



OFFICE OF THE
DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER

Local and Regional Government
Research Programme
Annual Newsletter
2003/04



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August 2003

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Introduction

Welcome to the 2003/04 Local and Regional Government Research Programme Annual Newsletter.

The Newsletter provides details of new projects to be commissioned in 2003/04 and updates on current projects and recent research findings.

The Local and Regional Government Programme contributes research-based information for policy development and evaluation on the major elements of local government and regional governance such as the role and structure of local and regional government, cross-cutting issues, finance, local democracy and standards issues, regional governance and service quality. The programme

has continued to expand since its start in 1988/89. The budget for 2003/04 is £2.82m.

We are keen to generate interest amongst research contractors and welcome expressions of interest both from those who have worked for us in the past and those who are new to the programme. If you wish to be considered when we draw up shortlists for invitation to tender, please complete and return the enclosed form to us at the address given on it. If you have any general questions or comments about the research programme, or the work of the Unit, please contact:

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New Projects for 2003/04 include:

- Evaluation of policies on local authority procurement
- Employee attitudes and improved service delivery
- An index of satisfaction with local government and its services
- New powers for joint working
- Making choices – enhancing user choice in local public service delivery
- Community strategies and community leadership: evaluation and guidance portal
- Capacity-building and LSPs
- Learning from research/research digests
- Evaluation of Shared Priorities
- Disabled people and local authorities
- Index of local authority inflation
- Research support for the Balance of Funding Review
- Reviewing the visitors indicators used in the Formula Spending Shares
- Review of the seasonal adjustment of benefits claimant data used in FSS's
- Evaluation of the Area-Based Initiative: feasibility study
- Attitudes towards Devolution and Regional Identity
- Regional Assemblies, Equality and Diversity

New Projects for 2003/04

If you would like to express an interest in tendering for any of these projects, please return the enclosed form as soon as possible. Guidance is at page 8.

1. Evaluation of Policies on Local Authority Procurement

An evaluation of the overall impact of procurement initiatives, policies and legislative changes over the last 2 years might be brought within the programme of evaluation studies that has been set up on the Local Government Modernisation Agenda. These changes include the Code of Practice, recommendations of the Byatt Review and changes to Part II of the LG Act 1988. A range of research around these changes has established much of baseline information for the evaluation.

A useful source of information on the impact of procurement policies would come from an integral survey(s) on the nature and extent of contracting activity – including volume, length and value of local government contracts by service area. In addition to considering the impact of procurement policies on the way authorities approach and organise procurement, this research should consider the potential impact on wider issues such as skills and capacity, diversity, service quality, etc.

2. Employee Attitudes and Improved Service Delivery

Expressions of interest are not required for this project

Empirical evidence suggests there are complex causal links between positive employee attitudes and other independently measured outcomes: more positive customer attitudes and/or other organisational performance measures. Almost all the evidence, however, comes from the private sector. There are virtually no relevant studies in the public sector, still less in local government. Given the increasingly recognised importance of staff involvement and attitudes to service delivery in local government, the aim of this project would be to start to fill this gap through detailed secondary

data analysis of a sample of surveys undertaken by Local Authorities, ODPM's own staff survey within the Best Value evaluation and, dependent upon the outcome, possibly commissioning a further national survey.

3. An Index of Satisfaction With Local Government and its Services

Expressions of interest are not required for this project

The aim of this project would be to develop potential composite measures of user and wider resident satisfaction with Local Government and its services based upon the citizen satisfaction BVPIs.

The Office has a Service Delivery Agreement from CSR2000: *To ensure continuous improvements in customer satisfaction with the overall service provided by their authority.* Whilst this is covered, to some extent, by publication of the results for individual satisfaction BVPIs, they will vary from one service area to another and the overall satisfaction measure – BV3 – is too reliant on citizen understanding of Local Government and its services. Research also shows that there are significant differences in satisfaction between users and residents as a whole.

4. New Powers for Joint Working

Expressions of interest are not required for this project

The proposed section 16 Order is intended to remove any residual uncertainty that remains outside the well-being powers and underpin the partnership agenda in local government and in other bodies.

In-house case study research will establish the feasibility of distinguishing the use made of this justification for forming partnerships or companies, and the consequences for local authorities and partners concerned. The research will consider partnering approaches enabled by the Order, delivery through these approaches, flexibility and responsiveness as well as effects on local authority procurement and the wider economy.

5. Making Choices – Enhancing User Choice in Local Public Service Delivery

Expressions of interest are not required for this project

The purpose of this project, which is an New Local Government Network project that ODPM is part-funding, is to examine the benefits, practicalities and implications of increased user choice in local public service. Drawing on examples from the UK and overseas, the project will map out the areas of local authority services where choice can be readily delivered.

In developing proposals, it will recognise the increasing interest in the choice agenda. The project relates to the Government commitment to choice and diversity in public services, and an end to the ‘one size fits all’ mass production public services. It also recognises that choice has many different interpretations, and seeks to untangle the different concepts.

6. Community Strategies and Community Leadership: Evaluation and Guidance Portal

This project will seek to undertake a formative evaluation of the local development and implementation of Community Strategies and their associated action plans. Flexibility is required as the nature of Community Strategies guidance may change according to potential rationalisation of Local Authority plan requirements. The evaluation will need to:

- Establish a long term evaluatory framework, including identification and use of indicators;
- Assess existing and updated Community Strategies to establish progress;
- Undertake a formative evaluation of processes, activities and preliminary impacts;
- Collate existing guidance and potentially develop further guidance; and
- Collect indicators for use in a future summative evaluation of impacts.

In addition, the project will collate good practice materials and guidance on community leadership. The project will need to make particular links with the Local Authority plan rationalisation process evaluation. (There is an existing commitment under the 2002/03 research programme to undertake a feasibility study on evaluating community strategies).

7. Capacity Building and LSPs

There is a need for evidence to inform any bid under CSR2004 for resources to support capacity building within LSPs. Research could explore – in greater depth than the current LSP evaluation within the programme of evaluations of the Local Government Modernisation Agenda permits – the potential/existing form of support for capacity building, the extent to which a lack of support for capacity building presents difficulties, as well as identify lessons from what currently works in practice.

