

# Consultation paper 1/2001

## Consultation review

### 1 Introduction

Putting the customer first is of primary importance for Ordnance Survey, and consultation with customers, partners and other external parties is a key Ordnance Survey activity. It will become increasingly important in the future as the market impacts ever more on our activities. The mix of consultation needs to address Ordnance Survey issues in the widest sense.

Ordnance Survey is reviewing the way it consults customers, stakeholders and other interested parties. We want to ensure that the flow of information from, to, and among these groups continues to support our mission of maximising the benefits of our mapping for the nation. Our e-business strategy, reflecting the wider, fast-changing context of digital and mobile technology, demands that new channels of consultation are put in place more closely suited than ever before to particular market sectors and interest areas.

Formal consultation through the consultative committee system has been in place in one form or another for over 50 years, and we have always valued the contributions from those involved. However, whilst those arrangements were appropriate at the time, they are not necessarily the most efficient or effective arrangements for the current environment, and we are concerned that they no longer meet customer needs.

We believe that all interested parties would benefit from a move away from the twice-yearly event, to an ongoing process of consultation through a variety of means which are more convenient for all concerned. We will aim to reinforce examples of good practice from existing arrangements.

However, we feel that the principle of consultation can be better served for all involved by replacing the formal consultative committee system.

This paper proposes what Ordnance Survey believes will be a better mechanism for consultation in the future and provides the basis for consulting with consultative committee members to shape the future of consultation with our customers. A draft version of this paper has already been read and reviewed by all committee chairmen and there has been broad support for the need for a fresh approach to be taken to consultation. Specific comments from chairmen have been incorporated wherever possible in this final paper. We are now at the stage where we want to share thoughts with all committee members.

### 2 Why change?

The practice of consultation with users dates from the period immediately after the Second World War with the introduction of the Inter-departmental Committee on Repayment Services and then in the 1960s, the Director General's Committee. But it was following the Janes' Committee Report in 1973 that we established the modern consultative committee structure. The various committees, their span of coverage and their terms of reference, have remained broadly unchanged ever since.

The last review of consultative committees was in 1996 (Consultation papers 1/1996 and 2/1996). Although we suggested some radical changes, only minor amendments were made in the end.

## Changing customer needs

Many of those consulted through the various consultation channels are now complaining of overload, and are keen to have more efficient, streamlined channels in place. They are often approached through routes which effectively bypass the formal committee process. Given the pace at which the market is changing, this alternative and more rapid consultation is inevitable.

## Responses to papers

The responses to consultation papers are extremely disappointing, especially considering the costs and effort involved in the whole process:

- It costs Ordnance Survey at least £100 000 per annum in direct costs (staff time, expenses, materials) to support the consultative committee process. This includes secretarial effort, authorship and preparation of papers, and involvement of directors and representatives in meetings.
- Almost 1 500 copies of every consultative committee paper are sent out. Yet direct responses generated from the papers in 2000 varied from one to a maximum of six responses per paper. Virtually all of these were from people we would expect to respond, and the feedback could easily have been generated without the issue of the papers.

## Weaknesses of the current system

A number of other issues are driving the changes in consultation and calling into question the existing system:

- Significant sectors of Ordnance Survey activities are not directly represented. They include new technology companies, location-based services, Licensed Partners, the GIS industry as a group, retailing, insurance, ambulance trusts, and higher education research. There is also no representation of such active and important national organisations such as Greenpeace and Friends of the Earth.
- The key players in the field of new technology are constantly changing and a static committee process will be unable to cope with this situation.

- Instead of focusing on policy issues, there is a trend for some committees to spend most of the time talking about problems of detail.
- Some committees are just too large to allow effective two-way communication. The process is therefore focused upon the supply of information from Ordnance Survey, rather than true consultation.

