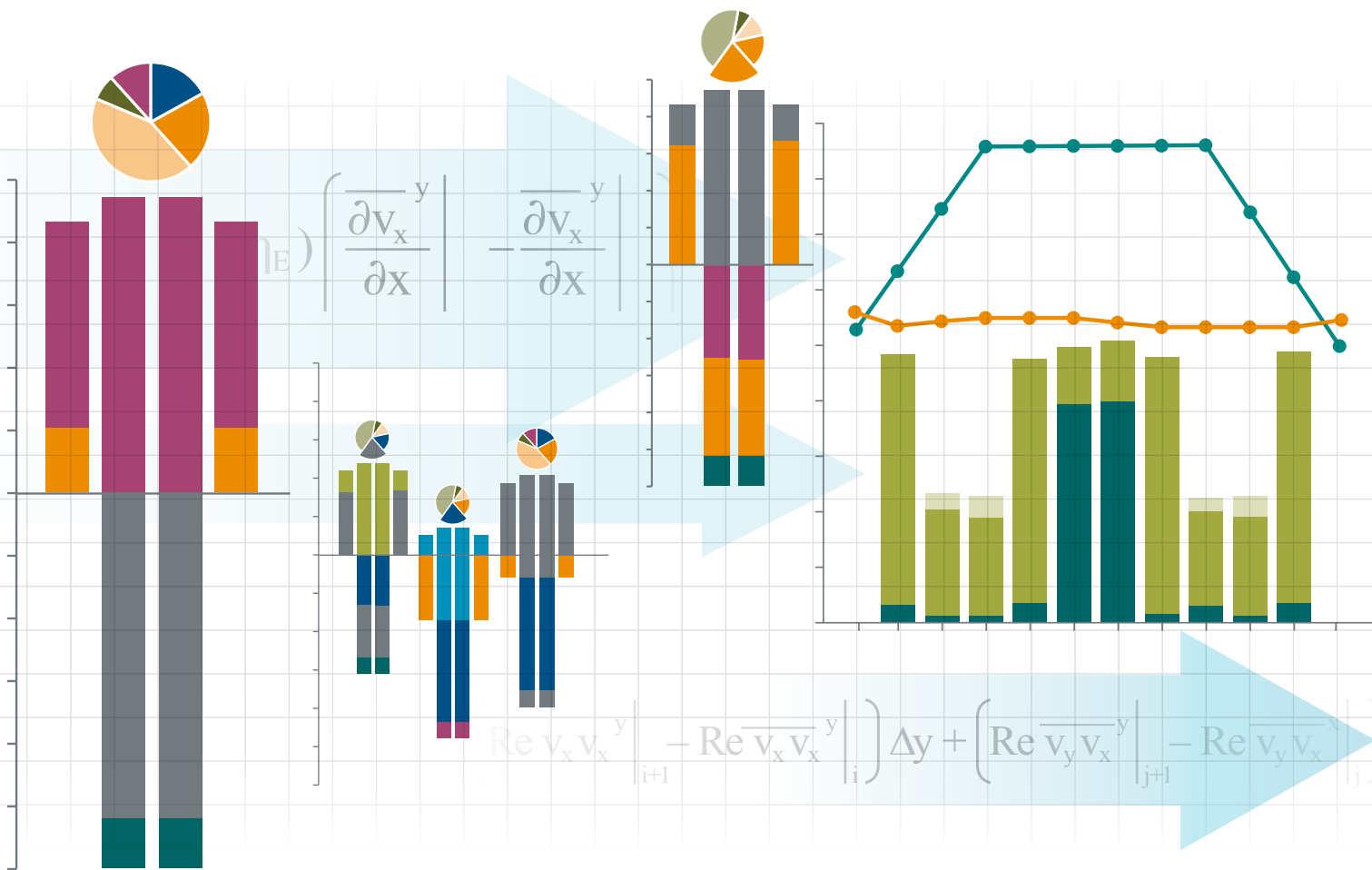


# EVIDENCE AND INNOVATION STRATEGY

## 2010-2012



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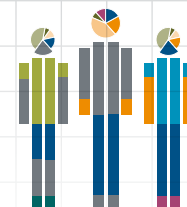
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# Introduction

This strategy sets out a vision for the way we procure, use and deliver cutting edge and world class evidence and analysis. It provides a framework for analysts, scientists, policy makers and external research partners. It sets out the innovative analysis that has underpinned our policy development and delivery and it points to our ambitions to further improve and build on our effectiveness so that we meet the policy priorities over the next two years. This strategy will link up with and support the delivery of the Department's business plan and objectives to be developed in the months ahead.

## What we are doing well

### We are:

- Using more innovative analytical techniques to understand the nature of the complex policy challenges we face; to underpin effective policy options and reliably measure the impact and success that our policies have for society and its members.
- Setting clearer priorities, targeting resources on critical areas of work to achieve more effective results and better value for money.
- Building up a robust evidence base on our policy areas, improving access to these data, increasing user groups and among analysts in the Department and those who work with us.
- Developing a roadmap to help us meet the challenges of tighter resources and more ambitious objectives over the coming months and years. This analytical framework is a fundamental step to help the Department act in a more flexible, resilient and efficient way to respond effectively to emerging priorities.
- Developing more effective relationships with analysts and scientists across Whitehall to encourage more exchange of ideas, more collaboration with a view to achieve better value for money, adding value to each others' work and sharing the knowledge from our research and analytical work.
- Building closer links with the research community, including the research councils and Technology Strategy Board, to build capacity in our priority areas and maximise our outcomes from our collective analytical and research resources.

## Preparing for the challenges ahead

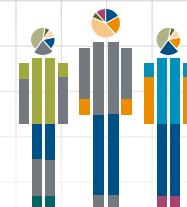
The policy landscape is in a process of major change. The challenges ahead will require us to be flexible, efficient and creative in how we address persistent and new policy issues. This will mean making sure that the outcomes and impacts from our programmes of research, data collection and analysis are cutting edge and effectively used in policy development.

Working with even tighter resources will require all analysts and scientists within the Department to coordinate and collaborate our activities; to ensure that our policy development process is underpinned by the best research, evidence and analysis.

We will monitor the effectiveness of this strategy and its actions over the course of the next two years, reviewing our objectives and the processes we have introduced to meet them. We will monitor the impacts from this work for policy development, value for money, building the evidence base and increasing capacity both in and outside of CLG to mine and use this evidence effectively.

We will need to be more innovative in the way we design and commission our research, evidence and analysis, how we use our resources and cascade that knowledge to support the development of more effective and efficient policy outcomes.

To encourage greater innovation, we will be promoting the use of the latest methodologies and analytical techniques, closer multi-disciplinary working among analysts and scientists in CLG and with our research partners, and the research councils and boards. Through our analytical framework and governance arrangements our heads of analytical and scientific professions will scrutinise the quality of our evidence base, and ensure its robustness to support the development and delivery of innovative policies.



