## GEOGRAPHIC INFORMATION SYSTEMS (GIS)/INFORMATION MANAGEMENT OFFICER

**EXECUTIVE MEMBER:**     Cllr N Williams

**LEAD OFFICER:**     Hilary Mitchell

**REPORT AUTHOR:**     Hilary Mitchell

**Summary:**     This report seeks agreement of the Executive to funding an additional post to promote and develop the Council's work in an area of improving the way it does business.

| **Recommendations**: | 1) That the Executive agrees to appoint a GIS/Information Management officer for the remainder of 2006/7 at a maximum cost of £17,000; and<br>2)  That the post is added to the Council's permanent establishment. |
|---|---|

**Impact on delivering corporate objectives**     Several of the objectives in the Corporate Plan 2006/7 require capacity for improving processes through the delivery of IT systems which rely increasingly on GIS systems and improved management of information.

**Impact on other statutory objectives (eg Crime and Disorder and LA21 )**     GIS and Information Management would contribute to statutory objectives, such as e-enabled services, Crime and Disorder and Freedom of Information

**Financial and human resource implications**     If approved in for 2006/7 the maximum cost of the post at scp 36 would be £17 k, which could be taken from salaries underspend reserve of £22k.

**Project and Risk Management**     The risk of not filling this post is the Council's inability to improve its business processes, and incur penalties under the Mapping Services Agreement.

**Key Decision Status**
**Financial**     No
**Ward**     No
**Other ward implications?**     No

   **BACKGROUND**

1.  The completion of the IEG programme in April 2006 has not marked the end of the Council's responsibilities to develop its processes and services for increased efficiency, improved customer access and ability to join up with other agencies.  Although at present the only Government targets for this work are Gershon efficiency targets, nevertheless there are significant expectations that local authorities will continue to deliver e-enabled services, and to invest in improving processes.  There is a continuing drive nationally and regionally to ensure that local government exploits the benefits that technology can offer, in particular through a new Government Strategy "Transformational Government –Enabled By Technology".

2.  In Cumbria the Connected Cumbria Partnership is providing leadership in this area and through the Cumbria Information Hub all the Cumbrian authorities are making progress to allow customers access to information and local authority services, from wherever they log in.

3.  Copeland Borough Council invested nearly £1.9m in IT projects during the 4 years of IEG, from Government grants, and its own resources.  It achieved a measure of success in that 99% of the targets in the PI were achieved by the deadline, and most of the priority outcomes were met.  Beside the financial resources invested there has been a considerable investment of officer and member time in improvements in systems, such as MVM for Planning, Building Control, Environmental Health and Land Charges, website development to improve communication and e-enabled services and databases of spatial information for planning, land charges and address management. Geographical Information Systems are required to link to these databases for storing and displaying data.

4.  A temporary GIS Officer was able to support the initial set-up of the GIS requirements for these and other systems, but left at 31 March 2006.  This has meant that there has been no further development to the Council's GIS capability since then, although basic maintenance has been possible through the existing IT staff.

5.  The Council's service processes, among others, that require continuing development include:
    – GIS for Contact Central
    – GIS data loading for MVM
    – Internet mapping
    – Intranet support on PlanWeb for Planning staff
    – Monthly updates to Ordnance Survey on Positional Accuracy
    – Data Capture management
    – LLPG advice for new databases
    – Public protection information management for Environmental Health

6.  Besides process management GIS is also used to understand data better for projects and one off exercises and corporate policy development.  For example GIS can demonstrate where the enforcement service's activities most commonly occur so that littering, dog fouling or parking offences could be prevented or perpetrators caught through targeting resources.  The ability to use PlanWeb for a range on business activities, such as informing Council Tax staff about new properties, locating sites for visiting officers and ensuring that the Council can maximise NNDR or Council Tax collection would be enhanced by updated GIS.

7.  There is considerable activity in improving efficiency and customer access through

technology happening in Cumbria through the Connected Cumbria Partnership. Recently however development of the Cumbria Information Hub in Copeland has faltered due to this Council's lack of resource for joining up the Council's website to the hub.  In particular the lack of GIS knowledge and capacity has prevented the project from moving forward.  Although it is possible for Copeland to use some of the systems it has already bought and implemented, the full potential of the products will not be realised, and the investment will not bring the benefits that were envisaged.  In addition Copeland will be a source of delay and under-performance for other Cumbrian authorities.  A report from a recent meeting of the Connected Cumbria Partnership Strategic Board is attached for information.

