

REGIONAL AND SUB-REGIONAL INFORMATION / INTELLIGENCE: NEEDS, USES, GAPS AND PRIORITIES

March 2002

Anne E. Green and David Owen

Contact details:

Anne Green
Institute for Employment Research
University of Warwick
Coventry
CV4 7AL

Tel: 024 7652 4113

Fax: 024 7652 4241

Email: A.E.Green@warwick.ac.uk

Contents

	Page
1. Introduction	1
1.1 Scope and Structure of the Report	1
1.2 Context	1
1.3 The Nature of Consultations with Users and Providers of Regional and Sub-Regional Data	3
2. Information / Intelligence <i>NEEDS</i>	6
2.1 Nature and Topic Coverage of Information / Intelligence Needs	6
2.2 Geographies	10
3. Information / Intelligence <i>USES</i>	12
3.1 Sources Used	12
3.2 Primary Data Collection Activities	15
4. <i>GAPS</i> in Information / Intelligence and <i>PRIORITIES</i>	17
4.1 Introduction	17
4.2 Gaps Identified	18
4.3 Priorities	20
Appendix 1: Aide Memoire Used at Regional Meetings	23
Appendix 2: Workshop – 2nd August 2001	25
Appendix 3: Web-Based Survey Questionnaire	41
Appendix 4: Report on Web-Based Survey	49
Appendix 5: Selected Examples of Gaps Identified in the NWRIU Gapping Exercise	89

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Scope and Structure of the Report

This report provides an overview of the regional and sub-regional information / intelligence needs, uses, gaps and priorities identified during the course of the *Mapping Regional Data* project.

The *first section* of this report provides an *introduction* to the identification of needs, uses, gaps and priorities. It sets the context for the review of regional and sub-regional information / intelligence needs and uses, highlighting the wide range and large volume of ongoing activity with respect to ‘mapping’ and ‘gapping’ (section 1.2). The methodology adopted for consultations with users and providers of regional and sub-regional data is set out (section 1.3).

The *second section* of the report addresses *needs* for regional and sub-regional information / intelligence. The rationale underlying such needs and the (changing) nature and topic coverage of such needs are outlined (section 2.1). The geographical scales at which data are required are described (section 2.2).

The focus in the *third section* of the report is on *uses* of regional and sub-regional information / intelligence. The research revealed that a wide range of sources is used. Some of the key sources used, and their strengths and weaknesses, are identified (section 3.1). Selected comments made relating to assessing the usefulness of data sources are reported (further details are provided in Appendices). The nature of, and rationale for, primary data collection activities undertaken at regional and sub-regional level is outlined also (section 3.2).

Gaps in the regional and sub-regional information / intelligence base arise where the data sources available / used do not meet user needs. Such gaps (and associated *priorities*) form the focus of attention in the *fourth section* of the report. An introductory section discusses the nature of ‘gaps’ (section 4.1). Key gaps highlighted during the course of the research are identified and discussed (section 4.2). Finally, attention shifts to the main *priorities* for filling gaps (section 4.3).

1.2 Context

Historically, data availability at the regional level has not been well developed, partly owing to the plethora of different boundaries used by regional forms of administration.

➤ *Information available at regional and local levels has been much more limited than at the national scale.*

However, recent years have witnessed a *renewed emphasis on regional (and sub-regional) information*, with a ‘rebirth’ of the regional agenda since the 1997 General Election. There have been increased calls for more spatially disaggregated forms of data that allow comparison of the socio-economic context within each of the English regions, and the extent

to which policy activities are reducing inter-regional (and intra-regional) disparities. Such spatially disaggregated data are necessary to support area-based policies – some of which may be at ward or sub-ward scale (as is the case with many Neighbourhood Renewal initiatives).

Moreover, a *new emphasis on evidence-based policies highlights* the importance of the regional and sub-regional information base.

Changes in government and governance structures have also stimulated a need for more regional and sub-regional information and intelligence.

- ◆ *Regional Development Agencies (RDAs)* are important users of regional and sub-regional information.
- ◆ *Government Offices for the Regions (GORs)* have taken on an increasing diversity of work and interests,¹ most of which are inherently geographic in nature, following on from the restructuring of central government departments in June 2001. For example, along with the Regional Co-ordination Unit (RCU), the Government Offices are involved in the development of “City Scripts”² for briefing purposes.
- ◆ *Regional Observatories* have been, or are being, established in the regions of England, although progress is being made at different speeds, and the models adopted are rather different in the various regions.³ In some regions there are *Local Observatories* also. There are also Public Health Observatories (PHOs) with interests in regional and sub-regional information / intelligence.
- ◆ *Local authorities* remain important data holders. However, the data they hold (and use) are mixed in quality, availability and usability (including issues of sharing data).
- ◆ *Regional Assemblies* are also emerging as new ‘players’ with key interests in sub-regional information / intelligence.
- ◆ From April 2001 *Local Learning and Skills Councils (LLSCs)* replaced the Training and Enterprise Councils (TECs), which were important players in regional and sub-regional intelligence, including primary data collection activities. *Sector Skills Council (SSCs)* are replacing National Training Organisations (NTOs), and will have a role to play in provision of sector-specific intelligence at regional (and sub-regional) level.
- ◆ Within *ONS* there is *greater emphasis than formerly on regional and local statistics*.
 - ◇ Development work is proceeding on a number of fronts to derive local level estimates using a range of data sources at different geographical scales.⁴
 - ◇ The ONS Information Management Programme (IMP) is seeking to develop the infrastructure necessary to enhance access of ONS sources to users.

¹ Government Offices for the regions represent the work and interests of DfES, DEFRA, DTLR, DTI, the Home Office and DCMS. From April 2002 staff from the former NHS Regional Offices will also be joining Government Offices.

² Containing key data (as up-to-date as possible), on various topics, about certain cities.

³ Although there have been meetings of Regional Observatories (and Public Health Observatories) in 2001 to discuss common issues.

⁴ This was highlighted in a ‘gaps’ exercise consultation with central government departments undertaken by ONS/DTLR immediately before the commencement of the *Mapping Regional Data* project, and was also evident in consultations conducted during the course of the project.

- ◇ Following on from the stimulus of the work of *Policy Action Team 18 for 'Better Information'* at the micro area level, 2001 has seen the launch and ongoing development of the ONS *Neighbourhoods Statistics Service (NeSS)*.
- ◇ A Web-based interface has been developed for *NOMIS*, and from July 2001 access to *NOMIS* was made free to users.
- ◆ In the *private sector*, a number of players are concerned with 'adding value' to existing information sources and generating new sources.
- ◆ At *regional and local level* there are multifarious information gathering activities.

Hence, a *key issue/question* arising is how 'joined up' all of these activities are / should be.⁵

During the course of the *Mapping Regional Data* research it became evident that there is scope for improvement in sharing of knowledge about the many developments / initiatives ongoing.

In summary, the Mapping Regional Data project took place within the context of a wide range and volume of ongoing activity, at a time of considerable expansion and dynamism of the regional / sub-regional information base.

1.3 The Nature of Consultations with Users and Providers of Regional and Sub-Regional Data

During the course of the *Mapping Regional Data* project views on information/intelligence needs, uses and gaps were collected using the following main *methods*:

- 1) ***Regional Meetings*** – in Summer 2001 meetings were held in each of the Regions of England to ascertain the views of representatives of Regional Development Agencies and Government Offices for the Regions on:
 - *Needs*: The nature of information/intelligence needs
 - *Needs*: Changing information/intelligence needs
 - *Uses*: Data sources used
 - *Uses*: Access to information/intelligence and data collection activities
 - *Gaps*: Identification and prioritisation of gaps
 - *Gaps*: Filling gaps

(See *Appendix 1* for a copy of the Aide Memoire used to guide discussion at Regional Meetings; [this was pre-circulated to interviewees].)

Recordings were made at each Regional Meeting, in addition to notes being taken at the meeting. A separate internal paper was written on the basis of each Regional Meeting. The material presented in this report draws on, and synthesises, findings from the Regional Meetings.

The format of the meetings varied slightly. In some regions a joint discussion was held with one representative of the Government Office and one representative of the RDA.⁶ In other instances larger meetings were convened, with representatives with Local Government Association / Chamber / LLSC / Regional Observatory / Public Health

⁵ This issue was the subject of some discussion at the Project Workshop – see Appendix 2.

⁶ Generally, representatives held positions with an Intelligence / Strategy / Research function.

Observatory / Economist / Skills Analyst / Process & Performance functions represented. In many instances discussions were quite wide-ranging and the aide memoire was not followed rigidly at all. Rather the emphasis was on following through ‘themes’ – e.g. competitiveness (in terms of data ‘needs’, ‘uses’, ‘gaps’ and ‘priorities’), e-commerce, foreign direct investment (FDI), etc. In other instances discussions were more formalised and discussions discussion stuck more rigidly to the aide memoire. Whatever the format adopted, the key issues addressed in the aide memoire were covered. Perhaps the greatest difficulty encountered was in getting a *comprehensive* picture of all data sets used.

Discussions generally lasted between ninety minutes and two hours.

- 2) **Telephone (and some face-to-face) interviews** – with ‘key informants’ from:
 - Other regional and local offices and agencies (e.g. Public Health Observatories, local government officers, etc)
 - Central government departments (e.g. DfES, DTI, etc)
 - Data agencies / brokers / suppliers / private sector research agencies (e.g. Cambridge Econometrics, Dun and Bradstreet, CACI, Local Futures Group, etc)
 - Academics / research institutes / learned societies (e.g. Policy Research Institute, Institute of Employment Studies, etc).

(An Aide Memoire similar to that presented in Appendix 1 was used in telephone interviews.)

- 3) **Desk Research** – using materials/reports published on the Web, articles in academic and practitioner journals, newsletters (e.g. LARIA and BURISA), etc.
- 4) **A Project Workshop** – held in August 2001 to provide some feedback on key themes emerging from the regional consultations, desk research, etc. The Workshop, attended by over 30 people from a range of organisations, also provided an opportunity for gaps and priorities to be discussed more intensively in three Discussion Group sessions. (A detailed report of the Workshop is presented in [Appendix 2](#)). Key findings from the Workshop are integrated into the main body of this report.

- 5) **Web-based Survey** – providing an opportunity for a wider range of individuals⁷ to air their views on:

- spatial levels at which information / intelligence is *used*
- *sources* used
- *gaps* and associated *priorities* at regional and sub-regional scales

(A WORD-version of the survey is reproduced in [Appendix 3](#)). There were 119 survey respondents, with the largest single category being from local government (see the detailed report on the resulted from the Web-based Survey presented in [Appendix 4](#)).

The Web Survey may be regarded as supplementing the views obtained at Regional Meetings and in telephone interviews. Some of the respondents were followed up with more detailed telephone calls to discuss specific issues raised.

Assessment of Consultation Methods Adopted

At the outset of the research it was made clear, and it was understood, that it is not possible to easily identify the entire ‘population’ of users of regional and sub-regional statistics, and so to construct a ‘representative sample’ from such a population for consultation purposes. Hence, the needs, uses, gaps and priorities identified in this report should be regarded as

⁷ In particular, users from local government and other sub-regional organisations.

indicative. Nevertheless, through the different methods adopted, the consultation has been undertaken in all regions of England, and all parts of the United Kingdom.

Users and suppliers of information from a range of different organisations were involved in the consultation exercise. During the research views were sought and given on the understanding that they would not be attributable to specific individuals / organisations. Some individuals consulted were much more experienced users of regional and sub-regional data than were others; this is reflected in the comments made.

2. INFORMATION / INTELLIGENCE NEEDS

2.1 Nature and Topic Coverage of Information / Intelligence Needs

The Nature of Information Needs

Some users, notably some researchers in higher education / research institutes working on a project basis, have very specific information / intelligence needs, ‘driven’ by *specific issues* and *topics* under investigation.

For users in RDAs and Government Offices for the Regions, information / intelligence needs tend to be extremely *broad* and *wide-ranging*. There is increasingly a need to ‘juxtapose’ very different types of information at a range of spatial scales. For, example, it may be necessary to make links between topics such as crime, health and unemployment. Similarly, it is important to look at housing issues ‘in the round’ – i.e. data may be needed on house prices, local school catchment areas, transport issues, social aspects of housing, tenure information, etc, and how these aspects all influence each other.

Needs are driven by imperatives to:

- establish baselines
- set targets
- monitor performance⁸
- undertake benchmarking studies
- evaluate and assess the impacts of programmes and policies
- prepare and support bids (for funding).

For all of these functions, the key emphasis is on ‘*quantification*’. Some interviewees made reference was made to the ‘seductive power’ of numbers for ‘bidding’ purposes – with numbers being ‘worth more than anecdotes’, and bemoaned the fact that strong qualitative evidence was often overlooked. In general, an appreciation emerged from consultees about the role of qualitative intelligence, alongside that of a quantitative nature.

Beware of Information for Information’s Sake

Despite the ‘needs’ identified for information on a wide range of topics, caution was raised in some quarters against an ‘information “anorak”’ approach of collecting information for information’s sake: a condition which may, in turn, lead to “analysis paralysis”.

Issues and Questions – Emphasising ‘Cross-Cutting’ Themes

Indeed, some interviewees emphasised the desirability of adopting an ‘issues and questions’ rather than a ‘data driven’ approach; so keeping the *purpose* of / for information / intelligence at the forefront of considerations. It was noted that the way in which data are often classified into ‘themes’ might not aid such an approach. A key example that was mentioned by one

⁸ At the regional meetings, considerable emphasis was placed on the monitoring of regional strategies. This involves the identification, derivation and monitoring of a multiplicity of economic, social, environmental and spatial indicators. Such indicator exercises were being undertaken in virtually all regions, but with little (or no) co-ordination. ‘Monitoring’ is a key driver of information needs for strategies at all geographical levels.

consultee was the difficulty in obtaining information on e-commerce – which cuts across several ‘themes’. Another example of a ‘cross-cutting’ theme is the ‘24 hour city’ – subsuming requirements for information on the economy, crime, pollution, environment, etc.

Topic Coverage

Responses from the Web survey suggest that those topics foremost amongst information / intelligence needs at *regional scale* are:

- demographics
- unemployment and labour market participation
- social inclusion, poverty and deprivation
- employment structure
- economic development
- skills – supply, demand, shortages and gaps.⁹

All of these topics were ranked as ‘extremely important’ or ‘very important’ by at least 60 per cent of respondents. At the *sub-regional scale*, the percentages rating these topics as ‘extremely important’ or ‘very important’ were consistently higher.

Topics least likely to be mentioned as ‘extremely important’ or ‘very important’ at regional and sub-regional scales included:

- ◆ tourism / culture / leisure
- ◆ business confidence / attitudes
- ◆ crime / justice
- ◆ environmental quality
- ◆ health
- ◆ technology / innovation.

However, different users rate the various topics differently – for some users, these latter topics are of greatest importance.

At all regional meetings the *very wide range of topics* on which information is sought was emphasised.¹⁰ In general, there was a broad *commonality* of issues, and also considerable overlap in topics of interest, between regional partners.

Foremost amongst the *information needs* identified at regional meetings was ***economic*** information, including:

- GDP¹¹
- income
- output
- productivity

⁹ It was noted by several interviewees that many of the key needs had been identified in the work of the National Skills Task Force, and it was considered important that the Task Force recommendations were implemented.

¹⁰ This is exemplified by the fact that at the London regional meeting, one of the first demands for information (prompted by the London Mayor’s policies and initiatives) was on diseases in pigeons!

¹¹ Possibly the foremost indicator mentioned at the regional meetings. It is of key interest to RDAs and Government Offices – and is a key indicator of RDA performance.

- ‘business’ data – including information on numbers of businesses, job generation, start-ups and business confidence
- vacancies
- supply chains
- trade – imports and exports, and related financial information on exchange rates and implications for the regional economy on (changing) levels of exchange rates
- investment
- innovation¹²
- clusters¹³
- R&D

This ‘economic’ emphasis reflects the key role of ‘economic competitiveness’ in regional strategies, and the interests of RDA representatives in economic strategy.

Also under a general ‘economic’ heading, a range of requirements for ‘reliable’ and ‘real time’ *labour market* information was identified, encompassing:

- (current and likely future) industrial and occupational composition of employment
- (current and likely future) skills – supply and demand (encompassing ‘replacement demand’ as well as ‘expansion demand’)
- economic activity / inactivity and unemployment
- earnings
- attitudes to working
- barriers to working
- work-life balance.

A range of *social* information, relating to the ‘social inclusion’ domain of regional economic strategies, was identified also, including:

- deprivation – including aspects such as unemployment and benefit dependency
- aspects of ‘access’ and ‘exclusion’ – including access to public transport, to doctors, to other services, to ICT,¹⁴ etc, and financial exclusion
- the social economy – including volunteering
- area satisfaction
- regional identity¹⁵
- crime.

Inextricably related to needs for both *economic* and *social* information, are requirements for *demographic* information. For example, Public Health Observatories need a sound base of demographic data for measuring health inequalities, labour market analysts need

¹² ‘Investment’ and ‘innovation’ are both included in a set of draft ‘Tier 2: Regional Outcomes’ Targets for RDAs.

¹³ At the regional meetings, and amongst interviewees more generally, a good deal of interest emerged in *Clusters* – in part, building on the work conducted by DTI. This has stimulated a greater need for improved business information, and for indicators on exports, etc. It has also stimulated a demand for better information on the service sector (where information sources are generally perceived to be relatively weak).

¹⁴ This is a topic for which timely information was identified as being particularly important, given the speed of ongoing developments.

¹⁵ Mentioned only in a minority of regional meetings.

demographic data as an indicator of labour supply, and housing market analysts need demographic data to feed into estimates of demand for housing.

Key needs identified by consultees encompass population counts for different sub-groups of the population (including the most ‘obvious’ disaggregations by age and sex), include:

- *minority ethnic groups* – here it is notable that requirements for information on the size and composition of minority ethnic groups are not confined to those regions / local areas with relatively large, and geographically concentrated, populations from minority ethnic groups. There is also a need for such information in regions / local areas where the minority ethnic groups population is smaller than the national average and may be relatively diverse (in terms of ethnic groups represented). Information on ethnic composition of the population emerged as being of crucial importance for monitoring purposes from an equalities / diversity perspective.
- asylum seekers
- migrants
- travellers¹⁶
- disabled.

Alongside economic competitiveness and social inclusion, *environmental protection / sustainability* is a central pillar of regional economic strategies. In the regional meetings there was somewhat less emphasis on needs for ‘environmental’, than for ‘economic’ and ‘social’, information – perhaps reflecting the attendance of RDA, as well as GO personnel, at the meetings. Under the ‘environmental’ heading needs emerged for information on:

- environmental quality
- land use – with particular reference to derelict land and brownfield land
- waste
- pollution
- green technologies.

Related to the needs for ‘environmental’ information identified above are a series of ‘cross-cutting’ topics (as identified in section 2.1), some of which are related to Regional Planning Guidance, including:

- *transport and travel* – encompassing not only issues of ‘congestion’, the volume of travel flows and (more importantly) the ‘origins’ and ‘destinations’ of journeys, the timing of journeys, mode of transport, etc¹⁷
- housing – including number of houses needed where, price and affordability, etc.

Quality of life is another cross-cutting theme linking economic, social and environmental domains, mentioned both at Regional Meetings and in other interviews.

Other topics that were mentioned in some, but not all, regional meeting, and by several consultees, included:

- health

¹⁶ Not widely mentioned.

¹⁷ Many consultees expressed a need for, and an interest in commuting data. This reflects not only the requirements of multi-modal studies, but also the way that ‘commuting’ has links with economic competitiveness, social inclusion and environmental protection issues.

- tourism
- culture¹⁸
- sport.¹⁹

2.2 Geographies

'Flexible Geographies'

The “new regional landscape” tasked with delivery’ (as outlined in section 1.2) has fuelled a need for more ‘flexible geographies’.

Not only have information needs at a ‘macro’ (i.e. regional) level increased in importance, so have need for ‘micro’ level data. At the same time, a continuing need for information at ‘local’ level (however ‘local’ is defined) is evident. The demand for information / intelligence at sub-regional level is ‘explained’ by the fact that regional averages are ‘meaningless’ – rather, there is a need for information on regional ‘highs’ and ‘lows’.

A Multiplicity of ‘Standard’ and ‘Non-Standard’ Geographies

While ‘standard’ administrative’ geographies (such as county, unitary authority and local authority district areas) remained important, and are the main units for which ‘local’ level information is needed in some regions,²⁰ in other regions it administrative units may be regarded as ‘meaningless’ entities. Instead, as far as possible information was also collected for functionally-defined ‘local economy’ areas.²¹

Maximum Spatial Disaggregation

The way in which *local policy areas* often cut across standard administrative boundaries was emphasised by many consultees²² - such that it may prove extremely difficult to generate baseline information from secondary sources. Specific examples mentioned during the consultation process include Regeneration Zones in the West Midlands, and Education Action Zones (throughout the country).²³ Indeed, the need for information on local policy areas (including SRB and LSP areas) is a key driver behind the *plea* in all regions *for data to be disaggregated to the lowest geographical scale possible*. This would then enable re-aggregation to a range of units (to generate statistics for programme areas, catchment areas, etc).

¹⁸ Regional Cultural Consortia need regional information for monitoring purposes.

¹⁹ The Department of Culture, Media and Sport undertook a review of regional information sources and availability in 2001 as a basis for a project determining the data requirements of regional agencies.

²⁰ As emphasised by RDA and GO representatives at the North East Regional Meeting, for instance.

²¹ The importance of functionally-defined areas was mentioned particularly in the Eastern region. There was an interest in units such as ‘the Cambridge local economy’ (defined in accordance with travel-to-work patterns and business linkages, which may not fit in with the boundaries of administrative units at all). Particular interest in functionally-defined areas was also expressed in the South West.

²² This issue was the subject of particular attention in the West Midlands.

²³ In this latter instance, the development of the advent of the Unique Pupil Number (UPN) which will enable aggregation of education data using the postcode of residence of pupils, rather than of schools, is a key development.

In this vein, there was a universal welcome for the work of PAT 18 and the development of ONS Neighbourhood Statistics (NeSS). However, at the micro area level, ward boundary changes could cause problems for data collection / analysis. Some consultees highlighted geo-referencing as a possible solution here.

Inter-Area Comparisons

For benchmarking, it was noted that inter-area comparisons were required. From the Regional Meetings it emerged that in some regions, a key focus was on improving regional performance vis-à-vis other regions in England and across the UK. Some concerns were voiced that devolution may have negative connotations for Great Britain and UK regional data comparability, and this same concern emerged amongst respondents to the Web survey.

EU regional and other *international comparisons* tended to be emphasised more in the 'better performing' English regions (notably the South East and Eastern region), with topics such as 'the knowledge economy' tending to be at the forefront of concerns. In London, there was an interest in comparisons with other major European and 'world' cities. In terms of topic areas, consultees concerned with economic data, were most likely to mention needs for international comparative data.

3. INFORMATION / INTELLIGENCE USES

3.1 Sources Used

Use of a Wide Range of Sources

Not only are information / intelligence needs broad and wide ranging, but also *use is made of a wide range of information / intelligence sources*. The Web survey revealed three primary sources used by around 90 per cent of respondents:

- national databases operated by the public sector (e.g. ONS, NOMIS)
- websites of central government departments / agencies
- paper-based publications and reports published by ONS and government departments.

