

Local Authority Research Council Initiative

*LARCI – bringing Local Authorities and the Research Councils into closer partnership,
leading to better informed research, policy and practice.*

LARCI Newsletter
Spring 2009



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Strategic Board

Chaired by Professor John Benington, the strategic agenda for LARCI is set by a Board which includes Chief Executives from a number of Local Authorities as well as senior staff from devolved administrations and LARCI member organisations.

For information on LARCI Strategic board members please see our website www.larci.org.uk

Welcome

Welcome to the LARCI Spring 2009 newsletter.

It has been an exciting recent few months for LARCI, with the appointment of new Chair, Professor John Benington from Warwick Business School, and the latest meeting of the recently formed Strategic Board, which set strategic research priorities for the forthcoming year.

Featured in this edition is information on how to access Knowledge Transfer Partnerships, a scheme aimed at giving local authorities and other organisations, access to invaluable expertise at Britain's top universities.

This newsletter also provides concise summaries of the latest research, funded by the LARCI concordat organisations, of interest and practical use to those working with and within local government.

We also signpost opportunities for collaboration with Research Council programmes, share best practice through publicising research conducted by local authorities and publicise reports and events supported by related organisations.

For more LARCI information please visit our website which is updated regularly with events and information:

www.larci.org.uk

Cover photograph:

© Bluebells in the Chiltern Hills May 2009
Gary Bartlett, Chiltern District Council

If you would like to provide a photograph for the newsletter front page please email LARCI@esrc.ac.uk

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Raising standards across our schools



KTP Business Leader of Tomorrow award

An ESRC-funded Knowledge Transfer Partnership (KTP) with a school in Northumberland has scooped a national award at the recent KTP awards ceremony. The Partnership's Associate, Anna Reid, won the coveted "Business Leader of Tomorrow" award for her work in developing the capacity of students to act as independent learners and working to devise a method of assessing how well they develop these skills.

Acting as a conduit between the renowned Research Centre for Learning and Teaching at Newcastle University and the progressive Bedlington Community High School in Northumberland, Anna has been working with a core team of teachers to develop their understanding of how to encourage students to become more enquiring in their approach to their studies. The school has also recruited and trained a team of student researchers from Years 7, 8 and 9 and they support staff when they are trying out new initiatives in class.

Headteacher, Keiran McGrane felt that the partnership had already made an impact, saying:

"The KTP has been very valuable particularly in changing the culture and ethos of the school to be more focused on student learning. Anna has effected significant change within the practise of a number of teachers.....This has now created a tipping point whereby the project is being infused throughout all subject areas,".

The next stages of the project involve ensuring that enquiry becomes embedded in all lessons and that an assessment framework is developed for students to measure their own progress against skills and knowledge. The school will be hosting a series of visitor days in June and July for educational professionals to find out more about how this approach to teaching and learning might be applied in their organisations. Professor David Leat from Newcastle University is

equally enthusiastic:

"The KTP has been a brilliant opportunity to test some of our understandings. We are learning important lessons about the forms of knowledge that support practice innovation, and how practitioner's needs change over time,".

This Partnership receives financial support from the Knowledge Transfer Partnerships programme (KTP). KTP aims to help businesses and public sector organisations to improve their competitiveness and productivity through the better use of knowledge, technology and skills that reside within the UK Knowledge Base. KTP is funded by the Technology Strategy Board along with the other government funding organisations.

For further details please contact
Sara.atkinson@northumberland.gov.uk

Photo: Anna Reid and Graham Spittle

Focus on KTP's for Local Authorities

Knowledge Transfer Partnerships enable research organisations to apply their research knowledge to important local authority problems. Through these collaborative partnerships, UK local government can benefit from a wide range of expertise available in the UK knowledge based - public and private sector research institutes and higher education institutions.

At the heart of each Knowledge Transfer Partnership is a relationship between a company/organisation and staff in a knowledge base institution applying their expertise to a project that is central to the development of their collaborative partner. The project is carried out by an associate (recent graduate or postgraduate), who also benefits from an organised training programme. In the process, the knowledge base institution is able to enhance the business relevance of their work.