# Our analytical framework

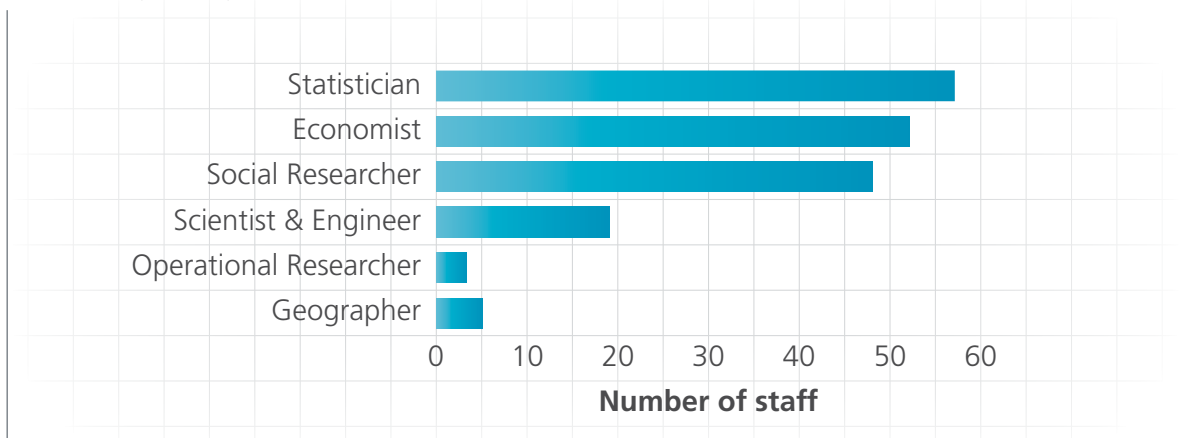
**Our Aim:** We will provide Ministers and policy makers with the latest, robust evidence to develop and deliver policies with real and lasting benefits for society.

To do this:

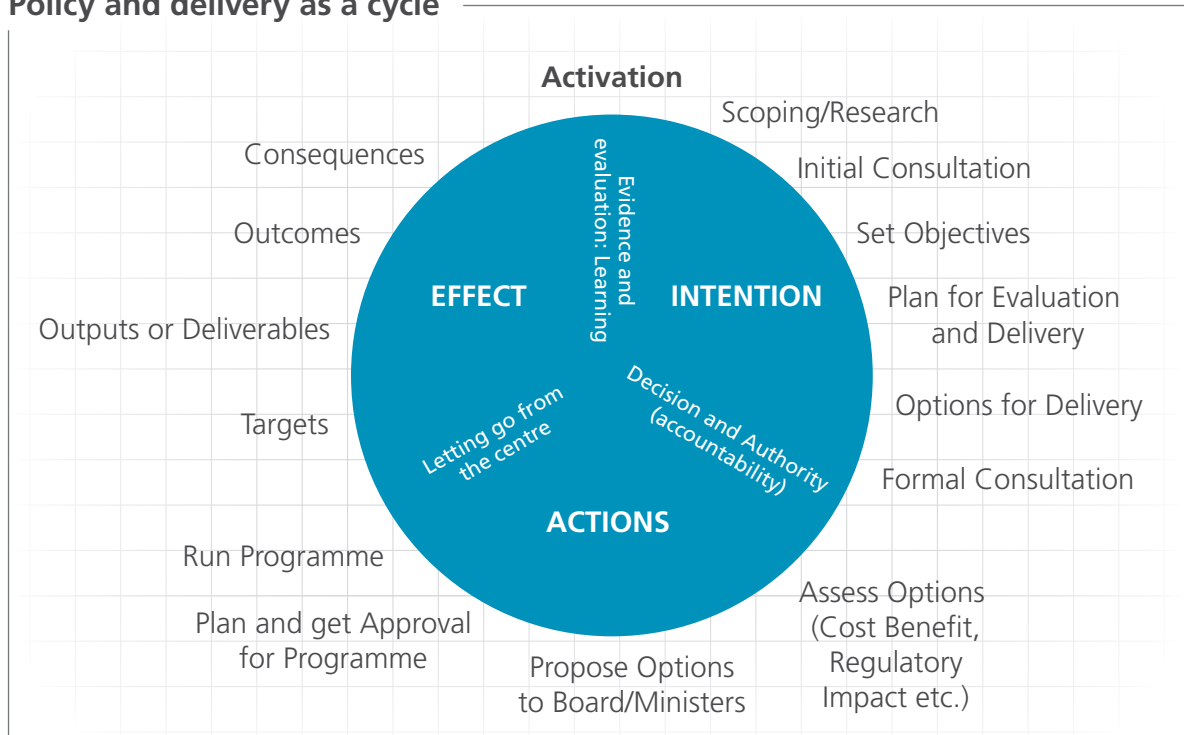
- We follow the underlying **principles** of *value for money, clearer priority setting, greater transparency* in the formulation of our research programme and exercise **scrutiny** of our new and existing programmes of research and analysis to ensure critical needs are being met.
- We pull together the collective expertise and knowledge of all our analytical professions as well as seeking more opportunities to work collaboratively with analysts and scientists across Whitehall and in the wider research and academic community.
- We have developed a **roadmap** and associated **infrastructure** to identify, plan and deliver our evidence and analysis requirements, over the next two years. The roadmap sets out the processes and principles of how we identify, prioritise, commission and deliver our research and analysis requirements to deliver the key aim.

**Driving the process are our analysts and scientists.** We have 184 analysts and scientists employed in CLG, comprising about 8 per cent of the workforce from a range of professions and disciplines. Collectively these researchers and analysts bring together their skills and expertise to inform the procurement, delivery and dissemination of the best analysis for use by policy makers and Ministers. Working to the highest professional standards we strive to be ever more effective in making the best of existing resources, getting the best value for public money, and placing the evidence and analysis we generate at the heart of the policy making process.