The next most widely used sources (used by around 70 per cent of respondents) were:

- sources from within own organisation
- local government information.

Key Sources

Many users place particular emphasis on *ONS* (and other Departmental) *sources*;²⁴ (indeed, one interviewee felt that access to regional and sub-regional data was “not a significant issue” if ‘you know your way around ONS data’, although most consultees did not fully endorse such a sentiment). Mention was made of the ONS ‘seal of approval’ (as a measure of ‘quality control’ – and some users indicated that they did not necessarily stop to think about the strengths and weaknesses of ONS data: rather, they assumed that it was ‘robust’. Amongst the ONS sources, key data sets mentioned included:

- ◇ *Compendia sources* – including ‘Regional Trends’, ‘Regions in Figures’, etc²⁵
- ◇ *Other ONS publications* – notably ‘Economic Trends’ (for in-depth articles and commentaries), but also ‘Financial Trends’
- ◇ *First Releases* and a range of *Statistical Monitors*²⁶
- ◇ *Neighbourhood Statistics* – a ‘new’ development that was widely welcomed
- ◇ *NOMIS* – one of the most popular means²⁷ for accessing a range of LMI sources,²⁸ including key data sources²⁹ such as:
 - *JUVOS claimant count data* – particularly valued for its timeliness, its availability for small area geographies, and the fact that since the data area taken from administrative records they are not subject to sampling variability and associated sampling error

²⁴ This was particularly the case for Government Offices.

²⁵ Some interviewees noted that they would try to get access to ‘source’ data – e.g. NES data on earnings, in order get ‘more timely’ information, rather than waiting for the compendium to be published. This underlines the importance of *timeliness* of information.

²⁶ Again, these were valued as providing more up-to-date information than *Compendia*.

²⁷ The advent of a free service was universally welcomed. While many users appreciated the development of Web access, others (generally the more long-standing and specialist users) preferred the greater flexibility and speed offered by the command based access system offered by NOMIS2.

²⁸ Several users considered that more data sources (e.g. the Agricultural Census) could be made available on NOMIS, and would welcome such an expansion of data sources accessible via NOMIS.

²⁹ This list is not exhaustive.

- *Labour Force Survey* – widely recognised and used at regional level as a source of economic (and social information),³⁰ and to some extent at sub-regional levels, (although at sub-regional level it was reported that analyses were often thwarted by sample size constraints)³¹
- *Annual Business Inquiry (and Annual Employment Survey)* – the key source of information on employees in employment at local level³²
- *Census of Population* – remains a crucial ‘underlying’ source, its strength being disaggregation to the micro area scale and comparability across areas,³³ although the 10-year gap between Censuses means data are outdated towards the end of inter-Censal periods³⁴
- *New Earnings Survey*³⁵ – only recently made available on NOMIS
- *VAT registrations and deregistrations* – used for information on business start-ups, failures and survival³⁶
- *Population estimates and projections* - some local authorities produce their own population and household projections, but there are difficulties of inter-area comparability because of different sources used. Moreover, some users regard such projections as being ‘politicised’, and so are cautious of using such local projections in regional level analyses.³⁷
- ◇ *Family Expenditure Survey*
- ◇ *General Household Survey*
- ◇ *International Passenger Survey*³⁸

³⁰ The broad range of topics covered by the LFS was considered an advantage, although some consultees admitted to a lack of awareness of all of the topics covered by the LFS.

³¹ Some users indicated that ‘small’ sample sizes and ‘large’ sampling errors limited possibilities for measuring trends over time, since it was impossible in some instances to answer the question: ‘Is it noise, or is it a trend?’. There was a general welcome for an increase in sample size for the LFS, but it was noted that even with an increased sample size not all requirements could be met. Indeed, the desire for various dimensions of disaggregation (e.g. age, gender, etc) was such that sample size constraints posed limitations on use at regional level.

³² Several users raised concerns about the robustness of this source at local level, but generally it was seen as a ‘more comprehensive’ source than other employer databases; (although a minority of users preferred to use information from regional employer surveys, on the basis that they contained more timely information).

Many consultees ‘mistrusted’ the ‘top down’ modelling approach for generating local data, with some raising specific concerns about large local ‘losses’/‘gains’ in jobs associated with the replacement of the Annual Employment Survey by the ABI. There was a strong desire, expressed across all regions, to be able to access more detailed data from the ABI – in order to undertake local work on employment, clusters, etc.

³³ Apart from in London, it seems that relatively little use has been made of specially commissioned tables from the Census of Population.

³⁴ Some users expressed a desire for at least some 2001 Census of Population data to be made available more speedily.

³⁵ Identified by several consultees as worthy of a boost to provide more robust local data. The need for a facility to increase the number of ‘NES areas’ identified in the full NES data set was also raised by users relying on this sources for work on ‘Area Cost Adjustment’ calculations (used in various parts of the public sector to reflect local labour market variations).

³⁶ A widely recognised weakness of this source is the fact that not all businesses reach the VAT threshold. Such businesses are not included in the statistics. VAT registrations may include some businesses which have been in existence for quite some time, but have not formerly reached the VAT registration threshold.

³⁷ Nevertheless, a demand was evident for more spatially disaggregated population estimates and projections, and also estimates and projections disaggregated by other dimensions – notably ethnicity.

³⁸ Mentioned specifically in the London meeting as an input into work on population projections; (international migration has a significant impact on London’s population).

- ◇ *DTI Regional Competitiveness Indicators* – bringing together a number of regional indicators in a timely fashion
- ◇ *DSS/DWP benefit statistics* – some interviewees recognised greater potential for the development and use of administrative records more generally; particularly as with such statistics there tends to be a ‘good’ spatial disaggregation and there are no problems of sampling error.
- ◇ *DfEE/DfES statistics on education and training* – generally accessed via Departmental Websites³⁹
- ◇ *DTLR housing statistics*
- ◇ *DTLR transport statistics*
- ◇ *Vital statistics*
- ◇ *Compendium of Health and Health Care Statistics* - a key information source for Public Health Observatories - referred to as ‘the Bible’ by one PHO interviewee.

On the basis of the regional meetings, it emerged that, in general, representatives from Government Offices were confined mainly to use of ONS and other government departmental sources, whereas interviewees from RDAs made reference to supplementing such sources with data from *private sector providers*. Indeed, half of respondents to the Web survey⁴⁰ indicated that they used commercial data suppliers). Here, key sources mentioned during consultation included:

- ◇ forecasting models – e.g. from CE, IER, BSL⁴¹; most made reference to the use of ‘impact analysis’ modules⁴²
- ◇ business and exports data (Dun and Bradstreet)
- ◇ estimates of claimant count and ILO unemployment at ward level⁴³
- ◇ geodemographic data and statistics associated with ‘drive time’ catchments – from CACI, Experian, etc
- ◇ income estimates - CACI
- ◇ population estimates from CACI
- ◇ relocations data (Prism)
- ◇ exports data (from Dun and Bradstreet)
- ◇ GOAD plans⁴⁴
- ◇ Estates Gazette group
- ◇ consultant reports (e.g. KPMG, McKinsey)
- ◇ employer databases.

³⁹ A key development here is LEASIS – already providing information on various aspects of school performance, pupil achievement, etc, for users in Government Offices. On the basis of the consultations conducted in the *Mapping Regional Data* project, there is likely to be a larger ‘market’ for such a system when it is made more generally accessible to a wider range of users.

⁴⁰ Including around two-thirds of local government respondents.

⁴¹ It was noted, however, that weaknesses in ONS data (e.g. AES, ABI, etc) feed into the quality of outputs from such models.

⁴² Sometimes referred to as ‘*what if*’ – i.e. what is the impact of a closure of a large firm on the regional economy?

⁴³ From Taylor Associates.

⁴⁴ Now owned by CACI or Experian.

Reference was also made to the purchase of ‘repackaged’ ONS data from private sector providers. ‘Repackaging’ in ‘interesting and innovative’ ways was seen as ‘adding value’ to the data. ONS data from private sector providers.⁴⁵ This exemplifies an increasing emphasis on *interpretation*, rather than solely on *provision*, of information. As one interviewee contended: ‘The *key test* of information is: “*Can it be used to make valued decisions, and so move forward?*”’.

For European comparative data, some users had used the limited amount of information contained in *Regional Trends*. Others had used *RCADE*,⁴⁶ while others turned to *Eurostat* or resorted to contacts in National Statistical Offices.

3.2 Primary Data Collection Activities

Use of information from a variety of data sources and of various types is widely recognised as a key feature of a comprehensive economic / social / environmental report at regional or sub-regional level. Primary research can provide tightly focused, specific quantitative and qualitative information, putting ‘flesh on the bones’ of information available from national sources.

From the Regional Meetings it emerged that, in terms of *primary data collection activities*, RDAs were more likely to engage in such activities than Government Offices. Some had a more cautious approach to surveys than others. Generally, primary data collection activities were engaged in:

- to *fill information ‘gaps’*, and/or
- to *provide timely information*.

The foremost example of primary data collection activities at regional (and sub-regional) level are the *household surveys* which were undertaken in many regions by TEC consortia, sometimes in conjunction with other partners, to provide information on progress towards National Learning Targets. The opportunity was also taken in many of these surveys to collect information on topics such as attitudes and barriers to learning, training needs and intentions, job search, etc. Generally, household survey information could be disaggregated to county and district levels, but there is no comparable information for other regions. Although Household Surveys have been undertaken in several of the regions of England, the surveys are not necessarily synchronised, and there are differences in content and methodology that further limit their comparability. In some regions such household surveys have been complemented by employer / business surveys. Extensive use is made of information from regional / local surveys. Such surveys are often used in preference to information from ‘official’ sources (such as the AES and ABI), because they have the advantage of *timeliness*, (although they suffer the disadvantage of lack of comparability between regions).

Other topics identified for surveys included:

- innovation capacity
- short-term business trends

⁴⁵ The example of the Local Futures Group was given.

⁴⁶ At the University of Durham.

- skills – needs and gaps.⁴⁷

A role was suggested for ONS in ‘fixing certain parameters’ for conducting surveys, and this view was endorsed at the Workshop, with a desire for ONS to act as a ‘central advice point’ – to provide guidance on conducting surveys, on classification issues, etc.

Other concerns were around the number of ‘players’ involved in survey work – each doing ‘their own bit’ and not necessarily contributing to ‘the big picture’. It was noted that, to date, the TECs were active in undertaking employer and household surveys, and it is not yet clear what approach the local LSCs will take.

⁴⁷ In the East Midlands, for example, the difficulty of gaining access to the DfES Employer Skills Survey data at local level (confidentiality is an issue here) was mentioned, and to fill the gap primary information collection was undertaken.

4. GAPS IN INFORMATION / INTELLIGENCE AND PRIORITIES

4.1 Introduction

What is a 'Gap'?

A 'gap' exists when there is a difference between 'current' and 'desired' positions. In the *Mapping Regional Data* project, a 'gap' is said to exist where currently available information sources do not meet user needs.

'Gapping' as a Dynamic Exercise

Since the information base is inherently dynamic, and user needs also change over time, 'gapping' is an ongoing exercise, which may be likened to a 'journey' rather than a 'destination'.

'Hidden Gaps'

From the consultations conducted, it emerged that there may be '*hidden gaps*' - i.e. some users may consider that there are 'gaps' because they have only partial knowledge of what is available. As one consultee pointed out: "we don't know what we don't know".

The importance of having a clear picture about whether and what data exist was a recurring theme in consultations – i.e. whether there really is a 'gap': in the words of one interviewee, "being ignorant about your ignorance is something well worth getting rid of". It should also be noted, however, that the ability of users to identify weaknesses in the information base may be positively associated with the depth of their knowledge, such that "the more you know about something, the more you know about the problems".

Plugging Gaps

'Gaps' may not be about a complete absence of information / intelligence *per se*, but rather about:

- *improving access to existing sources* - it needs to be borne in mind that some users may face greater problems in accessing information / intelligence that exists than others. Those in the private sector reported particular difficulties and delays in accessing key sources (e.g. LFS, GHS, etc). Moreover, confidentiality constraints may mean that some information that does exist is not accessible to users, while in other instances there is perceived to be an unwillingness to make existing data available. Examples cited of sources in the latter category include Inland Revenue data and electricity consumption data.
- *enhancing the usability of existing sources* - Enhancing the usability of sources may entail: (1) ensuring that notes on the use of sources and on underlying assumptions are made available alongside the data, rather than in a previous version of the same publication or in a different publication; (2) a reduction in the elapsed time in making data available and / or responding to user queries; (3) enhancing the ability to manipulate data - e.g. making specific tables available in spreadsheet form, rather

than in PDF files (such that data have to be re-entered; (4) packaging data in such a way as to enhance links between sources.

- *making better use of existing sources* – including making better links to policy issues.

4.2 Key Gaps Identified

Reference has already been made to the sentiment that “we should not be ‘anoraks’, collecting information in an obsessional sort of way” (section 2.1). Rather, the emphasis should be on ensuring provision of the ‘data component’ in answering policy-related questions.

In general terms, a number of *key themes* emerged across topics and sources during the consultation process:

- *quality* – various sources were identified where it was felt that there was scope for quality to be improved
- *accuracy* – concerns emerged about the accuracy of certain data sources – particularly at sub-regional level
- *timeliness* – the lack of up-to-date information on key topics was a common refrain, and was seen as hampering policy development and monitoring⁴⁸
- *need for finer spatial disaggregation* – to provide opportunities for disaggregation and re-aggregation.

In a few instances, formal gapping exercises had been undertaken at regional level to inform the development of Regional Observatories.⁴⁹ Sometimes these have resulted gaps identified were generally extremely diverse, with few common themes.

A number of ‘key gaps’ issues recurred across regional meetings, interviews, and from the Web Survey, notably:

- the lack of *timely GDP data*⁵⁰ – suggestions were made that this gap could be filled by using more timely data on components of GDP (e.g. Inland Revenue data on salaries)
- inappropriate and outdated *industrial classification* system – users mentioned the need for an enhanced classification system to identify new sectors; (classification schema tend to ‘follow’ developments in structures, and yet users are often particularly interested in ‘new/’emerging’ sectors).
- the lack of ‘standard’ definitions for ‘creative industries’, ‘ICT-related’ industries, the ‘knowledge economy’, ‘management skills’, etc.⁵¹

⁴⁸ Some users would prefer information to be made available more speedily than currently, even if it meant that information having to be revised subsequently.

⁴⁹ The example of the work undertaken in the North West by the NWRIU is particularly notable here. A major gapping exercise has been undertaken, with over one hundred gaps identified, and agreed, by a series of Information Task Groups. These gaps have been classified according to ‘type’ (i.e. ‘primary gap’, ‘lobbying’) and are being prioritised. (See [Appendix 5](#) for selected examples of gaps identified.)

⁵⁰ One interviewee likened the current situation: “driving looking in the mirror”.

⁵¹ Some interviewees / respondents considered that a good deal of effort was expended by users in generating slightly different definitions, and that there is scope for adoption of ‘standard definitions’ – so as to enhance regional comparability of analyses.

- a general desire for a *larger LFS sample size*; (despite increases in sample size, some users recognise that information for some local areas [particularly small areas and rural areas] and on some topics [particularly when further dimensions of disaggregation are adopted] will remain limited.
- a lack of comprehensive information on *numbers of businesses*⁵²
- lack of up-to-date information on composition of the population by *ethnic group*⁵³
- lack of up-to-date information on *commuting flows*⁵⁴
- lack of information on *incomes* for small areas
- lack of comprehensive information on aspects of *e-business* and *e-society*⁵⁵
- a recognition that '*environmental*' data are generally the most disparate.

Other 'gaps' emerging included:

- need for better information on *innovation*
- improved *productivity* data
- desire for improved access to information on *patents, innovation* and *investment*
- more up-to-date information on *R&D*
- need to develop better indicators on *quality of life* (including pollution, congestion, noise, cleanliness, etc)
- improved *local transport* data, including reliable and up-to-date data on trip generation
- need for improved regional data on *FDI*
- need for improved and more disaggregated *import and export* data
- lack of claimant data disaggregated by *ethnic group*
- lack of information at sub-regional level on *disability* which includes severity and type of disability
- lack of information on *destinations* of those leaving education / training
- lack of information on company *recruitment patterns*
- lack of up-to-date data on the *self-employed*
- more timely information on *industrial dereliction*
- lack of data on a *workplace-base*⁵⁶
- lack of quantitative and qualitative evidence on *generic / core / transferable skills* – from employer and employee perspectives
- lack of consistent information on *IT user skills*
- a lack of information on *total government expenditure* in different regions / local areas

⁵² A need for improved information on business turnover was identified also.

⁵³ This was one of the most frequently cited gaps, by users from a wide cross-section of organisations.

⁵⁴ At the local and micro area level, users are dependent on commuting flow data from the decennial Census of Population.

⁵⁵ Including measures such as take-up of the internet, access to broadband and take-up of electronic (local and central) government services. Some information is provided on a frequent basis by the *MORI Technology Tracker* but sub-national disaggregation is limited. Many users are dependent on information from local household / employer surveys.

⁵⁶ The suggestion was forwarded that LFS data could be made available on a workplace-base, as well as on a residence-base, at regional and sub-regional levels.

- need for information on *languages spoken*
- a lack of data on detailed *local government / public sector employment*
- need for a wider range of information on *social exclusion*
- lack of statistics on *single / non-statutory homeless*
- need better information on *housing affordability*⁵⁷
- lack of information on *mental health*
- lack of information on *community care*
- more detailed information on *greenhouse gas emissions* and on *air pollutants*
- need for more comprehensive and robust information on *rural areas*⁵⁸
- lack of good quality data on *European regions*
- need for more *scenario* work
- information on the *impact of growth/decline in other regions* on the region in question⁵⁹

More generally, key gaps were identified in knowledge about surveys being undertaken at regional level - particularly those undertaken by the higher education sector. There is recognition that a large number of surveys being undertaken, and lack of co-ordination between surveys, may lead to ‘survey fatigue’. With the development of Regional and Local Observatories, it was considered that there is scope for more *regional and local consultation* on data collection / publication issues.

Restrictions (real or perceived) on data sharing were also identified as a problem, as was a lack of ‘data standards’. The issue of ‘data standards’ also relates to *kite marking* – one interviewee suggested that information / intelligence sources could be kite marked, in an attempt to provide guidance to users about quality standards and which source(s) to use for particular applications when alternatives were available.

4.3 Priorities

‘Necessary’ and ‘Sufficient’ Information / Intelligence

In prioritising ‘gaps’ it is important to consider what is ‘*necessary*’ and what is ‘*sufficient*’ – and concentrate attention where existing data is ‘*necessary*’ but not ‘*sufficient*’, in order to achieve ‘*necessary and sufficient*’ information/intelligence.

Key Principles

While some specific information / intelligence ‘gaps’ were mentioned by consultees, the key priorities emphasised were about *making better use of existing data* and *enhancing co-*

⁵⁷ This is a key issue in high cost areas (such as London), whereas numbers of voids is higher up the policy agenda in some other regions.

⁵⁸ It was noted that information is often sparser, and less robust, for rural areas than for urban areas. DEFRA commissioned an exercise in 2001 examining information needs and gaps in rural areas.

⁵⁹ This ‘gap’ was rarely mentioned. It emphasises the importance of ‘standing back’ and not losing sight of inter-regional links, at a time when many users are focusing on their own region and component sub-regions.

ordination of data collection activities in order to achieve greater consistency in information between regions / local areas - so aiding inter-area comparability.

Hence, five *key principles* may be identified underlying the provision / release / use of any data set:

- (a) *accessibility* – information should be made as accessible, and as easy to use, as possible
- (b) *classification* – ‘standard’ definitions should be adopted and used as much as possible
- (c) *co-ordination* – there is an important role to be further developed by ONS here
- (d) *dissemination* – users need to be clear where information comes from and to know about its provenance (including methodology and assumptions)
- (e) *timeliness* – users need data in a timely fashion.

Specific Key Priorities

More specifically, the *key priorities* to emerging from the consultations conducted were:

- 1) *GDP* – there is a need for more timely and robust data, and perhaps for greater use to be made of ‘proxy’ indicators at sub-regional and local level
- 2) *Numbers of / details of businesses* – there is a lack of comprehensive information on numbers of businesses (and also numbers of business start-ups) at regional and sub-regional scales. (Users suggested that access to ABI information at individual level would go some way to easing current problems encountered in research / analyses / policy work relating to businesses.)
- 3) *Ethnicity* – there is a lack of up-to-date, detailed and complete information on population numbers by ethnic group – at all spatial scales. Results from the 2001 Census of Population will help fill this gap, but the information for 2001 will quickly become outdated. Concern was also expressed about the lack of ‘completeness’ of ethnicity information on administrative records.⁶⁰⁾
- 4) *Traffic / commuting flows* – up-to-date and comprehensive information on the ‘origins’, ‘destinations’ and ‘timing’ of flows is needed to aid understanding of, and planning for, changing patterns of where people live and work,⁶¹ which are fundamental to the understanding of spatial patterns of economic development (an issue rising up the policy agenda) and for Regional Planning Guidance.
- 5) *Local income data* – for use in ‘social inclusion’ and ‘economic competitiveness’ domains, as an important ‘cross-cutting’ piece of information, to be used alongside data on other topics.⁶²

⁶⁰ In some instances, the ‘not known’ ethnic category contains more observations than minority ethnic group categories.

⁶¹ One respondent considered the lack of more detailed questions on journey-to-work and working patterns in the 2001 Census of Population a ‘missed opportunity’, and thought that there may be scope for including more questions on when, where and how people travel-to-work in the LFS. (There are some questions of this type in the National Travel Survey, but the sample size and scope for spatial disaggregation is much more limited.)

⁶² Plans to include an ‘income’ question in the 2001 Census of Population were abandoned following the Census Test.

- 6) *E-commerce, and penetration of and access to ICT* – there is a need for comprehensive sources of spatially-referenced information in a field that is recognised as being extremely dynamic, in order to answer questions such as:
- how many people have access to the Internet?
 - how many companies sell on-line?
 - how much business is done on-line?
 - what type of business is done on-line?
 - how many people have broad band connections (as opposed to modem connections)?

As emphasised above, the information base and user needs are both dynamic, so over time new needs, uses and gaps will emerge. Nevertheless, in this context of dynamism, most of the specific gaps identified above are of reasonably long-standing, and have been identified by a range of users from different context.

Appendix 1: AIDE MEMOIRE USED AT REGIONAL MEETINGS

Questions for Interviews

Representatives of RDAs / Regional Observatories / Regional Offices / local government / local and regional agencies

A. About You and Your Organisation

1. **Interviewee(s)**
 - a) name, address, contact details
 - b) job title, role, activities
2. **Your organisation(s)**
 - a) name of organisation
 - b) function and activities of organisation – at regional / sub-regional scales

B. Information / Intelligence NEEDS

3. **Nature of information / intelligence needs**
 - a) what *topics* do you need information / intelligence on? – prompt for additional topics, if necessary
 - b) at what *geographical scale(s)* do you require data (e.g. regional / unitary authority / other sub-regional / micro area scale)?
 - c) *why* do you need such data? (i.e. how do data needs relate to organisational functions)
4. **Changing information / intelligence needs**
 - a) in what ways have your information / intelligence needs changed over recent years? and why?
 - b) can you identify any *new / emerging data needs*?
 - c) what are the *reasons* underlying these changes?