8.  The Council currently has no capacity to manage information as a resource.  This is demonstrated by the lack of progress in record and document management, which is expected to support the Freedom of Information Act (FOI).  Although currently we have satisfied the enquiries we have had under the Act up till now, the Information Commissioner has said that a proactive approach to FOI requests is expected. Information management is the basis of being able to respond appropriately to FOI.  In addition the Council could expect to generate further efficiencies through a well-managed corporate information system, both paper and electronic.  The GIS/Information Management Officer would be involved in assessing the feasibility, procuring and implementing an Electronic Document and Record Management system, if this was felt to be appropriate.

## Options

The recommended option is to agree to the appointment of a permanent GIS/Information Management Officer for the reasons given above.

The alternative option is to decide not to create the post and take the risks inherent in not having this improvement capacity, and possible penalties for not being able to meet the standards of the Mapping Services Agreement.

## Conclusion

Since both GIS and record and document management require information management it is proposed to combine these activities in the one post and appoint a GIS/Information Management Officer.  The post would not be based in the IT team, but would be a corporate role in either Policy and Performance or Legal and Democratic Services.
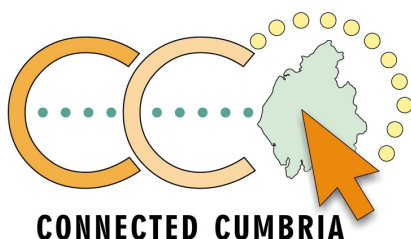
**Appendix A** -

Connected Cumbria Partnership Strategic Board – Report 19 July 2006

**List of Background Documents:**          "Transformational Government – Enabled by Technology"

**List of Consultees:**          Portfolio-holder for Resources and Local Democracy
Chair of IT Sub-Group
Corporate Team

**Appendix A**



CONNECTED CUMBRIA

# CONNECTED CUMBRIA PARTNERSHIP STRATEGIC BOARD

## Meeting date: 19th July 2006
## From: Cumbria GIS Officers Group

## GIS AND ADDRESS MANAGEMENT IN CUMBRIA

## Executive Summary

1.1     The use of Geographic Information and Address Management has increased significantly in the last few years. Geographic Information is now a rich and powerful source of intelligence for policy development, service planning, efficiency gains and funding bidding, and it crosses all areas of government.

1.2     Under the Mapping Services Agreement, councils now have a duty to maintain their Land & Property Gazetteers on an ongoing basis, to increasingly high standards, and to work more closely with internal departments and external partners.

1.3     There are noticeable differences across the county in the way that geographic information is used, maintained and resourced, and it is far from being exploited fully.

1.4     The paper describes the Importance and benefits of geographic information and the Land & Property Gazetteer, together with the resources required.


## 2.0   POLICY POSITION AND BUDGETARY IMPLICATIONS

2.1     Some authorities may require policy amendment or resource allocation.

2.2     There are no budgetary implications at this stage for the CCPSB, however financial implications may arise later to facilitate joined-up activities, to enable sharing of address or geographic information.


## 3.0   RECOMMENDATION

3.1     That the CCPSB considers the staffing structure outlined in the paper for their authority, together with the responsibilities for those posts.

3.2    The CCPSB support the co-operation activities listed, through both the GIS/LPG staff, and others at all levels in the authorities.

3.3    CCPSB make staff within their authorities aware of the importance of these issues, as outlined in this paper.


## 4.0    BACKGROUND

4.1    Geographic Information Systems have increased significantly in the last few years, both in their complexity, as well as the recognised benefits of deploying this technology, both in the public and private sectors.

4.2    The relevant partners have been implementing GIS and related systems from the early to mid 90s onwards. There are a number of systems in use, with varying levels of compatibility and incompatibility.

4.3    The Mapping Services Agreement, and the street naming and numbering process, place contractual and statutory duties on local authorities, as outlined in the attached paper.

4.4    Additionally, the use of GIS and the LPG has reached a sufficient level of maturity to require all authorities to put sufficient resources into this area for the reasons listed.

4.5    There is concern that not all authorities are resourcing this area adequately or to the same  extent. This will lead to them not reaping the benefits of GIS technology, nor from they and others benefiting from the two-way sharing of data. A single authority could therefore potentially hold all other agencies back from exploiting this technology, as well as on a national basis.

4.6    There is additional concern that not all authorities are maintaining their Land & Property Gazetteers to as high a standard as others. This will lead to themselves,  County-level agencies,  national agencies and utilities  failing to exploit the benefits of this data. These agencies will run into additional problems when the Street Naming & Numbering process becomes synchronised with the LPG, from Autumn 2006.


## 5.0    CONCLUSION

5.1    There are noticeable disparities both locally and nationally, between authorities in this area.

5.2    More resourcing is needed from some authorities to benefit from the potentials of this technology and to meet contractual and statutory duties.

5.3    Co-operation and data sharing between authorities is recognised by wide variety of staff as being of considerable benefit to all, however this is happening in an occasional and uncoordinated way.