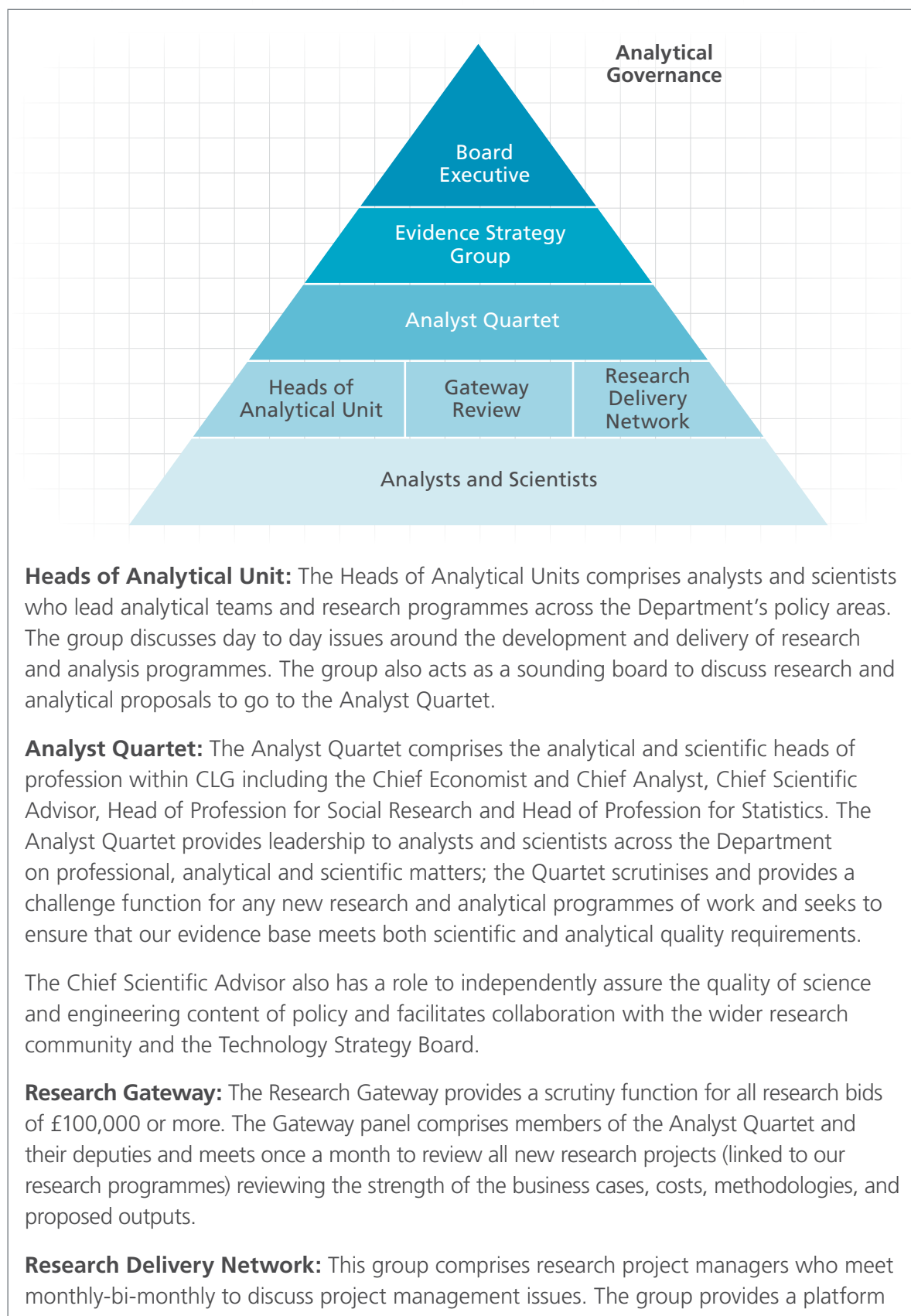
**CLG analysts by profession**



**Policy and delivery as a cycle**



**Our analytical framework provides a research and evidence roadmap** enabling us to identify the evidence gaps across the Department and a timely, prioritised agenda to shape our analytical and research activities. Our analytical governance arrangements have been organised to support the implementation of the analytical framework.





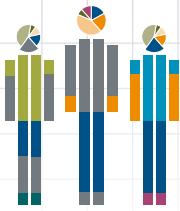
to exchange knowledge and good practice in the design and commissioning of new research and analysis.

**Evidence Strategy Group:** The Evidence Strategy Group is a sub-group of the CLG Board Executive. It sets the strategic direction and priorities for research and analysis and makes decisions on resources. It comprises Directors and Directors General from across the Department's Policy, Strategic and Corporate business areas. The Group meets quarterly to review priorities and resources, to raise the profile of research and analysis across the Department.

Our analytical framework links the following steps in the formulation and delivery of research, evidence and analysis together:

- **Timely and joined up business planning rounds:** Policy, analyst and scientific colleagues working together and with their stakeholders to identify evidence gaps, prioritise evidence requirements and proposing new or additional analytical and research work to meet Ministerial objectives.
- **Early scrutiny of the research programmes by senior analysts in and outside of the Department:** Our senior analysts, heads of analytical and scientific professions and external analysts assess and challenge draft research programmes for their internal validity, prioritisation, value-for-money and relative impact on meeting our business needs.
- **High level review of the Department's Research Programme for consistency and proportionality:** Our Evidence Strategy Group – a subgroup of the Board comprising Directors and Directors General from across the Department – review the overall content, cost and balance of the research programmes delivery across the financial year and linked to our business priorities.
- **Clearance by Ministers:** Throughout the process we engage with Ministers and their teams to ensure that our programme of research, evidence and analysis meets their requirements and provides robust evidence to inform effective and efficient policies that generate real benefits for societies.
- **Delivering the research programmes:** Through our research programme newsletters we communicate our proposed research programmes to colleagues outside of the Department to invite tenders from the widest range of experienced and skilled research communities.
- **Scrutinising the quality of individual research projects:** Throughout the financial year, the individual research programmes are monitored for spend and delivery to ensure that the evidence requirements are delivered on time and to budget. Individual projects estimated at over £100K are scrutinised by a gateway review team comprising heads of analytical profession together with procurement specialists, ensuring the design, cost and outputs are fit for purpose and offer the best possible value for money.

- **Consistency and value for money in our procurement:** Our procurement teams are trying to achieve greater value for money and consistency in the ways we procure new research and analysis, providing greater visibility of spend, widening the pool of providers to increase innovation and offering overall better value for money through category management.
- **Supporting Project Managers – through the Research Delivery Network:** Project managers, together with procurement colleagues meet on a regular basis to provide each other with practical advice and support during the delivery phase to keep work on track.
- **Transfer of knowledge:** Through a range of platforms: publications, seminars, workshops and briefings with policy and delivery teams the evidence base is shared and made accessible to colleagues within and stakeholders outside the Department.
- **Ongoing review of research priorities:** Throughout the financial year we constantly monitor the progress with delivery and assess the priorities of our projects.



# Data and statistics

**Our Aim:** To maintain and improve the robustness, integrity and impartiality of our statistics and data sets. We will ensure that our data acquisition, handling and dissemination is inline with legislation while simultaneously providing user-friendly, reliable and accurate outputs and releases to inform new and monitor performance of existing policies.

The Department holds a wide variety of statistical datasets, databases and administrative sources covering housing, local government finance, fire and cohesion. These are integral to our policy development and delivery as well as for the measurement and monitoring of performance. Using these sources the Department produces national and official statistical outputs at quarterly, annual and other intervals and the tables below show the current data releases and their respective frequencies over the course of the year.

National Statistical Releases	Frequency
Citizenship Survey	Quarterly
Citizenship Survey: Community Cohesion Topic Report	Quarterly
Citizenship Survey: Empowered Communities Topic Report	Annually
Citizenship Survey: Identity and Values Topic Report	Annually
Citizenship Survey: Race, Religion and Equalities Report	Annually
Citizenship Survey: Volunteering and Charitable Giving Topic Report	Annually
Commercial and Industrial Floorspace and Rateable Value Statistics	Annual
Development Control Statistics: England	Annual
English Housing Survey	Annual
Fire Statistics Monitor	Quarterly
Fire Statistics, United Kingdom	Annual
Green Belt Statistics: England	Annual
House Building	Quarterly
Housing and Planning Statistics	Annual
Housing Statistics Summary: Mid-year Household Estimates	Biennial
Land Use Change Statistics England	Quarterly
Local Authority Capital Expenditure and Receipts: England Final Outturn	Annual

National Statistical Releases	Frequency
Local Authority Capital Expenditure and Receipts: England Forecast	Annual
Local Authority Capital Expenditure and Receipts: England Provisional Outturn	Annual
Local Authority Capital Expenditure and Receipts: England Second Provisional Outturn	Annual
Local Authority Revenue Expenditure and Financing: England Budget	Annual
Local Authority Revenue Expenditure and Financing: England Final Outturn	Annual
Local Authority Revenue Expenditure and Financing: England Provisional Outturn	Annual
Local Government Financial Statistics	Annual
Local Government Key Facts Card: England	Annual
Planning Applications	Quarterly
Projections of Households in England	Biennial
Projections of Households in England (detailed information)	Biennial
Statutory Homelessness Statistics	Quarterly