The Knowledge Transfer Partnership scheme is financially supported by sponsors, the largest of which is the Department of Trade and Industry. In addition to the ESRC, other Research Councils are also involved as are the Welsh Assembly Government and the Scottish Executive. Knowledge Transfer Partnerships are managed by a contracted company, Momenta. In addition to the grant, the participating business/organisational partner also contributes to each project.

For further details of this scheme please contact:

Momenta
Didcot
OXON
OX11 0QJ

Telephone: 0845 330 3614
Web: <http://www.ktonline.org.uk/>

Local authorities and school improvement – the use of statutory powers

The LGA commissioned National Foundation for Educational Research (NFER), to conduct a study examining how local authorities support and challenge their schools, using informal, formal and statutory strategies. Supporting school improvement has consistently been a key concern for the Government, policymakers and practitioners over the past decade. Local authorities are a central component of the school improvement process, and can use a range of strategies (including statutory powers) to assist schools that are struggling to effect necessary changes and improve their schools. This report examines the formal and informal strategies that Local Authorities have developed to support and challenge their schools, and focuses in particular on whether Local Authorities have (or have not) used the intervention powers that have been available to them, and the reasoning behind their approach.

For more information visit: <http://www.nfer.ac.uk/publications/pdfs/downloadable/LGle-report.pdf>

Improving the quality of life of children, young people, families at risk and older people

Mum's the Word: The Secret to Building Children's Social Skills

The way that mothers talk to their children when they are young has a lasting effect on children's social skills, according to a research study funded by the Economic and Social Research Council. The researchers found that children whose mothers often talked to them about people's feelings, beliefs, wants, and intentions, developed better social understanding than children whose mothers did not include much 'mental state talk' in their conversations.

For more information contact:
Dr Nicola Yuill (Tel: 01273 678630, email: nicolay@sussex.ac.uk)

Health and well-being in old age: it's still money that counts

The impact that wealth and social class has on people's well-being in old age is far greater than is often assumed. New research from the Economic and Social Research Council reveals just how great the difference really is in people's health and well-being between different social groups at older ages.

"These findings have important implications for us all." said Professor Nazroo who led the research team.

"Increases in life expectancy raise major challenges for public policy. Among these is the need to respond to marked inequalities in economic position and life expectancy at older ages. In addition, despite the fact that we are all living longer, many people now stop work before the statutory retirement age and a large proportion of these still have the potential to provide a positive input into society, the economy and their own well-being. Our findings will help us understand how society can help people realise this potential."

The study was based on a detailed analysis of the English Longitudinal Study of Aging (ELSA) using data collected between 2002 and 2007.

For more information contact: Professor James Nazroo (Tel: 0161 275 2495, email: james.nazroo@manchester.ac.uk)

Using the VivaCity2020 Toolkit: How diverse urban environments impact on quality of life

Researchers from the VivaCity2020 consortium have conducted three detailed case studies of **diverse urban environments** in London, Sheffield and Manchester to measure the **quality of life** actually experienced by residents and the decision-making rationales used by stakeholders in their development of these environments.

City dwellers were found to be very adaptable, often preferring some spatial separation between residential and night time activities. However, they were willing to make trade offs: a lack of external space could be sacrificed as long as they had access to views. Residents would also forfeit car use in exchange for access to public transport.

Indicators of **poor quality of life** (litter, waste, noise and anti social behaviour) were associated with **mixed-use areas** where residential housing and the lure of urban living (shops, cafes, bars, pubs, clubs and restaurants on people's doorsteps) were in **close proximity**. But equally **ready-access to amenities** such as local shops and park space was a requirement for **good quality of life**.

VivaCity2020 synthesised this social analysis wherever possible with geographical data collected from 2D plans and 3D modelling to map the case study areas using GIS. Researchers also developed a Space Syntax-based tool for analysing, interrogating and explaining the links between diverse urban environments, crime and quality of life.