8. Learning from Research/Research Digests

This project will aim to:

- Systematically consolidate learning from the evidence base that has been developed by ODPM, the Audit Commission, LGA, IDeA etc., on the key themes of the Local Government White Paper;
- Identify key gaps and areas that need to be developed in greater depth; and
- Develop an easily accessible digest of research findings that can be easily updated.

9. Evaluation of Shared Priorities

This project will seek to evaluate the success of the Shared Priorities as a joint initiative between Government and the Local Government Association (LGA) through:

- Measuring the progress of pathfinder projects from strategy and action plans to implementation and outputs/outcomes;
- Measuring the impact on central government of the shared priorities, specifically in relation to delivery of the freedoms and flexibilities;
- Establishing factors which help and hinder the delivery of the Shared Priorities;
- Examine wider developments in local government related to the Shared Priorities, including changes in service delivery responsibilities for local government; and
- Measuring the extent to which key targets are being achieved across the shared priorities within pathfinder schemes and across Local Government more widely.

This programme of research could also provide support to the Innovation Forum that has been established with CPA excellent-rated local authorities.

10. Disabled People and Local Authorities

Very little is known about how local authorities in England are meeting their obligations under the 1995 Disability Discrimination Act (DDA). However, the literature which does exist mainly concentrates on people with physical disabilities and their access needs, suggesting that there may be a gap in terms of local authorities' conceptualisations of people with disabilities, their access and service needs. This project would be designed to assess local government's performance in meeting the needs of people with disabilities and ensuring that people with disabilities have full access to services. It would aim to facilitate local authorities in meeting their obligations under the DDA and provide a learning process, drawing on good and/or innovative practice relevant to including people with disabilities, and, where appropriate, provide guidance.

11. Index of Local Authority Inflation

This project would aim to identify appropriate price indicators to measure changes in the prices of goods and services purchased by Local Authorities. It will identify relevant price indicators for each category of expenditure in the procurement part of the ODPM Subjective Analysis Return (SAR) (rows 18-54), using existing official sources (eg components of RPI, PPI and CSPI). It will also make proposals for filling gaps where there are no existing price indicators that are suitable. The project will also identify any other information on the types of goods and services purchased by Local Authorities, to supplement that already provided in the ODPM SAR, and to help inform choices on price indicators.

12. Research Support for the Balance of Funding Review

The Balance of Funding Review Group, which commenced in the final quarter of 2002/03, will discuss issues around the central/local balance of funding for local expenditure and look at options for reform. The Local and Regional Government Research Unit will play a role in supporting the Group, through the provision of available research evidence. The Group may also raise some requirements for new research and the 2003/04 Local and Regional Government Research Programme should allow adequate capacity to respond.

In particular, three areas are being considered – the relationship between balance and funding issues and turnout; public attitudes towards the funding of local government; and international lessons from different funding regimes for local government.

13. Reviewing the Visitors Indicators Used in the Formula Spending Shares

Visitor data are used in the Highways Maintenance, EPCS and Police blocks of the Formula Spending Shares (FSSs). Three main visitors indicators are currently used. These represent the number of nights stayed by domestic visitors, foreign visitors and the number of day visitors to local authorities. These need to be reviewed. Firstly, much of the data used in the current indicators are from 1991 sources, including the 1991 Census. Comparable data was not collected by the 2001 Census. There is a need, therefore, to develop an indicator that uses more up-to-date information. Secondly, there is concern that existing indicators may not reflect the impacts that different types of visitors may have on an area, eg an authority that attracts a large number of visitors for shopping facilities may experience different costs than an authority that attracts people for nightlife.

14. Review of Seasonal Adjustment Made to Data on Benefit Claimants Used in FSSs

Information on the number of claimants of different benefits in an area is used in Formula Spending Share (FSS) calculations. Six of the benefits indicators use data that are collected from an annual scan of the total number of claimants. This project would support thinking on whether there are differential effects of seasonality on these benefits for local authorities, in order that these indicators can be adjusted to reflect any differences.

15. Evaluation of the Area-Based Initiative: Feasibility Study

This project will involve undertaking a feasibility study on how to evaluate the impact of the Review of Area-Based Initiatives, and to identify best practice with regard to rationalisation and better coordination of such initiatives at the (sub) regional level.

16. Attitudes towards Devolution and Regional Identity

This project will involve the inclusion of a module of attitudinal questions into the British Social Attitudes survey to ascertain awareness of, and views on, the establishment of regional chambers, proposed Elected Regional Assemblies, levels of regional identity and other issues. This will build on findings from modules in previous years of the British Social Attitudes survey. However, in 2003 the questions in the module sponsored by ODPM will be altered to better reflect the changes after the publication of the regions White Paper *Your Region, Your Choice*.

17. Regional Assemblies, Equality and Diversity

Expressions of interest are not required for this project

A mapping exercise is needed to establish the policies and activities which Regional Chambers undertake as part of their promotion of an equality and diversity agenda is required. This exercise will aim to provide an up-to-date overview of: a) what policies Regional Chambers have in place in order to promote equality and diversity; b) what Regional Chambers do in order to promote those policies; c) what methods Regional Chambers use to monitor and assess their promotion of equality and diversity.

Guidance for Potential Contractors

This section gives general guidance on the way contractors are selected for research projects.

Expressions of Interest

Expressions of interest are very welcome, but they do not guarantee inclusion on the shortlist for invitation to tender. The information that contractors provide on the enclosed form will be used in drawing up a shortlist, usually of between 3-6 names depending on the nature of the project and extent of expertise amongst potential contractors. Projects included in the newsletter form the basis of work for the coming year. Inevitably, however, there are changes to the announced programme during that time. Policy priorities may change, generating new information requirements, or projects originally suggested may no longer be needed or may require modification. The programme is sufficiently flexible to allow for this. The enclosed organisational details form asks for information about the expertise and experience of potential tenderers which will, in part, allow us to develop shortlists for any *extra mural* projects.