Official Statistical Releases	Frequency
Baseline for DSO Indicators 2.10 and 2.11 (Supporting People)	Annually
Best Value Performance Indicators for the Fire and Rescue Service	Ad Hoc
Capital Forecast return	Annually
Capital Payments and Receipts (Live tables)	Ad Hoc
Collection Rates for Council Tax and Non Domestic Rates - England	Annually
Count of Gypsy and Traveller Caravans	Biannually
Dwelling stock for England	Annually
Employment rate gap between deprived and non-deprived neighbourhoods	Quarterly
English House Condition Survey 2007. Last in annual series (replaced by EHS)	Annual
English Housing Survey 2008-09 Headline Report. First in annual series	Annual
Extent of retail development taking place in England	Annually
Fifteen years of the Survey of English Housing	Ad hoc
Fire and Rescue Service Operational Statistics	Annually
Fires in the Home: Findings from the English Housing Survey	Triennially
Five Year Land Supply for Housing, England	Annually

Official Statistical Releases	Frequency
Gross Affordable Housing Supply	Annually
Homelessness Prevention and Relief	Ad Hoc
House Price Index	Monthly
Housing and Planning Key Facts	Quarterly
Levels of Council Tax set by Local Authorities: England	Annually
Life expectancy at birth	Annually
Local Authority Council Taxbase: England	Annually
Local Authority Housing Statistics: Housing Strategy Statistical Appendix (HSSA) and Business Plan Statistical Appendix (BPSA)	Annually
Local Government Pension Scheme Funds: England	Annually
Mortgage Rescue Scheme Monitoring Statistics	Quarterly
National Non-Domestic Rates collected: England	Annually
National Non-Domestic Rates to be collected: England	Annually
Net Supply of Housing for England and the Regions	Annually
Percentage change in the employment rate in Primary Urban Areas	Annually
Place Survey	Biennially
Quarterly Capital Payments	Quarterly
Release of data for DSO indicator 3.5	Ad Hoc
Rough Sleeping - Total Street Count	Annually
Social Housing Sales (Council House Sales)	Annually
Social Lettings Tables - adjusted for missing local authority landlord data	Ad Hoc
State of Cities Database	Ad Hoc
Supporting People - Quarterly Client Records and Outcomes	Quarterly

We are constantly identifying new and innovative ways to increase access among the public and external research/analyst/scientist community to use our statistical outputs and our databases.

In 2008 the **Places database** was re-launched. [www.places.communities.gov.uk/](http://www.places.communities.gov.uk/) It brings together a wide range of evidence around the concept of 'place'. It is a shared resource which directly supports policy officials, analysts, scientists and our external partners/ stakeholders in their evidence-based policy making.

In February 2009 the **Places Analysis Tool** was launched, which provides useful, simple to use outputs for regions, local strategic partnerships based on the National Indicator Set. This includes time series, charts, tables and thematic map outputs.

We are working with the Cabinet Office on our contribution to Making Public Data Public (described further on page 19). The key aim is to facilitate and encourage more efficient data sharing across systems and organisational boundaries. In particular, we shall be opening up access to the Places database so it can inter-operate with other third-party systems.

## The introduction of the 2007 Statistics and Registration Act has major implications for our data management and publication

The UK Statistics Authority (UKSA)(formerly the Statistics Board) was established through the **Statistics and Registration Service Act 2007** and gave the Authority the power to determine a Code of Practice, with a statutory duty to promote and safeguard the production and publication of official statistics that serve the public good; and the quality and comprehensiveness of, and good practice in relation to, official statistics across the UK, alongside specific powers to assess the compliance of official statistics against that Code. In January 2009 the Authority published the Code of Practice for Official Statistics against which the UKSA will independently assess all National Statistics. In addition, the Authority will assess any Official Statistics that are either submitted by Departments or that the Authority feels need to be assessed.

The Department currently has 23 National and five Official Statistics due to be assessed between now and 2012. If these statistics are assessed and found to be compliant with the Code they will be (re)designated as National Statistics. The Department is required to ensure that the Code continues to be observed in relation to its National Statistics. As a result the National Statistics need to be compliant with all aspects of the Code:

- Meeting user needs
- Impartiality and objectivity
- Integrity
- Sound methods and assured quality
- Confidentiality
- Proportionate burden
- Resources (adequate and appropriate)
- Frankness and accessibility
- User engagement
- Release practices
- The use of administrative sources for statistical purposes

Though it is not a formal requirement for other official statistics to comply with the Code it is seen as good practice. In addition to this, the UK Statistics Authority can ask to assess any National or Official Statistics against the code at anytime. The Department aims to ensure that its official statistics outputs also comply with the code.

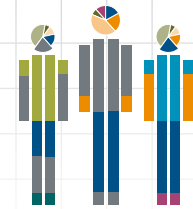
## Our plans for further progress in these areas over the next couple of years

The Department has a number of National and Official Statistics awaiting assessment by the UKSA up until 2012. The Department is continuing to work towards ensuring official statistics comply with the Code of Practice as far as possible and will continue to seek National Statistics status for those releases believed to be fully compliant.

There is currently a Housing 'shop-window' under development on the Places database. This will provide a single site for accessing local area housing and planning data and provide the tools for running user-defined analysis, including time series, area comparisons, mapping and the ability to analysis across themes.

The Enhanced Local Government Accruals and Reporting (ELGAR) project will introduce a new data collection system for Local Government Finance data that will provide better quality, more efficient data for analysis.

We are working to ensure that we deliver our surveys and statistical outputs more efficiently, and with some savings.



# Externally commissioned research and in-house analysis

**Our Aim:** To provide Ministers and policy makers with the latest, world-class research, commissioned from experts, combined with the bespoke analysis and interpretation of data by our in-house analysts and scientists. We will ensure that our commissioned research supports new and innovative ways to understand how best to address policy priorities, providing practical and insightful evidence to inform innovative, effective and efficient policy options for Ministers. We will ensure that our externally commissioned research and analytical programmes, as well as our in-house analysis draw upon the best and cutting edge design, scientific and analytical methodologies. As we work with tighter financial constraints, we will ensure that our programmes of research, evidence and analysis offer real value for public money.

Our research and analysis covers a range of expertise, including economics, social research, spatial analysis, physical sciences and futures methods. The following are examples of some of the high impact innovative research and analysis recently delivered by external contractors and our analysts and scientists that have directly benefited the policy formulation process.

## CASE STUDY

In February 2008, CLG commissioned De Montfort University and the University of Southampton to undertake a systematic review of domestic and international evidence around six community empowerment mechanisms (asset transfer, citizen governance, e-participation, participatory budgeting, petitions and redress). This method is well established and highly regarded in the medical sciences, its use is much less common in the social sciences. We used an innovative approach (using Boolean coding) that allowed systematic search, analysis and synthesis to be applied to qualitative case study data. This innovative methodological approach encompassed three stages.