This research has also produced a huge body of evidence about how the process for making urban design decisions works in practice and how it can be improved to facilitate urban sustainability. This knowledge was taken to Sheffield and Islington Borough Councils in the form of internships to give these key public sector

decision-makers an opportunity to consider how sustainability can be better incorporated into the design, development and planning of their local areas.

For more information please contact: Joanne Leach at joanne@joanneleach.co.uk or visit: <http://www.vivacity2020.eu/vivacity-toolkit/spatial-data-analysis>

Prof. Rachel Cooper at r.cooper@lancaster.ac.uk

The future of Public Toilets

It's a dirty job but someone's got to do it.

Research consortium VivaCity2020 has rolled up its sleeves and delved into the murky world of the public toilet to find out why this most basic of facilities has gone from public convenience to embarrassing nuisance.

VivaCity2020 has produced an assessment tool and a wealth of evidence to improve the design of public toilets and ensure modern British cities are well equipped for a twenty four hour lifestyle with accessible, sustainable and more desirable public loos.

By looking at the range of users, VivaCity2020 was able to identify a number of common requirements linked by needs and disabilities and then to design templates that best fulfilled all the requirements. The result is an accessible and inclusive toilet design that incorporates recommendations from a wide range of British Standards.

The Accessible Toilet Design Guide is now in use by Tesco, the Olympic Delivery Authority and the DCLG, as well as being featured on BBC Radio 5.

For more information please contact: Joanne Leach at joanne@joanneleach.co.uk or visit: <http://www.vivacity2020.eu/vivacity-toolkit/all-tools#sustainability-issue-seven>

Prof. Julienne Hanson at j.hanson@ucl.ac.uk

Creating safer and stronger communities



Generating a Safer Community—Regeneration of Hulme, Manchester

VivaCity2020 has conducted an in-depth case study of the regeneration of Hulme, Manchester to find out how targeted regeneration can aid in the reduction of crime and the construction of safer communities.

Hulme lies approximately one mile from Manchester and has suffered from housing and development problems over the last 30 years. Plans for regeneration began in 1992 and are still continuing today. VivaCity2020 consulted a wide range of sources—information from residents, local authorities, crime statistics and town planners—to build a clear picture of the regeneration project.

They found that poor maintenance of the typically high-density public spaces, lack of pedestrian movement, poor parking facilities and social divisions between residents all contributed to an absence of self-supervision and subsequently to higher crime rates.

These findings point to a 'New Urbanism' solution that advocates generating an increased feeling of community spirit to combat crime, with a 21st century twist. Within New Urbanism, walking and cycling are advocated over car use, and streets are designed to be permeable (accessible from every direction) to encourage pedestrian movement. Permeable and open spaces that are self-supervised by constant activity are believed to result in reduced crime rates and less fear of crime. However, care has to be taken not to increase opportunities for crime by, for example, providing potential burglars with access to the back of properties.

The work has produced new evidence on how regeneration can aid the reduction of crime and how to reap the benefits of engaging with local community and campaign groups. It also highlights the importance of Police Architectural Liaison Officers, architects and planners working in partnership.

For more information please contact: Joanne Leach at joanne@joanneleach.co.uk or visit: <http://www.vivacity2020.eu/vivacity-toolkit/new-urbanism-hulme-case-study>

Transforming our local environment

Engaging citizens around climate change learning: An invitation to work with the Open University

Many local authorities are now working on plans to support adaptation to climate change as well as contributions towards a low-carbon economy. A particular challenge involves engaging with citizens around this complex yet urgent agenda. Yet changes in citizen

behaviour are also a significant part of the solution.

In recognition of the challenges, the Open University in collaboration with the Environment Agency (England & Wales) has created a new strategic programme known as Learning to Live with Climate Change (LLCC). LLCC believes that responding to climate change requires collaborative effort involving all sectors of society, including citizens, businesses and government. Such collaboration requires processes of social learning where different parties learn together and shape collaborative solutions.