## Alternative channels for consultation

Over the years Ordnance Survey consultation has multiplied considerably, such that a whole raft of processes and opportunities now exist. Consultation now takes many forms, of which the consultative committee process is but one, and this process cannot be considered in isolation. Other consultation includes:

- Product-based user groups (ADDRESS-POINT<sup>®</sup>, Land-Line<sup>®</sup> and so on).
- SLA (service level agreement) working groups.
- OSLO (Ordnance Survey Liaison Officer) seminars for the local authority sector.
- Specially arranged seminars to cover specific issues such as the Digital National Framework<sup>™</sup> (DNF<sup>™</sup>).
- Utility sector seminars.
- Regular conferences with retailers and other partners.
- Other exhibitions, events, conferences and seminars, either organised by Ordnance Survey or where Ordnance Survey has a presence.
- Market intelligence gathering.
- Dedicated and ongoing market research projects.
- Day-to-day account management meetings.
- Meetings with individual special interest groups.
- A potential Strategic Alliance (announced as part of the Ordnance Survey e-business strategy).
- Web site forums.

In some instances, there are groupings elsewhere of similar people covering almost identical issues, for example, the Association for Geographic Information (AGI) and the Intra-governmental Group on Geographic Information (IGGI).

### 3 The way forward

We will be replacing the current committee structure and would like to propose a refreshed package which includes both existing and new opportunities for consultation. Greater use would be made of electronic communications, thus fitting with Ordnance Survey's move towards e-business. We also wish to make consultation more targeted towards issues of particular interest to specific interest groups, and develop a more consistent process of feedback on the results of consultation.

Attached at annexe A is a summary of the possible opportunities for future consultation. These possibilities are very much open to discussion with all the current consultative committees.

### 4 What next?

We would welcome committee members discussing the contents of this paper before and/or at the next round of consultative committee meetings. Subsequent to those meetings, we will collate and confirm preferred future consultation for each interest group in liaison with relevant parties, and subsequently implement whatever is finally agreed.

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2 April 2001



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## **Annexe A**

### **Proposals for future consultation**

All the current consultative committees are to be replaced by a new range of consultation opportunities. Many such opportunities already exist for consultation with the markets represented by the current consultative committees, but it is also planned to develop new opportunities. In particular, we wish to capitalise upon the benefits of electronic communication with much greater use of our web site. We also wish to target our consultation more effectively at those to whom a particular issue has special importance.

The proposals below are for consideration by all the members of all the existing consultative committees. They are meant to provide a starting point for discussion.

We should emphasise at this stage that we make no assumptions that the list would be sufficient to meet all your needs.

### **Proposals common to all consultative committees**

There are a range of existing and potential opportunities which we wish to develop, which could be available to the market sectors currently covered by all consultative committees. These include:

- Greater use of the Ordnance Survey web site. This would include ongoing and consistent provision of current information, with a free subscription service, potentially customised to those with special interests. The opportunities also exist for web forums on particular issues. The structure of the web site will include simple headline summaries of issues, with access to more detailed background information for those who wish to delve deeper. New issues could be highlighted and the desire for responses indicated. Use could be made of email and auto-email response facilities. Comments and responses could be posted on the web site for others to see.
- Improved Customer Relationship Management (CRM), in which Ordnance Survey is making significant investment. This includes improved customer care processes and improved helpdesk facilities, giving greater opportunities for issues to be lodged with relevant staff within Ordnance Survey. By this means,

Ordnance Survey will have a much clearer picture of the dialogue with its customers and stakeholders, and a much improved means of disseminating comment through the organisation to those responsible for any particular issue. Feedback will also be easier to manage.

- A single customer/partner/stakeholder conference, on a much larger scale than the current DG's Conference, to which all major customers, partners and stakeholders would be invited. (Plans are already under discussion for a potential conference before the end of 2001.)
- Better targeting of particular individuals and professional institutions/bodies for specific issues. Recent consultation for the DNF has followed this model.
- Feedback through account managers, retailers and partners. For markets where we supply products through third parties, Ordnance Survey has regular meetings with retailers and partners during which changing customer requirements and concerns are amongst issues discussed.
- Specific feedback direct to those who have made specific comments on issues of their particular interest. Recent examples include feedback on a one-to-one basis to those consulted as part of the e-business strategy development. Feedback needs to be given in a timely fashion, including progress reports where an issue cannot be resolved quickly.
- Specifically arranged seminars which address particular issues. Recent examples include seminars for the DNF and positional accuracy.
- Contact through Ordnance Survey presence at exhibitions and events. Most markets are addressed through some sort of exhibition and event attendance.
- Participation in formal market research programmes. This can often be as part of focus groups or one-to-one interviews. In some cases this will involve targeting specific individuals, in other cases a more representative sampling may be appropriate. The methodology would be determined by the objectives of the research.