- A first stage mapping the evidence base, identifying the highest quality studies for review in Stage 2. Over 3,500 articles and reports were initially identified and subsequently filtered down to approximately 20 studies per empowerment mechanism.
- Stage 2 involved defining empowerment success (outcome factors) and the drivers or the inhibitors of empowerment under different circumstances. For each of the six empowerment mechanisms, the highest quality case study evidence was coded against the influencing and outcome factors identified.



- Stage 3 involved the statistical analysis of coding stage to produce a robust and replicable analysis of variable and often competing evidence in order to identify which mechanisms empower; in what ways, and in what contexts.

These findings fed directly into policy development – specifically in the petitions policy and the passing of petitions legislation, which placed a legal duty on councils to respond to petitions. The report was published online in June 2009: [www.communities.gov.uk/publications/localgovernment/localdecisionreview](http://www.communities.gov.uk/publications/localgovernment/localdecisionreview)

## CASE STUDY

### Spatial Economics Research Centre

One of the key dimensions of our policies is the role of ‘place’ and in recent years we have worked closely with other Government Departments and academic experts to explore the implications of ‘place’ for the delivery and outcomes of our policies. CLG, together with BIS, the Welsh Assembly Government and the ESRC co-fund the **Spatial Economics Research Centre (SERC)**. This research centre, based at the London School of Economics, brings together leading spatial researchers from across the country to provide a rigorous understanding of the nature, extent, causes and consequences of spatial disparities; providing high quality independent research to understand why some regions, cities and communities prosper, while others do not. Tackling persistent spatial economic disparities remains a key policy objective. The focus of SERC’s research programmes include:

- Examining the scale and nature of UK disparities.
- Investigating the spatial differences in innovation, enterprise, investment, skills, agglomeration externalities and social capital.
- Increasing understanding of how land and real estate markets function and the benefits and costs of living or working in one place rather than another.
- Considering the implications of costs, sorting the place-based effects for the spatial structure of the economy and for the nature of the linkages between places.
- Exploring how policy should address spatial economic disparities and what governance mechanisms are most appropriate.
- Building links with wider partners such as the Manchester Independent Economic Review and the Northern Way.

Work is underway across all these work programmes and published outputs, including discussion papers, books and peer reviewed journal articles which together with conferences and workshops result in the dissemination of the main findings from these workstreams. Collectively, SERCs work has fed directly into policy discussions around the spatial distribution of government expenditure, the roles of physical regeneration and mixed communities and on understanding better housing

demand and supply issues. SERC have also been actively involved in helping CLG and BIS to react to policy challenges arising as a result of the recession. This has included discussions on the role of industrial policy, identifying areas at risk, housing repossessions, regeneration, and on implications for Local Authorities. Findings from SERC's workstreams are available on: [www.spataleconomics.ac.uk/](http://www.spataleconomics.ac.uk/)

## CASE STUDY

**Working closely with experts:** In 2006, as a response to the Cabinet Office Capability Review of CLG, the Department set up three Expert Panels with the aim of strengthening the role of economics and the use of research and evidence within CLG. They have focused on the housing market downturn; social housing allocations; the review of council housing finance; housing density and sustainability; the regeneration framework; regeneration futures; and the contribution of local action to reducing worklessness. In 2008, a Fire and Resilience Expert Panel was established, followed by a Local Government Expert Panel in July 2009.

Collectively, these policy specific panels have entailed leading experts offering analytical and evidential advice to policy teams on a rapid responsive basis. The Fire and Resilience Expert Panel has provided both academic challenge as well as cutting edge academic input into the formulation of fire and resilience policy and the Local Government Expert Panel has provided timely advice to the *Strengthening Local Democracy* consultation; assessing the financial impact of giving powers to enable local authorities to establish mutual insurance companies on participating local authorities. All of these commissions have contributed crucial information during the policy formulation and review process which would not have been available in the necessary time frames without the rapid accessibility of the panel. Outputs from the expert panel's commissions are available on the CLG research database.

**Foresight: Land Use Futures:** From its beginning in April 2008, CLG has played a leading part in the Foresight Land Use Futures project. Foresight's role is to help government think systematically about the future. It uses the latest scientific and other evidence combined with futures analysis to tackle complex issues and help policymakers make decisions affecting our future. Every project involves a wide range of stakeholders, covers its science with a multi-disciplinary approach, and examines issues that cut across the responsibilities of at least two government departments. The Land Use Futures project is the eleventh Foresight project, following on from others with CLG participation such as Sustainable Energy Management and the Built Environment, which reported in 2008.

The Land Use Futures project aims to provide an evidence base which will support government and other policy makers in ensuring the UK's land use patterns and practices are fit for the future, including:

- An analysis of land use challenges the UK could face over the next fifty years;

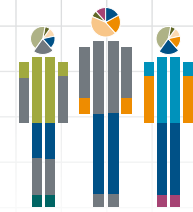
- An examination of existing structures and mechanisms and their capacity to help us meet these challenges;
- Identification of opportunities to use and manage land differently now so that UK society continues to enjoy a good quality of life in the future.

Foresight has worked with leading experts to assemble the latest evidence and research on land use topics. The team has developed scenarios for 2060 to produce insights into the long-term prospects for land use. The project covers the whole spectrum of land use from urban to rural and is jointly sponsored by Defra and CLG. It reported in February 2010.

## CASE STUDY

**Living with Environmental Change:** CLG is a member of the cross-government/ Research Council Living with Environmental Change (LWEC) programme. The programme is an unprecedented partnership of organisations funding, undertaking and using environmental research, including the Research Councils, government departments, devolved administrations and delivery agencies. The ten-year programme will connect world-leading natural, engineering, economic, social, medical, cultural, arts, and humanities researchers with policy-makers, business, the public, and other key stakeholders. LWEC will help ensure the UK provides international leadership and solutions to the challenges faced during this crucial period, and provide the knowledge and tools to make informed choices about the future. Our activities will help to make better predictions and analysis of environmental change so that we can adapt and become more resilient, as well as helping people to mitigate or avoid the worst impacts as our environment is altered.