Invitations to Tender

Formal invitations to tender will include:

- the specification of the project outlining the objectives, relevant details and what contractors are expected to provide in the tender;
- the standard contract conditions;
- the date for receipt of tenders; and
- the expected timing for the announcement of the award.

Three weeks is the usual period for submitting tenders, although for urgent projects that period may be shortened.

Tender Documents and their Assessments

A tender assessment panel will examine the tenders. The panel will look at the appropriateness, quality and cost of contractors' proposals, and they will take into account:

- understanding of the issues being addressed;
- familiarity with previous relevant research;
- the experience of the research team; and
- the proposed costs.

Interviews may be held to assist with this assessment. Normally these will involve the tenderer making a short presentation and discussing the proposals more fully, including responding to the questions of the interviewing panel.

Awarding Contracts

The assessment of tenders normally results in the selection of a preferred tender, although the Office is not bound to accept any tender. All tenderers are informed of the outcome. The successful tenderer then agrees a programme of work with the Office for inclusion in the formal contract.

Evaluation System

An evaluation system has been designed in consultation with previously-used contractors and the Programme's policy customers. There is an internal procedure to evaluate all contracts within the Local and Regional Government Research programme on completion.

The purpose of the evaluation system is to improve the workings of the programme, by informing future research and enabling the process to run more smoothly and effectively in future. It will also enable contractors to be provided with comments from the Office on their satisfaction with both the management of the research and the quality of the outputs and will give contractors the opportunity to offer feedback to the Office.

Summary of the 2002/03 Research Programme

In 2002/03, the Local and Regional Government research programme consisted of 74 projects. There were 48 new projects and 26 on going from the previous year. Brief details of a number of key projects undertaken within each of the main research themes of the programme are given below.

Local Government Modernisation Agenda: Framework Agreement

Over-arching Evaluation of the Local Government Modernisation Agenda

The Local and Regional Government Research Unit has a major on-going 10-year programme of research evaluating the long-term effects of the various elements of the LGMA, but it also recognises that individual evaluations will only give a partial view of the real effect of the LGMA in local government. An over-arching evaluation of the LGMA, therefore, has been commissioned not only to explore the delivery and impacts of the individual policies, but also to understand how these policies interact and what the key drivers of change are.

The project is being undertaken by a consortium led by Professor Tony Bovaird (University of the West of England) and Professor Steve Martin (Cardiff Business School). The research has two elements. Firstly, a *Meta-evaluation* of the secondary data collected by the research teams evaluating individual elements of the LGMA and secondly, a *Macro-evaluation* collecting new primary data where there are gaps in information to answer key research questions.

The research institutions undertaking the individual evaluations of the LGMA are contracted to LRGRU under a Framework Agreement, which facilitates joint working and data-sharing for the over-arching evaluation. The group meets regularly and has held their first conference in June 2003.

Cross-Cutting Issues

Long Term Evaluation of the Local Government Modernisation Agenda

Contractor: Cardiff Business School and partners

This research will provide a robust evaluation of the overall impact of the Local Government Modernisation Agenda by drawing together data from across all evaluations of individual aspects of LGMA policy. The project will examine not just whether the LGMA has been implemented as intended, but also explore local authority performance to determine whether the policy is meeting its objectives. The research began in early 2003, with a scoping project which examines the data collected and findings from the individual evaluations to establish the need (if any) for further primary data collection. In addition, the research team has begun development of protocols for joint working, data sharing and publication between the meta-evaluation team and the research contractor/teams undertaking individual LGMA evaluations. During 2003 the project will produce two policy papers and a baseline report. *Issue-based policy papers and annual interim reports throughout the study. Final report in early 2009.*

Links Between the Finance and Non-Finance Elements of Local Government

Contractor: School for Policy Studies, University of Bristol

The University of Bristol, with input from the London School of Economics, have undertaken a systematic and extensive review of UK and overseas literature around the relationship between local government finance and local democracy, service delivery, performance and partnership working. Despite insufficient literature to draw firm conclusions in some areas of interest, the report does highlight the importance of finance as a tool of public policy and draws attention to the trade-offs that can exist between different broad policy goals. *Published November 2002*

Equality and Diversity in Local Government in England

Contractor: Office for Public Management

OPM was commissioned to deliver a short piece of primary research examining what local government

is doing in terms of delivering the equality and diversity agenda. The research has involved: scoping interviews with over 30 experts in the field; an email survey to all local authorities in England, achieving a 52% return rate; 10 case studies of local authorities; a validation event. Results from the email survey indicate that many initiatives focus on ethnic minorities and people with disabilities, perhaps reflecting recent legislation; however, nearly 10 per cent of respondents had not published a Race Equality Scheme. Interim findings from the case studies suggest that there is a very wide range of practice in this area.

Final report published in July 2003

Local Strategic Partnerships: Evaluation and Action Research

Contractor: Local Government Centre, University of Warwick

Commencing in March 2002, this 3-year project seeks to (a) establish a long-term evaluatory framework (b) undertake a formative evaluation of processes and preliminary impacts, and (c) provide action research to support both LSPs and the development of LSP policy at local, regional and central levels.

The feasibility study and evaluatory framework were completed in December 2002. This included a baseline survey of all English LSPs. Together with an LSP research newsletter; the report of survey was published and disseminated to all LSPs in February 2002. Longitudinal case study research in 13 partnerships commenced in early 2003. Five year-long issue-based action learning sets also commenced in early 2003 – each bringing together approximately 12 LSPs to develop pragmatic support materials for wider dissemination. The research also encompasses 3 ‘call-down’ contracts (1) an assessment of local public sector body engagement in LSPs (2) an assessment of the nature and contents of local neighbourhood renewal strategies, and (3) gathering of perceived good practice experiences in use of shared indicators and targets.

Materials produced incrementally throughout the study. Baseline survey published February 2003. Final report in 2005.

