

**Geographic Information Panel
Minutes of meeting held on
20 September 2006**

Present

Vanessa Lawrence (Ordnance Survey) – Chair
Chris Chant (Defra), for Andrew Burchell
Matt Crossman (Association of British Insurers), for Nick Starling
Simon Doyle (Association for Geographic Information)
Michael Fishwick (Demographic User Group)
David Fry (Department for Communities and Local Government), for Michael Kell
Iain Greenway (Ordnance Survey of Northern Ireland)
James Kavanagh (Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors)
Jim Meldrum (Registers of Scotland)
Cheryl Miller (SOLACE, East Sussex County Council)
Nick Rigby (Ministry of Defence)
Andrew Stott (e-Government Unit, Cabinet Office)

Apologies

Karen Dunnell (Office for National Statistics)

In attendance

Hugh Buchanan (Ordnance Survey) - Secretary

Action

1 The minutes of the previous meeting were accepted as a true record.

2 Matters arising

a Stakeholder engagement

CM

Cheryl Miller (CM) had written to Vanessa Lawrence (VL) with suggestions. It was agreed that CM would circulate this note to the whole Panel.

b The National Archives

VL had met with Natalie Ceeney. Andrew Stott (AS) reported that Natalie Ceeney has been tasked by the government's CIO Council to look at some aspects of government information management.

c Comprehensive Spending Review

VL had conducted early discussions with DCLG officials. Within Comprehensive Spending Review (CSR) bids, the emphasis will have to be on savings that will be realised by investment in new work. Further engagement will be required across different government departments.

3 UK GI Strategy

VL gave a resume to the GI Panel of the process which has been managed through the GI Panel's Strategy Development Group.

There was a discussion about whether expectations of the Strategy were reasonable, or whether the expected scope of the Strategy was too broad. It was explained that the Strategy Development Group have been setting priorities for the consultants' work.

Robin McLaren made a presentation.

In the discussion that followed, the following points were made:

Content

- The citizen-centric nature of the Strategy is to be welcomed, and needs to include empowerment of citizens, not just service delivery to citizens
- The focus on users needs to extend to communities as well as individuals, and to improving quality of life.
- The overlay of the UK GI Strategy with regional GI strategies is very important.
- The Strategy has to be sustainable, both in the sense of supporting environmental sustainability and being fiscally sustainable.
- The Strategy needs to present cost and benefit case studies, and also the unintended costs of the absence of an effective strategy.
- The consultants would like examples from GI Panel members of benefits-based evidence that can support the Business Case.
- The Strategy has to connect with government economic and social priorities – i.e. social outcomes, efficiency, and better decision making.
- A high level story-line must be constructed for final publication
- The work so far has not resulted in a high-level storyline, but instead has concentrated on evidence collection and technical detail which may never be published. The example of similar work being undertaken are the Capability Reviews being sponsored by the Prime Ministers Delivery Unit. The evidence collection is not being published but the outcomes and results are available for all.
- The Strategy also needs to explain the change required by organisations from the current situation that is in place across Government with respect to GI, and what the drivers of that change will be.
- The term "shared services" currently has a special meaning within the Transformation Government programme, and therefore the term "joined-up government" is to be preferred in this work.
- As the Strategy develops, the Vision and Aims need to be expressed more concisely and simply.

All

Process

- Engagement with stakeholders about the Strategy is essential, balancing however the very constrained financial budget in which the creation of GI Strategy is being operated and by the need not to prejudice future advice to Ministers.
- Ministers will decide on the process they wish to follow once they receive the report: it is possible that Ministers may wish to undertake a formal consultation on the proposed UK GI Strategy. The GI Panel acknowledges its responsibility to have conducted sufficient engagement and research during the development of the Strategy to inform the creation of the UK GI Strategy. It was discussed that in other subject areas, there is greater public debate through media coverage e.g. Local Government White Paper.
- There is a need to ensure that the engagement around the Strategy has been sufficient and representative. This could be undertaken by discussing emerging findings with key stakeholders who have been involved in early workshops. This should be led by the consultant team, rather than the GI Panel. Permission from the Minister to do this will be sought.
- VL will brief Angela Smith (DCLG Minister) on the emerging findings of the GI Strategy at their next meeting.

Next steps

- GI Panel members should supply any feedback comments to Know Edge. The development of a storyboard will emerge from the next phase of their work. **All**
- The comments raised at the GI Panel meeting to Know Edge reinforce those made by the GI Strategy Development Group. That Group will continue to manage the consultants' work for the GI Panel. The Secretariat will circulate dates of Strategy Development Group meetings to GI Panel members in case they wish to feed in verbal comments before the meetings. **HB**
- An initial storyboard will be developed, which will be tested with the Strategy Development Group, and then the rest of the GI Panel.

4 INSPIRE

a Conciliation discussions on INSPIRE are continuing in Europe, and discussions within Government on funding its implementation are commencing. Cabinet Office have contacted VL to discuss the GI Panel's possible role in implementation, on which she is conferring with John Suffolk of the e-Government Unit. The unresolved question is the appropriate governance group for implementing INSPIRE, progressively from 2009 onwards. INSPIRE implementation will require significant resources from across different affected departments. Treasury has stated that implementation is part of business as usual within affected departments. VL will continue discussions. **VL**

b Core Reference Geographies

Simon Doyle reported that AGI Council have drafted a paper on Core Reference Geographies, which he will circulate to Panel members. **SD**

Dates of future meetings

Future meetings of the Panel are scheduled for:

14 December 2006, 2pm