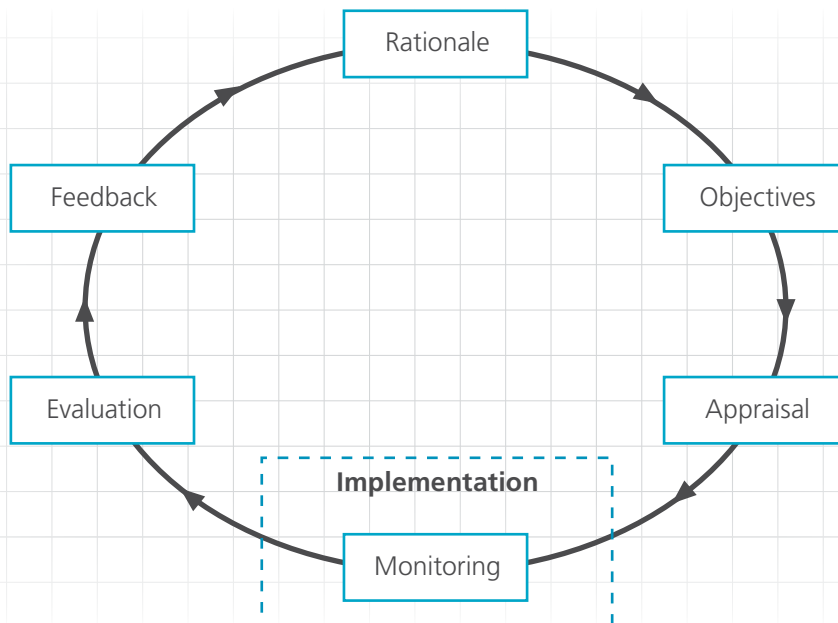
LWEC partners are benefiting from the move away from the “linear model” of how research is used to inform policy to one which is based on a more deliberative analytical model where the strategic objectives of all partners are met in a way that adds value through partnership working. The new way of working, offered by LWEC, generates new kinds of challenging research questions and increases the likelihood that high level excellent research will have impact. Policy-makers will have a stronger more relevant evidence base to use in adapting to and mitigating environmental change of all kinds. There should also be benefits to partners in making the most of their limited resources and in working across disciplinary boundaries to tackle the complex and sometimes complicated challenges from interactions between say, environmental and demographic change. LWEC aims to help all partners deliver their own strategic goals to better effect by delivering added value through partnership working. LWEC is already making it possible to co-design research programmes amongst partners and other stakeholders more quickly and to do this in a way that increases the likelihood that research will have an impact on society and the economy sooner and, it is hoped, at lower overall cost.



# Monitoring and evaluation

**Our Aim:** To provide robust, timely and clear evidence, research and analysis to help Ministers and policy colleagues develop monitor and track the implementation and performance of policies and interventions and their impacts upon the lives of the people and communities.

We are developing a Monitoring and Evaluation Framework which will provide parameters and principles for designing and delivering evaluations of our policies and interventions. These will be informed by HM Treasury's Green and Magenta Books' guidance. The framework and supporting activities, including guidance and training and processes, will ensure consistency and coordination, to improve quality, proportionality and overall better value for money across our monitoring and evaluation programme.



The use of evaluation and monitoring evidence is a critical phase of the policy development cycle. We need clear, timely and robust evidence to assess our policy options, to track on-going performance or measure the value of our policies and their impacts on the lives of the people and communities.

**Measuring and monitoring impact:** To improve our impact, we will strengthen our evaluation and monitoring plans from the outset. We are looking at evaluation design during the preparation of Impact Assessments.

## CASE STUDY

**Impact Assessments:** One of the key tools we use to understand and define the policy challenge and to analyse whether there is a case for Government intervention, through the development of policy options, public consultation final decision-making. An IA is most effective at the early stages of policy development by providing a continuous process to help policy-makers fully think through the rationale, and consequences of our interventions in the public, private and third sectors and providing us with sufficient evidence on the positive and negative effects of such interventions, including reviewing the impact of policies after they have been implemented. The National Audit Office's review of our Impact Assessments showed that although these were of reasonable quality they still required strengthening. Steps are in place to improve the robustness through ensuring they include:

- The relevant evidence base and identifies evidence gaps to be addressed.
- Quantification of costs and benefits where possible.
- Early analyst involvement in policy formulation.
- Greater analyst involvement with Board and Ministerial discussions.

Where evaluations are necessary, they will be designed prior to policy implementation, so that they can be undertaken alongside policy development and delivery in a timely manner. This step will be supported by our Regulation and Appraisal Unit (RAU) which will provide guidance, advice and scrutiny.

## CASE STUDY

Innovations in methodologies and in the types of interventions we deliver require our in house analysts to have the best and up to date knowledge on evaluation design and analysis. To **boost evaluation capacity** we will be ensuring that we are linked into cross-Whitehall networks of analysts, such as the cross Whitehall GES-GSR evaluation network where we can share expertise and knowledge. We are also in the process of establishing an external panel of experts in evaluation design, methodology and analysis to provide robust bespoke advice and guidance for evaluation and monitoring activities. Owing to the nature of what is a wide range of complex policy interventions we often face methodological challenges in locating and measuring the impacts from our interventions. The following examples demonstrate some of challenges and methodological innovations that our most recent evaluations have tackled successfully. We will draw upon the lessons we have learned and will share and use it to inform future evaluation and monitoring of new policy interventions.

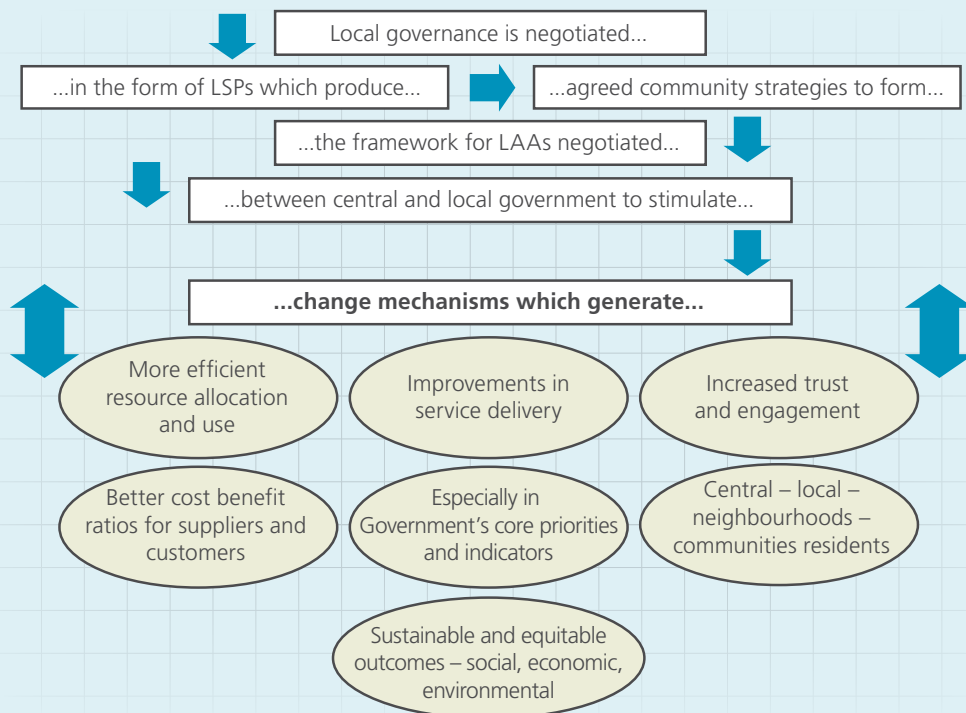
## CASE STUDY

### Evaluation of local area agreements (LAAs) and local strategic partnerships (LAAs)

The evaluation of LAAs and LSPs was commissioned in 2007. The key questions covered in this evaluation include:

- To what extent do local area partnerships trust the LAA as a system of the agreeing priorities?
- Do they help Local Strategic Partnerships (LSPs) in delivering change on the ground and ultimately did this lead to improvements in social and economic outcomes?

The evaluation design has been based around a Theory of Change – setting out a hypothesis of how the LAAs and LSPs will improve *efficiency, build trust and relationships* between local partners and with the central government, and lead to *service improvements*. The details of the theory of change were agreed with policy colleagues during a series of workshops at the beginning of the evaluation and form the basis of the data collection, these are set out below:



The evaluation consists of several data strands including surveys (LAAs, LSP and the Partners survey), interviews with key stakeholders, longitudinal case-studies in five areas, and a quantitative analysis of outcome data.