Profiles of Local Government Systems in Commonwealth Countries

Contractor: Commonwealth Local Government Forum

Following the publication of 9 local government profiles in 2002, a further 6 have been developed and the existing 9 upgraded. Profiles now exist for Australia, Bangladesh, Belize, Cyprus, Dominica, Ghana, India, Jamaica, Malta, New Zealand, South Africa, Trinidad & Tobago, Uganda, UK and Zimbabwe. A further 12 profiles will be developed during 2003.

Published in CLGF 2003 Handbook (February 2003)

E-Government – Process Evaluation

Contractor: Centre for Urban and Regional Development, University of Newcastle upon Tyne

This project will provide a detailed understanding of the processes by which local authorities are planning and implementing e-government and the obstacles and challenges they face. The key question this research is seeking to answer is: why does the pace of development differ so widely across local authorities and with certain elements of implementation? The research is based largely on ten local authority case studies visited at different stages of implementation. The project also draws upon a recently completed survey of all local authorities, which was conducted in-house by LRGRU.

Survey report published in May 2003.

Full process evaluation report to be published in summer 2003

Local Democracy and Standards Issues

Consulting on Council Tax and Spend Decisions

Contractor: MORI with the Universities of Manchester and Birmingham

Whilst guidance on consultation is available, little has been produced that is specific to consulting on local tax and spend issues – an area that presents particular difficulties. A research team, led by MORI, was commissioned to develop guidelines to provide practical support to those authorities committed to carrying out quality and effective consultation.

Published in June 2002



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Local and Regional Government Research
Programme 2003/04

Organisational Details

This form can be downloaded at: <http://www.local.odpm.gov.uk/research/index.htm>

We would be grateful if you could complete and return this form to help us build up a clearer profile of the expertise amongst potential tenderers for our research projects. You are encouraged to return it as you may otherwise miss the opportunity to be considered to undertake research projects for the Unit.

A single copy of this form should accompany expression of interest form(s).

Contact name:			
Job Title:			
Name of organisation:			
Address:			
Postcode:			
Tel:		Fax:	
e-mail:			
Where did you hear about the Newsletter?			

MAIN AREAS OF EXPERTISE

LOCAL GOVERNMENT FINANCE

Capital finance
Revenue finance
Taxes and charges

Local PSAs
Procurement

SERVICE DELIVERY

Best Value
Best Value Performance indicators
Beacon Councils
Electronic government

REGIONAL GOVERNANCE

RDAs
Regional chambers
Devolution/regional government
Regional governance structures

DEMOCRATIC RENEWAL

- Stakeholder participation
- Political management structures
- Local government law

- Innovation, cultural and organisational change
- Ethical considerations

CROSS CUTTING ISSUES

- Community leadership/planning
- Partnership working
- Equality Issues
- Diversity Issues

METHODOLOGY

- Large scale data manipulation
- Quantitative data analysis
- Qualitative techniques
- Design/facilitation of focus groups
- Design and use of case studies
- Survey design
- Survey fieldwork and analysis
- Policy evaluation techniques
- Data mapping/GIS
- Literature reviews

GENERAL

- European/international experience
- Preparation of guidance
- Public satisfaction measures

Please list any other relevant skills or subject expertise that may be of interest:

Have you undertaken research previously for the ODPM (or its predecessors)?
 If yes, please give the title of the project/s and dates undertaken below. *Please continue on separate sheet if necessary.*

Send completed forms to:	Date form completed:
Victoria Walker Local and Regional Government Research Unit Office of the Deputy Prime Minister Floor 5/D5, Eland House Bressenden Place, London SW1E 5DU OR e-mail to: lg_research@odpm.gsi.gov.uk	



**OFFICE OF THE
DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER**

Local and Regional Government Research
Programme 2003/04

Expression of Interest

Please complete one form per project (copy as required)

This form can be downloaded at: <http://www.local.odpm.gov.uk/research/index.htm>

Whilst responding does not guarantee inclusion within any tendering shortlist, you are advised to complete and return the form as you may miss the opportunity to be considered.

We would be very interested in receiving any supporting material you may have about you and/or your organisation.

Project Number:	Project Title:
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Contact name:			
Job Title:			
Name of organisation:			
Address:			
Postcode:			
Tel:		Fax:	
e-mail:			

Please briefly outline the relevant experience of your organisation, specifically related to the above project. *You are asked to list details of specific projects below.*

Please provide details of your capability and expertise to undertake the above project (e.g. methodological expertise, numbers of relevant staff etc):

Please provide details of recent **relevant** projects undertaken or in progress. Please give the title of the project, and details of the sponsoring organisation (with contact name and details). *Please continue on separate sheet if necessary.*

Send completed forms to:

Victoria Walker
Local and Regional Government Research Unit
5/D5, Eland House
Office of the Deputy Prime Minister
Bressenden Place, London SW1E 5DU

OR

e-mail to: lg_research@odpm.gsi.gov.uk

Date form completed:

Public Participation in Local Government – Survey of Local Authorities

In-house project

This survey provides information on the range and extent of public participation initiatives being used across local government. It updates baseline research published in 1998 and shows that local government continues to push forward the agenda on public participation. The research indicates that authorities clearly recognise the benefits of engaging the public and are increasingly trying to involve people in local decisions and developing service delivery. The average number of initiatives used per year by authorities has increased since 1997 and there has been a marked increase in the use of more innovative and deliberative types of participation, such as interactive websites, citizen's panels and focus groups.

Published in December 2002

The Development of Overview and Scrutiny

Contractor: INLOGOV, University of Birmingham

INLOGOV have undertaken a largely case study-based examination of the development of overview and scrutiny within new council constitutions. The research has found a good deal of experimentation across local authorities in terms of the structure and operation of overview and scrutiny and within this there is strong trend towards individual authorities emphasising particular key roles. The report focuses on the positive lessons from local implementation and provides practical solutions to barriers within local authorities whatever their constitutional arrangements.

Published September 2002

Finance

Evaluation of the Development of Asset and Capital Management

Contractor: York Consulting Ltd.