C. USES of Information / Intelligence

5. **Data sources used**
 - a) what *key data sets / sources* do you currently use at regional / sub-regional scales?
 - b) what are the strengths and weaknesses of these data sets / sources?
 - c) what do you do with information from each of these data sets / sources (e.g. generation of indicators, use for monitoring purposes, linking information from different sources to generate intelligence, etc)? – prompt for details of indicators, methodology used in generation, etc.
 - d) can you point to any examples of ‘good/best practice’ in use of data to generate information / intelligence? (either within your own organisation or elsewhere – prompt for contact names/details)
 - e) what are the key weaknesses in current provision given your current and likely future information / intelligence needs?

6. Access to information / intelligence and data collection activities

- a) *where* do you obtain data? and with what *frequency*?
- b) are there any particular barriers to accessing these data?
- c) are there regional/sub-regional data sources that you know exist and would like to use, but cannot access?
- d) do you undertake any *primary data collection* activities? if so, *what* information do you collect? *how* do collect it? *why* do you collect it? how do you analyse it?

D. GAPS in Information / Intelligence

7. Identification and Prioritisation of Gaps

- a) have you undertaken any recent exercises to identify (and prioritise) information / intelligence gaps? if so, what was the nature of the exercise? what were the main results? – if possible, obtain a copy of the results
- b) what *types* of data do you need, but cannot find? (i.e. what topics do you need to know about, and at what geographical scales, but cannot find/access?)
- c) are there key gaps in data sources you currently use? (e.g. ‘missing’ questions in surveys)
- d) how would you *prioritise* the gaps identified? (i.e. which are most important / less crucial)?

8. Filling Gaps

- a) what steps (if any) have you taken to fill the data gaps you have identified? (e.g. funding regional/local ‘boosts’ to surveys, use of proxy measures / generating estimates, etc) – prompt for details of methodologies employed
- b) how successful would you say these steps have been in filling gaps? what are the strengths and drawbacks of the approach(es) adopted? and, if appropriate, what obstacles thwarted attempts to fill gaps?
- c) do you have any *recommendations* for filling gaps? (e.g. recommendations to data collection agencies in terms of improving coverage / disaggregation of current sources, facilitating access to data, etc)
- d) are you aware of *new data collection / publication activities* (either within your own organisation or elsewhere) that will help to fill gaps? – prompt for details and associated contacts names / details

Are there any other comments you wish to make regarding the availability and use of regional/(sub-regional) intelligence data?

Appendix 2: WORKSHOP - 2nd August 2001⁶³

Over 30 representatives from local government, central government, Regional Development Agencies, Government Offices for the Regions, Regional Observatories, higher education, research institutes and private sector consultancies attended the Workshop. Attendees were drawn from all regions of England.

KEY ISSUES RAISED

Simon Pitts (DTLR) gave a brief introduction to the Project.
Anne Green gave a presentation on *Progress to Date*.⁶⁴

Issues Arising in Discussion following the Sessions on the ‘Introduction to the Project’ and ‘Progress to Date’

- There are ‘mapping’ exercises ongoing at national level (by Regional Information Branch) and at regional levels (for/by Regional Observatories).
- There is a need for a catalogue that is ‘*useful*’ and ‘*used*’.
- Perhaps it is appropriate in the first instance to focus the catalogue on the *statutory purposes of RDAs* – these are wide-ranging.
- There is a need to identify what data are *most useful* at local and regional levels.
- *Timeliness* – It is clear that a Catalogue will get out of date quite quickly. This project / Catalogue is intended as a ‘starting point’; not as a ‘one-off’ piece of work.
- The Catalogue is not intended to be *prescriptive*: it will not ‘dictate’ that certain data sources *must* be used.
- While there is a desire for *greater standardisation*, the importance of making use of local knowledge to ‘innovate’ at local level was also considered important.

Issues Raised in the Discussion Group Sessions

Introduction

There were 2 Discussion Group sessions – focusing on:⁶⁵

1. *Information/Intelligence GAPS*
2. *Priorities*

⁶³ See Annex 1 for the *Workshop Programme*.

⁶⁴ See Annex 2 for an outline of the presentation.

⁶⁵ See Annex 3 for pre-circulated guidance on *Issues for Discussion*.

Discussion Group A

INFORMATION / INTELLIGENCE GAPS

- 1) Issue of *qualifications* was not included in the list presented in the ‘Progress to Date’ session. This is an important topic.
- 2) There is a need for information on the *workings of the labour market* – i.e. recruitment, turnover and redundancies; also, skill shortages – current and future.
- 3) *Rural issues* should be a ‘cross-cutting’ theme. It was pointed out that in terms of data availability data for rural areas was often characterised by small sample sizes – therefore, the geographical scale imposed greater difficulties.
- 4) The importance of *health issues* was emphasised – including the English Health Survey.
- 5) There is an issue of *lack of consistency* in coding of ethnicity on training statistics. (This is an example of where data are available now, but could be made more usable.) The issue was raised that ONS could play a pro-active role in acting as a key contact point for people to consult regarding classification and coding schemas.
- 6) There is also scope for a greater role on co-ordination of other surveys – e.g. ESS.
- 7) People have access to a greater range, and more detailed data, than previously – largely because of what is available on the Web. It was stated that sometimes there is “superfluous detail” – an example is the lack of information on ‘key benefits’ in Neighbourhood Statistics.
- 8) There was some debate about my rankings of need for data in the order (1) economic, (2) social, (3) environmental. It was claimed that environmental data was less well marshalled than other sources. There is less consistency in collection and aggregation of data relating to environmental features. It was pointed out that there was a ‘sparseness’ of point-based information on air quality.
- 9) There is an issue of the need for intelligence on what *impact* has something had.
- 10) The changing role of Regional Assemblies was outlined. There must be many indicators that are common to all regions.
- 11) There is a distinction between (1) contextual and (2) performance indicators – but the two are related to each other.
- 12) There is a good deal of policy interest in *diversity* between regions.
- 13) Other issues mentioned:
 - Self-employment and links to micro-businesses
 - Housing – vacant dwelling and second homes; tenure stock; unfit dwellings
 - Local retail statistics
 - Informal economy

PRIORITIES

Priorities mentioned by those present:

- 1) *Timely release* of data is crucial – the example was given of local release of LFS data taking a long time.

- 2) *LFS* – would like to aggregate across 5 quarters to create local area data (notably employment data for sub-groups).
- 3) There needs to be more emphasis on *accessibility, co-ordination* and *dissemination*.
- 4) In terms of classification issues (e.g. management skills, creative industries and cluster work) would like more *central guidance*.
- 5) More effort could be placed on ‘ruralising’ data – i.e. creating good quality data sources for rural areas.
- 6) Emphasis should be on *making better use of existing sources*. Examples were given of administrative records using different definitions (e.g. of ethnicity). Even with central government, there is more scope for ‘standardisation’ of information provision.
- 7) Some participants would like information on *claimant count disaggregated by ethnic group*.
- 8) There is scope for *making better use of existing sources*.
- 9) *Denominators* are needed for Best Value/other indicators.

5 key principles were identified underlying the provision/release/use of any data set:

- A. *Accessibility* – scope for accessibility of data to be enhanced.
- B. *Classification* – some standard definitions (e.g. knowledge industries, urban and rural areas, skills, etc).
- C. *Co-ordination* – it is important for ONS to have a role here.
- D. *Dissemination* – users need to know where data comes from.
- E. *Timeliness* – users need data in a timely fashion (e.g. GDP).

Discussion Group B

INFORMATION / INTELLIGENCE GAPS

- 1) There may be more gaps in terms of awareness of what data are available, rather than ‘real’ data gaps.
- 2) *Geo-referencing* of data is essential in order to obviate problems of changing regional/sub-regional boundaries.
- 3) Details of data collection, and technicalities surrounding data collection methodologies are often difficult to understand. There is a need to make explanations of methodologies more accessible to the general user; (the idea of a course was proposed here, with users being introduced to the strengths and weaknesses of different data sources).
- 4) It is important not to lose sight of the data collected at local level by local communities. Consideration needs to be given to whether, and how, such data can be used at regional level.
- 5) *Access* to, and *cost* of, data sources is a key issues for some users in the private sector.
- 6) Many users are asked to ‘monitor’ developments, but there is no information available to them for this.

- 7) There may be gaps in terms of information/intelligence on some sub-groups – e.g. ethnic minorities, homeless, etc.
- 8) Some of the key gaps related to quality of life, environmental and transport data. Data on environmental sustainability is the most disparate.
- 9) There is a desire for workplace-based data, as well as residence-based data, from sources such as the LFS, GHS, etc.

PRIORITIES

- 1) Joined-up working between Departments and institutions is important in establishing the kinds of data that are available and where they can be accessed.
- 2) There is a need to ensure greater consistency in data collection between regions. It is recognised that much data is collected at the regional and sub-regional levels, and it is important to ensure that such data are comparable.
- 3) Availability of good metadata is important – users want information on regularity of data collection, sample size issues, disaggregations available.⁶⁶
- 4) There is a need for both ‘top-down’ and ‘bottom-up’ approaches in data collection and analysis. There are some benefits to be derived from the availability of uniform coding and classification practices, but it is also important for there to be some local flexibility to enable a ‘bottom-up’ approach, taking account of regional and local differences.
- 5) There is scope for improved ‘packaging’ of data across different themes.

Discussion Group C

INFORMATION / INTELLIGENCE GAPS

General

- 1) It was felt that most data needed were being collected but that the main gaps came in the way data were packaged – i.e. getting the appropriate data for the need. For example, this could be part of a county rather than for a whole county, but the data were only available by county.
- 2) Gaps are shown in the inflexibility of data – as policy areas/geographies change data may not be available in these new areas. There is a need to have data that can be disaggregated to the lowest level so that it can be broken down and reassembled into new units.
- 3) There is gap in joining up the sorts of data people might be using at regional level and those being used at a sub-regional level. For example, using GDP at a regional level but household disposable income may be a better measure at the local level: joining up these two sets of data is an issue.
- 4) Where data are not available data may be modelled to fill those gaps. Models are not generally provided by Government departments – it is down to the user to produce them / have them commissioned.

⁶⁶ The Catalogue is intended to provide such data.

Specific Data Gaps

- 5) A difficulty in finding environmental data
- 6) No. of business start ups. Data is available on VAT registered businesses but not on those who are not registered- those just starting out may take several years to rise to the level need to be VAT registered.
- 7) A need for data on the skills of people within a certain industrial sector. The example was given that in Berkshire there is a high number of IT companies, but the people employed are not skilled computer people but production line staff who put parts together and pack boxes. It would be useful to know how many other professions are employed by a sector; for example how many accountants do IT companies employ? This data isn't currently available.
- 8) Need for management skills level and recruit data – who, and how, companies recruit.

PRIORITIES

- 1) The biggest priority was felt to be timeliness across all data. People would rather have data that was still fit for purpose but arrived earlier (even if it was subject to revision later) to be better informed of the latest trends and therefore, make better informed decisions.
- 2) 'Ways of improving existing information sources in order to overcome current shortcomings' was seen to be the highest priority from the pre-circulated list (see Appendix 3)
- 3) Data on e-commerce was seen as a new priority- this area is expanding rapidly and with more business being conducted online there was a need for this data to measure business performance and survival.
- 4) A need for LFS and Skills Surveys to be enhanced to provide better data at the local level was highlighted.
- 5) 'More central guidance on regional/local data collection activities' (noted in the pre-circulated list – see Appendix 3) was also seen as important.

Issues raised in plenary discussion

- For some survey and point-based data sources, sampling is too sparse to gain a good overview at the local level.
- Some users might wish to consider greater use of *proxy indicators* and *synthetic indices* in which survey data are used alongside other data to derive indices at local level. The example was given of the 'Area Satisfaction Index' developed at the University of York with Survey of English Housing data.
- There is scope for making better use of administrative records.
- There is a need for local income data, and disappointment was expressed in some quarters concerning the omission of an income question in the 2001 Census of Population.
- The issue of the need for *projections* was raised, but it was considered that ensuring the reliability of the basic information for input to projections was important to get right first.

- Some attendees considered that they had a lack of knowledge concerning what information existed at regional and sub-regional level.

The Catalogue – inviting views

- Justin Wickens outlined the way in which StatBase was used by the ONS to group data and metadata according to 13 themes.⁶⁷ It was noted that there were currently 2,921 datasets, with a hundred or so pending release. See: <http://www.statistics.gov.uk/statbase/datasets2.asp>
- It was noted that an *ONS Data Catalogue* was being developed, but the person responsible for this was unable to be present at the Workshop, and the scope, nature and timing of this exercise was unclear at the time of the Workshop.⁶⁸ It was considered that it would be necessary to *co-ordinate* activities for the ONS and DTLR Catalogue.⁶⁹ A suggestion was made from the that it might
- Simon Musgrave from the UK Data Archive underlined the need to work according to international standards in terms of metadata and cataloguing. It was noted that the UK Data Archive was a large repository of data sets, and that it was possible to use search engines to look for particular data sources and questions contained therein.
- It was pointed out that the DTLR Catalogue would be paper-based in the first instance. Design of an electronic interface would be the subject of a separate contract.

⁶⁷ See Appendix 4.

⁶⁸ Justin Wickens (ONS), Simon Pitts and Wendy Russell Barter (DTLR) met with Terry Cook (ONS) to discuss the ONS Catalogue on 8 August.

⁶⁹ A suggestion was made from the floor that it might be possible to have different electronic ‘front ends’ with the same underlying data.

Annex 1:
Workshop Programme

Reviewing the availability, and use, of regional intelligence data

Workshop – Thursday 2nd August 2001

Venue: Room G/F/H
Department for Transport, Local Government and the Regions
Eland House
Bressenden Place
LONDON
SW1E 5DU

10.45 *Arrival and coffee*

11.00 *Welcome and Introduction to the Workshop* (Chris Hasluck, IER, Warwick)

11.10 *'Mapping the Availability, and Use, of Regional Intelligence Data Project – A DTLR Perspective* (Simon Pitts, DTLR)

11.20 *Progress to Date* (Anne Green, IER, Warwick)

- outline of methodology and main issues from work undertaken so far

12.00 *Introduction to Discussion Group 1* (Chris Hasluck, IER, Warwick)

12.05 *Discussion Group 1*

- Information/intelligence gaps:
 - what are the key information/intelligence gaps?
 - how are these gaps being filled?
 - are there 'gaps' missing from those identified in the project so far?

12.35 Lunch

13.20 *Introduction to Discussion Group 2* (Chris Hasluck, IER, Warwick)

13.25 *Discussion Group 2*

- Priorities:
 - what are/should be the priorities for filling gaps?
 - is there consensus between users about the gaps?
 - is it possible to agree what are the key information/intelligence gaps?

13.55 *Report Back from Discussion Groups*

14.40 *The Catalogue – inviting views* (Chair, Chris Hasluck, IER; Introductory Overview from Justin Wickens, ONS)

15.10 *Questions*

15.30 *Tea and Departure*

Annex 2:

Presentation on *Progress to Date* by Anne Green

REVIEW OF THE AVAILABILITY, AND USE, OF REGIONAL (& SUB-REGIONAL) INTELLIGENCE DATA

Issues Arising from
PROGRESS TO DATE

Anne E. Green
Email: A.E.Green@warwick.ac.uk
Tel: 024 7652 4113

1. ABOUT THE PROJECT

Project is concerned with:

1. reviewing the **availability**, form and **use** of regional and sub-regional data sources (from ONS / government departments / private sector / other - including primary research) relevant to:
 - *the delivery of regional policy*
 - *purposes of RDAs*
2. **identifying GAPS** in data coverage - and **associated priorities**
3. **development of a data catalogue providing details of sources and guidance on the effective use of data**

2. METHOD

Stage 1: Identification, review and assessment of existing data sources:

- Desk research
- Interviews with key informants - including regional meetings
- Survey - see http://www.warwick.ac.uk/ier/dtldr_intro.html

Stage 2: Preparation of draft Data Catalogue

Stage 3: Production and presentation of Final Catalogue

Timescale end April 2001 – January 2002

3. NEEDS, USES AND GAPS

Information/Intelligence NEEDS

- nature of needs - topics, geographical scale, etc
- changing needs - new/emerging needs

USES of Information/Intelligence

- data sources used - assessment of strengths and weaknesses
- access and data collection issues - including barriers to access

GAPS

- identification and prioritisation
- steps taken to fill gaps

4. CONTEXT (1)

Renewed emphasis on regional (and sub-regional) information

- *'rebirth' of regional agenda since 1997 General Election*
- *increasing interest in regional/sub-regional/local policies* ➔ *disaggregated data for area-based initiatives*
- *evidence-based policy*

Changing government/governance structures

- *advent of RDAs*
- *increasing diversity of work/interests of government offices for the regions*
- *regional and local observatories / public health observatories*
- *emphasis on partnership working - wide range of players*

5. CONTEXT (2)

Wide range and volume of ongoing activity

- ? *expansion and dynamism of regional / local information base*
- work of PAT 18
- development of ONS Neighbourhood Statistics
- other ONS developments in local and regional statistics
- NOMIS developments
- private sector - 'adding value' to existing sources / generating new sources
- surveys / other information gathering activities at regional and local levels

6. RATIONALE UNDERLYING NEEDS FOR INTELLIGENCE

Information/intelligence needs are *driven* by:

- establishing baselines
- setting targets
- monitoring performance
- benchmarking
- evaluation and assessment
- preparing and supporting bids - "seductive power" of numbers

Beware of *information 'anoraks'* and "*analysis, paralysis*"!

- need to avoid collecting information for information's sake: emphasis on an *'issues and questions'* approach - to influence decisions and policies; rather than a *'data driven'* approach

7. TOPICS - Introduction

Broad range and depth of topic coverage -
issue of where to draw 'boundaries' for the catalogue

Themes/'domains' - in order of importance:

- 1 *economic competitiveness*
- 2 *social inclusion*
- 3 *environmental sustainability*

Cross-cutting issue:

- *spatial planning/prioritisation*

Links between themes

8. KEY TOPICS (1)

Key topics on which information/intelligence is required by different individuals/organisations include:

- *economy* - including:
GDP, 'business' data - encompassing job generation / start-ups, trade - imports and exports, investment, innovation, clusters, R&D, financial information
- *labour market* - including:
employment structure, skills, unemployment
- *population* - encompassing:
size, structure, number of households, migration
- *environment* - including:
land use issues, environmental quality, waste, planning issues

9. KEY TOPICS (2)

Key topics (continued):

- *quality of life* - linking across domains
- *health* - link to social and economic indicators
- *crime* - community safety
- *housing* - issues of need, links to RPG
- *tourism / culture / sport*
- *transport and travel* - including congestion
- *accessibility issues* - to jobs, services, ICT, etc
- *attitudinal information* - including social capital
- *rural issues*

10. GEOGRAPHIES

New 'regional landscape' requires 'flexible geographies'

Emerging needs for:

- *macro* (regional) level data
- *micro* level data

Standard / Non-standard geographies

- *administrative* geographies - counties / unitaries / districts
- *'local economies'* - functionally-defined areas
- *local policy areas* cutting across standard geographies

Inter-area comparisons (for benchmarking purposes)

- other English/UK regions
- EU regions and other international comparisons

11. SOURCES (1)

Use made of a wide range of information/intelligence sources

ONS sources

- *regional compendia* - Regional Trends, Regions in Figures, DTI Regional Competitiveness Indicators
- *Economic Trends, Financial Trends, etc*
- *First Releases*
- *Neighbourhood Statistics* - “welcome development”
- *NOMIS* - Web access welcomed (but ‘too structured’ for some)
- *Census of Population* - crucial underlying source at micro level
- *LFS* - increasing use, but enhanced sample size unlikely to meet user requirements
- *ABI*; issue of access to *IDBR*
- *JUVOS* - unemployment data

ONS ‘seal of approval’

12. SOURCES (2)

Administrative sources

- DSS/DWP benefit statistics
- potential for greater use of administrative records

Other Departmental Sources - including:

- DfES statistics on education
- DTLR housing statistics

Primary data collection:

- *regional / local surveys* - including:
Household Surveys and Employer / Business Surveys

Private sector providers

- labour market projections
- local income estimates
- statistics associated with ‘drive time’ catchments

13. ATTRIBUTES – ASSESSMENT OF DATA SOURCES

- A. Thematic coverage
- B. Geographical coverage and spatial disaggregation
- C. Other disaggregations
- D. Data collection/generation methodology
- E. Frequency of data collection/timeliness/updateability
- F. Use and interpretation of data
- G. Availability and access
- H. Future plans/development

14. KEY ISSUES

Timeliness:

- “driving by looking in the mirror”
- ‘users want data *now*’

Robustness:

- small sample sizes and large standard errors - data are ‘stretched’ at sub-regional level, so limiting possibilities for looking at trends over time ➡
‘Is it noise, or is it a trend?’
- size of denominator

Classification issues

- *SIC / SOC* - definitions do not necessarily match requirements - particularly in ‘new’/‘emerging’ sectors; lack of comparability between alternative definitions
- *skills* - e.g. ‘management skills’, ‘IT skills’, etc

15. IDENTIFYING GAPS

A ‘journey, not a destination’ - ‘gapping’ is an ongoing exercise

Hidden gaps:

- a ‘gap’ may exist in the context of partial knowledge about what data are available
- “being ignorant about your ignorance is something well worth getting out of”

Weaknesses in the information base associated with depth of knowledge:

- “the more you know about something, the more you know about the problems”

Issues of Access:

- problems in accessing information/intelligence which exists
- confidentiality

16. PRIORITIES - GENERAL ISSUES

Themes:

- quality
- accuracy
- up-to-dateness
- need for finer spatial disaggregation - opportunities for disaggregation and reaggregation

Stepping back:

- need for greater *co-ordination* of local / regional / other work - notably surveys; inconsistent methodologies and assumptions may hamper ‘joining up’
- need for *consistency* in data collection
- are data *necessary* and *sufficient*?
- need for intelligence to understand the *drivers of change*

17. KEY PRIORITIES (?)

1. **GDP:** timeliness, robustness, spatial disaggregation
 2. **Numbers of / details of businesses** lack of comprehensive information on number of businesses at regional / sub-regional scales; lack of access to ABI at individual level; also a related issue of numbers of business start-ups
 3. **Ethnicity:** lack of up-to-date information on population numbers by ethnic group / ethnic diversity; related issue of asylum seekers
 4. **Traffic/commuting flows** need for more information on 'origins', 'destinations' and 'timing' of flows
 5. **E-commerce;** Penetration of, and Access to, ICT
- N.B. this is a dynamic area

18. OTHER PRIORITIES

Improved information/intelligence on:

- Skills: future requirements
- Projections and '*What if*' scenario work: tracing possible impacts of changes on regional / local economies
- Government funding / expenditure: for regions / sub-regions
- Investment
- Innovation
- Trade
- Productivity
- Quality of life
- Energy consumption
- Income

◆ *Impact on the region of growth/decline in other regions*

19. ENHANCING USEABILITY

- Notes on use of sources and on underlying assumptions
- Reduced elapsed time in making data available and responding to queries
- Greater geographical disaggregation
- Enhancing ability to manipulate data
- 'Packaging' data in such a way as to enhance links
- Making data available on a workplace-base and a residence-base
- Signposting
- Kitemarking
- Health warnings

Annex 3:

Pre-circulated briefing notes for Discussion Groups

Reviewing the availability, and use, of regional intelligence data

Workshop – Thursday 2nd August 2001

BACKGROUND TO DISCUSSION GROUP SESSIONS

The Workshop Programme includes two linked Discussion Group sessions:

1. Focusing on *Information/Intelligence GAPS*
2. Assessing *PRIORITIES* for filling such gaps

Please consider these issues (and, if possible, consult with your colleagues to take account of their views) prior to the Workshop

In preparation for **Discussion Group 1: Information/Intelligence GAPS**, you are invited to consider:

- 1) Your NEEDS for information/intelligence and the sources you *USE* to fill those needs. More specifically, please consider:
 - a) the *themes / topics* on which you require information/intelligence – and any key *links* between those topics
 - b) the *geographical scale(s)* at which you require information/intelligence (i.e. regional / sub-regional / local; standard / non-standard geographical units)
 - c) any *emerging* needs (i.e. where there is a new / increasing need for information / intelligence – either on new topics, new links between topics and/or at different geographical scales)
- 2) The SOURCES USED in an attempt to meet your information/intelligence needs. Here, please think about the full range of types of sources used – e.g. ONS sources, information available from central government departments, other regional / local sources, information/intelligence available from private sector providers.
- 3) In order to identify GAPS, please assess how well the sources used meet your needs; (although the focus in this discussion is on ‘gaps’, you may wish to identify some examples of information/intelligence sources which meeting your needs well). In thinking about ‘gaps’, please consider:
 - d) the *shortcomings* of existing information sources (in terms of robustness, quality, coverage, consistency/comparability between geographical areas, timeliness, disaggregations available, etc)
 - e) do you attempt to fill gaps, and if so, how? (i.e. using proxy measures, use of data relating to a different geographical scale)
 - f) those needs which you cannot meet because you know of *no available data source* containing the information required
 - g) problems in *accessing* information you know exists

In preparation for ***Discussion Group 2: PRIORITIES for filling Information / Intelligence GAPS***, you are invited to consider:

- 4) The *priorities* for filling gaps – including:
 - h) ways of improving existing information sources in order to overcome current shortcomings
(i.e. increasing sample size for surveys, introducing new questions, more timely release of data, etc)
 - i) making better use of existing sources
 - j) new data collection instruments
 - k) more central information provision
 - l) more central guidance on regional/local data collection activities
 - m) improving access to sources
 - n) ways of enhancing the usability of existing sources
- ❖ Please come with your organisation's **'top 2' priorities** for filling gaps.
- ◆ Each group will be asked to decide on their **'top 5' priorities** for the Report Back session.

