Consultation Questionnaire

Please note, all responses to the consultation will be made public.

When answering questions, please continue writing on a separate sheet where necessary.

A.   About you

What is your name?   Dr Barry Leventhal

Which of the following best describes the organisation that you represent?
[please tick one box only]

No organisation (member of the public)	☐ →	Go to question 1
Central government	☐	
Local government & partner organisations	☐	
Government statistical agency	☐	
Neighbourhood renewal	☐	
Academia	☐	
Commercial sector	☒	
Community group	☐	
Health sector	☐	
Other	☐ →	Please specify

What is the name of your organisation? Market Research Society – Census and Geodemographics Group (MRS CGG)

Are you willing for ONS to contact you to explore your answers further?

Yes   No

If yes: Telephone   020 8905 2634

                Email   barry@barryanalytics.com

                Address   9 Markham Close, Borehamwood WD6 4PQ

B.   Policy and Design
Please circle your response (1-5)

1.   The Requirement for Workplace Zones
Please refer to the Topic Notes on page 21

1.1   There would be value in establishing a small area geography, by splitting and
         merging existing OAs, for reporting workplace data.

Disagree strongly -	1	2	3	4	**5**	- Agree strongly

Please note any further comments including, if applicable, details of the
benefits that such a geography would bring to you.

The analysis of where people regularly go through the day (especially
because of workplace) is fundamental to the proper provision of services by
both the public and private sector. It is vital to realise that this is an
additional geography and in no way replaces the need for residential counts
and the main requirement remains for OA counts.

Ideally if at all possible this should be a UK dataset.

1.2

Those OA's with very large numbers of workers should be divided into
smaller areas e.g. City of London, whilst areas with few workers should be
merged. In some restricted cases it is possible that suppression may be better
than mergers but if this were to be pursued then research to support this
would be required

Disclosure control should only be a consideration for worker confidentiality,
protecting workplace identity would greatly reduce the utility of the data, as
any large employer would 'disappear' e.g. Boots in Nottingham.

Given the wide use of LSOAs this seems to be a natural and preferred choice
for constraining aggregation of postcodes in workplace zones.

Issues may arise with LSOA boundaries cutting through workplaces, or in
cases where an entire LSOA is still below the threshold.

1.3　　On what variables (age, gender, qualification level, etc.) should a workplace geography report on? (details are included on page 21 of the Topic Notes)

In general more detailed univariate counts would be more favourable than simplistic cross-tabs.

These counts will also be very valuable when applied to flow information which whilst of use to the commercial sector will also greatly help the public sector e.g. transport planners, DfT etc.

We would probably view age, gender, industry, occupation, approximate social grade and means of travel to work as the key variables for workplace zones.

It is important to distinguish the requirements for standard tabular output for workplace zones from requirements for origin-destination statistics, with the hope that neither of these requirements should have an adverse impact on the other. We would expect trip matrix data to be inevitably less detailed than workplace area statistics because of disclosure control constraints, but it should not have to be further degraded as a result of decisions taken, say, about the geography for workplace area statistics.

1.4

The key measure to be applied is utility of output data, which depends upon good geographical resolution combined with a controlled level of distortion in the data as discussed above.

It should be recognised that there are a range of distinct uses of workplace area statistics and origin-destination statistics

1.5　　Please list any additional requirements you may have for a workplace geography such as those listed on page 21.

Disclosure control will inevitably have a major impact on this geography, we would prefer to see smaller areas with greater detail in univariate tables than having to have larger geographies with crosstabs to satisfy disclosure requirements.

2.   The need for an Upper Layer Super Output Area

Please refer to the topic notes on page 22

2.1   There would be value in establishing a Nationally agreed set of Upper Layer SOAs.

Disagree strongly -	**1**	2	3	4	5	- Agree strongly

Please note any further comments including, if applicable, details of the benefits that a national set of Upper Layer SOAs would bring.

This high level of data provides no extra value as it is at far too high a level to provide useful discrimination. If however others have use for this we have no objection to its provision

2.2   There would be value in letting local authorities create their own Upper Layer SOAs to meet their own requirements.

Disagree strongly -	1	2	3	4	5	- Agree strongly

Please note any further comments.

2.3   If a national set of Upper Layer SOAs are produced, what considerations should ONS make when designing them?

3. Output Areas and Super Output Areas unfit for purpose

Please refer to the Topic Notes on page 23.

3.1   Please provide details of any OAs/SOAs that meet the criteria outlined within the Topic Notes for being a candidate for redesign. Please provide, as a minimum, the OA/SOA code together with an explanation of why the OA/SOA cannot currently be used, and what statistical benefits of realigning the boundary would produce. Accompanying maps [on a separate sheet] and further details that may support an application are invited.

In general it is felt that any changes carried out as a result of this exercise should be kept to a minimum and to where there is an obvious 'error' and not be allowed to be changed simply to fit into any local geo-political requirements. The greater the change, the greater the reduction in the statistical value of having a systematic and objective method of OA creation.

As a general point it is important that sufficient thought is given to the supporting files and information that shows how the new (2011) and old (2001) output areas relate to one another and other administrative areas. This would need to be done at postcode level which in itself is an approximation, or better still at address level, given the work done to produce a comprehensive address list for the 2011 census.

4 Numbers consistent with Section 3 'Output Geography Policy for 2011 Census'

1. When a stable geography was agreed upon, there was it was said an expectation that any changes in geography would be no greater than 5%. Somehow this has now become a goal, rather than just an outcome which is possibly skewing the decision making process. It should remain as an outcome and not be an objective in its own right.

   The CGG, representing users of UK wide sets of small area statistics, needs consistency and minimal variability in small area geography as a whole. Its view is that the only modification of 2001 OAs should be amalgamation or subdivision where population change necessitates.

   Although the 2001 OAs were not originally created for long term stability - no criteria were introduced for this purpose - they were created in an automated, objective and systematic way which significantly reduced variability inherent in Census Enumeration Districts and gave OAs their statistical value.

   The CGG view is that the 2001 methods could not be replicated in a piecemeal way in response to what are very likely to be selective and inconsistent local requests to modify 'under performing" OAs and that there would be a definite risk of increasing between OA variability, which could be detrimental to national analyses such as area classifications.

   We also feel that too much emphasis is given to the 'naturalness' of OA boundaries. These, and the shapes of OAs, largely reflect the underlying physical pattern of residential addresses together with the layout of postcodes which are a fundamental aspect of the creation and us OAs. There are no hard and fast means of deciding that an OA is 'unnatural' and any attempts to do so would further diminish objectivity.

   Therefore the CGG is strongly in favour of minimal change in the interests of national consistency, maintaining statistical value, and of course usefulness for time series

2. Communal OA's. The provision of these would enhance the data where applicable (a relatively small number of OA's). Allowing them by amending Disclosure Control rules would be easy and not disclosive of individuals. Should not be turned down because of the 5% rule (see above) and failure to provide is a missed opportunity.

3. Align boundaries to L.A.'s – agree

4. Not align to Wards – tend to agree as given the level of changes in wards would be out of date virtually immediately.

5. Not align to real world features – agree

6. No unpopulated OA's – agree

7. Boundaries to remain freely available – strongly agree, and also wish issues for VAR's to be resolved.

8. Align Scotland \ England boundaries – agree

9. Provide additional mean high water boundaries – agree
10. Coding of OA's & SOA's to new coding convention - agree