York Consulting Ltd are evaluating the implementation and development of asset management plans and corporate capital strategies in local government. These arrangements were assessed as part of the Single Capital Pot (SCP) but will now be considered under CPA and the forthcoming prudential regime. This three-year

study involves understanding changes in local authority approaches and the outcomes they can lead to. The study will also read across to research on the initial period of SCP funding that York Consulting are also undertaking.

Second stage report published January 2003

The Financial Management of Local Disasters: Local Authority Use of Bellwin Scheme Support

Contractor: Bannock Consulting

A review in 2001 largely concluded that the Bellwin Scheme is an appropriate financial support mechanism for local authorities faced with unforeseen and exceptional disasters. However, although fully audited, detailed information on the Bellwin claims has not been collated centrally on any systematic basis. Also, it is not clearly understood is how funding under the Scheme is used in the context of the total cost to local authorities of dealing with emergencies and disasters. Bannock Consulting have been commissioned to undertake research to address these gaps.

Final report in autumn 2003

Regional Governance

Identifying the Flow of Public Expenditure into the English Regions

Contractor: A team led by Professor Iain McLean of Nuffield College, Oxford

The project has two key aims: to identify the form and level of public expenditure (domestic and European) flowing into individual English regions; and, to identify – for each expenditure flow – what determines the level of that expenditure ie the allocative mechanism. The research commenced in May 2002, and is due to be completed by end-June 2003. The main output to date has been a feasibility study that reviews past research and sets down the parameters for the current project. This will be followed by individual expenditure stream reports covering, for example, health and personal social services.

Production of a final report bringing together all expenditure data, methodologies for disaggregation to regional figures and considerations for further work to be published in Autumn 2003

Evaluation of the Role and Impact of Regional Chambers

Contractor: ARUP

This research project will evaluate the extent to which regional chambers, collectively and individually, have met their objectives. It is envisaged that this research will be carried out in two phases, the first being a feasibility study and the second an evaluation of regional chambers in delivering their strategic and scrutiny roles.

Final report due January 2006

Long-Term Evaluation of the Operation and Effectiveness of Elected Regional Assemblies

Contractor: SURF, University of Salford

An evaluation of the extent to which, collectively and individually, Elected Regional Assemblies (ERAs) within England have met their objectives. The research is long-term, and is to be rolled out as ERAs emerge. The research will include a feasibility stage in which the evaluation methodology will be designed and baseline information collected.

Issues based reports and papers will be produced with a final report due c2011

Review of the Policymaking Process: the Introduction of Elected Regional Assemblies

Contractor: SURF, University of Salford

This project will examine the mechanics of the development, design and delivery of policy, focusing on the policy context following the White Paper *Your Region, Your Choice* and specifically following the enactment of the Regional Assemblies (Preparations) Bill. It is based on the assumption that policy development, design and delivery, and responses to policy in the regions are best tracked contemporaneously than retrospectively. Given the likely timescale for the establishment of elected regional assemblies, this project will be longitudinal. This will enable the building in of a retrospective element, tracking not only how policy development, design and delivery are managed but how, if at all, those processes change over time and with any structural changes.

Issues based reports and papers will be produced with a final report due c2011 initial report due 2006

Attitudes Towards Devolution and Regional Identity

Contractor: National Centre for Social Research

The Office funded a module of 10 questions in the 2002 British Social Attitudes Survey. This was a module of attitudinal questions, which attempt to ascertain awareness of, and views on, the establishment of regional chambers, proposed elected regional assemblies, levels of regional identity and attitudes to devolution elsewhere in the UK. The dataset was delivered in January 2003.
Dataset delivered end January 2003

Service Quality

Qualitative Understanding of Satisfaction and Expectations

Contractor: MORI Social Research Institute

In 2000/01, all English local authorities were required to undertake a number of surveys to collate "user satisfaction" performance indicators. These survey-based measures form part of the wider suite of Best Value Performance Indicators (BVPIs), which councils are required to collect on an annual or tri-annual basis. The main stage of the project was to develop new questions for the surveys in order to measure quality of life issues and expectations as well as satisfaction. A scoping paper was prepared setting out options for new questions, and a rationale for including each one. Other government departments also submitted proposed question areas, particularly relating to the areas of anti social behaviour, community cohesion and quality of life. From this, qualitative and quantitative testing of the new questionnaires was carried out. The final versions of the questionnaires to be used in the 2003/04 user satisfaction surveys can be found at: www.survey.bvpi.gov.uk
Guidance based on the new questions, and the questionnaires that incorporate them, was published in March 2003

Long Term Evaluation of Best Value and Its Impact

Contractor: Cardiff Business School and partners

Starting in early 2001, this is an objective, rigorous and robust evaluation of the success of local authorities' approaches towards Best Value. It will identify Best Value's impact, both in terms of its aims and objectives and as a key component of the Local Government Modernisation Agenda (LGMA). The first phase of the research involving a census of local authorities and residents surveys is now complete, and the case study work is underway. A preliminary report linking these elements with the 2000/01 best value performance indicator baseline data will be published later in 2003.

This project also included a feasibility study on a research framework to enable evaluation of the process and impact components of the LGMA. This has now been published and is available on our web site: <http://www.local.odpm.gov.uk/research/index.htm>.

The project has further developed during 2001/02 to explore the link between staff satisfaction and service standards. A survey of a range of frontline staff across the various services provided by local authorities has been commissioned and successfully piloted. The main stage staff survey will be undertaken during 2003/04.

Issue-based and progress reports throughout the study. Final report in early 2006

Intervention and Recovery Support Programmes

Contractor: INLOGOV, University of Birmingham

INLOGOV have been commissioned to evaluate the delivery of recovery plans in a number of CPA rated 'poor' authorities. The research aims to contribute to understanding and learning from the practical experience of recovery and to distil the lessons learned from both the academic and practical evidence. The first case study began in 2002 and continues in 2003 alongside at least four other case study sites. INLOGOV have produced first drafts of three policy papers and delivered a number of facilitates workshops to the local government field. During 2003/04, INLOGOV will draft further policy papers (in particular on sustaining recovery) and an interim report.