Annex 4:

A review of the Availability, and use of Regional and Sub-regional Data - StatBase Perspective

31 July 2001

1. StatBase uses 13 Themes to group data and metadata relating to the three StatBase entities, namely Analyses, Sources and Products. These Themes are:

- **Crime and Justice**
- **Health and Care**
- **Population and Migration**
- **Education and Training**
- **Natural and Built Environment**
- **Social and Welfare**
- **Labour Market**
- **Transport, Travel and Tourism**
- **Agriculture, Fishing and Forestry**
- **Commerce, Energy and Industry**
- **Economy (The)**
- **Other**
- **Compendia and Reference**

The themes themselves are then broken down to subject level which again is broken down into topic level. Each lower level allows for a more specific entity linking. A graphic representation of how this works can be seen at

<http://www.statistics.gov.uk/statbase/DirectoryTree.asp>

2. Data is obtained from a variety of sources, the main methods of data provision are

- Provided directly from Government Statistical Service (GSS) providers
- StatBase staff viewing departmental websites and contacting data owners for permission to reproduce data from those websites on StatBase
- Reproducing data from printed publications, i.e. Press Releases, hardcopy publications

Each dataset can be linked to as many Theme/Subject/Topic levels as necessary. All data are sourced to suppliers and if necessary links are provided from StatBase data to supplying organisations website.

3. The level of geographic disaggregation is determined by the supplying organisation. StatBase itself only reproduces the geographic parameters set by the supplier.

4. All the themes within StatBase have associated datasets apart from Compendia and Reference. As of 31 July 2001 there are 2921 datasets with a hundred or so pending release. See

<http://www.statistics.gov.uk/statbase/datasets2.asp>

Frank Perry

On-line Services

Communication Division

Office for National Statistics

01329 813267 (GTN 3042)

Appendix 3: WEB-BASED SURVEY QUESTIONNAIRE

Data Needs, Uses and Gaps

This survey is designed to collect information on intelligence *needs, uses* and *gaps* for a review of regional and sub-regional data sources relevant to:

- the delivery of regional policy, and to
- the purposes of Regional Development Agencies.

The aim of the research is to improve knowledge of, and access to, regional and sub-regional data for ALL users and providers of such data. The results of the survey are intended to feed into the development of a data catalogue providing details of sources and guidance on the effective use of data at regional and sub-regional levels. The results will also be used to inform and prioritise the work of government agencies in filling information gaps.

This survey is being undertaken by the University of Warwick on behalf of the Department for Transport, Local Government and the Regions (formerly DETR).

A. Background information

This section includes questions relating to your job, organisation and contact details, and the activities you undertake. There is also a question on involvement in working groups / user groups.

1. Respondent details

Organisation:	
Postal address:	Building/Office No./Unit No.: _____ Street: _____ District: _____ City/Town: _____ Postcode: _____
Contact person:	Name: _____ Position in organisation: _____ E-mail address: _____ Telephone: _____
Date completed:	/ /2001

2. About your organisation and its activities

Type of organisation (tick box that best describes organisation)

- | | | | |
|--|--------------------------|---------------------------------------|--------------------------|
| central government department | <input type="checkbox"/> | local enterprise agency | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| devolved administration | <input type="checkbox"/> | private sector training organisation | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| NGO | <input type="checkbox"/> | NTO | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| government office - regional level | <input type="checkbox"/> | charity | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| RDA | <input type="checkbox"/> | other voluntary sector | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| regional / local observatory | <input type="checkbox"/> | private sector research consultancy | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| other regional body (eg: Regional Assembly, regional 'network' etc.) | <input type="checkbox"/> | other private sector business | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| local government | <input type="checkbox"/> | further education institute | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Learning and Skills Council | <input type="checkbox"/> | higher education / research institute | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| other (please describe) | <input type="checkbox"/> | | |

B. Information needs and uses

We wish to gain a picture of the topics on which you need regional and sub-regional intelligence – now and in the future, and the types of spatial and other disaggregations needed.

3. On what *topics* is regional and sub-regional data and intelligence *needed* for your decision-making / policy-related / operational activities?
 (please identify both current importance and likely future importance of topics by typing in a number on a 1-to-4 scale where 1 is ‘extremely important’, and 4 is ‘not important’, leave blank those topics that are ‘not applicable’.)

Topic	Regional		Sub-regional	
	Current Importance	Future Importance	Current Importance	Future Importance
Economic development (e.g. GDP, investment)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Technology/innovation	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Business development, competitiveness, investment	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Business confidence / public attitudes	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Pay & earnings	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Employment structure	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Unemployment and labour market participation	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Skills	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Education & training: participation / achievement	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Education & training provision	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Demographics	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Social inclusion, poverty & deprivation	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Housing	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Planning	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Land use	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Environmental quality	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Tourism/culture/leisure	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Transport	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Health	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Crime/justice	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Holistic reports ([sub-]regional overview e.g. <i>Regional trends</i>)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other (<i>please describe</i>)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Regional – Current _____

Regional – Future _____

Sub-regional – Current _____

Sub-regional – Future _____

4. At what spatial level do you **USE** data and intelligence? (please tick all that apply)

(N.B. Data and intelligence on certain topics are not available for all spatial disaggregations identified)

Topic	Level of spatial disaggregation													
	Micro-area (e.g. ward, postcode sector)	County	Unitary authority	Local authority district	Local Learning and Skills Council area	TTWA	Local policy area (e.g. New Deal for Communities area, regeneration area)	Other local areas' – e.g. user-defined	Region	England	Great Britain	United Kingdom	European Union	Other inter-national (e.g. OECD)
Economic development (e.g. GDP, investment)														
Technology/innovation														
Business development, competitiveness, investment														
Business confidence / public attitudes														
Pay & earnings														
Employment structure														
Unemployment and labour market participation														
Skills														
Education & training: participation / achievement														
Education & training provision														
Demographics														
Social inclusion, poverty & deprivation														
Housing														
Planning														
Land use														
Environmental quality														
Tourism/culture/leisure														
Transport														
Health														
Crime/justice														
Holistic reports ([sub-]regional overview e.g. <i>Regional Trends</i>)														
Other (please describe)														

If you have any comments on particular topics on which spatially-disaggregated data and intelligence are *used* please feel free to append such comments to this survey.

5. Do you USE disaggregations of the following topics by any of the dimensions shown in the column headings?
(please tick all that apply)

Topic	Disaggregation								
	Gender	Age	Ethnic group	Disability	Industry	Occupation	Qualification level	Economic position	Duration
Pay & earnings									
Employment structure									
Unemployment & labour market participation									
Skills									
Education & training: participation / achievement									
Demographics									
Social inclusion, poverty & deprivation									
Housing									
Health									
Crime & justice									

If you have any comments on these (or other) non-spatial disaggregations *used*, please feel free to append such comments to this survey.

6. What sources do you use to obtain information and intelligence at regional and sub-regional scales?
 (please tick all that apply in the first column, and in subsequent columns indicate how well each source meets your needs.)

Data source	Use (tick box)	How well do the sources used meet your needs? please tick relevant box, (where 1 is 'very well' and 4 is 'not at all well'.)			
		1	2	3	4
		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
National databases operated by the public sector (e.g. NOMIS, Land Registry, ONS)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Paper-based publications and reports published by ONS / government departments	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Websites of central government departments and agencies	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Local government (e.g. research and intelligence units in county councils/local authorities)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Regional Observatories / Public Health Observatories / Local Observatories	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Commercial data suppliers (e.g. CE, BSL, Dunn and Bradstreet, market researchers, consultants, etc)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Trade / professional and employer / employee organisations	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
NTOs / sectoral organisations	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Overarching national organisation (e.g. TUC, CBI)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
International public sector agencies (e.g. Eurostat, ILO)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
ESRC Data Archive / MIMAS (University of Manchester)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Digital boundary data	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Within own organisation	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other (please describe)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Please provide any comments on sources where your score on 'how well the source meets your needs' is 3 or 4.

C. Information gaps and associated priorities

From the answers to the questions in this section we hope to derive a picture of existing *gaps* in intelligence data at (1) regional scale (question 8) and (2) sub-regional scale (question 9), and whether and how you attempt to fill these gaps.

7. **From your own perspective, what do you consider to be the most significant *gaps* in intelligence data at the REGIONAL scale? (N.B. question 8 covers the sub-regional scale)**
 (e.g. lack of information on a certain topic, weaknesses/shortcomings data collection methodologies, poor data quality, etc.)
How do you endeavour to fill these *gaps* at the REGIONAL scale?
 (e.g. own attempts to generate estimates to fill gaps, use of proxy indicators, commissioning of own surveys, etc.)
 (please list in order of priority, with 1 as highest priority)

Priority	Description of gap	Description of attempts to fill gaps
1	_____	_____
	_____	_____
	_____	_____
2	_____	_____
	_____	_____
	_____	_____
3	_____	_____
	_____	_____
	_____	_____

Please note any other comments you have on how these gaps could be filled, (you may wish to append an extra sheet at the end of the survey).

8. From your own perspective, what do you consider to be the most significant *gaps* in intelligence data at the SUB-REGIONAL scale?
 (e.g. lack of information on a certain topic, weaknesses/shortcomings data collection methodologies, poor data quality, etc.)
 How do you endeavour to fill these *gaps* at the SUB-REGIONAL scale?
 (e.g. own attempts to generate estimates to fill gaps, use of proxy indicators, commissioning of own surveys, etc.)
 (please list in order of priority, with 1 as highest priority)

Priority	Description of gap	Description of attempts to fill gaps
1	_____	_____
	_____	_____
	_____	_____
2	_____	_____
	_____	_____
	_____	_____
3	_____	_____
	_____	_____
	_____	_____

Please note any other comments you have on how these gaps could be filled, (you may wish to append an extra sheet at the end of the survey).

9. Would you be prepared to speak to a member of the research team in more detail about *data needs, uses and gaps* (either by telephone or e-mail correspondence)?

Yes

No

Thank you for completing this survey.

Please complete the on-line questionnaire at <http://www.warwick.ac.uk/ier/> ... or fax this completed form to Anne Green at 024 7652 4241 or post to Anne Green, Institute for Employment Research, University of Warwick, Coventry CV4 7AL.

Appendix 4: REPORT ON WEB-BASED SURVEY

**Data Needs, Uses and Gaps -
Uses of and views of regional and sub-regional data: Analysis
of the Web Survey**

February 2002

Prepared by David Owen (CRER) and Anne Green (IER), University of Warwick

1. Introduction

This Appendix reports the detailed results of a Web Survey of the use of regional and sub-regional data.

Respondents

Overall, 119 responses were received to the survey (more than one individual replied from some organisations).

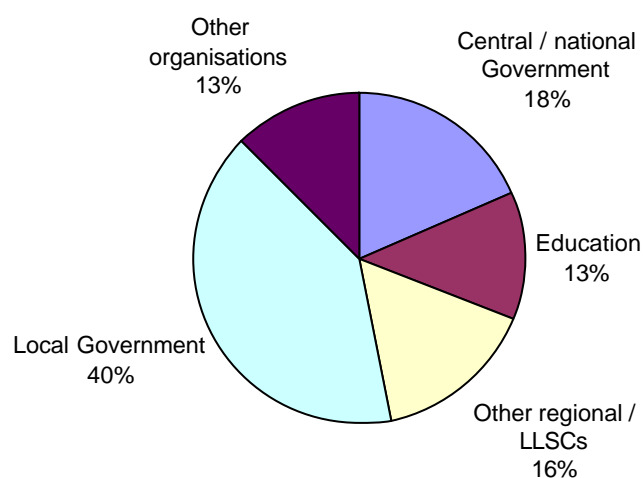
The affiliation of respondents is detailed in Table 1.1.

Table 1.1: Affiliation of survey respondents

<i>Respondent category</i>	<i>Number</i>
Central government department	21
Charity	1
Devolved administration	1
Further education institution	1
Government Office Regional office	1
Higher education/research institute	14
Learning and Skills Council	18
Local government	48
Private sector consultancy	1
Other, including (one each): Black voluntary sector skills development agency; Cancer Registry, NHS; Careers Service (part of Connexions partnership); Central Bank; NDPB; Professional Membership Institute; Sub-regional economic partnership	13
<i>Total</i>	<i>119</i>

For the purposes of this report, respondents have been grouped into 5 broad types, as depicted in the pie chart. Local government was responsible for two-fifths of responses, with (nearly) a further fifth coming from central and devolved government. Other regional organisations and (local) Learning and Skills Council(s) was the next largest category of respondents.

Figure 1.2: Respondents by broad category



2. Topics of interest

Respondents reported an interest in a wide range of topics.

Table 2.1: All respondents: Percentage for whom regional or sub-regional data is extremely or very important, by topic

<i>Topic</i>	<i>Regional</i>		<i>Topic</i>	<i>Sub-regional</i>	
	<i>Current</i>	<i>Future</i>		<i>Current</i>	<i>Future</i>
Demographics	72.3	73.9	Demographics	79.0	83.2
Employment structure	70.6	75.6	Employment structure	78.2	83.2
Unemployment and labour market participation	70.6	76.5	Unemployment and labour market participation	77.3	84.0
Social inclusion, poverty and deprivation	67.2	70.6	Social inclusion, poverty and deprivation	77.3	80.7
Economic development (e.g. GDP, investment)	59.7	62.2	Economic development (e.g. GDP, investment)	67.2	73.1
Skills	59.7	64.7	Skills	67.2	73.1
Holistic reports	56.3	63.0	Education & training: participation/achievement	64.7	72.3
Education & training: participation/achievement	54.6	59.7	Pay & earnings	63.9	67.2
Pay & earnings	51.3	57.1	Holistic reports	63.0	69.7
Business development, competitiveness, investment	46.2	51.3	Business development, competitiveness, investment	55.5	61.3
Education and training provision	43.7	46.2	Transport	55.5	60.5
Transport	43.7	49.6	Education and training provision	52.9	58.0
Housing	42.0	42.9	Housing	52.1	54.6
Planning	38.7	40.3	Planning	50.4	52.9
Technology/innovation	37.0	42.9	Land use	49.6	53.8
Tourism/culture/leisure	36.1	40.3	Health	48.7	54.6
Land use	33.6	36.1	Crime/justice	48.7	53.8
Environmental quality	33.6	42.0	Technology/innovation	47.9	54.6
Health	33.6	39.5	Tourism/culture/leisure	47.9	52.9
Business confidence/public attitudes	31.9	38.7	Environmental quality	47.1	54.6
Crime/justice	26.9	31.9	Business confidence/public attitudes	42.0	52.1
Other	10.9	11.8	Other	13.4	13.4

Overall, the topics reported as ‘very important’ or ‘important’ for the largest numbers of respondents, at both regional and sub-regional levels, currently and in future, were:

- demographics
- employment structure
- unemployment and labour market participation
- social inclusion, poverty and deprivation.

Each of these topics was identified as being important by at least two-thirds of respondents at regional level, and by at least three-quarters at sub-regional level.

The topics appearing as next most important in the rankings are:

- economic development
- skills.

These same topics are identified as amongst the most important by most of the broad categories of respondents, although there are some differences in detail (see Tables 2.2-2.6).

Other topics (such as tourism, culture, leisure; health; crime / justice) are of specific interest to a smaller proportion of respondents.

Table 2.2: Central and national government: Percentage for whom regional or sub-regional data is extremely or very important, by topic

<i>Topic</i>	<i>Regional</i>		<i>Topic</i>	<i>Sub-regional</i>	
	<i>Current</i>	<i>Future</i>		<i>Current</i>	<i>Future</i>
Social inclusion, poverty and deprivation	77.3	86.4	Unemployment and labour market participation	72.7	86.4
Demographics	72.7	81.8	Social inclusion, poverty and deprivation	68.2	77.3
Unemployment and labour market participation	72.7	86.4	Demographics	68.2	81.8
Employment structure	72.7	86.4	Employment structure	68.2	77.3
Skills	63.6	68.2	Skills	59.1	63.6
Economic development (eg GDP, investment)	63.6	72.7	Holistic reports	54.5	63.6
Holistic reports	54.5	63.6	Economic development (eg GDP, investment)	50.0	63.6
Education & training: participation/achievement	54.5	63.6	Education & training: participation/achievement	45.5	59.1
Business development, competitiveness, investment	54.5	59.1	Transport	45.5	50.0
Pay & earnings	50.0	54.5	Land use	45.5	50.0
Technology/innovation	45.5	50.0	Tourism/culture/leisure	40.9	50.0
Transport	40.9	45.5	Pay & earnings	40.9	45.5
Education and training provision	40.9	54.5	Business development, competitiveness, investment	36.4	45.5
Land use	36.4	40.9	Housing	36.4	40.9
Housing	36.4	45.5	Environmental quality	36.4	50.0
Environmental quality	31.8	45.5	Planning	36.4	36.4
Tourism/culture/leisure	31.8	40.9	Technology/innovation	31.8	45.5
Planning	31.8	31.8	Education and training provision	31.8	50.0
Health	27.3	40.9	Health	31.8	45.5
Business confidence/public attitudes	22.7	36.4	Crime/justice	27.3	36.4
Other	18.2	18.2	Business confidence/public attitudes	22.7	31.8
Crime/justice	9.1	18.2	Other	18.2	18.2

Regional current: other topics mentioned <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Exports of goods/trade Jobcentre vacancy data Travel to Work & Travel to Learning Use of IT Waste (Arising and Management) Welsh Language 	Sub-regional current: other topics mentioned <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Basic Skills Needs Jobcentre vacancy data
Regional Future: other topics mentioned <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Business formation/survival rates Jobcentre vacancy data Travel to Work & Travel to Learning 	Sub-regional future: other topics mentioned <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Basic Skills Needs

Whereas for all respondents, most topics were slightly more likely to be identified as ‘very important’ or ‘important’ at sub-regional level than at regional level, this was not apparent for Central Government respondents.

Table 2.3: Education: Percentage for whom regional or sub-regional data is extremely or very important, by topic

Topic	Regional		Topic	Sub-regional	
	Current	Future		Current	Future
Employment structure	73.3	86.7	Employment structure	80.0	93.3
Demographics	73.3	80.0	Social inclusion, poverty and deprivation	80.0	80.0
Unemployment and labour market participation	66.7	80.0	Demographics	73.3	80.0
Social inclusion, poverty and deprivation	66.7	73.3	Unemployment and labour market participation	66.7	80.0
Economic development (eg GDP, investment)	60.0	66.7	Holistic reports	60.0	60.0
Housing	60.0	60.0	Pay & earnings	60.0	66.7
Holistic reports	60.0	66.7	Skills	53.3	66.7
Skills	53.3	66.7	Economic development (eg GDP, investment)	53.3	60.0
Pay & earnings	53.3	66.7	Housing	53.3	53.3
Education & training: participation/achievement	46.7	46.7	Planning	46.7	46.7
Health	46.7	46.7	Technology/innovation	46.7	53.3
Education and training provision	40.0	46.7	Education & training: participation/achievement	46.7	53.3
Planning	40.0	46.7	Health	46.7	46.7
Environmental quality	40.0	46.7	Education and training provision	40.0	46.7
Technology/innovation	33.3	40.0	Environmental quality	40.0	46.7
Business development, competitiveness, investment	33.3	53.3	Business development, competitiveness, investment	33.3	53.3
Land use	33.3	40.0	Land use	33.3	46.7
Transport	33.3	46.7	Transport	33.3	46.7
Crime/justice	33.3	33.3	Crime/justice	33.3	33.3
Tourism/culture/leisure	26.7	26.7	Tourism/culture/leisure	26.7	26.7
Business confidence/public attitudes	20.0	20.0	Business confidence/public attitudes	20.0	26.7
Other	6.7	6.7	Other	20.0	20.0

<p>Regional current: other topics mentioned</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Prices, consumer's expenditure, trade 	<p>Sub-regional current: other topics mentioned</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Commuting Data relevant to performance of local government policies and initiatives Prices, Consumers' Expenditure, Trade Up-to-date sub-regional occupational structure
<p>Regional future: other topics mentioned</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Prices, consumer's expenditure, trade Housing market trends 	<p>Sub-regional current: other topics mentioned</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Commuting Housing market trends Prices, Consumers' Expenditure, trade Up-to-date sub-regional occupation

For respondents in the higher and further education sector, housing emerges as a more important topic than for respondents overall. There is a very high level of continuing interest in employment structure.

