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Dear Colleagues,

### **Ordnance Survey Response to ‘Transformational Government – Enabled by Technology’**

I am pleased to submit Ordnance Survey’s response to the invitation to comment on the strategy for Transformational Government.

Ordnance Survey ([www.ordnancesurvey.co.uk](http://www.ordnancesurvey.co.uk)) is the National Mapping Agency and has extensive knowledge and experience in information management, particularly geographic information management. Further background information is provided at Appendix A. We successfully employ cutting edge technology on a daily basis in the maintenance and management of the National Geospatial Database (NGD). The NGD underpins some 10% of the UK’s GDP. Ordnance Survey’s Director General is official advisor to the United Kingdom Government on all aspects of survey, mapping and geographic information and is Chair of the Geographic Information Panel.

We therefore welcome the opportunity to help develop appropriate information management strategies for government and look forward to playing an active role in delivering the transformational government agenda.

Ordnance Survey supports the principles and objectives set out in the strategy. However, based on our role and experience, we believe that the full benefits articulated in the strategy will only be realised if increasing importance is placed on and focus given, across government, to effective information management. We therefore strongly recommend that, as an adjunct to the policy and principles presented in the paper, a clear structure for the creation, management and exploitation of government information is defined and communicated widely in the public and private sectors..

Furthermore we believe that the benefits of good information management, supported by appropriate information technology infrastructures, can be increased through a broader understanding of the benefits which arise from the greater use of modern, up-to-date and nationally consistent geographic information. Much of our lives, and therefore a great deal of government policy and service delivery, is influenced by location because, put simply, *‘everything happens somewhere’*.

Analysis of information within a consistent geographic framework, particularly when used widely across government, can assist in many policy areas. For example, a geographic approach to analysis of data can help determine patterns of crime, the distribution of noise pollution, the spread of diseases, the effective deployment of emergency services and much more besides. Neither technology alone, nor information alone can deliver any of these. The right technology combined

with the right information content can deliver significant benefits, but only if the management of both is integrated effectively. We should avoid duplication of effort in the creation and maintenance of the same information, and establish clear roles and responsibilities for the maintenance of core datasets that can benefit all users.

We believe that the Digital National Framework for business and geographic information has a fundamental role to play in delivering success in Transformational Government, particularly in driving down costs and in the effective and efficient sharing of information. The Digital National Framework is currently being developed through effective cooperation between the public and private sector. It is as an industry standard for sharing, integrating and increasing the benefit of business and policy information. See Appendix B and <http://www.dnf.org/Introduction/WhatIsDNF.htm>

The overall UK strategy for geographical information, being developed under the leadership of the Geographical Information Panel and referred to in paragraph 39(8) of the Transformational Government draft, is also of fundamental importance. We believe this can and must lay the foundations for a National Spatial Data Infrastructure. However, a framework which is not widely subscribed to will achieve nothing. We believe that the same approach to leadership as described in paragraph 40 will be equally important in ensuring that the nation maximises the benefit of this work.

We welcome the proposals to measure customer satisfaction and the strong focus on citizens as customers of government. We believe that many of the lessons to be learned in the delivery of public services are already well understood in the Executive Agencies focused on the collection, maintenance and dissemination of information, particularly by those who operate as Trading Funds. In these, business outcomes are driven by the rigours of a commercial approach to management, and a clear focus on satisfying customer demand.

Furthermore we believe that:

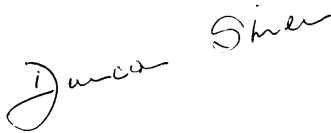
- there needs to be increased clarity of organisational purpose and a reduction in unnecessary duplication of effort e.g. the roles of central and local government in information collection and management should be crystal clear and co-operation should be strengthened;
- in driving forward the principles of shared services, particular care is needed to ensure that the impacts on differing organisational business models, endorsed by government, are taken into account.
- the Service Transformation Boards, Customer Group Directors and others responsible for delivery of the transformational agenda should have a clear understanding of the benefits that a geographic perspective can bring to policy formulation and service delivery.
- whilst the intention to rationalise the use of web services through convergence of government websites on Directgov is valuable, it is at least as important to understand the importance of 'Brand Management' to the business of government. Ordnance Survey's brand, as an example is widely recognised and trusted the world over. It is important for government that key government brands continue to have a strong presence in the markets they serve.
- it is also important to open and transparent government, and compliance with relevant legislation, that costs and revenues can be clearly accounted for and reported. There is

potential within unmanaged common services and other aspects of the agenda for some blurring to occur.