Issue-based policy papers and progress reports throughout the study. Final report in Spring 2005

The Role of Staff in Delivering High Quality Services

Contractor: PricewaterhouseCoopers with Cardiff Business School

This project will look at the contribution that staff, and the way they are managed, makes to the delivery of high quality services by local authorities. The way staff are recruited, trained, managed and involved in decisions, has the potential to significantly impact on the quality of service provided by a local authority. This research will provide detailed information on how local authorities seek to realise this potential through their processes and arrangements for the management and involvement of staff.

The research approach includes a literature review, a survey of local authority HR managers, and case studies in twelve local authorities. It will also draw upon a survey of local authorities and contractors (being conducted by the Employers' Organisation) looking at the way authorities handle workforce matters during contracting.

Interim reports submitted throughout. Final report to be published Early 2004

Local Government Service Diversity: Practice, Expectations and Public Attitudes

Contractor: York Consulting Ltd.

Commissioned in late 2002, the project seeks to identify the full range of discretionary services across English and Welsh local authorities. It will also establish the preliminary impact of Well-Being legislation upon service provision and the likely effect of the ability to charge (up to cost-recovery) for discretionary services. In addition to focussing on the actions, decision-making processes and expectations of councils, the research will also assess public knowledge and attitudes to differential service provision.

Drawing on initial consultation with councils, an interim report was produced in January 2003.

Final report due end 2003

Evaluation of the Beacon Councils Scheme: Review of Applications Process

Contractor: Local Government Centre, University of Warwick

The Beacon Council scheme is designed to spread good practice and innovation amongst local authorities. Jointly commissioned with the IDeA, the main process evaluation was published in March 2002. The research was extended to produce a series of papers reviewing both trends in the applications process and an assessment as to whether the 'best' authorities were indeed applying for the Scheme.

Final reports produced in December 2002

Beacon Council Scheme: Round 4 Theme Research

Contractor: MORI

In support of the Beacon Council assessment process, MORI were commissioned to establish baseline figures of public satisfaction for each of the round 4 individual themes and for overall general performance.

Published in July 2002

Long-Term Evaluation of Local Public Service Agreements

Contractor: Office for Public Management with the University of the West of England and the University of Cardiff

Local Public Service Agreements (LPSAs) involve local authorities signing up to challenging targets to deliver key national and local priorities, in return for operational flexibilities and incentives with rewards for success. The long-term evaluation of LPSAs began its' developmental phase in March 2003, with the main phase running until 2007. This research examines whether LPSAs have led to substantial improvement in local authorities' ability to deliver key services, with the emphasis on impact (and outcome) as well as an evaluation of the negotiation and implementation processes. The findings from this evaluation will be disseminated in a series of interim reports, regular dissemination events and a final report on completion in 2007. The first publication relating to this evaluation will be a report of the development phase (due autumn 2003).

Projects in the 2001/02 and 2002/03 research programmes not currently let:

- Delivery of best value reviews (*Project 1, 2001/02*)
- Local authorities as community leaders (*Project 19, 2001/02*)
- Public knowledge and use of information on local authority expenditure (*Project 29, 2001/02*)
- Local government reorganisation: the effectiveness and impact of unitary authorities (*Project 1, 2002/03*)
- The relationship between plans, ring-fenced grants and Performance Indicators (*Project 9, 2002/03*)
- Civic education of young people (*Project 24, 2002/03*)

News

Local And Regional Governance Network

The Local and Regional Governance Network, one of four ODPM Networks formed to develop future research and policy, will be launched in October 2003. The 12 research teams who form the Framework Agreement contractors evaluating the individual Local Government Modernisation Agenda policies will be the nucleus of the Network. In addition, the Network will have members from the wider local government academic community and stakeholders from central and local government.

The Network will:

- Provide advice on key local government research and policy issues;
- Organise seminars for stakeholders;
- Advise on development and priorities for ODPM's local government research programme;
- Develop research capacity in the local government field;
- Improve access to, and take-up of, research findings; and,
- Raise the profile of local and regional governance research.

The network will also update academics researchers, practitioners and policy-makers with emerging policy issues and research opportunities from the central government perspective. Finally, the network will provide a forum for other stakeholders, such as third sector organisations and private consultancy, to interact with researchers both in academic and government circles and to disseminate their own research activities.

Links Within the Research Community

The Local and Regional Government Research Unit works jointly and in cross-cutting ways with the Joseph Rowntree Foundation, the IDeA, the Audit Commission, the Scottish Executive and the National Assembly for Wales, as well as other organisations and other parts of ODPM, eg the Neighbourhood Renewal Unit, and government departments in a variety of situations, including joint funding of projects, eg beacons, intervention in failing councils, LSPs, electronic voting, local government workforce matters, measuring cost-effectiveness, equality and diversity in local government and disaggregating BVPIs. A major new development had been the creation of the Local Government Modernisation Agenda Evaluation Programme Steering Group which meets four to five times a year and includes the LGA, Audit Commission, IDeA, relevant ODPM interests (as required) and other government departments (as required). In addition to overseeing the evaluation programme, this Steering Group aims to collectively reduce the research burden on local government and develop a more effective approach to joint planning the research effort of its core members.

Mid Year Consultative Meetings

Two round table meetings, hosted by the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister, were held in June 2002 to debate the future research agendas surrounding high quality public services at the local level and the different spheres of governance that operate from neighbourhood to regional and national levels. The purpose of the meetings was to encourage an open debate amongst the research, practitioner and policy-maker communities about the future, long-term research agenda surrounding these broad topics. It is hoped that the ideas generated and issues discussed will play a part in shaping and influencing thinking about the needs of the future

evidence base, and on how to fill significant gaps in the existing one.