Table 2.4: Other regional bodies / LLSCs: Percentage for whom regional or sub-regional data is extremely or very important, by topic

Topic	Regional		Topic	Sub-regional	
	Current	Future		Current	Future
Skills	84.2	84.2	Skills	89.5	89.5
Education & training: participation/achievement	84.2	84.2	Education & training: participation/achievement	89.5	94.7
Employment structure	78.9	84.2	Social inclusion, poverty and deprivation	89.5	89.5
Unemployment and labour market participation	78.9	84.2	Employment structure	84.2	89.5
Education and training provision	78.9	78.9	Unemployment and labour market participation	84.2	89.5
Demographics	73.7	73.7	Education and training provision	84.2	84.2
Social inclusion, poverty and deprivation	73.7	73.7	Demographics	84.2	84.2
Holistic reports	57.9	57.9	Economic development (eg GDP, investment)	84.2	89.5
Economic development (eg GDP, investment)	47.4	52.6	Holistic reports	73.7	73.7
Business confidence/public attitudes	42.1	47.4	Pay & earnings	73.7	73.7
Pay & earnings	36.8	36.8	Business confidence/public attitudes	68.4	73.7
Tourism/culture/leisure	36.8	36.8	Business development, competitiveness, investment	63.2	68.4
Business development, competitiveness, investment	31.6	36.8	Technology/innovation	47.4	52.6
Technology/innovation	26.3	31.6	Transport	47.4	47.4
Transport	26.3	31.6	Health	47.4	47.4
Health	21.1	26.3	Tourism/culture/leisure	42.1	42.1
Planning	10.5	10.5	Crime/justice	36.8	36.8
Environmental quality	10.5	10.5	Planning	31.6	36.8
Crime/justice	10.5	15.8	Environmental quality	21.1	21.1
Housing	5.3	5.3	Housing	21.1	26.3
Land use	5.3	5.3	Land use	21.1	21.1
Other	5.3	5.3	Other	5.3	5.3

Regional current: other topics mentioned Economic and skills forecasting	Sub-regional current: other topics mentioned Economic and skills forecasting
Regional future: other topics mentioned Regional accounts and modelling	Sub-regional future: other topics mentioned Information to enable economic and skills modelling

Given the predominance of respondents from local Learning and Skills Councils in this category, it is perhaps unsurprising to see Skills and Education & training: participation and achievement appear at the top of the rankings.

Table 2.5: Local government: Percentage for whom regional or sub-regional data is extremely or very important, by topic

Topic	Regional		Topic	Sub-regional	
	Current	Future		Current	Future
Demographics	70.8	68.8	Demographics	87.5	89.6
Unemployment and labour market participation	66.7	68.8	Unemployment and labour market participation	85.4	87.5
Economic development (eg GDP, investment)	66.7	64.6	Social inclusion, poverty and deprivation	85.4	87.5
Employment structure	64.6	66.7	Employment structure	83.3	85.4
Social inclusion, poverty and deprivation	64.6	66.7	Economic development (eg GDP, investment)	83.3	87.5
Pay & earnings	58.3	66.7	Housing	77.1	77.1
Business development, competitiveness, investment	56.3	60.4	Pay & earnings	77.1	83.3
Planning	56.3	58.3	Transport	77.1	81.3
Transport	56.3	62.5	Business development, competitiveness, investment	75.0	77.1
Skills	54.2	58.3	Skills	75.0	81.3
Holistic reports	54.2	62.5	Land use	75.0	75.0
Housing	52.1	50.0	Education & training: participation/achievement	75.0	81.3
Land use	50.0	50.0	Planning	72.9	75.0
Education & training: participation/achievement	45.8	52.1	Crime/justice	70.8	77.1
Technology/innovation	41.7	50.0	Environmental quality	68.8	77.1
Environmental quality	41.7	54.2	Holistic reports	66.7	77.1
Tourism/culture/leisure	41.7	47.9	Tourism/culture/leisure	64.6	70.8
Business confidence/public attitudes	37.5	43.8	Health	62.5	66.7
Health	37.5	41.7	Technology/innovation	60.4	68.8
Crime/justice	35.4	41.7	Education and training provision	56.3	58.3
Education and training provision	29.2	27.1	Business confidence/public attitudes	50.0	66.7
Other	8.3	10.4	Other	10.4	10.4

<p>Regional current: other topics mentioned</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Business Start Ups/Survival/Growth • Ethnicity information post 1991 census (of great interest) • Income • Urban-rural interdependence • Sectoral data • State of the Countryside – Countryside Act 	<p>Sub-regional current: other topics mentioned</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Agricultural Employment - 'old' MAFF reports • Anti social behaviour and other non criminal activity and equalities • Business Start Ups/Survival/Growth • Ethnic Minority data sets • ICT use • Household analyses • Worklessness • ICT / digital divide • Household incomes • Journey to work data - ward estimates by age/gender • Output • Income • Resident Perceptions/Priorities (Survey work) • Sectoral data • Social services data - benefits data • Disability • Ethnic communities
---	---

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Regional future: other topics mentioned</i> • Business Start Ups/Survival/Growth • Impact of e-commerce • Changing journey-to-work patterns • Renewable energy • Sectoral data • State of the Countryside – Countryside Act 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Sub-regional current: other topics mentioned</i> • Agricultural Employment • Business Start Ups/Survival/Growth • Household analyses, Worklessness, • R&D • Investment • International migration • Sectoral data
--	--

By contrast with central government, for local government respondents there is a greater interest in data at sub-regional level than at regional level.

Transport is a topic of greater importance for local government respondents than for respondents in aggregate.

Table 2.6: Other types of organisation: Percentage for whom regional or sub-regional data is extremely or very important, by topic

Topic	Regional		Topic	Sub-regional	
	Current	Future		Current	Future
Employment structure	73.3	66.7	Employment structure	66.7	66.7
Unemployment and labour market participation	73.3	73.3	Demographics	66.7	66.7
Demographics	73.3	73.3	Unemployment and labour market participation	60.0	66.7
Holistic reports	60.0	66.7	Holistic reports	53.3	60.0
Education & training: participation/achievement	53.3	60.0	Education & training: participation/achievement	46.7	53.3
Education and training provision	53.3	53.3	Education and training provision	46.7	46.7
Social inclusion, poverty and deprivation	53.3	53.3	Social inclusion, poverty and deprivation	46.7	53.3
Economic development (eg GDP, investment)	46.7	46.7	Pay & earnings	46.7	40.0
Pay & earnings	46.7	46.7	Skills	40.0	46.7
Housing	46.7	46.7	Crime/justice	40.0	46.7
Skills	46.7	53.3	Housing	33.3	40.0
Transport	40.0	40.0	Transport	33.3	40.0
Crime/justice	40.0	40.0	Business development, competitiveness, investment	33.3	33.3
Business development, competitiveness, investment	33.3	26.7	Environmental quality	33.3	40.0
Environmental quality	33.3	33.3	Tourism/culture/leisure	33.3	40.0
Tourism/culture/leisure	33.3	33.3	Health	33.3	46.7
Health	33.3	40.0	Technology/innovation	33.3	26.7
Technology/innovation	26.7	26.7	Business confidence/public attitudes	33.3	33.3
Business confidence/public attitudes	26.7	33.3	Economic development (eg GDP, investment)	33.3	33.3
Planning	26.7	26.7	Planning	26.7	33.3
Other	20.0	20.0	Land use	26.7	40.0
Land use	13.3	20.0	Other	20.0	20.0

<p>Regional current: other topics mentioned</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All services provided by local government • Equality issues, particularly gender-related • IT • Finance • Construction • Voluntary sector • Pay in relation to qualifications and experience • Trading Standards & Consumer Awareness 	<p>Sub-regional current: other topics mentioned</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Black and minority ethnic voluntary sector • Equality issues, particularly gender • Pay in relation to qualifications • Trading Standards & Consumer Awareness
<p>Regional future: other topics mentioned</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Black and minority ethnic voluntary sector • Equality issues, particularly gender • Pay in relation to qualifications • Trading Standards & Consumer Awareness 	<p>Sub-regional future: other topics mentioned</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Black and minority ethnic voluntary sector • Equality issues, particularly gender • Pay in relation to qualifications • Trading Standards & Consumer Awareness

Holistic reports are ranked more higher in importance for respondents in this category than for respondents in aggregate.

3. Types of regional and sub-regional data used and geographical scales of interest

The following tables (Tables 3.1-3.22) show percentages of each broad category of respondent using data for each topic and at each geographical level identified in the survey.

Overall, the information presented confirms:

- The importance of *regional* scale information – on virtually all topics and by all broad categories of user (but particularly for local government and regional bodies/LLSCs).
- The importance of *micro-area* scale information – particularly for topics such as demographics; social inclusion, poverty and deprivation; and housing. Of the broad user categories, local government respondents express most interest in micro-area information.
- At *local* level substantial use is made of information for standard administrative units (i.e. counties, unitary authorities and local authority districts⁷⁰). Apart from an interest in data for LLSC amongst users in the regional body/LLSC category, somewhat less use is made of information for other local geographies (e.g. TTWAs and local policy areas⁷¹). However, responses elsewhere in the Web Survey (as well as from other consultations),⁷² indicate that there is an unmet demand for information for non-administrative areas.
- At *national* level, use is made of information for England, Great Britain and the UK.

Table 3.1: Economic development (per cent of respondents reporting information use)

<i>Geographical scale</i>	<i>Central govt</i>	<i>Education</i>	<i>Regional body/LLSC</i>	<i>Local govt</i>	<i>Other</i>	<i>Total</i>
Micro-area	22.7	6.7	21.1	27.1	46.7	25.2
County	45.5	33.3	52.6	70.8	46.7	55.5
UA	45.5	33.3	26.3	37.5	26.7	35.3
LAD	40.9	40.0	42.1	41.7	26.7	39.5
LLSC	9.1	6.7	73.7	8.3	26.7	21.0
TTWA	13.6	13.3	21.1	18.8	20.0	17.6
Local policy area	9.1	13.3	10.5	25.0	33.3	19.3
User defined	-	13.3	5.3	16.7	20.0	11.8
Region	63.6	46.7	78.9	68.8	66.7	66.4
England	54.5	33.3	57.9	45.8	66.7	50.4
GB	50.0	33.3	47.4	45.8	46.7	45.4
UK	63.6	33.3	47.4	56.3	60.0	53.8
EU	31.8	26.7	15.8	27.1	40.0	27.7
Other international	18.2	13.3	10.5	4.2	26.7	11.8

⁷⁰ Local government users tended to identify LAD/UA according to the status of their own authority.

⁷¹ This may reflect a lack of readily available information at these geographical scales.

⁷² As well as from other elements of the consultation process.

Table 3.2: Technology and innovation (per cent of respondents reporting information use)

<i>Geographical scale</i>	<i>Central govt</i>	<i>Education</i>	<i>Regional body/LLSC</i>	<i>Local govt</i>	<i>Other</i>	<i>Total</i>
Micro-area	9.1	13.3	10.5	14.6	46.7	16.8
County	27.3	6.7	31.6	41.7	26.7	31.1
UA	13.6	6.7	5.3	20.8	13.3	14.3
LAD	13.6	20.0	26.3	27.1	6.7	21.0
LLSC	-	-	42.1	4.2	13.3	10.1
TTWA	-	6.7	10.5	8.3	6.7	6.7
Local policy area	-	26.7	10.5	14.6	6.7	11.8
User defined	-	20.0	5.3	6.3	6.7	6.7
Region	40.9	46.7	47.4	45.8	33.3	43.7
England	31.8	20.0	36.8	31.3	33.3	31.1
GB	22.7	20.0	21.1	29.2	13.3	23.5
UK	40.9	13.3	26.3	33.3	26.7	30.3
EU	22.7	13.3	10.5	12.5	33.3	16.8
Other international	9.1	6.7	10.5	4.2	20.0	8.4

Table 3.3: Business development and competitiveness (per cent of respondents reporting information use)

<i>Geographical scale</i>	<i>Central govt</i>	<i>Education</i>	<i>Regional body/LLSC</i>	<i>Local govt</i>	<i>Other</i>	<i>Total</i>
Micro-area	18.2	13.3	10.5	22.9	33.3	20.2
County	31.8	20.0	47.4	56.3	33.3	42.9
UA	31.8	26.7	15.8	25.0	26.7	25.2
LAD	31.8	33.3	31.6	33.3	13.3	30.3
LLSC	4.5	6.7	73.7	6.3	13.3	17.6
TTWA	9.1	6.7	15.8	10.4	13.3	10.9
Local policy area	4.5	26.7	10.5	16.7	13.3	14.3
User defined	-	13.3	5.3	6.3	6.7	5.9
Region	40.9	40.0	73.7	52.1	33.3	49.6
England	-	-	-	-	-	-
GB	4.5	13.3	26.3	12.5	20.0	14.3
UK	45.5	6.7	31.6	31.3	33.3	31.1
EU	22.7	6.7	10.5	10.4	40.0	16.0
Other international	-	6.7	10.5	2.1	26.7	6.7

Table 3.4: Business confidence (per cent of respondents reporting information use)

<i>Geographical scale</i>	<i>Central govt</i>	<i>Education</i>	<i>Regional body/LLSC</i>	<i>Local govt</i>	<i>Other</i>	<i>Total</i>
Micro-area	13.6	6.7	10.5	14.6	26.7	14.3
County	13.6	6.7	47.4	39.6	33.3	31.1
UA	9.1	6.7	15.8	16.7	20.0	14.3
LAD	9.1	13.3	31.6	29.2	6.7	21.0
LLSC	-	6.7	63.2	4.2	6.7	13.4
TTWA	4.5	6.7	10.5	8.3	6.7	7.6
Local policy area	4.5	20.0	5.3	10.4	6.7	9.2
User defined	-	13.3	5.3	10.4	6.7	7.6
Region	18.2	13.3	68.4	47.9	53.3	42.0
England	4.5	6.7	42.1	22.9	33.3	21.8
GB	9.1	-	31.6	18.8	20.0	16.8
UK	18.2	-	31.6	22.9	33.3	21.8
EU	9.1	-	5.3	4.2	26.7	7.6
Other international	4.5	-	5.3	2.1	13.3	4.2

Table 3.5: Pay & earnings (per cent of respondents reporting information use)

<i>Geographical scale</i>	<i>Central govt</i>	<i>Education</i>	<i>Regional body/LLSC</i>	<i>Local govt</i>	<i>Other</i>	<i>Total</i>
Micro-area	13.6	-	5.3	27.1	20.0	16.8
County	36.4	26.7	57.9	60.4	40.0	48.7
UA	27.3	26.7	31.6	35.4	33.3	31.9
LAD	27.3	26.7	42.1	45.8	33.3	37.8
LLSC	4.5	-	57.9	8.3	20.0	16.0
TTWA	4.5	-	15.8	18.8	13.3	12.6
Local policy area	-	20.0	5.3	14.6	13.3	10.9
User defined	9.1	-	10.5	10.4	6.7	8.4
Region	54.5	40.0	73.7	72.9	53.3	63.0
England	50.0	40.0	52.6	47.9	46.7	47.9
GB	50.0	20.0	47.4	52.1	40.0	45.4
UK	50.0	13.3	36.8	47.9	33.3	40.3
EU	27.3	-	5.3	8.3	26.7	12.6
Other international	9.1	-	5.3	2.1	13.3	5.0

Table 3.6: Employment structure (per cent of respondents reporting information use)

<i>Geographical scale</i>	<i>Central govt</i>	<i>Education</i>	<i>Regional body/LLSC</i>	<i>Local govt</i>	<i>Other</i>	<i>Total</i>
Micro-area	18.2	33.3	42.1	50.0	46.7	40.3
County	50.0	73.3	57.9	62.5	40.0	58.0
UA	50.0	73.3	42.1	35.4	33.3	43.7
LAD	40.9	66.7	68.4	54.2	26.7	52.1
LLSC	4.5	13.3	84.2	8.3	26.7	22.7
TTWA	22.7	33.3	36.8	16.7	13.3	22.7
Local policy area	9.1	33.3	10.5	27.1	33.3	22.7
User defined	4.5	20.0	21.1	20.8	20.0	17.6
Region	63.6	60.0	73.7	70.8	53.3	66.4
England	45.5	53.3	63.2	43.8	40.0	47.9
GB	45.5	53.3	52.6	43.8	33.3	45.4
UK	59.1	20.0	42.1	39.6	53.3	42.9
EU	22.7	20.0	5.3	12.5	33.3	16.8
Other international	13.6	6.7	5.3	2.1	20.0	7.6

Table 3.7: Unemployment and the Labour Market (per cent of respondents reporting information use)

<i>Geographical scale</i>	<i>Central govt</i>	<i>Education</i>	<i>Regional body/LLSC</i>	<i>Local govt</i>	<i>Other</i>	<i>Total</i>
Micro-area	27.3	33.3	47.4	77.1	46.7	53.8
County	50.0	53.3	57.9	68.8	46.7	58.8
UA	54.5	60.0	47.4	35.4	40.0	44.5
LAD	50.0	46.7	78.9	66.7	26.7	58.0
LLSC	9.1	6.7	68.4	12.5	20.0	21.0
TTWA	27.3	20.0	42.1	33.3	13.3	29.4
Local policy area	9.1	26.7	10.5	35.4	20.0	23.5
User defined	9.1	13.3	26.3	27.1	20.0	21.0
Region	68.2	46.7	78.9	79.2	66.7	71.4
England	50.0	33.3	57.9	45.8	60.0	48.7
GB	50.0	20.0	52.6	54.2	46.7	47.9
UK	59.1	6.7	47.4	54.2	53.3	47.9
EU	22.7	6.7	5.3	12.5	33.3	15.1
Other international	18.2	6.7	5.3	2.1	20.0	8.4

Table 3.8: Skills (per cent of respondents reporting information use)

<i>Geographical scale</i>	<i>Central govt</i>	<i>Education</i>	<i>Regional body/LLSC</i>	<i>Local govt</i>	<i>Other</i>	<i>Total</i>
Micro-area	27.3	20.0	63.2	33.3	33.3	35.3
County	31.8	20.0	52.6	56.3	33.3	43.7
UA	27.3	26.7	36.8	31.3	26.7	30.3
LAD	27.3	46.7	68.4	45.8	26.7	43.7
LLSC	13.6	6.7	84.2	20.8	26.7	28.6
TTWA	9.1	13.3	36.8	10.4	13.3	15.1
Local policy area	4.5	33.3	15.8	22.9	20.0	19.3
User defined	4.5	20.0	26.3	10.4	13.3	13.4
Region	59.1	26.7	84.2	54.2	60.0	57.1
England	40.9	33.3	52.6	25.0	46.7	36.1
GB	45.5	20.0	47.4	33.3	33.3	36.1
UK	54.5	20.0	42.1	27.1	53.3	37.0
EU	13.6	6.7	10.5	8.3	26.7	11.8
Other international	9.1	6.7	10.5	2.1	13.3	6.7

Table 3.9: Education and training – participation / achievement (per cent of respondents reporting information use)

<i>Geographical scale</i>	<i>Central govt</i>	<i>Education</i>	<i>Regional body/LLSC</i>	<i>Local govt</i>	<i>Other</i>	<i>Total</i>
Micro-area	31.8	20.0	57.9	43.8	46.7	41.2
County	36.4	13.3	52.6	47.9	33.3	40.3
UA	31.8	13.3	42.1	33.3	26.7	31.1
LAD	31.8	26.7	68.4	45.8	26.7	42.0
LLSC	13.6	6.7	89.5	20.8	26.7	29.4
TTWA	9.1	6.7	31.6	8.3	13.3	12.6
Local policy area	4.5	33.3	21.1	31.3	13.3	22.7
User defined	4.5	26.7	26.3	12.5	6.7	14.3
Region	54.5	33.3	78.9	45.8	53.3	52.1
England	31.8	33.3	63.2	27.1	40.0	36.1
GB	40.9	26.7	42.1	25.0	26.7	31.1
UK	50.0	20.0	36.8	25.0	46.7	33.6
EU	9.1	6.7	5.3	8.3	26.7	10.1
Other international	4.5	6.7	5.3	4.2	13.3	5.9

Table 3.10: Education and training provision (per cent of respondents reporting information use)

<i>Geographical scale</i>	<i>Central govt</i>	<i>Education</i>	<i>Regional body/LLSC</i>	<i>Local govt</i>	<i>Other</i>	<i>Total</i>
Micro-area	22.7	13.3	47.4	33.3	33.3	31.1
County	22.7	13.3	47.4	41.7	26.7	33.6
UA	22.7	13.3	36.8	27.1	20.0	25.2
LAD	22.7	20.0	63.2	43.8	26.7	37.8
LLSC	9.1	6.7	89.5	20.8	26.7	28.6
TTWA	4.5	6.7	31.6	10.4	13.3	12.6
Local policy area	4.5	20.0	21.1	20.8	20.0	17.6
User defined	4.5	6.7	26.3	8.3	13.3	10.9
Region	31.8	26.7	73.7	37.5	46.7	42.0
England	13.6	13.3	57.9	20.8	46.7	27.7
GB	22.7	13.3	36.8	18.8	26.7	22.7
UK	31.8	6.7	36.8	16.7	40.0	24.4
EU	4.5	-	5.3	4.2	20.0	5.9
Other international	4.5	-	5.3	2.1	13.3	4.2

Table 3.11: Demographics (per cent of respondents reporting information use)

<i>Geographical scale</i>	<i>Central govt</i>	<i>Education</i>	<i>Regional body/LLSC</i>	<i>Local govt</i>	<i>Other</i>	<i>Total</i>
Micro-area	31.8	46.7	57.9	85.4	60.0	63.0
County	54.5	53.3	63.2	68.8	53.3	61.3
UA	50.0	60.0	47.4	43.8	46.7	47.9
LAD	45.5	66.7	73.7	66.7	53.3	62.2
LLSC	4.5	6.7	89.5	12.5	26.7	24.4
TTWA	13.6	13.3	42.1	27.1	13.3	23.5
Local policy area	13.6	33.3	21.1	43.8	33.3	31.9
User defined	13.6	33.3	26.3	35.4	26.7	28.6
Region	68.2	40.0	84.2	68.8	73.3	68.1
England	50.0	26.7	52.6	47.9	60.0	47.9
GB	54.5	26.7	47.4	56.3	53.3	50.4
UK	63.6	13.3	42.1	47.9	66.7	47.9
EU	22.7	-	5.3	10.4	46.7	15.1
Other international	13.6	-	5.3	2.1	20.0	6.7

Table 3.12: Social inclusion (per cent of respondents reporting information use)

