

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

Present

Vanessa Lawrence (Ordnance Survey) – Chair
Tim Allen (Defra), for Andrew Burchell
Stan Brown (Ordnance Survey of Northern Ireland)
Karen Dunnell (Office for National Statistics)
Rob Mahoney (Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors)
Robert Mann (Association for Geographic Information (AGI))
Jim Meldrum (Registers of Scotland)
Cheryl Miller (East Sussex County Council)
Nick Rigby (Ministry of Defence)
Andrew Stott (e-Government Unit, Cabinet Office)
Philip White (Office of the Deputy Prime Minister), for Michael Kell

Apologies

Michael Fishwick (Demographic User Group)
Nick Starling (Association of British Insurers)

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 IP ownership of datasets

Cheryl Miller asked whether the complexity of IP ownership of NLPG referred to in item 1 of the minutes was unique to NLPG, or also applied to other datasets. She agreed to table a note on this at a future meeting if still appropriate following discussions with others.

CM

b Circulation of papers

The revised guidance on circulation of papers was discussed. The number of days in advance for circulation of papers to Members prior to a meeting will be amended to 5, and the Paper put on the GI Panel website.

HB

c IGGI

Philip White will be succeeded on his retirement by David Fry, including as the Chair of the Intra-Governmental Group on Geographic Information (IGGI).

3 UK GI Strategy procurement

Hugh Buchanan (HB) recapped the progress on the GI Strategy procurement set out in Paper GIP 3/2006, and took questions.

It was agreed that the evaluation period may need to be extended from 2 weeks to 3 weeks.

The process of monthly review meetings as part of the development of the GI Strategy was agreed, with the GI Panel representation envisaged as the Secretariat plus at least 2 members of the Development Group. HB to liaise with the Development Group on dates

for these meetings.

HB

During the discussion, the following points were made:

- There are strong links between the UK GI Strategy and the government's Transformational Government agenda.
- It is essential that the Strategy deals with ideas, not technology.
- The implementation of the Strategy will be more important than its development.
- In other countries, the implementation of counterpart strategies has required substantial resources. To achieve that in the UK will require significant influencing.
- Timely completion of the GI Strategy will allow discussions of resources to be included in Comprehensive Spending Review discussions.

The Secretariat will continue to progress the procurement in conjunction with the Development Group

HB

4 GI Panel Membership and Chairmanship

The Panel discussed Paper 1/2006. In discussion on membership, the following points were made:

- It is important that the Panel continues to take a strategic, not a technical view so that it can continue to consider how GI can benefit the country.
- The Panel functions well in part because of its current compact size, and so any consideration of membership should not jeopardise that. If a new member is to be invited, it may be necessary to ask another to step down.
- Effective membership of the Panel depends on attendance and participation.
- The current Panel membership has substantial central government representation. More user representation, such as Directors of Planning or Transport within local government could be beneficial.
- Association for Geographic Information, Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors and Demographic User Group all represent a range of private sector interests.
- Other user communities of interest might be health services and emergency services.
- Software vendors would like to be represented, but it would be very difficult to achieve representation from such a sector that would be accepted by all such vendors.
- The academic community would like to be represented at the Panel. Academic participation can bring benefits of adventurous use and thought. As a sector the academic community is very diverse, including both those whose primary interest is geographic information, and those whose interest is in the use of GI. If the academic sector is to be represented, the GI Panel should actively select a representative, not leave it to others.
- Utilities can give a strong technical and practical focus to discussions, but again have a very diverse range of interests and current practice.
- The health sector should be a huge player in the GI user community, and there is currently significant growth in interest, including Primary Care Trusts and Ambulance Trusts. Public Health has historically been a strong area of activity.
- There is a separate issue over diversity and representation within the AGI membership. The AGI membership includes academics, software vendors and small consultancies.
- In Northern Ireland, Mosaic operates a series of sectoral groups whose Chairs sit

together on a Project Board

- The development of the GI Strategy will raise issues of communities of interest, and so it may be sensible to not review membership significantly until after that.
- In local authorities, there is often a two-tier participation structure, with a small core decision making group, and a broader partners group. A similar model is under consideration for GI in Scotland. Such models clearly need good control and management to ensure that they deliver effectively. This model could be adopted for the Panel's work.

After the discussion on membership, the following conclusions and actions were agreed:

- Cheryl Miller offered to direct the Secretariat to examples of current good practice of two tier engagement **CM**
- the question of membership would be returned to after the publication of the GI Strategy. No new members will be invited to join the GI Panel whilst the development of the GI Strategy is taking place **VL**
- VL to discuss any difficulties with current attendance with existing members.

The Panel then discussed Chairmanship of the Panel, and unanimously concluded that they would like Vanessa Lawrence to continue as the Chair for a second year.

5 Government GI as public records

The Panel considered Paper 2/2006 on the concerns of The National Archives (TNA) about proper handling of GI that forms part of public records. In discussion the following points were made:

- It is important for the Panel to prioritise the tasks it wishes to take forward.
- Panel members are aware that archiving is a live topic within their own organisations.
- There are important relationships between this and Freedom of Information issues.
- Scotland and Northern Ireland have separate archive organisations, as do public sector bodies outside central government.

It was agreed that VL should write to the Chief Executive of The National Archives to agree the principles that need to be addressed; to understand how this issue fits with TNA's broader strategy and work programme; and to invite TNA to make a presentation at a future meeting. **VL**

6 Any Other Business

- a** The Panel discussed recent media discussion of government data charging policy, and concluded that there was no need to make a statement or recommendation to Ministers.

The Panel also discussed the current position of the proposed Inspire directive. Defra agreed to work with the Secretariat to circulate a position paper. **TA/HB**

- b** The Panel discussed the data requirements that would arise in connection with preparations for the 2012 Olympics, across a range of aspects from anti-terrorism to visitor management. It was agreed that Vanessa Lawrence should write to Alun Michael and to the President of the Association of Chief Police Officers to offer that a small group of Panel members would meet with each of them to discuss the potential contribution of GI. This will be done in liaison with the relevant Permanent Secretaries from the Permanent Secretaries Group that Karen Dunnell discussed to ensure alignment with other approaches. **VL**

Dates of future meetings

Future meetings of the Panel are scheduled for:

27 June 2006, 2pm

20 September 2006, 2pm

14 December 2006, 2pm