A major thrust of LLCC is the development of an on-line learning platform which uses web 2.0 technologies to enable people to learn more effectively by connecting people, resources and ideas. Currently known as 'SocialLearn', this platform is flexible, interactive and inclusive and designed to be enjoyed by a wide variety of visitor groups.

The first phase of SocialLearn testing will take place during June and July 2009. We are currently seeking Local Authority partners who would like to work with us, by recruiting citizens to take part in this test.

If the test goes well, Local Authorities may also be interested in exploring how the SocialLearn platform could support their climate change goals in the longer term. For more details on how we are running the test, and how your Local Authority can be part of it, please contact Helen Jeans, the Partner Coordinator for the SocialLearn on H.V.Jeans@open.ac.uk or 07842118839.

Making Our Cities Sustainable

A new customized search engine has just been created to open up results from a huge UK research programme focused on Sustainable Urban Environments (SUE). This single gateway allows access to over £38 million worth of government funded research. It will enable Practitioners, Policy Makers and the Third Sector to search for the precise research, tools and evidence that they need in making decisions about cities, investment for communities, planning, buildings, transport, regeneration and other aspects of urban sustainability.

To check whether there are research findings relevant to your work please go to the SUE Search engine which is at <http://www.urbansustainabilityexchange.org.uk/ISSUESueProgramme.htm>

The SUE Search Engine is part of the 'Urban Sustainability Exchange' website, which is being developed to provide a gateway to all SUE research, and is at <http://www.urbansustainabilityexchange.org.uk/index.htm>

The SUE Search Engine has been produced by ISSUES, a team working to improve Knowledge Exchange from the ongoing SUE Programme. Both SUE and ISSUES are funded by the Engineering and Physical Sciences Research Council (EPSRC).

For more information contact: K.J.Beckmann@hw.ac.uk



New report on Climate Change Policies integration across Europe.

Specific measures to tackle climate change, such as emissions trading, will only be successful if they are coherently supported by other government policies addressing economic and social issues, according to a new report "Climate Policy Integration, Coherence and Governance" published by the Partnership for European Environmental Research (PEER). The report explains that in order to create an effective Europe wide climate policy, climate change issues must be better integrated into both general and sector-specific policies such as taxation, transportation, and land use planning. PEER is chaired by the NERC Centre for Ecology & Hydrology. PEER membership is formed from seven of the biggest European environmental research institutes.

See: http://www.ceh.ac.uk/news/news_archive/2009_news_item_12.html

The full and summary reports are at available at: <http://peer-initiative.org/html/obj44.html>

DISTILLATE -Design and Implementation Support Tools for Integrated Local Land use, Transport and the Environment

The principal objective of DISTILLATE is to develop ways of overcoming the barriers to effective development and delivery of sustainable urban transport and land use strategies and, through them, enhanced quality of life.

DISTILLATE is coordinated by the Institute for Transport Studies (ITS) at the University of Leeds; its other research partners are the Centre for Environment and Planning at the University of the West of England, the Centre for Transport Studies (CTS) at University College London (UCL), the Stockholm Environment Institute (SEI) and Department of Mathematics at the University of York and TRL. In addition there are sixteen local transport organisations who have collaborated by providing some 35 case studies.

To date, DISTILLATE has developed 18 different tools and guidance documents, across the seven project areas. In addition it has produced a web-based tool to help practitioners analyse the issues that apply to them and guide them by providing information about which DISTILLATE tools might be appropriate.

For more information visit www.distillate.ac.uk

The tool for practitioners is available through the local transport planning network website www.ltpnetwork.gov.uk

Greening Existing Homes– A Herculean Task says report

A new joint Economic and Social Research Council and Technology Strategy Board publication highlights the need to focus on improving the energy efficiency of millions of buildings in Britain that will still be standing in 2050.

How people use and 'misuse' buildings coincides with a report from the House of Commons Environmental Audit Committee which calls on the government to make retrofitting existing buildings a priority in the Government's £535 million green stimulus plan.