## 6.0    APPENDICES

6.1    Attached Paper

# GIS and ADDRESS MANAGEMENT IN CUMBRIA

## What is GIS and Address Management

- **GIS**
  A range of desktop, browser and server products capable of viewing, editing or analysing Ordnance Survey and other geographically referenced datasets from internal departments partner agencies, and other, together with the significant attribute information associated with them. Ultimately everyone should have access to a GIS of some description, and its power and potential should make it a fundamental decision-making tool across each organisation.

- **Address Management**
  The processes involved with the development and maintenance of a single address dataset, which is geographically referenced, but can be deployed inside or outside a GIS. In this case it is the Land & Property Gazetteer (LPG), which includes the National Street Gazetteer (NSG). This must be promoted by all parties as the core address list, with all corporate address-based data linked to it, therefore creating joined-up working.

## Why

- **Contractual**
  Under the Mapping Services Agreement each authority has a contractual agreement to maintain, improve, update the hub and to use their Local Land and Property Gazetteer internally. To this end regular improvement schedules must be completed and agreed with IDEA. Failure to comply with requirements can lead to fines or the service being taken over by Intelligent Addressing, which would be much more expensive than the cost to run the service in the first place. Very tight copyright restrictions are also now in place that not only cover maps but address data as well. It is therefore important that control is exercised over the way in which address data is used and shared with others.

- **Statutory**
  Street Naming and numbering is a statutory duty for local authorities and recommended practice is to have close links to the NLPG custodian or for the custodian to undertake the role. This is due to it being synchronised by using the LPG as the sole distribution mechanism.

- **Efficiency**
  Joining up of internal departments (e.g. Planning & Building Control), automation of manual processes (e.g. Searches), linking departments together (e.g. into a CRM), targeting of resources (e.g. allocating social care staff to clients). This includes opportunities for savings required through Gershon.

- **Provision of more joined up services to stakeholders**
  By connecting various back office systems through the use of the NLPG and spatial systems, the customer can be provided with a much more seamless service. A CRM operator can instantly know information from all departments that affect the stakeholder. Even across differing authorities.

- Outside pressures e.g. Valuebill, other users of data
  Both specific and related eGovernment priority outcomes require use of GIS and the LPG, but there are also significant requirements from Pendleton, the Traffic Management Act, Children's Act, Valuebill and others. The NLPG is also now being adopted by many other outside agencies as well as parts of central government. As this carries on and gains momentum, more pressure will be placed on local authorities to ensure their gazetteer is as accurate and up to date as possible, with queries and question being directed at custodians from outside agencies.

- Not a finite job.
  There is a misapprehension surrounding the NLPG and GIS that once they are set up no further work is needed on them. This could not be further from the truth. The NLPG once set up needs constant maintenance, to account for new properties, sub-divisions, demolished properties, and other improvements such as extents. GIS is similar in that changes are constantly happening to software, base maps and accuracy improvements which can affect all existing data. These are all constant ongoing tasks, which are increasing in their complexity, as well as having an increasing number of staff and departments using the technology.

## Staffing Structure

It is strongly recommended that all authorities set up an address and spatial information team within their authority. The team should consist of a minimum of 2 permanent staff (One manager and one technician). The team will be responsible for the following functions.

- GIS and Spatial Information including data capture, support to staff, and receipt of data from partners and external agencies,
- Authority Liaison Officer (In respect of the Mapping Services Agreement) including the receipt, manipulation and delivery of data under the MSA, and ensuring compliance with the MSA contract.
- National Land and Property Gazetteer Custodian (National Street Gazetteer Custodian in the case of County Council)
- Street Naming and Numbering
- Implementation and Development of corporate GIS and LPG systems.
- Provision of Maps and Address Products, and multi-agency business data to support emergency planning functions.
- IT Systems. Implementation and development of GIS and Gazetteer systems, to meet both internal and national requirements and linking in of internal systems.
- Public access to GIS data

## Co-operation

- GIS Group
  The current Cumbria GIS and NLPG group should be put onto a more formal basis and tasked with building an informal partnership to help promote and use spatial and address based information within the county.
- Shared expertise/resources

Where an authority is unable to fund/find a full team it may be possible for neighbouring authorities to assist with some small areas of the workload to enable the authority to progress with the use of spatial and address information. For instance a neighbouring authority may be able to run/host web based mapping for another authority. Some staff may also have expertise in certain areas that would be beneficial to other authorities. Staff should be able to give over time to assist/undertake work for authorities where they are better placed to carry out that work.

- Sharing of information

  A vast amount of data exists within the districts, county-level, and national agencies. The data could be used much more widely than at present, to effectively and efficiently allocate resources, review services and prepare funding bids. GIS and geographically-referenced addressing are the only mechanisms in which this can be achieved to their full potential.

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