

**Geographic Information Panel
16 March 2005**

Present

Vanessa Lawrence (Ordnance Survey) – Chair
Len Cook (Office for National Statistics)
Michael Fishwick (Demographic User Group)
Michael Kell (Office of the Deputy Prime Minister)
Robert Mann (Association for Geographic Information)
Jim Meldrum (Registers of Scotland)
Andrew Stott (e-Government Unit)

In attendance

Hugh Buchanan (Ordnance Survey) - Secretary

Apologies

Michael Addison (Defra)
Mick Cory (Ordnance Survey of Northern Ireland)
Rob Mahoney (Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors)
Cheryl Miller (SOLACE)
Nick Starling (Association of British Insurers)

Action

1 Vanessa Lawrence (VL) recapped the process by which the Panel had been set up, members appointed, and herself appointed as Chair. She invited each member to explain their background and interests. A formal announcement from the Minister is expected during the week beginning 21 March 2005.

2 **Administration**

2.1 **Membership.** It was agreed that the role of the Panel is a strategic one, and that therefore it is essential to ensure participation from senior people. After a detailed discussion, it was agreed that there was a strong preference for the members to attend in person. Each member is invited to nominate a single alternate who is able to participate and make decisions at a senior level on strategic issues in case they are unable to attend a meeting, and to notify the Secretary of the GI Panel of the name of that person.

ALL

2.2 It was agreed that it may be useful to revisit the membership at some point in the future. The intention of the selected membership is to ensure coverage of a broad range of interests.

2.3 **Terms of Reference.** The draft Terms of Reference sent out by the Minister in November were reviewed. VL and Michael Kell (MK) put them in context by explaining the distinction that ODPM make in the responsibilities of the Minister who acts as the ODPM stakeholder in Ordnance Survey, and the Minister who acts as the ODPM customer for Ordnance Survey.

Among the points and amendments discussed were:

- the need to be able to provide advice back to all appropriate ODPM Ministers
- the desire to promote a coherent approach to the management of geographic information in the United Kingdom
- to reflect the correct membership
- to clarify that the Panel will identify the issues that it feels able to advise on
- to add the aim of making the use of GI extensive
- to clarify the UK-wide remit of the Panel.

It was agreed to produce modified Terms of Reference, for approval by members of the GI Panel and submission to the Minister for agreement.

VL, ALL

2.4 **Reporting.** Minutes will be publicly available. To make this work well, Panel members will need to provide comments on draft minutes promptly. We intend to have a GI Panel website to allow for dissemination of public documents. The Chair will write to the Minister if appropriate after the meeting.

2.5 **Budget.** ODPM have made a budget provision. MK to clarify budget position to VL. Members should discuss any expense requirements for meeting attendance with VL.

MK

3 **Agenda items.** Two short background papers, one on *GI Strategies in the UK*, and the other on *Spatial Data Infrastructure and INSPIRE* had been circulated in advance of the meeting.

In the discussion around these papers, some of the points made were:

- INSPIRE is important for developing existing collaboration between European countries and for UK information policy
- Panel members' views on INSPIRE are probably quite divergent
- organisations work well together when they share a clear sense of direction
- the United Kingdom currently lacks an agreed Strategy
- the implementation of a GI Strategy for the UK will be a pillar to support an SDI in the United Kingdom
- a UK Strategy will need to build on and support the existing regional strategies, not constrain them
- there are lessons to learn from other European countries

After the discussion, the view was that the lack of an agreed GI Strategy for the United Kingdom was an obstacle that prevented the development of a clear sense of direction in the GI community, and that the Panel could make a clear difference in that area.

4 **Proposals for future work items.** It was agreed that a scoping study for the development of a GI strategy for the UK should be commissioned, subject to agreement with ODPM on budget.

MK, VL

Members are invited to circulate their priority items for consideration by the Panel through the Secretary.

HB, ALL

5 **Any Other Business.** Dates for future meetings in June and September will be discussed by Hugh Buchanan (HB) with members' offices.

HB, ALL