The publication, which accompanies a seminar organised jointly with the Technology Strategy Board, says that twenty-seven per cent of UK carbon emissions come from domestic buildings – twice the emissions of commercial and public buildings and five times that of industrial buildings.

Research has shown a huge variety in energy use in different homes with a relatively small number of households consuming very large amounts of energy. But the publication stresses that it is a mistake to assume that people deliberately squander electricity or hot water. 'High-energy consumption is more likely to be the result of a series of benign lifestyle decisions, like buying a plasma screen TV or taking up a particular hobby,' says Professor Kevin Lomas.

For more information contact Technology Strategy Board press office: Claire.Cunningham@tsb.gov.uk

A Giant Leap for Carbon Footprinting?

Researchers from the Universities of De Montfort, Sheffield and Leeds are on their way to making a giant leap for the practice of Carbon Footprinting. New environmental buzz word, Carbon Footprinting (CF), is never far from anyone's lips but how is a CF actually calculated? And what can the measurements really tell us?

The university research team (grouped together as the 4M Consortium) are taking steps to answer these questions and create an evidence-based methodology for understanding and shrinking the urban carbon footprint.

Working in collaboration with Leicester City Council, the 4M project seeks to produce a carbon emissions inventory for the whole city of Leicester and in doing so,

place the calculations of the CF of cities on a secure platform. By standardising the practice of Carbon Footprinting in this way, the 4M hope to address the Audit Commission's concerns for 'the robustness and transparency of the data' produced in Carbon Footprinting. The city-wide CF will be created by drawing data from a series of sources including the carbon emissions from domestic and non-domestic buildings; the reduction of emissions from transport through the adoption of green travel schemes and modern fuels; the contribution of green space to carbon sequestration rates and the impact that personal carbon quotas would have on the lifestyle and well-being of city dwellers.

Using these small steps 4M will make the giant leap to identifying the scale of action needed to substantially shrink the UK's urban CF. And by creating techniques for measuring, modelling, mapping and managing the carbon sources in UK cities, ensure policy makers and stakeholders in the building sector understand the process of Carbon Footprinting.

For more information please contact: Prof. Margaret Bell at margaret.bell@ncl.ac.uk or visit: <http://www.ceg.ncl.ac.uk/research/transport/projects/4m.htm>

Promoting the economic vitality of communities

Britain and the Global Financial Crisis

Introducing multimedia briefings which include podcast interviews give background information and specific research examples for topical issues facing the UK today. The latest of these briefing is on the global financial crisis and will be updated with information from ESRC funded events and investments.

2008 closed amid doom and gloom and panic headlines about the country's slide into recession. Headlines such as "First recession in 16 years", "Britain Enters Recession", "Britain Spirals into Recession" were everywhere.

A series of public lectures are also underway looking at issues such as how recession affects our mental health and happiness, what the impact of recession will be on global poverty and whether it is a threat or an opportunity for the green economy. Events include:

- ✦ [Recession, Health and Happiness](#)
- ✦ [Recession and Global Poverty](#)
- ✦ [Recession and the Green Economy](#)

The ESRC funds research into both national and global economic issues through:

- ✦ [ESRC economic research centres and programmes](#)
- ✦ [ESRC economists and financial researchers](#)
- ✦ [ESRC media coverage and publications](#)

For more information: <http://www.esrcsocietytoday.ac.uk/ESRCInfoCentre/PO/briefings/index.aspx>

Third Sector Gears up to meet the Challenge of Personal Budgets

Third sector providers of social care services face a host of new challenges but also opportunities following the Government's commitment to expanding personal budgets* in social care. The issues raised for third sector organisations by policies to expand personal budgets are outlined in '*The impact of personal budgets on third sector providers of social care*'. This new booklet highlights the views of leading experts on social care and the third sector as presented during a Public Policy Seminar jointly organised by the Economic and Social Council (ESRC) and the Association of Chief Executives of Voluntary Organisations (ACEVO), held in February 2009.

