

**Geographic Information Panel
Minutes of meeting held on
14 December 2006**

Present

Vanessa Lawrence (Ordnance Survey) – Chair
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)
Graham Jenkinson (Office for National Statistics) for Karen Dunnell
James Kavanagh (Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors)
Jim Meldrum (Registers of Scotland)
Cheryl Miller (SOLACE, East Sussex County Council)
Nick Rigby (Ministry of Defence)
Nick Starling (Association of British Insurers)

Apologies

Chris Chant (Defra) for Andrew Burchell
Andrew Stott (e-Government Unit, Cabinet Office)

In attendance

Hugh Buchanan (Ordnance Survey) - Secretary

Action

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

2 Matters arising

INSPIRE

Vanessa Lawrence (VL) gave an update on the outcome from the conciliation process in November between the European Parliament and the Council of Minister.

3 UK GI Strategy

VL summarised progress since the last meeting. The consultants' work has been coordinated by the Strategy Development Group (SDG), and has included engagement with invited stakeholders on the emerging finding from their work. The next stage that is required is to take the consultants' report, and turn it into a report owned by the Geographic Information Panel.

Robin McLaren, Sheila Drew Smith and Gavin Keith made a presentation of the consultants' work. A discussion took place around the presentation which covered the following points.

- The examples used in any presentation must be robust, be able to be defended against challenge. Examples on GPS for air navigation and on climate change may be more powerful than those currently used.
- The power of the examples will be enhanced by framing them in terms of "From" and "To", and by quantifying them.
- The Strategy is a public sector strategy, and needs to be clearly presented as such.
- Citizen empowerment needs to be developed as an aim and a benefit of the

Strategy. This is important in responding to fears of intrusive data gathering.

- The Marine Data and Information Partnership (MDIP) provides a good example of inter-organisation leading to improved access to data.
- International comparisons provide useful illustrations of the implementation of different models.
- The Strategy focuses on the public sector since that is the area that government has influence over. The private sector will continue to be market-driven. This is not intended to exclude, but rather to properly reflect the areas of influence of the strategy. The private sector will continue to have an important role in the implementation and exploitation of geographic information.
- Within the geographic information market, there is no evidence of private sector market failure, and therefore no argument for market intervention by government.
- Wider use of geographic information should encompass both innovative use and more extensive uptake of existing applications. The Vision statement needs to reflect this. The Strategy Development Group will revisit this.
- The range of potential applications for geographic information need to include service customisation which is an increasing priority in public services.
- The Core Reference Geographies need to be described without the use of jargon.
- Public views on the content of Core Reference Geographies will be gathered through the User and Technical Forums, and through Benefits Realisation Review of the implementation of the Strategy.
- Terminology used for Core Reference Geography must be aligned with the terminology used by INSPIRE, while retaining simplicity.
- The use of a Service Oriented Architecture by the public sector can cause friction with the private sector, and yet it is clear that government intend that Service Oriented Architecture should be part of the public sector role. It is important that the Strategy provides opportunities for the private sector to move up the value chain.
- People skills will need to be developed through MBA courses etc., in a similar way to the development of core financial skills among non-financial specialists
- Many policy areas affecting the creation and the use of geographic information are devolved, and governance in this context will need clarity and careful management.
- Agreement on the appropriate Ministerial responsibility for the GI Strategy will need care. It should be seen as a role that spans government while being within a single Department.
- A new governance body will need input from Non-Executives to give it breadth and business input. The supporting Executive Team will need to be sized and scoped.
- Geographic Information must not be governed separately from the broader governance of public sector information, or from the management of census information.
- Public sector efficiency will be powerfully driven by citizen empowerment but will also require changed behaviour by public servants.
- The costs and benefits figures in the draft Report need to be further firmed up. The Strategy Development Group will revisit this.
- The priorities and tasks to be addressed in the implementation of the UK GI Strategy will need to be clearly articulated, together with the resources required

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for implementation. This can only be done in outline, since it is primarily a task for those carrying out the implementation.

- Local government will be concerned about any extra costs that might arise from implementing this.
- Standards have a central role in realising benefits from a strategy, even though they are not a high-profile subject.

Next Steps

The Report should go to the Minister in January 2007. This meeting was about ensuring that GI Panel members are content with the principles and the recommendations from the consultants.

It is important to have realistic expectations of the Strategy. Its publication will result in close scrutiny of its content.

The Strategy Development Group will meet to agree a version of the Report to go to the Minister. This will involve further copy writing of material.

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4 Dates of future meetings

Future meetings of the Panel are scheduled for:

- Tuesday 3 April 2007, 2 - 5pm
- Thursday 28 June 2007, 2 - 5pm
- Thursday 20 September 2007, 2 - 5pm
- Thursday 13 December 2007, 2 - 5pm