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English only

**Eighth United Nations Conference on the
Standardization of Geographical Names**

Berlin, 27 August-5 September 2002

Item 4 of the provisional agenda*

**Reports by Governments on the situation in their
countries and on the progress made in the
standardization of geographical names since
the Seventh Conference**

Report of the United Kingdom

Submitted by the United Kingdom**

* E/CONF.94/1.

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ADMINISTRATIVE RESTRUCTURING

The major administrative restructuring of the United Kingdom, which had been taking place over the last five years, has now been completed.

The Report of the United Kingdom to the Seventh United Nations Conference on the Standardization of Geographical Names (working paper E/CONF.91/INF/17) noted the completion of the restructuring of local government in Scotland and Wales. Wales now comprises 22 unitary authorities (11 Counties and 11 County Boroughs), the names of which are official in both English and Welsh. Scotland has 32 unitary authorities, known as Council Areas.

As of April 1 1998, the administrative restructuring of England was also completed, as detailed in the Report of the United Kingdom Division to UNGEGN 20 (Working Paper No 13). There are now 149 first-order administrative divisions in England. Of these, 115 are unitary authorities of a single-tier structure, and 34 are counties, which are two-tier structures sub-divided into districts.

Recently, there has been some discussion in England of a new reorganisation. The UK Government has published a White Paper entitled *Your Region Your Choice: Revitalising the English Regions* which describes proposals for a new administrative set-up comprising eight regions (outside Greater London) to be run by regional assemblies.

This project, however, is still very much in the initial stages. A Bill has yet to be passed through Parliament, which would allow a referendum to take place in each of the proposed regions to determine whether the local population would be in favour of a regional assembly. If the reorganisation is approved, the first changes are unlikely to be in place until at least 2007.

ORDNANCE SURVEY – THE UK NATIONAL MAPPING AGENCY

Ordnance Survey (OS) <www.ordnancesurvey.gov.uk> is the national mapping agency of Great Britain and as such is responsible for collecting geographical names information for portrayal on national maps. The Ordnance Survey of Northern Ireland (OSNI) <www.osni.gov.uk> performs a similar function in Northern Ireland.

OS MAP AND GAZETTEER PRODUCTS

Ordnance Survey's recent focus has been on improving its range of digital products, in both raster and vector formats, concentrating particularly on locational information. Over the past few years, Ordnance Survey has developed a database, the Digital National Framework™, the initial data for which was derived from the three basic-scale series of 1:1,250, 1:2,500 and 1:10,000. The output product from this is the new digital map of Great Britain, the OS MasterMap™, launched in November 2001. OS aims eventually to create all their products from the MasterMap™ which is the most detailed mapping of the UK ever produced.

In addition to its range of very detailed large-scale map products, OS is also developing its 1:50,000 scale and 1:250,000 scale Colour Raster products. Vector products which contain geographical names as a specific layer include the Strategi® digital map product and Meridian™ 2. The latter is

available in two themes, communication (containing administrative areas) and topographic (including geographical names).

New series of 1:25,000 scale Explorer maps and 1:250,000 scale Road maps are being introduced and work continues on the revision of the standard 1:50,000 Landranger series and its related gazetteer. Updated annually, this gazetteer is the most comprehensive gazetteer of British place names ever published in both book and digital form.

OS NAMES POLICY

Names information is updated in the course of map sheet revision. Advice on the appropriate spelling of a name is sought from local authorities and other reliable organisations and individuals. Common local usage, preservation of historical form, and the current relevant language for the name are all factors taken into account before a name is committed to a map sheet.

In 1998/99, Ordnance Survey undertook a review of its policy with regard to the collection of geographical names and their depiction on its products. This review resulted in the drafting of a specific policy for the treatment of Gaelic names in Scotland and further consideration of the use of Welsh in OS products. Recommendations were made to ensure proper identification of authoritative sources for the collection of names information and to encourage the consistency of spelling of names across all OS products.

In July 2001 Ordnance Survey published its Welsh Language Scheme which advocates further collection in Wales of Welsh-language names to be used alongside English forms. A Gaelic Names policy, also recently drawn up by OS, requires the collection of Gaelic spellings of place names in Scotland from authoritative sources and, where Gaelic forms are found to be in common use, to ensure their consistent application on each of its map products.
