idea.gov.uk](http://www.idea.gov.uk)  
[www.localgovnp.org](http://www.localgovnp.org)  
[www.odpm.gov.uk](http://www.odpm.gov.uk)

# News from the Early Implementers

"We've had a Land and Property Gazetteer (LLPG) for over 25 years. This data has been used very widely throughout the Council to provide public services as well as detailed information at all levels. Our citizens have on-line access to property related data such as their ward Councillors, refuse collection days, planning applications, nearest doctors and lots more. Showing the Council Tax Band and Rateable Value for individual properties is a natural next step and the Valuebill project will enable us to achieve just that and more by linking the LLPG to the relevant datasets, matching location addresses followed by speed of information exchange and improved intelligence leading to billing using an accurate and comprehensive database."

**Jay Patel** – Database Manager at London Borough of Brent and Chair of NLPG Custodian London Group

"Working on the Valuebill project has already benefited Nottingham City Council in terms of increasing our relationship and understanding of Council Tax and NDR systems and also enabled us to build a very productive relationship with the Valuation Office".

**Diane Fieldhouse** – Team Leader, Searches & LLPG, Nottingham City Council

## How you can be involved

- Attend the latest round of Experience Sharing Workshops (Feb/Mar) or EXPO (April) - register on: [www.localgovnp.org.uk](http://www.localgovnp.org.uk)
- Keep up with the latest developments on: [www.newham.gov.uk/valuebill](http://www.newham.gov.uk/valuebill)

# Valuebill Partners

## Pilot LAs:

- London Borough of Newham
- South Gloucestershire
- Corporation of London
- Staffordshire Moorlands DC
- Derwentside DC
- Tandridge DC
- East Riding of Yorkshire
- Tynedale Council DC
- Huntingdonshire DC

## Government Agencies:

- Valuation Office Agency
- Greater London Authority
- Improvement and Development Agency (IDeA)

## Key Partner:

- NLPG

## Land and Property systems suppliers including:

- Academy
- IBS (Public Services)
- Anite
- MIS
- Caps Solutions
- MVM
- Civica
- Sx3
- Comino

## Trade and Professional Associations:

- Institute of Revenues, Rating and Valuations (IRRV)
- Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors (RICS)