<i>Geographical scale</i>	<i>Central govt</i>	<i>Education</i>	<i>Regional body/LLSC</i>	<i>Local govt</i>	<i>Other</i>	<i>Total</i>
Micro-area	36.4	40.0	47.4	85.4	66.7	62.2
County	36.4	33.3	42.1	62.5	46.7	48.7
UA	45.5	60.0	26.3	37.5	40.0	40.3
LAD	45.5	53.3	63.2	58.3	46.7	54.6
LLSC	9.1	6.7	63.2	6.3	26.7	18.5
TTWA	4.5	6.7	21.1	8.3	13.3	10.1
Local policy area	13.6	33.3	10.5	41.7	26.7	28.6
User defined	-	20.0	15.8	31.3	20.0	20.2
Region	54.5	26.7	68.4	75.0	53.3	61.3
England	45.5	40.0	52.6	50.0	46.7	47.9
GB	36.4	26.7	31.6	33.3	40.0	33.6
UK	36.4	20.0	36.8	37.5	46.7	36.1
EU	13.6	6.7	-	10.4	26.7	10.9
Other international	-	-	5.3	2.1	13.3	3.4

Table 3.13: Housing (per cent of respondents reporting information use)

<i>Geographical scale</i>	<i>Central govt</i>	<i>Education</i>	<i>Regional body/LLSC</i>	<i>Local govt</i>	<i>Other</i>	<i>Total</i>
Micro-area	36.4	26.7	10.5	70.8	46.7	46.2
County	27.3	20.0	10.5	50.0	26.7	32.8
UA	22.7	40.0	10.5	35.4	13.3	26.9
LAD	22.7	40.0	21.1	52.1	13.3	35.3
LLSC	-	-	15.8	2.1	20.0	5.9
TTWA	4.5	-	-	2.1	6.7	2.5
Local policy area	9.1	13.3	-	27.1	20.0	16.8
User defined	-	6.7	-	22.9	20.0	12.6
Region	27.3	40.0	21.1	50.0	40.0	38.7
England	27.3	40.0	15.8	35.4	33.3	31.1
GB	22.7	40.0	15.8	27.1	33.3	26.9
UK	27.3	26.7	15.8	25.0	33.3	25.2
EU	4.5	6.7	-	4.2	13.3	5.0
Other international	-	6.7	-	2.1	13.3	3.4

Table 3.14: Planning (per cent of respondents reporting information use)

<i>Geographical scale</i>	<i>Central govt</i>	<i>Education</i>	<i>Regional body/LLSC</i>	<i>Local govt</i>	<i>Other</i>	<i>Total</i>
Micro-area	9.1	13.3	5.3	50.0	20.0	26.9
County	22.7	6.7	10.5	54.2	20.0	31.1
UA	22.7	13.3	5.3	33.3	13.3	21.8
LAD	18.2	26.7	15.8	54.2	6.7	31.9
LLSC	-	-	10.5	4.2	-	3.4
TTWA	4.5	-	-	6.3	-	3.4
Local policy area	9.1	6.7	-	18.8	6.7	10.9
User defined	4.5	6.7	-	18.8	6.7	10.1
Region	27.3	13.3	15.8	45.8	13.3	29.4
England	18.2	13.3	10.5	25.0	6.7	17.6
GB	13.6	6.7	5.3	18.8	-	11.8
UK	18.2	6.7	10.5	16.7	6.7	13.4
EU	4.5	-	-	4.2	-	2.5
Other international	-	-	-	2.1	-	0.8

Table 3.15: Land use (per cent of respondents reporting information use)

<i>Geographical scale</i>	<i>Central govt</i>	<i>Education</i>	<i>Regional body/LLSC</i>	<i>Local govt</i>	<i>Other</i>	<i>Total</i>
Micro-area	4.5	13.3	5.3	58.3	26.7	30.3
County	27.3	6.7	10.5	50.0	26.7	31.1
UA	22.7	13.3	5.3	33.3	13.3	21.8
LAD	22.7	13.3	15.8	50.0	-	28.6
LLSC	-	-	10.5	2.1	-	2.5
TTWA	4.5	-	-	6.3	-	3.4
Local policy area	9.1	-	-	25.0	6.7	12.6
User defined	4.5	-	-	18.8	6.7	9.2
Region	27.3	13.3	15.8	45.8	13.3	29.4
England	18.2	13.3	10.5	27.1	6.7	18.5
GB	18.2	6.7	5.3	20.8	-	13.4
UK	18.2	6.7	10.5	20.8	13.3	16.0
EU	-	-	-	6.3	-	2.5
Other international	-	-	-	2.1	-	0.8

Table 3.16: Environmental quality (per cent of respondents reporting information use)

<i>Geographical scale</i>	<i>Central govt</i>	<i>Education</i>	<i>Regional body/LLSC</i>	<i>Local govt</i>	<i>Other</i>	<i>Total</i>
Micro-area	4.5	6.7	-	35.4	26.7	19.3
County	31.8	-	10.5	43.8	20.0	27.7
UA	27.3	13.3	5.3	31.3	6.7	21.0
LAD	22.7	6.7	15.8	43.8	6.7	26.1
LLSC	-	-	5.3	-	-	0.8
TTWA	-	-	-	4.2	-	1.7
Local policy area	9.1	6.7	-	18.8	-	10.1
User defined	4.5	-	-	22.9	6.7	10.9
Region	27.3	6.7	21.1	45.8	13.3	29.4
England	22.7	-	10.5	25.0	13.3	17.6
GB	22.7	-	5.3	27.1	6.7	16.8
UK	22.7	-	10.5	25.0	13.3	17.6
EU	-	-	-	8.3	6.7	4.2
Other international	4.5	-	-	4.2	-	2.5

Table 3.17: Tourism (per cent of respondents reporting information use)

<i>Geographical scale</i>	<i>Central govt</i>	<i>Education</i>	<i>Regional body/LLSC</i>	<i>Local govt</i>	<i>Other</i>	<i>Total</i>
Micro-area	9.1	-	-	25.0	26.7	15.1
County	40.9	6.7	26.3	50.0	26.7	36.1
UA	31.8	13.3	10.5	27.1	13.3	21.8
LAD	31.8	13.3	21.1	45.8	13.3	31.1
LLSC	-	6.7	42.1	4.2	13.3	10.9
TTWA	4.5	6.7	-	2.1	6.7	3.4
Local policy area	9.1	-	-	14.6	6.7	8.4
User defined	4.5	6.7	-	14.6	6.7	8.4
Region	36.4	13.3	42.1	54.2	33.3	41.2
England	18.2	-	26.3	29.2	20.0	21.8
GB	18.2	-	21.1	25.0	13.3	18.5
UK	18.2	-	21.1	22.9	20.0	18.5
EU	-	-	-	6.3	13.3	4.2
Other international	-	-	5.3	4.2	13.3	4.2

Table 3.18: Transport (per cent of respondents reporting information use)

<i>Geographical scale</i>	<i>Central govt</i>	<i>Education</i>	<i>Regional body/LLSC</i>	<i>Local govt</i>	<i>Other</i>	<i>Total</i>
Micro-area	13.6	-	5.3	47.9	26.7	26.1
County	36.4	13.3	26.3	56.3	33.3	39.5
UA	27.3	26.7	15.8	33.3	13.3	26.1
LAD	27.3	20.0	36.8	41.7	13.3	31.9
LLSC	-	6.7	31.6	2.1	13.3	8.4
TTWA	9.1	6.7	5.3	8.3	6.7	7.6
Local policy area	9.1	13.3	-	29.2	6.7	16.0
User defined	-	6.7	-	22.9	6.7	10.9
Region	45.5	20.0	36.8	54.2	26.7	42.0
England	31.8	6.7	10.5	22.9	20.0	20.2
GB	27.3	6.7	10.5	25.0	13.3	19.3
UK	22.7	6.7	21.1	20.8	20.0	19.3
EU	4.5	-	-	6.3	6.7	4.2
Other international	-	-	5.3	-	6.7	1.7

Table 3.19: Health (per cent of respondents reporting information use)

<i>Geographical scale</i>	<i>Central govt</i>	<i>Education</i>	<i>Regional body/LLSC</i>	<i>Local govt</i>	<i>Other</i>	<i>Total</i>
Micro-area	18.2	20.0	5.3	70.8	46.7	41.2
County	36.4	20.0	15.8	50.0	33.3	36.1
UA	27.3	26.7	10.5	35.4	20.0	26.9
LAD	27.3	26.7	26.3	52.1	26.7	37.0
LLSC	-	-	21.1	2.1	20.0	6.7
TTWA	-	-	-	4.2	6.7	2.5
Local policy area	9.1	20.0	-	29.2	26.7	19.3
User defined	4.5	6.7	-	16.7	20.0	10.9
Region	40.9	20.0	21.1	60.4	40.0	42.9
England	31.8	13.3	15.8	39.6	33.3	30.3
GB	13.6	13.3	5.3	27.1	26.7	19.3
UK	22.7	6.7	15.8	29.2	40.0	24.4
EU	4.5	-	-	14.6	13.3	8.4
Other international	4.5	-	5.3	2.1	6.7	3.4

Table 3.20: Crime and justice (per cent of respondents reporting information use)

<i>Geographical scale</i>	<i>Central govt</i>	<i>Education</i>	<i>Regional body/LLSC</i>	<i>Local govt</i>	<i>Other</i>	<i>Total</i>
Micro-area	18.2	13.3	10.5	64.6	40.0	37.8
County	36.4	6.7	10.5	47.9	33.3	32.8
UA	27.3	13.3	5.3	33.3	13.3	22.7
LAD	27.3	13.3	26.3	50.0	20.0	33.6
LLSC	-	-	21.1	2.1	13.3	5.9
TTWA	4.5	-	-	4.2	6.7	3.4
Local policy area	9.1	20.0	-	25.0	20.0	16.8
User defined	-	13.3	-	22.9	13.3	12.6
Region	31.8	13.3	21.1	50.0	20.0	33.6
England	27.3	20.0	10.5	33.3	20.0	25.2
GB	18.2	13.3	5.3	27.1	13.3	18.5
UK	27.3	6.7	10.5	25.0	20.0	20.2
EU	4.5	-	-	12.5	6.7	6.7
Other international	-	-	-	2.1	6.7	1.7

Table 3.21: Holistic reports (per cent of respondents reporting information use)

Geographical scale	<i>Central govt</i>	<i>Education</i>	<i>Regional body/LLSC</i>	<i>Local govt</i>	<i>Other</i>	<i>Total</i>
Micro-area	18.2	13.3	10.5	22.9	20.0	18.5
County	36.4	26.7	26.3	50.0	33.3	38.7
UA	40.9	26.7	15.8	22.9	13.3	24.4
LAD	36.4	26.7	36.8	41.7	20.0	35.3
LLSC	9.1	13.3	42.1	4.2	6.7	12.6
TTWA	13.6	6.7	10.5	4.2	6.7	7.6
Local policy area	13.6	20.0	5.3	10.4	13.3	11.8
User defined	9.1	6.7	5.3	8.3	6.7	7.6
Region	45.5	26.7	31.6	58.3	20.0	42.9
England	27.3	13.3	15.8	22.9	13.3	20.2
GB	36.4	20.0	15.8	22.9	6.7	21.8
UK	40.9	13.3	21.1	27.1	20.0	26.1
EU	4.5	20.0	-	10.4	13.3	9.2
Other international	-	6.7	5.3	2.1	13.3	4.2

Table 3.22: Other (per cent of respondents reporting information use)

<i>Geographical scale</i>	<i>Central govt</i>	<i>Education</i>	<i>Regional body/LLSC</i>	<i>Local govt</i>	<i>Other</i>	<i>Total</i>
Micro-area	4.5	-	-	6.3	6.7	4.2
County	-	6.7	-	6.3	20.0	5.9
UA	-	-	-	4.2	13.3	3.4
LAD	-	-	-	4.2	20.0	4.2
LLSC	4.5	-	-	-	-	0.8
TTWA	-	-	-	-	-	-
Local policy area	-	-	-	4.2	-	1.7
User defined	-	-	-	2.1	-	0.8
Region	4.5	6.7	-	6.3	20.0	6.7
England	4.5	6.7	-	2.1	20.0	5.0
GB	9.1	-	-	2.1	6.7	3.4
UK	9.1	-	-	2.1	20.0	5.0
EU	-	-	-	-	13.3	1.7

4. Dimensions of disaggregation of data

Table 4.1 shows dimensions of disaggregation used for data relating to specific topics.

Across most of the topics identified, there is respondents report that they use (where available) disaggregations by gender and age. Ethnic group⁷³ and disability also emerge as key disaggregations of interest. Industry and occupation disaggregations are used alongside employment structure, pay and earnings, skills and unemployment.

Table 4.1: Percentage of all respondents using data for each disaggregation, by topic

Topic	gender	age	ethnic group	disability	industry	occupation	qualification level	econ. position	duration
Pay and earnings	63.9	33.6	20.2	13.4	45.4	44.5	24.4	19.3	9.2
Employment structure	69.7	50.4	32.8	26.1	63.0	55.5	31.9	27.7	15.1
Unemployment and labour market	79.0	72.3	44.5	31.9	31.9	37.0	31.9	29.4	50.4
Skills	52.1	47.9	36.1	28.6	44.5	44.5	46.2	26.9	14.3
Education and training	50.4	52.1	36.1	29.4	29.4	30.3	47.9	22.7	16.8
Demographics	79.8	83.2	63.9	41.2	29.4	36.1	33.6	33.6	14.3
Social inclusion	52.9	58.8	48.7	43.7	15.1	16.0	26.9	30.3	17.6
Housing	17.6	21.8	17.6	15.1	5.9	9.2	7.6	14.3	5.9
Health	39.5	41.2	23.5	21.8	9.2	11.8	8.4	13.4	8.4
Crime & justice	25.2	29.4	21.8	8.4	4.2	6.7	8.4	10.9	4.2

Table 4.2: Pay and earnings (per cent of respondents reporting information use)

Disaggregation	Central govt	Education	Regional body/LLSC	Local govt	Other	Total
Gender	54.5	46.7	63.2	81.3	40.0	63.9
Age	36.4	13.3	42.1	31.3	46.7	33.6
Ethnic group	18.2	6.7	36.8	18.8	20.0	20.2
Disability	9.1	-	31.6	10.4	20.0	13.4
Industry	54.5	33.3	47.4	43.8	46.7	45.4
Occupation	45.5	33.3	47.4	45.8	46.7	44.5
Qualification level	27.3	6.7	36.8	16.7	46.7	24.4
Economic position	9.1	-	36.8	22.9	20.0	19.3
Duration	-	-	21.1	8.3	20.0	9.2

Table 4.3: Employment structure (per cent of respondents reporting information use)

Disaggregation	Central govt.	Education	Regional body/LLSC	Local govt	Other	Total
Gender	59.1	73.3	78.9	70.8	66.7	69.7
Age	45.5	46.7	68.4	43.8	60.0	50.4
Ethnic group	27.3	26.7	63.2	20.8	46.7	32.8
Disability	13.6	6.7	63.2	18.8	40.0	26.1
Industry	54.5	60.0	78.9	62.5	60.0	63.0
Occupation	54.5	60.0	84.2	43.8	53.3	55.5
Qualification level	27.3	26.7	52.6	20.8	53.3	31.9
Economic position	18.2	13.3	47.4	25.0	40.0	27.7
Duration	4.5	13.3	36.8	8.3	26.7	15.1

⁷³ Use of ethnic group data by all broad categories of respondent, but especially amongst those in local government and from other

Table 4.4: Unemployment and the labour market (per cent of respondents reporting information use)

<i>Disaggregation</i>	<i>Central govt.</i>	<i>Education</i>	<i>Regional body/LLSC</i>	<i>Local govt</i>	<i>Other</i>	<i>Total</i>
gender	86.4	73.3	84.2	77.1	73.3	79.0
Age	68.2	46.7	78.9	79.2	73.3	72.3
Ethnic group	50.0	40.0	68.4	31.3	53.3	44.5
Disability	22.7	13.3	63.2	25.0	46.7	31.9
Industry	31.8	33.3	47.4	20.8	46.7	31.9
Occupation	31.8	40.0	52.6	29.2	46.7	37.0
Qualification level	31.8	26.7	52.6	18.8	53.3	31.9
Economic position	22.7	20.0	42.1	25.0	46.7	29.4
Duration	22.7	40.0	57.9	58.3	66.7	50.4

Table 4.5: Skills (per cent of respondents reporting information use)

<i>Disaggregation</i>	<i>Central govt.</i>	<i>Education</i>	<i>Regional body/LLSC</i>	<i>Local govt</i>	<i>Other</i>	<i>Total</i>
Gender	45.5	20.0	78.9	52.1	60.0	52.1
Age	40.9	20.0	78.9	43.8	60.0	47.9
Ethnic group	31.8	20.0	78.9	22.9	46.7	36.1
Disability	18.2	13.3	78.9	16.7	33.3	28.6
Industry	40.9	26.7	84.2	33.3	53.3	44.5
Occupation	31.8	20.0	89.5	35.4	60.0	44.5
Qualification level	40.9	20.0	78.9	39.6	60.0	46.2
Economic position	13.6	13.3	52.6	25.0	33.3	26.9
Duration	4.5	20.0	36.8	4.2	26.7	14.3

Table 4.6: Education and training (per cent of respondents reporting information use)

<i>Disaggregation</i>	<i>Central govt.</i>	<i>Education</i>	<i>Regional body/LLSC</i>	<i>Local govt</i>	<i>Other</i>	<i>Total</i>
Gender	36.4	20.0	84.2	47.9	66.7	50.4
Age	40.9	20.0	84.2	50.0	66.7	52.1
Ethnic group	22.7	13.3	78.9	29.2	46.7	36.1
Disability	9.1	13.3	73.7	22.9	40.0	29.4
Industry	22.7	20.0	52.6	20.8	46.7	29.4
Occupation	22.7	13.3	63.2	18.8	53.3	30.3
Qualification level	31.8	20.0	68.4	52.1	60.0	47.9
Economic position	9.1	13.3	47.4	18.8	33.3	22.7
Duration	-	20.0	42.1	10.4	26.7	16.8

Table 4.7: Demographics (per cent of respondents reporting information use)

<i>Disaggregation</i>	<i>Central govt.</i>	<i>Education</i>	<i>Regional body/LLSC</i>	<i>Local govt</i>	<i>Other</i>	<i>Total</i>
Gender	77.3	66.7	84.2	83.3	80.0	79.8
Age	77.3	66.7	89.5	89.6	80.0	83.2
Ethnic group	45.5	33.3	78.9	77.1	60.0	63.9
Disability	22.7	13.3	68.4	47.9	40.0	41.2
Industry	18.2	20.0	42.1	29.2	40.0	29.4
Occupation	18.2	20.0	52.6	39.6	46.7	36.1
Qualification level	22.7	20.0	47.4	33.3	46.7	33.6
Economic position	13.6	20.0	42.1	41.7	40.0	33.6
Duration	9.1	6.7	26.3	8.3	33.3	14.3

Table 4.8: Social inclusion (per cent of respondents reporting information use)

<i>Disaggregation</i>	<i>Central govt.</i>	<i>Education</i>	<i>Regional body/LLSC</i>	<i>Local govt</i>	<i>Other</i>	<i>Total</i>
gender	40.9	40.0	63.2	56.3	60.0	52.9
Age	40.9	40.0	63.2	70.8	60.0	58.8
Ethnic group	36.4	40.0	63.2	50.0	53.3	48.7
Disability	27.3	20.0	52.6	54.2	46.7	43.7
Industry	9.1	13.3	21.1	14.6	20.0	15.1
Occupation	9.1	20.0	21.1	16.7	13.3	16.0
Qualification level	13.6	20.0	42.1	29.2	26.7	26.9
Economic position	9.1	20.0	31.6	43.8	26.7	30.3
Duration	13.6	6.7	26.3	16.7	26.7	17.6

Table 4.9: Housing (per cent of respondents reporting information use)

<i>Disaggregation</i>	<i>Central govt.</i>	<i>Education</i>	<i>Regional body/LLSC</i>	<i>Local govt</i>	<i>Other</i>	<i>Total</i>
Gender	13.6	6.7	15.8	25.0	13.3	17.6
Age	18.2	13.3	10.5	33.3	13.3	21.8
Ethnic group	4.5	13.3	15.8	27.1	13.3	17.6
Disability	4.5	6.7	10.5	27.1	6.7	15.1
Industry	-	6.7	5.3	6.3	13.3	5.9
Occupation	-	13.3	5.3	12.5	13.3	9.2
Qualification level	4.5	6.7	5.3	8.3	13.3	7.6
Economic position	4.5	13.3	15.8	18.8	13.3	14.3
Duration	4.5	-	10.5	4.2	13.3	5.9

Table 4.10: Health (per cent of respondents reporting information use)

<i>Disaggregation</i>	<i>Central govt.</i>	<i>Education</i>	<i>Regional body/LLSC</i>	<i>Local govt</i>	<i>Other</i>	<i>Total</i>
Gender	22.7	20.0	15.8	62.5	40.0	39.5
Age	18.2	20.0	21.1	66.7	40.0	41.2
Ethnic group	4.5	13.3	21.1	31.3	40.0	23.5
Disability	4.5	13.3	15.8	35.4	20.0	21.8
Industry	-	6.7	10.5	12.5	13.3	9.2
Occupation	-	6.7	10.5	14.6	26.7	11.8
Qualification level	-	6.7	10.5	8.3	20.0	8.4
Economic position	-	6.7	5.3	16.7	40.0	13.4
Duration	4.5	-	5.3	10.4	20.0	8.4

Table 4.11: Crime & justice (per cent of respondents reporting information use)

<i>Disaggregation</i>	<i>Central govt.</i>	<i>Education</i>	<i>Regional body/LLSC</i>	<i>Local govt</i>	<i>Other</i>	<i>Total</i>
Gender	13.6	-	15.8	41.7	26.7	25.2
Age	13.6	-	15.8	52.1	26.7	29.4
Ethnic group	13.6	-	15.8	33.3	26.7	21.8
Disability	-	-	10.5	12.5	13.3	8.4
Industry	-	-	5.3	4.2	13.3	4.2
Occupation	-	-	5.3	10.4	13.3	6.7
Qualification level	4.5	-	5.3	10.4	20.0	8.4
Economic position	-	-	10.5	14.6	26.7	10.9
Duration	-	-	5.3	2.1	20.0	4.2

5. Information sources used

Table 5.1 shows the percentages of respondents using each of the sources identified in the Web Survey.

Table 5.1: Sources used and their relative importance (per cent of respondents reporting information use)

Source	Used					Not used
	Very important	Important	Unimportant	Not important	Not known	
National databases operated by the public sector	15.9	52.7	12.3	5.3	5.5	8.4
Paper publications – ONS / government departments	16.8	54.6	12.6	1.7	3.4	10.9
Websites of central government departments and agencies	15.1	52.9	12.6	5.0	5.0	9.2
Local government information	31.1	24.4	10.9	1.7	3.4	28.6
Regional / Public Health / Local Observatories	7.6	16.8	12.6	5.0	3.4	54.6
Commercial data suppliers	12.6	19.3	16.8	-	0.8	50.4
Trade / professional / employer / employee organisations	2.5	22.7	15.1	1.7	0.8	57.1
NTOs / sectoral organisations	4.2	18.5	10.9	0.8	0.8	64.7
Overarching national organisation	2.5	14.3	15.1	2.5	0.8	64.7
International public sector agencies	0.8	16.0	14.3	2.5	2.5	63.9
Data Archive / MIMAS	6.7	11.8	5.9	1.7	1.7	72.3
Digital boundary data	14.3	7.6	3.4	-	1.7	73.1
From within own organisation	36.1	26.1	3.4	-	5.0	29.4
Other	1.7	0.8	0.8	-	3.4	93.3

Tables 5.2-5.14 show the percentage of respondents by broad category using the information sources identified.

