

Terms of Reference

Geographical Information topic group

July 2007



West Midlands
Regional
Observatory

1 Background

The Regional Data & Intelligence Network (RDIN) is a community of users and providers of information in the West Midlands, and as such represents a primary resource to help achieve the purposes of the West Midlands Regional Observatory. Within this wide network, a number of 'Topic Groups' have been identified as 'clusters' around broad areas of interest.

Each Topic Group is intended to provide a forum for facilitating the processes of sharing, analysis, understanding and dissemination of information - both within the cluster itself and with the wider RDIN. The Topic Group Terms of Reference are set within this context.

2 Scope

The Geographical Information topic group will act as a technical resource advisory group and focus on issues concerning geographical information and benefits and limitations of data, systems used to explore and analyse spatially referenced data, data and analysis used and needed by RDIN members to support strategy formulation and implementation in the West Midlands region and its sub-regions.

3 Overall Objective

The overall aim of the topic group is to, "*advise WMRO of data and intelligence issues on behalf of the region, to assist in improving the evidence base of the West Midlands, in order to inform and improve development of regional strategy and policy*". This objective can be sub-divided into a number of specific objectives as follows:

3.1 Specific objectives

- Promote and lead the work to share geographical information data and intelligence within the region and with other central bodies.
- Disseminate good practice information to the RDIN and RDIN topic groups on use of geographical information.
- Identify gaps in regional geographical information, data and analysis and develop project proposals for filling them. Prioritise gaps identified and seek appropriate actions to fill those gaps.
- Develop the catalogue of digitised boundaries and ensure that the catalogue is updated regularly and new data sources are added as appropriate.
- Advise WMRO on the appropriate delivery methods for geographical information functionality, data and analysis to meet regional user requirements.

- Review the objective of the topic group over time and evaluate the work of the group on a regular basis to secure feedback for reporting to the User Group and the WMRO Partnership Board.
- Nominate up to three representatives of the topic group to the User Group. The role of the topic group representatives on the User group will be to act as the main conduit between the WMRO Partnership Board and the RDIN.
- The User Group representative will be responsible for identifying collaborative opportunities between topic groups, contributing to the RDIN report to the WMRO Partnership board and reporting back to their topic group, the outcomes of the User Group and the WMRO Partnership board meeting.

4 Administration of the User Group and reporting mechanisms

- 4.1 The topic group will not be chaired by any staff of WMRO, but will be chaired by an individual nominated by the Group.
- 4.2 WMRO will provide administrative and organisational support.
- 4.3 It will be the responsibility of the Chair and group members to identify items for each agenda.
- 4.4 The RDIN Co-ordinator at WMRO will be responsible for overall co-ordination of the topic group activities.

5 Membership

- 5.1 Topic group members will be active data and intelligence practitioners or interested in data to inform policy, and will be expected to make a significant contribution to the delivery of the objectives of the group.
- 5.2 Members must reflect the views of their own organisation and that of any networks that they are engaged in.
- 5.3 Benefits to each committed member of the topic group include shared access to data and intelligence between members of the group and a free place at the WMRO annual conference.
- 5.4 Benefits will only be valid if members regularly attend meetings. Non-attendance to three consecutive meetings will prompt a request that members confirm their commitment to the group.

6 Frequency of meetings

- 6.1 The group should meet quarterly (with support provided by WMRO RDIN Coordinator).
- 6.2 The group should formally review membership and Chair annually.