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**Chair of the UK Statistics Authority, Sir Michael Scholar KCB**

Rt. Hon. John Healey MP  
Minister of State for Housing and Planning  
Department for Communities and Local Government  
Eland House  
Bressenden Place  
London  
SW1E 5DU

25 September 2009

Dear Minister

**ESTABLISHING A NATIONAL ADDRESS REGISTER**

In my letter to you of 8 July, I set out the case for tackling afresh the obstacles that got in the way of earlier initiatives to establish a National Address Register.

I noted in that letter the substantial investment that the Office for National Statistics is making in the development of a special one-off register that it needs for the 2011 Census. This expenditure is a direct consequence of inadequate address data being available from existing sources. Unless government departments take steps to build on the ONS work, this one-off register will almost immediately become out of date.

The raw information on address comes mainly from the Royal Mail, Ordnance Survey and local government administrative records. It is these bodies, and the government departments that have responsibility for them, that would need to make the running on any new initiative. ONS would not be in a position to maintain a register in the longer term.

My letter prompted a number of supportive letters and statements including ones from the Chair of the Public Administration Select Committee, the Royal Statistical Society, the Improvement and Development Agency, Ordnance Survey and the Association of Regional Observatories. Both Sir Rob Margetts, on behalf of Ordnance Survey and Councillor Ian Swithenbank, on behalf of IDeA, strongly supported the need for a central government initiative to resolve the obstacles at this time.


I have not heard any voice raised against the proposal although there is clearly still some uncertainty as to the possible costs associated with a resolution of this issue.

In that context, I would simply reiterate that we firmly believe that government departments including the Office for National Statistics, local authorities, public services, emergency services, utilities, voluntary and commercial bodies would all benefit directly from savings in not having to deal day-to-day with problems created by incomplete and conflicting address data. That is a most substantial body of benefits to be set against the possible costs.

If the UK Statistics Authority can contribute to the preparation or examination of a full business case we would be happy to do so.

I am copying this letter as my original one.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Michael Scholar". The signature is written in a cursive style with a clear, legible font.

**Sir Michael Scholar KCB**