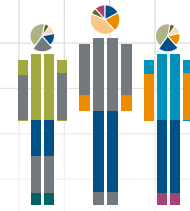
**Strengths:** The strengths of the evaluation are in its flexibility – the surveys (autumn 2008 and autumn 2009) captured emerging policy questions which arise during the evaluation. The longitudinal case studies have captured new priorities. The fieldwork conducted January–March 2010 is focusing on partnerships’ response to the economic situation and its impact on worklessness.

The evaluation entailed a call-off element to undertake research on emerging policy issues. For example, a series of surveys of senior Whitehall stakeholders has been commissioned, to test confidence across government of the LAA and the wider performance framework.

A further strength is that the individual elements of the evaluation are able to provide robust on-going evidence *as the evaluation progresses* – rather than impact being measured at the end of the research. The combination of these strengths have contributed directly to the development and delivery of LAA policy.

**Challenges:** Attributing positive outcomes to the LAA will be challenging, given a lack of comparison groups. This is a common methodological challenge for place-based policies.

The evaluation will use a number of methodological approaches, involving: an examination of (1) comparative rates of change (including historic trends v actual); (2) bivariate analysis of the links between performance and ‘policy levers’ (Theory of Change (ToC) model); (3) and multivariate analysis of performance, policy levers and, where appropriate, contextual factors, including exogenous shocks such as the economic downturn.



# Making evidence accessible

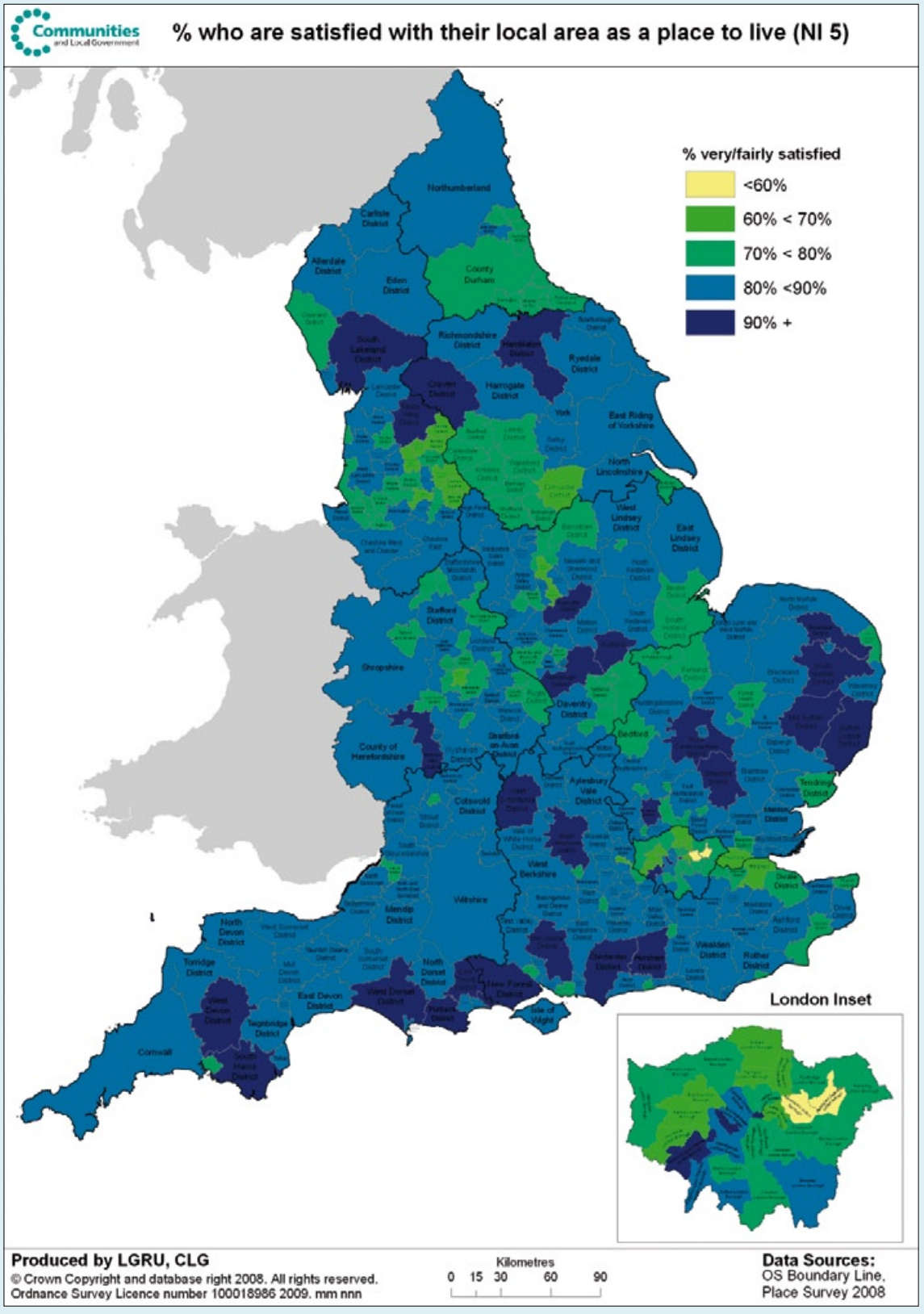
**Our aim:** To make our research, analysis and evidence accessible to everyone who needs it – the public, the Department, to our agencies, other departments, our stakeholders. We want to ensure that the data we commission, analyse and manage meets the needs of the wide range of users and partners, and with whom we routinely work.

**Continuing what we started:** CLG has a longstanding interest and commitment in ensuring that evidence is used in policy-making process – not only at the national level but by regional and local partners and by sharing information with citizens. Our analysts and scientists work closely with regional and national bodies to promote the use of spatial evidence and are engaged with the Government Office Network, the Association of Regional Observatories, Regional Improvement and Efficiency Partnerships, the Local Information Systems Network and many others. Examples of how we share our data with others are set out below. We are continuing our efforts building capacity and improving our understanding of the information we collect and maintain.

## CASE STUDY

**Making complex data accessible to a wider audience:** The 2008 Place Survey provides information on people's perceptions of their local area and the local services they receive using 18 national indicators that local government use to measure their performance across 152 county councils, metropolitan district councils, London boroughs and unitary authorities. The 2008 survey collected data from over 540,000 citizens and provides a rich source of insight into the attitudes and perceptions of individuals towards their local area. We used innovative methods to mine and identify patterns in a large and complex dataset and make these findings accessible to a range of stakeholders. The key to gaining an understanding of the data is to use multiple techniques in order to develop insights. Some techniques have been produced for engagement with stakeholders, some are produced for internal use within the Department, and some are produced as technical exercises or as an experiment. A commonly used technique for visualising data which relates to geographical areas is the choropleth. These are maps where different areas are shaded according to the area's value for the variable of interest. The advantage of choropleths is that they are easy to understand at a glance, and providing an appropriate colour scheme is chosen, they are aesthetically pleasing. [see map].