The Local and Regional Government Research Unit

Recent changes in staff and responsibilities include the introduction of two new principal research officers – Ann Deehan and Jane Aspden. A new senior research officer, Derek Egan, has joined the unit and, in the past year, Demelza Birch has been promoted into this position. The Unit has also welcomed five new research officers – Katherine Cane, Janet Crawford, Kate Millward, Ronan Smyth and Laura Williams. The Unit has been sorry to see the departure of David Purdy, Andrew O'Reilly and Adrian Laughton, who have taken up new research posts within the Civil Service.

Full details about current staff within the unit and the work they are responsible for can be found at the website address:

<http://www.local.odpm.gov.uk/research/contact.htm>

WEBSITE DETAILS OF SOME OTHER RELEVANT GOVERNMENT RESEARCH PROGRAMMES

Office of the Deputy Prime Minister (ODPM)

Details of ODPM research on housing, planning and land use, and on the Neighbourhood Renewal Unit, can be found in the science and research pages at:

<http://www.odpm.gov.uk>

Department for Transport (DfT)

Details of Department for Transport research on the Integrated Transport Research Strategy, and the Roads and Local Transport research programme can be found in the science and research pages at:

<http://www.dft.gov.uk>

Department for Education and Skills (DfES)

<http://www.dfes.gov.uk/research>

Department for Work and Pensions (DWP)

<http://www.dwp.gov.uk/asd>

Home Office (HO)

<http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk/rds/index.htm>

Department for Trade and Industry (DTI)

<http://www.dti.gov.uk/er/emar/index.htm>

<http://www.womenandequalityunit.gov.uk/research/index.htm>

<http://www.sbs.gov.uk/research/>

Department of Health (DoH)

<http://www.doh.gov.uk/research/rd2/prpindex.htm>

Scottish Executive

<http://www.scotland.gov.uk/cru>

National Assembly for Wales

<http://www.wales.gov.uk/subiresearch/index-e.htm>

Local and Regional Government Research Programme Publications

Full details of the Unit's publications appear on the Office's website at:

<http://www.local.odpm.gov.uk/research/index.htm>

The list below includes details of all reports published since 2000

Service Quality

Handling of Workforce Matters in Procurement: Monitoring the Impact of Amendments to Part II of the Local Government Act 1988, ODPM, August 2002

Local Authority Procurement: A Research Report. D. Birch, DTLR 2001

Improving local public services: final evaluation of the Best Value Pilot Programme. S. Martin et al., DTLR 2001

Best Value and Audit Commission Performance Indicators for 2000/2001 Volume I – User Satisfaction Performance Indicators: Guidance on Methods of Data Collection. DTLR 2000

Balancing Creative Tensions: Better Practice in Implementing Best Value. M. Allison and J. Hartley, Local Government Centre, University of Warwick, and Vertex and Oracle, DTLR 2000

Generating and Sharing Better Practice. M. Allison and J. Hartley. Local Government Centre, University of Warwick, DTLR 2000

Mapping Partnerships in Eleven Local Authorities. Paper 8, DTLR/Newchurch Partnership Series, DTLR 2000

The Beacon Council Scheme 2000/2001: A Handbook on Measurements of User Satisfaction in Local Government Service Delivery. MORI, DTLR 2000

Beacon Councils Year Two Themes Research Summary, DTLR 2000

(Beacon Round 2 Theme Research)

Community Safety – Reducing and Preventing Vehicle Crime. Beacons Preliminary Supporting Research. Crime Concern, DTLR 2000

Competitiveness & Enterprise – Better regulation of business to protect consumers and encourage enterprise. Beacons Preliminary Supporting Research. University of Birmingham. DTLR 2000

Education – Increasing the attainment of under-achieving groups. Beacons Preliminary Supporting Research. University of Newcastle, DTLR 2000

Health – Effective local strategies to tackle the wider causes of ill-health. Beacons Preliminary Supporting Research. University of Birmingham, DTLR 2000

Making the Most of Culture, Sport and Tourism – Stimulating economic and social regeneration through culture, sport and tourism. Beacons Preliminary Supporting Research. University of Birmingham, DTLR 2000

Modern Service Delivery – Good access to council services. Beacons Preliminary Supporting Research. University of Birmingham, DTLR 2000

Older people – supporting independent living for older people. Beacons Preliminary Supporting Research. DTLR 2000

Planning – Town centre regeneration. Beacons Preliminary Supporting Research. URBED, DTLR 2000

Social Services – Improving standards for children in foster care. Beacons Preliminary Supporting Research. University of York, DTLR 2000

Sustainable Development/Local Environmental Quality – Maintaining a high quality local environment. Beacons Preliminary Supporting Research. AEA Technology, DTLR 2000

Younger People's Issues – Tackling drug misuse. Beacons Preliminary Supporting Research. Cardiff School of Social Services, DTLR 2000

Local Democracy and Standards Issues

Local Strategic Partnerships Report of 2002 Survey, ODPM and DfT, February 2003

Council Tax Consultation: guidelines for local authorities, G. Stoker, W. Hatter and N. Gilby, University of Manchester, MORI, ODPM 2002

Continuity or Change? Officers and New Council Constitutions, P. Fox, M. Lyons, C. Skelcher, ODPM, University of Birmingham, ODPM 2002

The Implementation of New Council Constitutions and the New Ethical Framework: Report of ELG Survey Findings for ODPM Advisory Group ODPM 2002

The Development of Overview and Scrutiny in Local Government, University of Birmingham, ODPM 2002

Parish Council Standards Cases: An Estimate of their Volume and Nature DTLR 2002

Allegations of Misconduct in English Local Authorities, DTLR 2001

Public Attitudes to Directly Elected Mayors, DTLR 2001

Political Executives and the New Ethical Framework. C. Skelcher and S. Snape, INLOGOV, University of Birmingham, IDEa, 2001.*

1998 British Social Attitudes Survey: Secondary Data Analysis of the Local Government Module. N.I. Chivite-Matthews and J. Teal, DTLR 2001

Improving Public Services: Final Evaluation of the Best Value Pilots Programme, ODPM 2001

Improving Public Services: Evaluation of The Best Value Pilot Programme Final Report, ODPM 2001

Revisiting Public Perceptions of Local Government: A Decade of Change, National Centre for Social Research, DTLR 2000

