

**Meeting 8**  
**City Hall, London**

**04 February 2011**  
**10:30 – 15:45**

## **Summary of members service updates and progress**

### **Neighbourhood Statistics (NeSS)**

Since the last meeting the Neighbourhood Statistics Service (NeSS) has continued to make minor enhancements to the website. On 19th October, NeSS launched a new improved search engine following user feedback. Also, there have been improvements to the Middle Super Output Area (MSOA) Summaries.

NeSS has interactive maps in the Summaries for the first time, and MSOA data. There is also a new Business tab on the Neighbourhood Summaries

<http://neighbourhood.statistics.gov.uk/dissemination/Info.do?page=analysisandguidance/analysisarticles/business-topic-profile.htm>

In addition, NeSS has released new datasets on population estimates, adult mental health and child weight data.

Currently, NeSS is undergoing some substantial IM infrastructure updates - upgrading to Oracle 11g, moving from AIX to LINUX. This in preparation to move to the new web outthost supplier sometime in the Spring 2011.

NeSS is also moving to use the new GSS Naming and Coding hierarchy in the New Year. We are also working closely with our colleagues in the Web Development Programme (WDP) on the next phase of the development of the new ONS website.

Following a report by Shaw Trust, NeSS is planning to take forward recommendations to improve the accessibility of the website. Finally, following a penetration testing report, NeSS is also planning to take forward recommendations to improve the security of the website.

### **ONS Geography**

#### **PSMA**

The Public Sector Mapping Agreement will be implemented from 1st April 2011. This is a Crown-to-Crown agreement between the Department of Communities and Local Government (DCLG) and Ordnance Survey which will provide core geographic data to all of the public sector in England and Wales. ONSG are currently looking at the impacts this will have on our existing geographic data requirements and any licensing implications. ONSG have also been involved in web testing of the new Ordnance Survey website, in particular the extranet micro site for PSMA members.

### **Dissemination ONSG products**

OA boundaries – ONSG are still having ongoing discussions with Ordnance Survey with regards to having the Output Area boundaries being hosted on their OpenData website.

### ***National Statistics Lookup Directory and ONS Postcode Directory (formerly the National Statistics Postcode Directory)***

ONSG have created a new postcode product called the National Statistics Postcode Lookup (NSPL) to support the implementation of the NS Geography Policy. The NSPL is royalty free and will be launched at the end of February 2011 and quarterly thereafter. The new National Statistics Postcode Look-up (NSPL) relates over 2.5 million UK postcodes to output areas. These output areas are then related by a best-fit methodology to a wide range of administrative, health, electoral and other geographies.

The existing NSPD has been re-branded in name only as the ONS Postcode Directory (ONSPD) and continues in production. The methodology used by the NSPD has not changed. The NSPD is available as a royalty-free UK ONSPD 'Open' Product and as ONSPD Full PAF and Part PAF products which do incur Royal Mail royalties.

## **Policy**

### ***Geography Policy for National Statistics***

The Geography policy for National Statistics was approved by the July 2010 GSS RGC.

<http://www.ons.gov.uk/about-statistics/geography/policy/best-practice-guidance/geography-policy-for-national-statistics.pdf> .

The policy sets out the governing principles for how geographic information is used to produce and disseminate statistics, and has been adopted by the GSS to cover all national and official statistics. ONS Geography now has a full portfolio of products to support the policy, which includes the new coding and naming policy for statistical geographies, and the requirement to use OAs/SOAs as building bricks for producing statistics for higher level geographies, on a "best fit" basis. ONS Geography have been publicising the policy and driving the policy's implementation for all national statistics. GSS RGC members should be ensuring their national statistics producers are aware of the policy, and are implementing it.

### ***GSS Naming and Coding Policy***

In line with the Geography Policy for National Statistics the GSS Coding and Naming Policy for statistical geographies has been implemented. From 1st January 2011 statistical publications and exchanges of data that include codes should be in the nine character format.

The tools that support the policy are available on the ONS website. These include:

- Register of Geographic Codes (RGC) - a summary of the geographies affected
- Code History Database (CHD) - details of individual codes, relationships, hierarchies and archived data.
- Code History Database User Guide
- CHD Look-ups from new to former codes
- GSS Coding and Naming policy for statistical geographies
- Frequently asked questions

ONSG Geography (ONSG) has widely promoted the policy to ONS colleagues and other government departments in preparation for the change. ONSG will provide support, demonstrate the tools and discuss the policy with any areas that produce, publish or access geography-based statistical data.

***Output Geography Policy for 2011 Census***

The policy for maintaining the Output Areas and Super Output Area hierarchy, and other geography related outputs from the 2011 Census, was published at the start of February as part of the 2011 Census Outputs consultation. The public are invited to comment on the policy and the products that will be produced after the 2011 Census. As well as a maintained OA/SOA hierarchy, a new geography for workplace statistics, Workplace Zones, will be produced, which will nest within the new OA/SOA hierarchy.