## CASE STUDY

Making data accessible to a wide audience (from specialists to the general public) requires careful attention to data visualisation techniques. There is an increasing number of datasets in the public domain, particularly at the small area level, but usually without any advice on how best to visualise and communicate these data to people who need to use them. Data visualisation enables researchers to explore datasets to identify patterns, associations, and trends and thereby provide an accessible and clear representation of the underlying data to help answer a particular question at hand – all of which will contribute directly to the Making Public Data Public Agenda and CLG’s Timely Information for Citizens Pilots. Supporting our data-visualisation work is **DataViz** our online resource accessible to the public setting out the current range of visualisation solutions and providing advice the right visualisation techniques required across different parts of public service delivery. The DataViz site provides practical guidance of practical benefit to public sector researchers on how to improve the way they visualise data, a typology of visualisations with over 200 examples of visualisation, and descriptions of their uses. This online resource encourages users to build an online community and contribute their own examples of good practice and improve the general standard for visualisation solutions.

## CASE STUDY

Evidence is central to the work of all public bodies to ensure that decisions and service provision are undertaken using the best available data and analysis. We will ensure that user needs are taken into consideration when commissioning research, developing data sources and promoting evidence based policy. It is important that our research and analysis is presented in both an accessible format and in a timely manner and there are several ways that we try to ensure that we share and transfer our knowledge to all of our stakeholders. All of our commissioned research is published within 6 months of the final report being completed and our publications are downloadable from the Departmental website [www.communities.gov.uk/corporate/researchandstatistics/](http://www.communities.gov.uk/corporate/researchandstatistics/). Details about individual projects are available from our research management database [www.rmd.communities.gov.uk](http://www.rmd.communities.gov.uk)

We regularly hold public policy seminars where we invite experts in our policy and research priority areas to present their research and analysis to policy colleagues in and stakeholders working with the Department. These thought provoking sessions provide an opportunity to discuss the implications of our work, to challenge the findings and improve and strengthen the knowledge base.

**Making Data Available:** One of the ways we want to increase access to data is through *The Making Public Data Public Programme*, which is focused on improving access to public data held by Government to provide citizens with information about the services they need and to increase transparency and accountability. To support this ambition CLG has set up the Local Public Data Panel, a panel of experts from local government, academia and the IT developer community, chaired by Professor Nigel Shadbolt<sup>1</sup>, the Local Public Data Panel will work closely with local authorities, local strategic partners, the LGA, government departments and agencies to champion the release of local public data and information sharing, accelerate progress in agreeing common standards for data released into the public domain, and help identify which local public data are likely to have the greatest impact on empowering citizens or improving public delivery.

The Local Data Exchange (LDEx) supports the drive to champion the local public data agenda. We intend to progressively build LDEx as the standard mechanism for releasing CLG's statistical and geospatial data in an open, standard, re-usable form. LDEx will also enable CLG's data to be quickly and easily linked to related external sources, thereby fostering development of new insight for a much broader range of consumers. LDEx is a natural extension to CLG's Places Database, the Data Interchange Hub and Geography Publishing Service. By building on these services, the LDEx will reference 2,000 datasets drawn from multiple sources and integrated around the concept of place. LDEx will make these sources available for public consumption via an

1 Professor of Artificial Intelligence and Deputy Head (Research) of the School of Electronics and Computer Science at the University of Southampton.

open platform utilising common standards. The project will also prepare CLG's data holdings to align with the emerging LinkedData vision for public sector information.

Underpinning our work to make our data accessible are the **Public Data Principles**, set out in *Putting The Frontline First: Smarter government* [www.hmg.gov.uk/media/52788/smarter-government-final.pdf](http://www.hmg.gov.uk/media/52788/smarter-government-final.pdf)

1. Public data will be published in reusable, machine-readable form
2. Public data will be available and easy to find through a single easy to use online access point ([www.data.gov.uk/](http://www.data.gov.uk/))
3. Public data will be published using open standards and following the recommendations of the World Wide Web Consortium
4. Any 'raw' dataset will be represented in linked data form
5. More public data will be released under an open licence which enables free reuse, including commercial reuse
6. Data underlying the Government's own websites will be published in reusable form for others to use
7. Personal, classified, commercially sensitive and third-party data will continue to be protected.

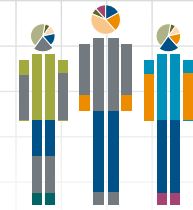
## CASE STUDY

To provide evidence on the impact of economic change on different places, in particular to help answer the question "What do we know about how the recession, and the recovery, are impacting on people and places?" The Spatial Analysis Unit has developed **The Spatial Intelligence Network (SpINe)** – a Government-wide resource for analysts working on the spatial impacts of the recession and the recovery initially commissioned the National Economic Council's (NEC) Analytical Working Group (AWG). This ensures that Government works together to produce a coherent place-based story of the recession and analysis of the recovery as a basis for future policy development. It is centred on a website on the Government Secure Intranet.

As part of the **SpINe** network CLG analysts work in tandem with other government departments across Whitehall and the Regions to develop a risk, resilience and recovery analysis of local impacts, covering:

- Gaps in knowledge
- Lack of up-to-date small area data
- Difficulties in accessing data and the lack of a single point to collate and share data and intelligence on the downturn

**SpINe** provides the platform to share knowledge and intelligence on the spatial impacts of recession. In doing so it seeks to foster common understanding of local recession impact and encourages further collaboration between Departments and regional bodies on recession and recovery related analysis. CLG shares evidence more widely through publications, newsletters and data sign posting tools, available through the Places Community.



# Going forward – the next steps

**Our Aim:** Over the next two years, we will continue to build on our successes to date and continue to work with Ministers and policy-makers to address the new policy challenges ahead. We will work collaboratively, think creatively, make best use of our resources and focus on value for money. As a learning organisation we will draw upon our strengths, recognise where we can improve our capacity and evidence base which we need to address. Some of the steps we are taking in the next few months will include:

## Working with others to make the most of our joint resources and efforts

We cannot do this alone. A range of complex policy issues means it is all the more important need to collaborate and work with stakeholder groups. We will continue to seek out more collaborative opportunities with researchers and analysts across the country ensuring that we make best use of our joint resources and expertise. We will work closely with the research councils to help deliver the evidence required to support the delivery policies in the period ahead. We will aim to build on our existing links with the ESRC and AHRC as well as to broaden our collaborative links to other research councils, including EPSRC, NERC and TSB.

Our Chief Analyst, Heads of Profession and Chief Scientific Advisor will contribute to cross Departmental discussions and collaborations in the areas of value for money, professional development, common research agendas and knowledge-sharing.

**Building capacity and ensuring we are ready to meet the challenges ahead.** We want to ensure that our analysts and researchers have the right skills to meet the changing priorities and new policies to be developed in the months ahead. As part of our continuing professional development, we will ensure that our analysts avail themselves of training opportunities, to acquire skills in the latest research methodologies and analytical techniques, equipping them to responsively meet policy maker and Ministers' evidence requirements.

So that the right skill sets are available when and where they are required, over the next few months we will be mapping the range of analyst and researcher skills available across the Department, to identify and address any gaps in our provision.

We will continue to improve the ways we share the knowledge, generated through our research and analysis, across the research community in the Department, and with colleagues outside the Department.

We will continue to review progress with the implementation of this strategy over the course of the next two years. We will ensure that this strategy is closely linked to the emerging strategic business priorities for the Department and the policy making framework currently under development.