- a culture of shared public services requires the unimpeded flow of information between organisations. Many information holders in the public sector sustain their businesses or raise vital investment funding through the management and exploitation of Intellectual Property Rights. If we are to realise the benefits that the development of a shared services culture promises, it is essential that Copyright ownership is clear and is respected. Appropriate licensing terms and royalties which are consistent to the protection and maintenance of the IP material are essential.

In conclusion I wish to reaffirm that Ordnance Survey supports and welcomes the principles and objectives set out in the strategy and we are keen to take opportunities to help achieve its promise by playing an active role in delivering the transformational government agenda.

Yours faithfully



**Duncan Shiell**  
**Director of Strategy**

### *Background to Ordnance Survey*

Ordnance Survey is Britain's national mapping agency. We maintain the definitive geographical framework for Great Britain, as well as capturing and marketing a wide range of geographical information. Our Director General is official advisor to the United Kingdom Government on all aspects of survey, mapping and geographic information. Ordnance Survey is a Government department and executive agency, and since 1999 has successfully operated as a Trading Fund.

Ordnance Survey surveys and collects nationally consistent data on roads, buildings, addresses, boundaries, water courses, height and many other aspects of the natural and man-made landscape of Britain. Although traditionally supplied to the user as paper maps, this data is now more usually supplied as digital information to underpin and link government and business information for analysis, manipulation, display and publication.

The digital database of the surface of Britain is known as the National Geospatial Database (NGD) from which the OS MasterMap® product is produced. The NGD is the most up-to-date, nationally consistent and accurate topographic information available and forms an essential geographic framework for Great Britain. It is continuously updated, with some 5,000 changes added every day.

Ordnance Survey geographical data is currently available to all Government departments, agencies and non-departmental public bodies through the Pan-Government Agreement (PGA) all local authorities through the Mapping Services Agreement (MSA) and is extensively used by these organisations and hundreds of business users.

## What is DNF?

**DNF is an industry standard for integrating and sharing business and geographic information from multiple sources.**

### Background

Geographic information increasingly needs to underpin mainstream information services. To do this we need to transform the data we use from simple and relatively unintelligent maps and pictures, to computer records that information technologies can recognise and handle easily, reliably and in increasingly automated processes.

Through this transformation we see our investments in information systems being realised in significantly better end-user services based on improved data integrity, and through greater business advantage coupled with lower operational costs.



## The DNF Vision



The vision for DNF is to enable and support easy and reliable integration of business and geographic information regardless of who is responsible for its maintenance and where this is undertaken, thus achieving the goal of "plug and play information".

Ultimately this has the potential to evolve into a network of information which, while distributed, when brought together can be used with assurance. Business information can then be shared with the knowledge that all users have confidence that they are referring to the same location and entity in the real world. This can be critical in many applications.



### **The Digital National Framework is intended to be:**

#### 1. Definitive

*maximising the benefits of definitive referencing*

- DNF provides a framework to promote the better integration of all kinds of information with location as the common denominator. It offers the ability to link multiple information sources to a definitive location reference through unique identifiers. In Great Britain, the main national foundation for this is OS MasterMap Topography layer.

## 2. Inclusive

*reflecting principles of industry best practice*

- DNF is being developed as an open initiative with input from a variety of interested parties. It encompasses proven and robust international standards. Although developed in the United Kingdom and Ireland, the DNF concept is transferable to other countries.

## 3. Structured

*using effective techniques for a “create once, use many times” model*

- DNF features are referenced through unique identifiers enabling explicit and unambiguous linking and exchange of information. DNF’s object-based approach means that data should be collected once, maintained at the most effective level of detail, and then reused in any way the user requires. It offers the ability to create a consistent and structured geographic data model to integrate information easily and reliably.

## 4. Reliable

*delivering data integrity for underpinning critical business decisions*

- DNF is based on a consistent form of georeferencing to provide information integrity. This makes it easier to associate data from all kinds of sources in a reliable way and to support information transfer in everything from street works and buried services to insurance and civil contingency.

## 5. Cost-effective

*lowering the costs of handling multi-source data*

- The greater the take-up of DNF, the more significant the benefits will be for wider data sharing, thereby leading to lower data handling costs, ease of maintenance and the avoidance of duplicated effort. The result – reduced costs for the management and support of various data holdings.

## 6. Flexible

*enabling information exchange and cross-business applications*

- As DNF is a model for the integration of information of all kinds it can be used to link different views of the world to a common base. This gives users the ability not only to accurately capture information of a precise geographical area, but then to share or use this in conjunction with other users in automated cross organisational applications.