## Market specific consultation

In addition, we would like to suggest possible opportunities for consultation specific to each existing consultative committee.

### RGSOSC

(Royal Geographical Society Ordnance Survey Education Committee)

Representing the education sector.

The Chairman endorses the benefits of changing from the current process.

Additional alternative possibilities for consultation:

- AGI Education Committee
- AGI GIS in School Education Special Interest Group (new)
- University Liaison Service (all universities)
- Digimap® User Group
- Nominated OS Liaison Officer for Royal Geographical Society
- Nominated OS Liaison Officer for Geographical Association
- Education Manager for specialist enquiries
- Periodic meetings at Chief Executive level
- Ordnance Survey representation on the RGS Education Committee
- A joint *Mapping in Education* conference every two years, held at RGS, bringing together producers and users ... 'in an active and deliberately wide ranging forum' ... (quote Dr Gardner)

Further education links could be established after market research.

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### BRICMICS (OS)

(British Committee for Map Information and Catalogue Systems, Ordnance Survey Committee)

Representing libraries and allied bodies concerned with mapping. Note that BRICMICS will continue with or without an Ordnance Survey presence.

The Chairman endorses the benefits of changing from the current process.

Additional alternative possibilities for consultation:

- Potential involvement in Ordnance Survey's new design laboratory.
- Direct links to Ordnance Survey product managers regarding specification changes, including opportunities to view proposed products as part of the market testing process.
- Stronger links to British Cartographic Society (BCS).
- Possible special interest group meetings along similar lines to existing meetings but with a more specific agenda and more appropriate Ordnance Survey representation (less formal, less frequent, and focused upon particular issues as they arise).

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## CCPR

(Central Council of Physical Recreation)

Organisations concerned with all aspects of recreation and sport, including the Ramblers Association, Open Spaces Society, Youth Hostels Association, Orienteering Federation, and National Trust.

The Chairman supports the proposal to change the focus of the group, but does not support disbanding it completely. He feels the group proves useful for Ordnance Survey to get to the recreation bodies. CCPR represents the only standing forum of all the principal national and governing bodies of sport concerned with outdoor recreation.

Additional alternative possibilities for consultation:

- Convert current consultative committee into a *recreation consultative forum*, with a more flexible, targeted consultation process.
- Develop a separate form to consider the needs of the more tourist elements, such as tourist authorities and commercial holiday operators.
- Potential involvement in Ordnance Survey's new design laboratory.
- Individual contact with special interest groups as appropriate.

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## SCPMU

(Standing Committee of Professional Map Users)

Representing the professions – surveyors, planners, engineers, lawyers and others.

The Chairman broadly endorses the proposals for change, and raised a number of significant issues.

Additional alternative possibilities for consultation:

- Stronger links with professional institutions (for example, RICS, RIBA).
- Encouragement for members to have dialogue with partners and agents.
- Encourage professionals to build stronger links with AGI, FIG (International Federation of Surveyors) and other similar bodies with whom Ordnance Survey has direct contact.
- Ordnance Survey involvement in continual professional development (CPD) programmes.

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## **LAOSC**

(Local Authorities Ordnance Survey Committee)

Represents local government and the requirements of local authorities.

The Chairman endorses the benefits of changing from the current process. A similar organisation is likely to continue, under a different name and with new terms of reference.

Additional alternative possibilities for consultation:

- SLA management committee
- Account managers and OSLOs
- OSLO seminars
- OSLO Newsletter

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## **NJUG**

(National Joint Utilities Group)

Represents utilities – gas, water, electricity and communications.

The Chairman endorses the benefits of changing from the current process.

Additional alternative possibilities for consultation:

- Account management
- Widen scope of GIS Consultative Committee
- Licence negotiations
- Utilities seminars

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## **NOOSC**

(National Organisations Ordnance Survey Committee)

Represents government departments, government agencies, statutory authorities and other similar national organisations.

The Chairman endorses the benefits of changing from the current process.

Additional alternative possibilities for consultation:

- Account management
- Government seminars
- Shows and exhibitions
- Customer group presentations
- Online on dedicated web sites
- Strategic Alliance proposals
- Project management boards
- SLA management

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All these proposals are open for discussion during the spring 2001 round of consultative committee meetings.

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