It is evident that:

- The most widely used sources are national databases operated by the public sector (e.g. Nomis), paper publications of ONS and websites of ONS and central government departments and agencies. Disaggregations of information source use by broad category of user indicate that usage is widespread across all categories of user. At least two-thirds of users rank these sources at ‘important’ or ‘very important’.
- Just over 70 per cent of respondents used local government information, and the majority of users ranked this source as ‘important’ or ‘very important’. However, as Table 5.4 shows, the main users of this source of information are local government and regional bodies/LLSCs.
- Around 70 per cent of respondents reported using information generated by/accessed from within their own organisation. Such use was most prevalent amongst regional bodies/LLSCs.
- One in every two respondents made use of information from commercial data suppliers. Table 5.6 shows that the local government category shows the highest levels of usage.

- Nearly half of respondents had used Regional / Public Health / Local Observatories. Levels of use were highest in local government.⁷⁴
- Only a quarter of respondents made use of the Data Archive and MIMAS services, with respondents from education reporting highest levels of usage.

Table 5.2: Paper publications by ONS or government departments (per cent of respondents reporting information use)

<i>Broad category</i>	<i>Used</i>					<i>Not used</i>
	<i>Very important</i>	<i>Important</i>	<i>Unimportant</i>	<i>Not important</i>	<i>Not known</i>	
Central govt.	18.2	50.0	9.1	-	-	22.7
Education	6.7	40.0	26.7	-	13.3	13.3
Regional body/LLSC	21.1	47.4	15.8	-	10.5	5.3
Local govt	20.8	58.3	12.5	4.2	-	4.2
Other	6.7	73.3	-	-	-	20.0
<i>Total</i>	<i>16.8</i>	<i>54.6</i>	<i>12.6</i>	<i>1.7</i>	<i>3.4</i>	<i>10.9</i>

Table 5.3: Use websites of central government departments and agencies (per cent of respondents reporting information use)

<i>Broad category</i>	<i>Used</i>					<i>Not used</i>
	<i>Very important</i>	<i>Important</i>	<i>Unimportant</i>	<i>Not important</i>	<i>Not known</i>	
Central govt.	18.2	27.3	22.7	13.6	-	18.2
Education	13.3	26.7	20.0	6.7	20.0	13.3
Regional body/LLSC	15.8	57.9	5.3	-	10.5	10.5
Local govt	16.7	68.8	6.3	4.2	2.1	2.1
Other	6.7	60.0	20.0	-	-	13.3
<i>Total</i>	<i>15.1</i>	<i>52.9</i>	<i>12.6</i>	<i>5.0</i>	<i>5.0</i>	<i>9.2</i>

Table 5.4: Use local government information

<i>Broad category</i>	<i>Used</i>					<i>Not used</i>
	<i>Very important</i>	<i>Important</i>	<i>Unimportant</i>	<i>Not important</i>	<i>Not known</i>	
Central govt.	13.6	18.2	4.5	-	-	63.6
Education	13.3	20.0	26.7	-	20.0	20.0
Regional body/LLSC	42.1	31.6	5.3	-	5.3	15.8
Local govt	47.9	20.8	10.4	2.1	-	18.8
Other	6.7	40.0	13.3	6.7	-	33.3
<i>Total</i>	<i>31.1</i>	<i>24.4</i>	<i>10.9</i>	<i>1.7</i>	<i>3.4</i>	<i>28.6</i>

⁷⁴ At the time of the survey, Observatory services were still developing, and in some regions no Regional Observatory had been established. It would be expected that use of Observatories would increase over time.

Table 5.5: Use regional, Public Health or Local Observatories (per cent of respondents reporting information use)

Broad category	Used					Not used
	Very important	Important	Unimportant	Not important	Not known	
Central govt.	-	13.6	9.1	-	-	77.3
Education	13.3	13.3	-	6.7	13.3	53.3
Regional body/LLSC	15.8	10.5	10.5	5.3	5.3	52.6
Local govt	8.3	22.9	20.8	4.2	2.1	41.7
Other	-	13.3	6.7	13.3	-	66.7
Total	7.6	16.8	12.6	5.0	3.4	54.6

Table 5.6: Use commercial data suppliers (per cent of respondents reporting information use)

Broad category	Used					Not used
	Very important	Important	Unimportant	Not important	Not known	
Central govt.	4.5	27.3	18.2	-	-	50.0
Education	-	-	13.3	-	6.7	80.0
Regional body/LLSC	26.3	15.8	10.5	-	-	47.4
Local govt	14.6	25.0	22.9	-	-	37.5
Other	13.3	13.3	6.7	-	-	66.7
Total	12.6	19.3	16.8	-	0.8	50.4

Table 5.7: Use trade, professional, employer, employee organisations (per cent of respondents reporting information use)

Broad category	Used					Not used
	Very important	Important	Unimportant	Not important	Not known	
Central govt.	-	13.6	9.1	4.5	-	72.7
Education	-	13.3	6.7	-	-	80.0
Regional body/LLSC	5.3	5.3	31.6	-	-	57.9
Local govt	4.2	35.4	8.3	2.1	2.1	47.9
Other	-	26.7	33.3	-	-	40.0
Total	2.5	22.7	15.1	1.7	0.8	57.1

Table 5.8: Use NTOs and sectoral organisations (per cent of respondents reporting information use)

Broad category	Used					Not used
	Very important	Important	Unimportant	Not important	Not known	
Central govt.	4.5	9.1	9.1	4.5	-	72.7
Education	6.7	20.0	-	-	6.7	66.7
Regional body/LLSC	10.5	36.8	21.1	-	-	31.6
Local govt	-	12.5	10.4	-	-	77.1
Other	6.7	26.7	13.3	-	-	53.3
Total	4.2	18.5	10.9	0.8	0.8	64.7

Table 5.9: Use overarching national organisation (per cent of respondents reporting information use)

Broad category	Used					Not used
	Very important	Important	Unimportant	Not important	Not known	
Central govt.	4.5	4.5	18.2	9.1	-	63.6
Education	-	20.0	13.3	-	-	66.7
Regional body/LLSC	5.3	15.8	31.6	-	-	47.4
Local govt	2.1	12.5	6.3	2.1	-	77.1
Other	-	26.7	20.0	-	6.7	46.7
<i>Total</i>	<i>2.5</i>	<i>14.3</i>	<i>15.1</i>	<i>2.5</i>	<i>0.8</i>	<i>64.7</i>

Table 5.10: Use international public sector agencies (per cent of respondents reporting information use)

Broad category	Used					Not used
	Very important	Important	Unimportant	Not important	Not known	
Central govt.	-	18.2	13.6	9.1	-	59.1
Education	-	20.0	13.3	-	13.3	53.3
Regional body/LLSC	5.3	15.8	10.5	5.3	-	63.2
Local govt	-	14.6	12.5	-	2.1	70.8
Other	-	13.3	26.7	-	-	60.0
<i>Total</i>	<i>0.8</i>	<i>16.0</i>	<i>14.3</i>	<i>2.5</i>	<i>2.5</i>	<i>63.9</i>

Table 5.11: Use Data Archive or MIMAS (per cent of respondents reporting information use)

Broad category	Used					Not used
	Very important	Important	Unimportant	Not important	Not known	
Central govt.	4.5	4.5	13.6	-	-	77.3
Education	6.7	40.0	-	-	13.3	40.0
Regional body/LLSC	5.3	5.3	-	-	-	89.5
Local govt	8.3	6.3	6.3	4.2	-	75.0
Other	6.7	20.0	6.7	-	-	66.7
<i>Total</i>	<i>6.7</i>	<i>11.8</i>	<i>5.9</i>	<i>1.7</i>	<i>1.7</i>	<i>72.3</i>

Table 5.12: Use digital boundary data (per cent of respondents reporting information use)

Broad category	Used					Not used
	Very important	Important	Unimportant	Not important	Not known	
Central govt.	-	4.5	4.5	-	-	90.9
Education	6.7	13.3	-	-	6.7	73.3
Regional body/LLSC	10.5	-	-	-	-	89.5
Local govt	27.1	10.4	4.2	-	2.1	56.3
Other	6.7	6.7	6.7	-	-	80.0
<i>Total</i>	<i>14.3</i>	<i>7.6</i>	<i>3.4</i>	<i>-</i>	<i>1.7</i>	<i>73.1</i>

Table 5.13: Use from within own organisation (per cent of respondents reporting information use)

Broad category	Used					Not used
	Very important	Important	Unimportant	Not important	Not known	
Central govt.	31.8	31.8	4.5	-	-	31.8
Education	13.3	20.0	-	-	13.3	53.3
Regional body/LLSC	52.6	15.8	-	-	10.5	21.1
Local govt	39.6	27.1	6.3	-	4.2	22.9
Other	33.3	33.3	-	-	-	33.3
<i>Total</i>	<i>36.1</i>	<i>26.1</i>	<i>3.4</i>	<i>-</i>	<i>5.0</i>	<i>29.4</i>

Table 5.14: Use other (per cent of respondents reporting information use)

Broad category	Used					Not used
	Very important	Important	Unimportant	Not important	Not known	
Central govt.	-	-	-	-	-	100.0
Education	-	-	-	-	6.7	93.3
Regional body/LLSC	5.3	-	-	-	-	94.7
Local govt	2.1	2.1	2.1	-	4.2	89.6
Other	-	-	-	-	6.7	93.3
<i>Total</i>	<i>1.7</i>	<i>0.8</i>	<i>0.8</i>	<i>-</i>	<i>3.4</i>	<i>93.3</i>

Other comments made about information sources are shown in Table 5.15.

Table 5.15: Other information sources used

Broad sector	Comment
Central govt.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Often the information required is not available on the websites visited. • Some data sets (e.g. transport) data difficult to aggregate to regional level.⁷⁵
Education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Often we collect our own survey data at a local level due to the lack of available information.
Regional body/LLSC	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We use statistics and labour market reports from the local R&I unit.
Local government	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We refer to business conditions surveys by RDA and by LSC. • We use data from District Councils • Health Authority data is used • Local Surveys are used a lot. We often use consultants to undertake work. • We rely on lots of local data sources – Social Services, Police, Health, Probation, Education, Careers, Housing Benefit, Transport studies - usually post-coded for small area analysis • Also use national and local press, academic references • We use sources from other local bodies - health authority, learning and skills council (ex TEC), learning partnerships, police, local education providers etc • Professional Publications • Sub regional data for the Isle of Wight is very often affected by the sample size used in surveys; for example NES data does not include figures for female employees. • We are members of a consortium for labour market information.
Other	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I would like web-based information available, as I often require specific information for comparative purposes. Mainly County based. • We obtain information from Learning & Skills Councils

⁷⁵ Note that a new DTLR publication on *Regional Transport Statistics* was published on the DTLR website in November 2001.

Table 5.16 presents ‘write in’ comments made about specific data sources; (users were invited to provide comments on sources that met their needs ‘less well’).

Table 5.16: Comments made about shortcomings in information sources

<i>Broad sector</i>	<i>Comment</i>
Central govt.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Government could be better at providing data in electronic format on websites. Whilst pdf files are common, Excel or equivalent files are the most useful. In many instances these need to be requested separately. • I find the different formats in which information is presented (e.g. Local authority/health authority) difficult to negotiate. Also very irritating having to copy from Adobe documents. More spreadsheets required. • In my experience, Central Government department websites do not tend to have a great deal of specific subject information - they refer to ONS instead. I find the Eurostat website is not very useful at all. Information is difficult to track down and usually not available. • NOMIS – my low score relates to the fact that some of the older data (e.g. 1991 Census) is not available through the web interface. Central Government websites - do not seem to have much of the data we require. I find the ONS Statbase particularly unhelpful! • ONS are dreadful. You take pot luck when you phone with an enquiry. Little confidence in answers they give -phone several times and get different answers. Services are slow and expensive. "Navidata" program is littered with bugs. • Paper based publications do not have the flexibility - i.e. the split you want by industry etc. You pay mostly for information you don't require. Perhaps only a page or two is of interest. National/International organisations do not often provide information for categories of most interest. • Survey sources have to be treated 'with a pinch of salt', as they are (naturally) skewed samples.
Education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • My needs are different at different times. Sometimes sources are good, sometimes not. • Local authority data sources at small area level for specific projects are not always well resourced to deliver properly. Use small area data down to ED and build up new social boundaries, paper based copies are not an option as costs involved in transfer to electronic media. • Main problem is lack of good disaggregated research and technology data, although even at a national level, R&D data (the most readily available) is of dubious quality in terms of accuracy. • Need much fuller and more compatible data from local government on expenditure patterns and policy performance, supplementing eg Audit Commission data and Employers Organisation employment data. In particular, there is very limited data on local authority expenditure. • Paper publications - time consuming to locate and rarely have sub-regional information. Government websites - can be slow and difficult to search- data not very disaggregated. • There are a lot of useful data sources that can be accessed, but what they provide tends to be fairly inflexible, especially in terms of the data groupings they employ (educational attainment data is a good case in point). Many are also inadequate in tracking.
Regional body/LLSC	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Limited and very difficult to get sub-regional information. Equally the sectoral definitions used do not meet the redefined industrial/occupational structures that we have agreed with partners as the sub-regional / regional priorities. • not specific or local enough.

<p>Local government</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Commercial operators are normally loath to give explanations of how they produce results so issues of quality, comparability, trust arise. With the ILO and Eurostat, the search routes can sometimes be a bit of an issue. • Eurostat data are often not available for the spatial areas required. They are cumbersome to use and can change with no warning. • Websites are hard to navigate or find exact information needed. • More development required of Neighbourhood Statistics -particularly for income, disposable household income. Need more up-to-date national data sets - e.g. benefits data are 3 years old. • National data sets, Paper Based Reports - There are very often cases whereby we are required to provide a specific indicator and given a Central Government Source only to find that the indicators do not accurately match or they are out of date. • Not always comprehensive / Sources not always known about. • Websites not easy to navigate. Data available do not match to sub-regional requirement. • Regional health observatory data too medical and not geared up to LA needs. No Regional Observatory in the West Midlands. Many organisations not able to provide data at local level - LA or below - or ethnic breakdown we require. • Sectoral data not detailed enough for our needs. Sources generally, need to be more locally focused. • The costs of collecting the right data are inflated by the legal requirement to submit performance statistics - these are not necessarily informative in their own right. Government has yet to understand the difference between management information and raw data. • We are required to set and achieve SMART targets for interventions around health inequalities. These are often small areas but even ward-level statistics would be better. Neighbourhood statistics are useful but not always helpful in the health field. • Websites – currently do not have access to Internet, therefore someone has to access this source for me.
<p>Other</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Access to information from non-government organisations can be very limited. International data can be of variable quality and timeliness. • Central government websites use lousy search engines and hide the details to avoid confusing the moronic public. Local government data is usually a secret. The others charge too much or publish meaningless aggregates. • Local authorities are poorly funded, and focus too greatly on social inclusion issues for my needs. Eurostat has poor data coverage/ organisation (I can't ever find what I want) and slow. NTOs are highly variable in quality. • Local government can be very obstructive and have very poor data collection and dissemination practices. Affordable and accessible digital boundary data, especially within the health service, is a continuing problem. • We occasionally use the ONS Statbase facility for regional data, but find it very difficult to retrieve the correct data. Commercial data suppliers are often costly, and the reliability of the information is uncertain. Local government data tends to be too local.

6. Data ‘gaps’ and the actions taken to fill them

Respondents were invited to identify what they considered to be the most significant ‘gaps’⁷⁶ in intelligence at regional and sub-regional scales. The questionnaire allowed for three such gaps to be identified at each scale. Comments were also invited on actions taken to fill gaps.⁷⁷

The gaps identified encompassed both general comments applying to a number of sources, and more specific comments relevant to a particular source. For reference purposes, Table 6.1 shows gaps identified at regional level, and actions taken to fill them; (the information is presented by broad user category). Additional comments made on regional data sources are presented in Table 6.2. Similar information on gaps and actions to fill them at sub-regional level is shown in Table 6.3, and comments on sub-regional sources are presented in Table 6.4.

At *regional level* the general issues amongst the comments most frequently made concerning gaps included:

- shortcomings in accuracy and quality of data
- timeliness – information is not as timely as would like⁷⁸
- frequency – data are not collected sufficiently frequently
- lack of time series information for trend analysis
- lack of consistent/comparable methodologies used in generating locally-derived data⁷⁹
- gender issues are not well covered
- need for more and improved qualitative data
- “knowing what exists”⁸⁰

Comments were also offered on shortcomings in *access* to information – for example:

- ◇ “I think there are enough organisations dealing with regional information to cover most topics adequately. Although some organisations spend a huge amount of public money on consultants and the reports are never publicly published.”

Some respondents questioned *how useful* regional indicators are as comparators:

- ◇ “The regional picture serves only as a crude guide for any characteristic because of its diversity.”
- ◇ Regional data is required for comparative purposes but can give a false impression - especially when the region is diverse. Regional data should always make reference to ‘highs’ and ‘lows’ rather than just providing ‘averages’.”

Amongst the specific comments made at *regional level*, the following gaps were identified by several respondents:

- lack of *ethnicity* data – both population counts, characteristics (e.g. in terms of labour market participation), for crosstabulations against other variables, etc

⁷⁶ A ‘gap’ can be identified as a difference between the current position and a desired position. There may be ‘hidden gaps’ as a result of respondents having only partial knowledge about information sources available.

⁷⁷ Not all respondents provided information on gaps, or on actions to fill gaps.

⁷⁸ For example, specific comments about the timeliness of GDP data.

⁷⁹ For example, with reference to population estimates.

⁸⁰ One comment was: “I think an important issue with regard to information gaps is not that the data does not exist but that awareness of what data is available is limited.”

- lack of information on *disability*
- lack of information on *IT* – access, take-up, user skills, etc
- lack of information on *employment* (including self-employment)
- up-to-date *occupational* information
- insufficient information on *skills* – needs, types, etc
- need better information on *new businesses*
- lack of information on *regional prices*
- need information on *inter-regional trade*
- lack of information on *output per hour*
- poor information on *R&D* and *innovation*
- *Labour Force Survey* sample is too small for detailed disaggregations required
- need more detailed *income* data
- *New Earnings Survey* methodology leads to lack of information on low paid workers
- lack of information on *where people live and work*
- need information on *waste planning*
- gaps in data on *environmental quality*
- air pollution needs to be measured at more sites within the region

Many of the gaps referred to at regional level were also identified as key issues at **sub-regional level**. Amongst the general issues raised were:

- poor data quality
- unreliability of certain information sources at local level⁸¹
- need for information at sub-ward level.⁸²

There were also similarities with the regional level in the specific gaps identified at the sub-regional scale:

- a) lack of information on *ethnic composition of the population*⁸³
- b) lack of information on *disability*
- c) lack of *local income* data⁸⁴
- d) need more emphasis on *earnings at local level*
- e) need for more information on *skills*
- f) need for '*real*' *GDP* data at more local levels

⁸¹ Particularly in relation to employment data for small areas.

⁸² It was noted that in some areas (e.g. Birmingham) wards are quite large units.

⁸³ Including references to the fact that more up-to-date information is needed than that available from the decennial Census of Population.

⁸⁴ Such information is needed for a number of purposes, including assessing the affordability of housing.

Table 6.1: Regional data gaps and actions taken to fill them

<i>Central government</i>	
Gap	Action
lack of information on labour market participation of black and ethnic minority groups	
Language skill data	East Midlands Regional Household Survey
Long time series data is often unavailable. e.g. change in GDP methodology to ESA95 was only applied back so far	Use combinations of data from other sources, e.g. Eurostat, OECD, etc.
Outpatient data	Mandated for NHS Trust
Problems with data packaging: getting data at appropriate disaggregations	Attempts to fill gaps
Qualitative evidence concerning generic/core/transferable skills	Possibility of setting up surveys
Quantitative evidence concerning generic/core/transferable skills - from employer and employee perspectives	Development of generic skills question set, for use in telephone/postal surveys to be piggy-backed on others
Regional Accounts	ONS should look at constructing regional Social Accounting Matrices; This would provide a single point of reference.
Regional price deflators	Some Treasury estimates exist, but we await a definitive version from ONS
Regional Real GDP	Central Government Interdepartmental Working Group
The LFS is the source of most of the regional data that is of use to me. However when we want to breakdown the data into subgroups and characteristics the sample sizes can become too small.	For some subgroups we can supplement the data with monitoring and survey data collected by the Department.
Under estimation of low paid workers in the New Earnings Survey because of data methodology	Carry out own Jobcentre surveys and compare average pay rates in Jobcentre with average rates in NES
up to date, readily available estimates of the GB population	Using the most up to date indicators, merging together information from England & Wales and Scotland
urban capacity (housing)	individual authority level but at varying stages and inconsistent
Waste planning data	Undertaking surveys
Energy statistics and greenhouse gas emissions	
<i>Education</i>	
Gap	Action
Demographic data at small area level	use of health authority registrations with estimates for age groups that don't register
housing market function	ED aggregates of CORE
Income	
Inter-Regional Trade	Modelling
Knowing what kind of data exists	Use of the Regional Observatory
More up-to-date occupational data	
No major gaps at regional level	
R&D and innovation indicators are very poor	Undertake own surveys
Regional Prices	Proxies
Services employment and industry data poor	Undertake own surveys
Single/non-statutory homelessness statistics	
It is a nightmare trying to fit all geographies together	

<i>Regional body/LLSC</i>	
Gap	Action
Aggregated and comparative sub-regional data	Working in Regional Networks
Basic Skills	Use proxy from local household surveys and aggregate them to regional level.
Comparable data about school VI forms, FE colleges, work-based learning	guess!
lack of comparability of data collection methodologies	own surveys
Destination data of post 16 students	surveys by LSC and colleges
Destinations of young people post 16	Can only use national information
Detailed data on skills issues derived from comprehensive skills survey data.	
Higher education statistics	Have to "buy" what we need
Lack of quality information cross tabulated by equality indicators of gender/age/ethnicity/disability	Regional Household Survey
lack of trend analysis on key indicators such as population growth/decline, changes in economic position etc -this probably exists, but seems to be only the odd 'throw away' line in other rep	
Occupational breakdowns	Household Surveys and employer surveys
poor data quality (small sample sizes)	
Qualitative Data	Face-to-face interviews
Reason students choose one FE college above another in the	unknown at present
skill levels	commission surveys with other organisations to identify qualification levels and use them as a proxy; model from national data; Employer surveys / Household Surveys; commissioning of work on basic skills.
<i>Local government</i>	
Gap	Action
access to broadband	commercial surveys
Accurate Employment data - including self employed	pursuing through regional working / needs further thought
Analysis of locally-derived statistics on a common basis -e.g. school leavers, crime, children being looked	Some attempt at a regional overview of labour market data being undertaken by EEDA
Business Turnover	Surveys
Census data is collected too infrequently to accurately reflect the shifting population.	We are dependent upon the Greater London Authority's attempts to address information gaps
consistent approaches to gathering/calculating information.	Detailed questioning.
Currency of data	
Detailed Income data	further thought needed
Disability	Extrapolation
Economic performance information	Through NW Regional Intelligence
Employment (labour demand) forecasts required	
Environmental data	Will probably have to rely on Environment Agency and DEFRA's efforts.
Ethnic composition of population	Extrapolation
Ethnic data	Made use of Census (1991)
Ethnicity	Census 1991, NOMIS LFS
Health - lack of consistent statistical base, especially	just use snapshots

with constant change of regions.	
Innovation	Proxies
Labour supply and demand - (also identified as sub-regional level)	Reworked old econometrics
Lack of information on disability and ethnicity	
Lack of information on skill needs & entrepreneurship	Questions proposed for household surveys
Local Authority Statistics	Surveys
Missing agricultural data in some years for local authority	Treat agriculture separately
Need specific data on environmental quality and energy consumption	
new businesses and needs of high technology	
No co-terminous boundaries	
No datasets include information on employment in tourism with agreed definition	User defined definition of tourism based e.g. on BTA definition
Not always able to get data for the Merseyside region. North West is easier but this ex-government office region is of more relevance.	
Output / hour not available	national estimates as proxies - highly unsatisfactory
Regional planning data for comparison with County data	Regional monitoring for PPG3
Skills	Proxies, soft data
Synergy on small area population estimates/forecasts methodology	
take-up of internet	commercial surveys
Transport data is not collected before and after implementation of infrastructure	monitoring of motorway and road network various surveys
Use of /access to I.T. (e.g. Internet/e-mail)	surveys
where people live and work	Need boosts to LFS
<i>Other</i>	
Gap	Action
Coterminous local areas	
Data quality e.g. on crime	Own surveys / qualitative research
Impact of Trading Standards on Society	Surveys have been tried, but there are questions about whether the result is caused by the activity
Information on Black and minority ethnic people, namely skills levels, occupations and level of labour market participation and duration in jobs nationally, regionally, sub-regionally, etc.	contact with NTOs through their workforce development
Poor Data quality	
The GDP data are untimely.	We use survey data.
The GDP industrial breakdown is very untimely.	We use survey data.
There are significant gaps in the availability of regional data on many topics.	I am waiting for local development agency + their consultants to plug gaps with their observatory; Look for new ways of analysing existing data.