It Is Our Money Anyway ...: Lessons Learnt From Giving The Public a Voice in Local Authority Spending Decisions, National Centre for Social Research, DTLR 2000

New Council Constitutions: Modular Constitutions for English Local Authorities, Inlogov, University of Birmingham, The Stationery Office 2000, (Full report 1 also available)

New Council Constitutions: Consultation Guidelines for English Local Authorities. C. Copus and F. Taylor, INLOGOV, and G. Stoker, University of Manchester, The Stationery Office 2000

Turnout at Local Elections: Influences on levels of voter registration and electoral participation. Plymouth University and Maxwell Stamp PLC, DTLR 2000

New Forms of Political Management: Self evaluation toolkit. S. Snape, Inlogov, University of Birmingham, IDEa, 2000*

New Forms of Political Management. INLOGOV, University of Birmingham and S. Leach, De Montfort University, IDEa, 2000*

User Satisfaction Performance Indicators: Guidance on Methods of Data Collection – published April 2000

Process Evaluation of the Negotiation of Pilot Local Public Service Agreements ODPM 2002

Monitoring and Evaluation of the Beacon Council Scheme: Final Process Outcomes Report, Warwick Business School, ODPM

Leading and Learning: Perceptions and attitudes towards the Beacon Council Scheme and motivations for attending events, Warwick Business School, ODPM

User/Public Satisfaction with Service Delivery: Overall and Theme Specific Performance Briefing Paper prepared for The Beacon Council Advisory Panel/ODPM, ODPM 2003

The Beacon Scheme Round 5, ODPM 2003

Round 5 Better Local Public Transport theme report

Round 5 Supporting People theme report

Round 5 Benefits Administration theme report

Round 5 Early Years and Childcare theme report

Round 5 Promoting Sustainable Tourism theme report

Round 5 Transforming the School Workforce theme report

Round 5 Supporting Social Care Workers theme report

Round 5 Services for Older People theme report

Round 5 Housing Renewal theme report

Round 5 Crime and Disorder Partnerships theme report

Round 5 Theme Research interview summaries

The Beacon Scheme Round 4, ODPM 2002:

User/Public Satisfaction with Service Delivery: Overall and Theme Specific Performance – Baseline Data, The Beacon Council Advisory Panel/ODPM 2002

The Beacon Scheme Round 3 ODPM 2000 – 2001: Theme Research Papers

Individual Theme Research Papers

User Satisfaction Baseline: General Performance and Service Delivery

Cross-Cutting Issues

Public Participation in Local Government Report, D. Birch, ODPM 2002

Youth Participation in local Government: A Qualitative Study, D. Molloy, C. White, N. Hosfield, National Centre for Social Research, ODPM 2002

Local e-Government – a survey of local authorities, ODPM 2003

Equality and Diversity in Local Government in England: A Literature Review, S. Morgan, ODPM 2003

(This review is based on literature already in the public domain.)

A Review of Local Authority Statutory and Non Statutory Service and Policy Planning Requirements, L. Woodhouse, DTLR 2002

Work-Life Balance: A Survey of Local Authorities. D. Birch and D. Purdy, DTLR 2001

It is our money anyway ... Lessons learnt from giving the public a voice in local authority spending decisions, L. Spencer, G. Elam, R. Turner, National Centre for Social Research, DTLR 2000

Revisiting Public Perception of Local Government: A Decade of Change, C. Bromley, N. Stratford, N. Rao, National Centre for Social Research, Goldsmiths College, DETR 2000

Law Relating to Local Government. C. Crawford, S. Sauvain, A. Coulson, and M. Clarke, DTLR 2000

Innovation and Best Practice in Local Government: A Good Practice Guide. University of Birmingham, DTLR 2000

Innovation and Best Practice in Local Government: A Research Report. University of Birmingham, DTLR 2000

Policy Action Team 17: Joining it up locally – The Evidence Base. W. Russell Barter with P. McCafferty and L. Woodhouse, DTLR 2000

Finance

Implementation of Asset Management Plans and Corporate Capital Strategies: Baseline Report, ODPM 2003

The Development and Implementation of Corporate Capital Strategies and Asset Management Plans, ODPM 2003

Evaluation of the Capital Challenge Pilot Scheme, York Consulting, DTLR 2001

Council Tax Consultation: guidelines for local authorities Main Report, University of Manchester and MORI, ODPM 2002

Links between the finance and non-finance elements of local government: a literature review, University of Bristol, ODPM 2002

Scoping study on the implications of local authority fixed and variable costs for revenue grant distribution, PricewaterhouseCoopers, DTLR 2001

Local Government Grant Distribution – An International Comparative Study. PriceWaterhouseCoopers, 2000**

A Catalogue of Data relating to local government finance. B. Robson, DTLR 2000

Revenue Grant Distribution System: Research on Local Government Perspectives. ORC International, DTLR 2000

Business Perceptions of Local Government and Local Government Involvement with the Business Community. York Consulting, DTLR 2000

Doing the Business: A Guide for Local Authorities on Engaging the Business Community. York Consulting, DTLR 2000

Measuring Performance in the Management of Local Authority Property, DTZ Peda, ODPM 2000

Regional Issues

Inclusiveness of Regional Chambers Report, ODPM 2002

Data Catalogue – June 2002 Version

Regional data: review of needs, uses, gaps and priorities report, DTLR 2002

Regional Government in England: A preliminary review of literature and research findings. W. Russell Barter, DTLR 2000

Notes

**Publications available from:*
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Layden House
76-86 Turnmill Street
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Telephone: 020 7296 6600

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No.1 London Bridge,
London SE1 9QL

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Telephone: 020 7944 4125**

The Local and Regional Government Programme contributes research-based information for policy development and evaluation on the major elements of local government and regional governance such as the role and structure of local and regional government, cross-cutting issues, finance, local democracy and standards issues, regional governance and service quality.

The Newsletter provides details of new projects to be commissioned in 2003/04 and updates on current projects and recent research findings.