

Geographical Information Topic Group

8th February 2010

Minutes



West Midlands
Regional
Observatory

www.wmro.org

1. Welcome, apologies and Introductions

Attendees

Diane Edwards (DE)	West Midlands Cancer Intelligence Unit (Chair)
Lucy Bastin (LB)	Aston University
Andrina Dhillon (AD)	West Midlands Regional Observatory
Claire Edwards (CE)	Natural England
Rob Ellis (RE)	Environment Agency
Shona Frost (SF)	Staffordshire County Council
Michelle Haynes	CENTRO
Brian Higgs (BH)	Dudley Metropolitan Borough Council
Russell Hornsey (RH)	West Midlands Regional Observatory
Mark Hudson (MH)	Government Office West Midlands
Angela Johnson (AJ)	West Midlands Fire Service
Juliet Lane (JL)	Shropshire Council
Oliver Nicholls (ON)	West Midlands Regional Observatory
Nick Pardow (NP)	Government Office West Midlands
Graham Smith (GS)	Staffordshire University
Christopher Styche (CS)	Black Country Consortium
Gavin Wray (GW)	West Midlands Regional Observatory
Evette Jayatilake (EJ)	West Midlands Regional Observatory (Secretary)
Apologies	
Rosie Paskins (RP)	West Midlands Regional Observatory

2. Approval of minutes and matters arising from last meeting

- The minutes of the meeting held on 4th November 2009 were approved
- ON advised that he has approached Amanda Pearce and Paul Cobbing and they will present at the next GI meeting in May on PSA28

3. Ordnance Survey Consultation

The group discussed the Consultation paper on the Government's proposal to open up Ordnance Survey data.

The department for Communities and Local Government published a public consultation in relation to the Ordnance Survey and proposals to allow free access to a range of Ordnance Survey data later this year.

The purpose of the consultation is to obtain feedback attractiveness of 3 funding models to secure this 'free data'. The closing date for all responses is 17th March, 2010. The 3 models are:

- Option 1: Retain current business model
- Option 2: Radical change to split OS into 2 business' - raw data and derived products
- Option 3: Transition model between current and radical business model

Action

- ON to circulate the consultation [web link](#) to the group
- Topic Group members to look at the Consultation paper and give their views from a Geographical Information topic group perspective to ON by the end of Feb, for inclusion in the Observatory's response. Please try to base comments around the consultation questions.

4. Topic Group News

The group updated on their current work:

- JL advised that Shropshire Council is still working on the rural toolkit. Their first consultation will be held at a public event at the end of the month.

Shropshire council have purchased MOSAIC to use alongside their GIS software. The council will look at how they can use it to deliver their services more effectively, using MOSAIC customer insight data.

Rose Parker from Worcestershire has taken over Carmen Mayo's position at the council and will be responsible for Natural Environment data.

Shropshire council have been getting lots of requests for mapping and information for parish planning purposes.

JL advised that she will be leaving Shropshire council shortly and will look for a representative to attend the topic group meetings.

- GW advised that he is conducting a short survey based on what people think about the Observatory website, and invited members to participate.
- AJ advised that the West Midlands Fire Service (WMFS) are currently planning for the future. WMFS will increase activity on fire safety checks, partnership work and data analysis. AJ advised that they are purchasing a new version of MOSAIC to help with this.

AJ also advised that WMFS is still in the process of restructuring.

- CE advised that Natural England have just launched a report based on the environmental state of the Green Belt. This can be found on the Natural England's website: http://www.naturalengland.org.uk/about_us/news/2010/280110.aspx

Natural England is reviewing bio-diversity data nationally, to overcome problems with it, especially in priority habitats.

CE mentioned that she will be advertising a GIS post within her team and will forward details to the GI topic group to circulate to their networks.

- BH mentioned that earlier in the month Dudley MBC conducted an emergency planning multi-agency exercise. It was the first time that the GISMO application, developed by Dudley MBC, has been used in such an exercise and it was very well received by partners. The exercise demonstrated how data rich the local authority is.
- MH stated that that CENTRO have been working with the Heart of England NHS trust to investigate pattern of patients that do not attend hospital appointments and access to public transport. MH will keep the group updated with this project.

MH advised that their ICT section has taken on the lead for GIS, who will look to develop CENTRO's corporate GIS.

- CS advised that the Black Country Consortium have embarked on some new projects and are working with Natural England on integrated access and green space accessibility.

The Black Country consortium has put a bid in for the Aggregate Levy Sustainability fund.

- SF advised that Staffordshire Council have just procured Instant Atlas, to visualise data for Council members.

SF has been running trials on Arc-logistics to determine the cheapest ways to get children to school on buses.

- RE advised that the Environment Agency has been using GIS to review river basin development plans and their approach to flood defence. RE is also involved in checking MP constituency boundaries.
- GS advised that he was invited to present his work on the National Population Database at a workshop at Southampton University. Southampton have ERSC funding to develop a model for 24/7 populations. The workshop brought together a number of representatives to demonstrate their work so far, discuss the development of the population model and the data sources they might use.
- Mark Hudson from the Government Office West Midlands introduced himself to the group. MH advised he is involved in looking at the growth agenda through the regional spatial strategy.

- RH updated the group on Observatory work. RH advised that as yet the Functioning Geographies report is expected to be published week commencing 15/02/10.

The Enterprise Benchmarking Business Start-up report has been published and can be downloaded here:

<http://www.wmro.org/standardTemplate.aspx/Home/OurResearch/EnterpriseandInnovation/Benchmarkingstartupbusinessactivity>

The Observatory is also doing some work to identify good locations to site wind turbines.

The Regional Skills Assessment now has sub regional profiles available at:

<http://www.wmro.org/standardTemplate.aspx/Home/OurResearch/Skills/RegionalSkillsAssessment2009>

- DE advised that The West Midlands Cancer Intelligence Unit (WMCIU) will be using Instant Atlas to feed data back to hospital trusts, to help meet performance measures.

DE was invited to the 24/7 population event that GS attended. DE expressed interest in it from point of view of exposures to environmental hazards. It would also be relevant to evacuation purposes.

DE is supporting WMPHO in running a one day introduction to GI in Public Health as part of their Public Health Trainee programme.

5. 2009 - 2010 Work plan

Action

- *Topic group members are to continue submitting articles to Observations via Andrina and Russell.*
- *Andrina Dhillon is to contact some members of the topic group to see if they have any outstanding resources to add to the resource catalogue.*
- *An additional member is sought for the user group, please notify DE / ON.*
- *ON to seek a replacement Board Ambassador for the GI Topic Group.*

6. 2010 - 2011 Work plan

The draft work plan for 2010 - 11 was discussed.

Action

- *The GI and Population and Society topic group are to develop a seminar based on Data Visualisation. LB and GS volunteered to be involved in a joint working group with colleagues from the Population and Society Group.*
- *ON and DE to revise the work plan before being sent to the Observatory Board.*

7. User group feedback

- ON gave an update on the last User group meeting which took place in December. He advised that main discussions were around the business plan of the Observatory going forward and the review of the research gap register.

Action

- ON to forward the research gap register to MH
- ON to make the research gap register available on the website

8. AOB

- DE advised that ESRI are holding a 2 day Annual Conference in London on May the 10th - 12th, 2010. More information on this event can be found here:
<http://www.shapingyourvision.co.uk/>
- AGI is reviewing its Special Interest Groups (SIGs) and agreed to merge the Health (SIG) with the Local Government SIG into a joint 'Public Services' SIG.

9. Dates of future meetings

- 21st May 2010 - to be run as a networking opportunity for all serving members of the Topic Groups.