Table 6.2: Additional comments on regional data sources

<i>Broad sector</i>	<i>Comment</i>
Central government	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A single consistent point for a disparate large set of data is needed. Data needs to be brought together in a Social Accounting Framework. • Energy data - requires disaggregation of nationally collected / extrapolated energy and CO2 data • Freer availability of business information, also Invest UK providing a wider service of investment statistics. Ernst & Young EIM, a private subscription data service currently supersedes this. • I think an important issue with regard to information gaps is not that the data does not exist but that awareness of what data is available is limited. Improving knowledge of what data is available at the regional/sub-regional level could remove some of the problems • Often WALES is grouped with England.
Education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Regional prices could be published. Regional Input-Output tables / or spatial disaggregation of Purchasers' Inquiry • Various developments have been underway - but there remains a need for improved national and regional statistics on housing/homelessness.
Regional body/LLSC	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Richer data on employment by occupation from Labour Force Survey / Annual Business Inquiry etc - free up UCAS and HESA services - include questions on training • A regional partnership approach through a Regional Intelligence network - improves data sharing. Seeking to address this within Yorks and Humber. • The regional data sets meet our needs.
Local government	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • clear agreement on regional base areas and flexibility to adjust data to take account of boundary adjustments • Environment Agency should be estimating greenhouse gas emissions by region. They should also be measuring air pollutants in many centres in the region. • Finance/resources are always a problem - Joined up government may help! • Increased sample sizes and more modelling by data suppliers could help either meet some gaps or allow a common methodology to be used so allowing comparability and avoiding non-robust results being used to meet policy and monitoring needs • We make use of regional figures for comparison purposes with local datasets and there gaps, but we do not have specific plans to address these. • Regional data of limited use except for comparative purposes - sub regional more important • The regional picture serves only as a crude guide for any characteristic because of its diversity. There are gaps in intelligence but none that act as barriers at the local level or often even at the sub-regional level. • Use of geo spatial techniques • Would like to see environment agency expand the statistical side of their website to include regional environmental data. (Perhaps on DEFRA's?)
Other	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I think there are enough organisations dealing with regional information to cover most topics adequately. Although some organisations spend a huge amount of public money on consultants and the reports are never publicly published. Unless you are privy to knowing about them. • Regional data is required for comparative purposes but can give a false impression - especially when the region is diverse. Regional data should always make reference to 'highs' and 'lows' rather than just providing 'averages'. • Statistics could always be disaggregated by gender where they relate to individuals. There are alternative ways of overcoming problems of small samples other than combining figures for women and men. • The data is usually there but either not published or only at extortionate prices. This is particularly annoying for publicly owned data for which taxpayers have already paid once. • Useful to have a standardised date for annual collection of data (1st April) or a set of standardised dates depending on topic area.

Table 6.3: Sub-regional data gaps and actions taken to fill them

<i>Central government</i>	
Gap	Action
Consistent data on biodiversity	Liaison with English Nature.
Awareness - trying to locate data at different aggregates	Networking: using websites to locate information
Environmental Quality	
Estimates of industry GDP would be most helpful	
lack of information on income levels	
Lack of information on investment, GDP, GVA by sector	Produce estimations, e.g. using employment shares
lack of information on labour market participation of black and ethnic minority workers	
LFS data by place of work as well as place of residence	
Many changes in employment survey methodology in recent years makes meaningful backwards analysis difficult	Discontinuities in analysis
Most data at any sub-regional level (except unemployment)	
Post Code level House Prices	
Problems with data packaging: getting data at appropriate aggregates	Attempts to fill gaps largely dependent on aggregates that data published in - looking to establish tools that will aggregate/disaggregate.
Skills levels	This doesn't seem to be available anywhere, apart from ONS ward level data of school age qualifications or university attendance.
Up to date levels of employment/unemployment.	County council, UA, unemployment bulletins.
up to date, readily available estimates of the GB population	Using the most up to date indicators, merging together information from England & Wales and Scotland
Ward level indicators	
ICT usage, etc	
unreliability of Jobcentre vacancy data	
Boundary changes (LAs, UAs, Wards) often creates difficulties.	
Ethnicity data, with regards to employment, unemployment,	
Timeliness, confidentiality, data disclosure are all issues at sub-regional level	
<i>Education</i>	
Gap	Action
crime data	
Detailed data on local authority/local public service employment - trends at local level	Use of highly limited, one-off sources.
House price by bedroom size by LA district	Land Registry imputations
housing data e.g. vacancies	
Income data	
inter-censal gross migration flows at inter-district level	modelling from total population change, housing transactions and 1991 Census migration flows
Knowing what kind of data exists and where to find them	
Lack of information on economic development; LMI	Local newspapers, contacts with regional colleagues
Occupational data	
Quantitative data on local authority policy performance	Use of qualitative case study information
R&D and technology data	undertake own surveys
reliable unemployment rates for smaller UAs/districts	none - use rates with large standard error
Services employment and industry data poor	undertake own surveys

small area denominators for calculation of unemployment rates	often will use small area Census data as a proxy for a base and accept its inadequacies over time
would like regular small area data for benefits	
decent small area information on labour market participation / activity	
More frequent data on the self-employed - by industry	
Dwelling completions by sector and local authority area -data delays	
health data below health authority level	
<i>Regional body/LLSC</i>	
Gap	Action
Accurate forecasts of employment by occupation and industry	
almost everything in Labour Force Survey - samples too small	guess
Basic Skills Data	Performing our own analysis in consultation with local partners
Basic Skills	Basic Skills Research
Current population data broken down by ethnicity, age, gender, etc	
Data relating to participation and non-participation in learning	Sub-contracted research project. Plan to conduct household survey
Data relating to social inclusion: for example number of ethnic minorities in the population	Use national sources and make a very vague extrapolation to local area, phone around voluntary sector organisations working with minority groups'
Ethnic Minorities - general information	undertaken local research
increasing social exclusion/inclusion measures	
Lack of information on economic data at local level	Use own surveys, commission special studies, use private companies to derive data (e.g. for household earnings, GDP, etc
learning participation data for all types of learning	Wait for improved information
Matching what learners want and need with the demand for skills	commissioning of own surveys
Pay structures at the local level	Use local contacts to build up picture
Poor data quality e.g. small sample sizes LFS	
Provision of learning, by subject/occupational area and qualification target	Sub-contracted research project. Plan to influence collection and presentation of data from providers.
Quality of data. e.g. LFS unreliable with respect to small groups	Extending our own skills audit
Sector based research (based on engineering skills register approach)	More collaboration with NTO's and in house research
Skill levels & gaps	Extending our own skills audit
Skills demand issues	Employer survey
Skills supply issues	Commissioning research into skills supply
Student destinations	Looking to address this with partners
Training / Education provision	Currently engaged in a mapping exercise
Availability of all LFS data	Availability of all LFS data
Participation in learning	
Skills in existence in the local labour market	
Qualification Achievement data	
Sub-regional skills gaps and shortages.	
Non learners	
Forecasting model data	
skills gaps	skills gaps

<i>Local authorities</i>	
Gap	Action
Accurate Employment data - including self employed	
Business Information	Own surveys
Business Starts	Contacts local enterprise agencies
Business Turnover	Surveys
Census of employment	Large numbers of small employers in local area. No attempts made to fill gap
Commuting Data	Road side surveys traffic counts
Competitiveness data e.g. govt competitiveness indicators not at local level	use proxies or manage without; (move from TEC to LSC has resulted in less data at local level)
Dataset to identify and monitor rural disadvantage at local	Through NW Regional Intelligence Unit (RIU)
Disability	'orange/blue' badge holders. Social Services' records for visually impaired.
Disability	Local surveys
Disability - type/degree- employment position	
Earnings data at sub LAD level	
Earnings information	Small amount of local survey work undertaken, but comparison with other areas is not applicable.
Economic importance of commuting for the county	Travel surveys for out-commuting coupled with average earnings for destinations
Education	soft data, contact HEIs
Employment and economic activity on a residential basis	Apply 1991 rates to estimates of current population
Estimates of ethnic minority population	Names analysis of Electoral Register
Ethnic group info - demographic & economic & employment	use of out-dated 1991 based estimates
Ethnicity	Census 1991, NOMIS LFS
Ethnicity	Ipswich Borough Council commissioned survey for numbers. Community Education for languages used. 2001 Census for numbers/groups.
Ethnicity characteristics	Apply 1991 Census proportions or use studies commissioned by other organisations that cover our area.
Ethnicity of population	Population modelling with ethnic components
Export and import data for the county	Regional data as proxy (highly unsatisfactory)
Gaps related to competitiveness indicators and economic performance	
GCSE data still not available by home address of child.	Use school roll data to map results.
GDP at LAD	
health status	Extrapolation from NHS surveys, GHS etc.
hidden households - household formation is not a simple matter	
Income data for households	ONS modelling project - but looks problematic
income data to help assess affordability of housing	use some sub-regional data, but need more detailed data
Income levels	Use regional data
incomes data - not available at district/ward level	Looking to purchase CACI database (but cost may be prohibitive). Have tried, unsuccessfully, to find alternatives.
Interested in lower level data	
Labour demand/supply forecasts on a consistent basis	Discussions with EEDA and Regional Planners to try and commission bespoke employment projections/forecasts that suit many partners
Lack of coverage on LFS data - wish they could increase the sample size	Can't do it adequately

Lack of data by ethnicity (particularly unemployment and population)	Local household survey carried out (via LLSC) and LFS data used. Ethnic population model purchased from Bradford MBC
Lack of information on disability and ethnicity	Have used what regional data is available from LFS mainly and attempted a 'share' type of analysis
Lack of information on skill needs	The SLIMS project has carried out employer surveys on skill needs, current & future training and hard to fill vacancies.
Lack of knowledge over availability of local datasets through administrative datasets.	We have embarked on an information sharing project with partner agencies (police, health authority etc) that has produced an on-line list
Land registry house price data have no data on property	Use local price surveys
LFS data is limited for Local Authorities.	Local household survey data used.
Neighbourhood Statistics. - very good, would like to be able to create user defined areas	
no small area disability data to useful definition which includes level/type of problem	comparing census LLTI data, benefits data and registered disabled to get guide to scale of problem.
no small area income data	use benefits data for poverty proxy, use deprivation data, considered commercial data but decided it was unreliable
output, value added, R&D, new companies	Census of Production?
Pay rates at smaller levels	Consultation with ONS
Population with physical disabilities	In-house survey information or 1991 Census (limiting long-term illness)
Post 1991 Ethnic Group data at LAD/UA level	Unable to find
proxies for the 'socially excluded' are too dependent upon housing and employment related information	
reliable data on employment	ABI & other unreliable sources
Reliable data on income	
Reliable data on travel-to-work	
Resident perceptions/priorities	We have commissioned four neighbourhood household surveys to be carried out in our most deprived neighbourhoods
Skills	Proxies, soft data
Skills data	Local employer surveys
Small area earnings and household income measure	
Sub-district population estimates	
Tourism - accurate data re tourism flows/overnight stays	
Travel to Work / Schools / Hospitals / Leisure	commission locationally-specific studies
Up to date indicators of employment trends	
Update of Ethnic Minority statistics since the Census	Wait for 2001 Census
use of / access to I.T. (e.g. owning computer / Internet) etc	customer panel survey
Ward level population estimates by age/gender	Population projections (totals only, no age/gender breakdown)
Ward population estimates and economically active populations.	We have our own model to produce these.
Would like more data on GVA, GDP for smaller areas (e.g. ward/UA)	Might need to purchase Dunn and Bradstreet data to calculate GVA for small areas - won't be able to compare with regional figures
basic skills data	
lack of on-going ward-level population estimates	
Income	
Data available at a scale smaller than ward	
Detailed Income data	

Disabled individuals data set	
Business Start-ups and Survivals	
Up to date and sensitive measures of deprivation levels	
Data below ward level. Birmingham has large wards	
Community Development - participation rates in community activities	
Income	
improved tourism data	
Migrating households	
Retail turnover by centre	
Environmental data -generally lacking for areas below region.	
Lack of information on occupational structures	
Any accurate data on the demographic on black and ethnic minority groups and asylum seekers.	
Company information - local firms, size/sector, whether import/export, etc	
GDP	
Ethnic minority breakdown of unemployment figures	
Lack of data on service sector	
Housing Demand	
Mid-year population estimates - methodology for estimating international migration impact	
Disadvantaged groups (ethnicity in particular)	
More up-to-date ward-level data (i.e. more recent than 1991)	
Innovation	
	<i>Other</i>
Gap	Action
Administrative areas not always coterminous with other local policy areas	Use best fit - could sometimes do with disaggregation at smaller level over time
affordable, accurate and accessible digital boundary data	time consuming creation of boundaries from other sources
Issues not covered at sub-regional level.	
Lack of import/export data	none
Lack of wage data for broader base of occupations	considering own survey
Mismatch of top down bottom up approaches to data	If a gap between the top down data and bottom up data, more likely to only use the bottom up data.
Occupational change - especially projections for the future.	
Poor data from Local Authorities	Attempted to fill gaps in own data base from data from LA
Poor data quality	
Poor data/lack of data on specific health trends – e.g. pregnant teenagers	generate data via tracking partnership
population estimates	use of GP patient lists, extrapolating census
Qualification levels; participation in learning.	We use Careers Service Annual Activity Surveys for 16/17year olds - for a part picture.
Trader Profile Information	TSI has been engaged in opening up intelligence data sets to provide a greater degree of information on the background.
We require data for our small shire districts and wards	
Destinations of people completing all forms of education and training.	
No or little data below Ward level	

Table 6.4: Additional comments on sub-regional data sources

Central government.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NTO attempts to service sub-regional (e.g. LLSC) demands will doubtless be tempered by resource issues, and will most probably be taken forward on an individual basis. Attention will most likely focus on region. • Have not yet had much experience with sub-regional data although becoming more important - i.e. we are getting more requests for information at this level. • Information should be disaggregated down to rural communities / parishes and urban wards wherever statistical reliability allows • ONS would do well boosting the ABI. Not sure it is properly regionally sampled: target seems to be at primarily national statistics. • Some of the issues including timeliness, confidentiality and data disclosure are as much about lowering potential barriers & technical issues as they are about legal barriers. We have found that these barriers have been particularly difficult to overcome.
Education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Generally, have found it difficult to obtain consistent data down to local authority level • It would be useful to have a question on income in the Census of Population. As far as possible, it would be useful to make all data available at one base level (e.g. for postcodes) • Need more regular comparable data for small areas
Regional body/LLSC	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • LFS data often useful, but rarely robust at the geographic areas required • We have set up a sub-regional research forum and are setting up an intranet as part of an existing sub-regional website in South Yorkshire. The aim is to agree a partnership approach to surveys/research/ evaluation etc and to share information
Local government	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Need larger sample sizes in New Earnings Survey • Need to expand measure of GDP to local levels • Some information is available but at significant cost; (can also pay consultants but most LAD do not have sufficient funds) • Birmingham's sample size in the LFS should permit much more detailed analysis than is published via the annual database and Nomis. Should introduce flexible data system for bigger local authorities. • Could do more modelling • Employment information unreliable for small areas. Could use own survey. • Retail information has not been available since 1971 in reliable and complete form. We considered using Goad data but this is not complete. • Increased sample sizes and more modelling by data suppliers could help either meet some of these gaps or allow a common methodology to be used so allowing comparability and avoiding non-robust results being used to meet policy and monitoring need • Lack of common definitions of small areas for policy making. • Restrictions (real or perceived) on data sharing, and lack of data standards. • Need ethnicity data to small area - only available from census; would like county level estimates at least more regularly • Particular need for neighbourhood data (not wards) for neighbourhood management etc. • The most significant challenge facing the public sector is the provision of disaggregated information to support community planning. These will be based on community definitions determined locally and will not conform to the traditional geographies.
Other	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Data is often at a macro level - large geographical area, broad industry/occupational level. We have undertaken our own (resource consuming) surveys and/or used soft data. • Need to expanded New Earnings Survey • Need to have information on gender, geographic area and the topic of interest available from the same source. <p>Relied on TEC for local area information.</p>

7. Additional Comments

Further comments made by survey respondents are presented in Table 7.1.

Table 7.1: Additional comments made

Central government	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We are data suppliers rather than users. We see ourselves via the new Neighbourhood Statistics web site releases as being one of the key suppliers of small area data. We aim to make more data available within quicker time scales • The main problem we have with data, as a department with Great Britain responsibilities, is the difficulty at times of getting comparable information for the correct geographic unit. This relates in particular to DTLR information, which is often England only. • I would suggest getting the information at regional level to a higher standard before concentrating on local level (although desirable).
Education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I wish ONS would stop publishing workforce unemployment rates for local authority areas and replace these with resident-based rates. • More reliable employment data for local authority areas is essential – despite "improvements" to ABI, there are errors from one year to the next. • I am based in Scotland, but do use ENG/GB/UK sources regularly. Some concern that devolution/regionalisation in England will lead to loss of comparability of statistical data across the UK. That would be unfortunate for all concerned.
Regional body/LLSC	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Social inclusion type data is giving particular problems, especially if any attempt is being made to link it to the education and learning agenda. • There are many gaps especially around the topic of student destinations, where most are unknown.
Local government	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • On a range of topics we are pretty much reliant on census data, making response rate and the 10-year gap very concerning. Other administrative data sets are often used as proxies when census data is out of data but it's often not an ideal definition. • We welcome the new Neighbourhood Statistics Service launched by the Government and would place a high priority on the delivery of future phases of this project. • More and more needs of researchers / analysts and policy officers require information at the micro area level. • There is a lack of quality intelligence at the local level. • Neighbourhood Statistics on ONS website needs to go below ward level, to provide data for smaller user-defined regeneration areas. • Changes (e.g. larger LSC/new Health Authorities) are likely to limit availability of small-area information, as they will no longer be co-terminous with LA. • Generally there is a lack of information at District level and sometimes ward level.
Other	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Skills & Enterprise Network material used to be good. Will LSC (eventually) be able to do the same at a local level?

Appendix 5: SELECTED EXAMPLES OF GAPS IDENTIFIED IN THE NWRIU ‘GAPPING’ EXERCISE

‘Lobbying’ gaps include:

- greater robustness of GDP data
- alternative classification of SIC/SOC – to enable more accurate classification of ‘cluster’ groupings
- unemployment data for wards whose boundaries have changed
- dataset disaggregation for non-standard geographies
- to reduce the amount of restriction applied on certain information below regional level
- collection of lowest level data on location, extent, type, etc, of derelict, underused, neglected and contaminated land
- access to anonymised Inland Revenue PAYE data
- LFS to enable analysis for non-standard geographies
- definitions of ‘knowledge-based’ businesses and ‘knowledge-based’ jobs
- ◇ development of a best practice guide on how to consult with ‘hard to reach’ groups, such as : disabled, too busy, others
- ◇ data set providing intelligence on destinations of learners on leaving the learning community

Other Gaps include:⁸⁵

Information management :

- common approach to regional, sub-regional and local surveys
- Regional Competitiveness Indicators disaggregated to sub-regional boundaries
- Government expenditure statistics within the region
- New Company Investments into the region
- Closures, redundancies and new job announcements
- Ability to sources research/intelligence and datasets on black and ethnic populations
- Ability to sources research/intelligence and datasets on disabled populations
- Access to a regional companies database

Regeneration:

- ❖ Creation of a dataset of rural transport issues such as level of car ownership, useage, environmental impact, etc – at LAD level
- ❖ Creation of a standardised dataset reporting on air quality within and across the region
- ❖ Creation of one source of data to map all current community based initiatives to ward level.

⁸⁵ N.B. Not all gaps identified are listed.

Social inclusion:

- ❑ Mapping of small community / voluntary groups, both geographically and organisationally
- ❑ Mapping of disadvantaged groups within the ICT sector – to have a particular emphasis on skill – but also exclusion to hardware, software, the internet and broadband
- ❑ A dataset that would allow a greater understanding of the impact of ‘social enterprise’ on the regional economy

Local intelligence:

- To guarantee the perpetuation of the TEC Business Survey and Household Surveys – covering the local level, and with disaggregations to non-standard geographies
- Transport mapping by LA on a travel-to-work area
- Housing needs analysis
- Mapping of student output from educational institutions

Learning:

- ❖ Dataset on size and demand for various types of e-learning
- ❖ Skill shortages – and whether people with required skills are working in more lucrative occupations
- ❖ Dataset showing shortages in teacher supply
- ❖ Native speakers of foreign languages

Business & Economy:

- ✓ What constitutes an ‘ethnic business’ and how many are there
- ✓ Instant access to a whole set of regional economic projections
- ✓ Common dataset and methodology for the region/sub-region/local authority/ward levels on specific data items. This would need to include common timing, collection methodology, data definitions, numerator and denominator description, etc
- ✓ PC ownership by postcode