

GI Panel Membership and Chairmanship

Introduction

At its meeting in December 2005, the GI Panel agreed to review its membership and chairmanship at its meeting in March 2006. This paper provides the necessary background for that discussion.

The overall Aim of the GI Panel (from the Terms of Reference) is:

The Geographic Information Panel aims to give high-level advice to ODPM Ministers on geographic information issues of national importance for the United Kingdom

It is in the context of this Aim that the membership and chairmanship should be considered.

Membership

The section of the Terms of Reference for the Panel on Membership states

Group composition aims to balance the interests of representing the broad Geographic Information community with being focused and able to make decisions rapidly. The group will include senior figures from key interest communities.

Representation will be reviewed at least biennially to ensure that the Panel has adequate experience of the current key issues.

The current membership is drawn from the following organisations:

- Association for Geographic Information
- Association of British Insurers
- e-Government Unit, Cabinet Office
- Demographic User Group
- Department for Environment Food and Rural Affairs
- Ministry of Defence
- Office for National Statistics
- Office of the Deputy Prime Minister
- Ordnance Survey
- Ordnance Survey of Northern Ireland
- Registers of Scotland
- Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors
- Society of Local Authority Chief Executives and Senior Managers (SOLACE)

Members have been appointed without specifying a term of appointment.

The Secretariat have been approached by various individuals and organisations asking about future membership, and it is likely that there are other groups that would like to be represented on the Panel, but have not made a direct approach.

It is important to note from the Terms of References that the membership is not intended to be exhaustive. One sector which is not represented is academia.

The GI Panel is making good progress on developing a UK GI Strategy now that the funding issues have been resolved, and GI Panel members are now more familiar with their role. Three members have moved from their roles since being appointed, and their successors have taken on their Panel role.

Chairmanship

The section in the Terms of Reference on the Chair of the panel states:

The Panel will be chaired for the first year by the Director General and Chief Executive of Ordnance Survey with the intention of rotating the chair on an annual or biennial basis. Panel members will review the chairmanship annually and put recommendations to Ministers.

The Terms of Reference make no mention of the provision of a Secretariat which has been provided by Ordnance Survey in support of the Chair.

As noted above under membership, the Panel is engaged in a substantial programme of work on the GI Strategy. Vanessa Lawrence is very willing to discuss standing down as Chair but is also offering to remain as Chair for a further year to see the conclusion of the UK GI Strategy piece of work whichever is the will of the members of the GI Panel. A change of Chair may introduce some delay to that process.

Recommendations

It is recommended that the membership is not further altered at the moment.

It is recommended that the GI Panel discuss whether Vanessa Lawrence should continue in the Chair for a second year.

Hugh Buchanan
GI Panel Secretary