For more information contact Danielle Moore (Tel: 01793 413122, email: danielle.moore@esrc.ac.uk)

Meeting local transport needs more effectively

Planning and Designing an Inclusive Journey Environment

The AUNT-SUE* project works on socially inclusive design and operation in transport and the related public realm. The team is producing a tool-kit that can be used at all scales from the macro right down to the micro-level of streets, vehicles and facilities (e.g. bus stops, signage, ticketing). Central to the approach is the integration of policy, design and operations throughout the whole journey environment. More details on: www.aunt-sue.info
The tools include these:

AMELIA

AMELIA (A Methodology for Enhancing Life by Increasing Accessibility) is a GIS-based tool that can be used by transport planners to establish how many people meet accessibility benchmarks as a result of policy interventions. It is led by UCL in co-operation with Hertfordshire County Council. For more details contact: Prof. Roger Mackett (Email: rm@transport.ucl.ac.uk) or visit www.aunt-sue.info/tools.html

HADRIAN

HADRIAN ('Human Anthropometric Data Requirements Investigation and Analysis') is a CAD-based tool that enables designers and planners to simulate how different individuals cope with various transport-related tasks. HADRIAN allows accessibility to be assessed during the concept stage of design to assist designers and ergonomists in achieving a highly inclusive solution. It is led by Loughborough University. For more details contact Dr Russell Marshall (Email: R.Marshall@lboro.ac.uk) or visit www.aunt-sue.info/tools.html

Focus on... LARCI

New Chair for LARCI

LARCI is delighted to announce the appointment of new Chair, Professor John Benington of Warwick Business School.

LARCI Secretariat

Also joining the LARCI team is new Marketing and Communications Manager, Victoria Morrisroe.

Focus on... Local Government

One stop shop for expertise you may need

Whether it's the latest research on floods, sudden oak death disease or air quality, you can now find the environmental expertise you need using a **new online search service** (insert hyperlink <http://www.erff.org.uk/databases/textsearch.aspx>) built by the **Environment Research Funders' Forum**. (insert hyperlink <http://www.erff.org.uk/>)

The Forum has brought together, in just one database, information on all the environmental research funded by its members. These include the UK Research Councils, devolved administrations, environment agencies and some government departments such as the Department for Transport, the Department of Energy and Climate Change and the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs.

This new resource is in its infancy but will hopefully gather even more information as it becomes more widely used. Please send your feedback to office@erff.org.uk

Customer insight

The public expects increasingly more of its local services. Only by understanding what is really important to people can a service be efficient and effective. This new IDeA resource provides an introduction to tools, techniques and examples to help councils better understand their communities.

For more information visit: <http://www.idea.gov.uk/idk/core/page.do?pagelid=8998865>

Focus on... Research Councils

Global Uncertainties Fellowships Announced

How individuals, communities and nation states form their ideas and beliefs about security and insecurity will form the basis for 14 new fellowships under the Research Council's Global Uncertainties programme.

The £5.5 million investment from the Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC) and Arts and Humanities Research Council (AHRC) is anticipated to have significant impact both within the academic community and, where appropriate, on policy and practice.

As well as exploring how individuals and communities develop their ideas and beliefs about security and insecurity the fellowships will also look at why some ideas and beliefs can lead to conflict, violence or criminal activity. The Fellowships will also investigate how language, images and symbolism are used to change how risks and threats are communicated to, and perceived by, different groups

Led by the Economic and Social Research Council, the Research Council's Global Uncertainties programme supports and helps to integrate multidisciplinary research on conflict, crime, terrorism, environmental stress, and global poverty.

For more information contact:

Danielle Moore, Communications Manager, Tel: 01793 413122, email: danielle.moore@esrc.ac.uk

SSWEP—Placement Programme for Local Authorities

SSWEP, the Social Science Workplace Experience Programme, is funded by the Economic and Social Research Council and managed by Step Enterprise. It enables local authorities and public sector organisations throughout the UK to solve business issues by taking on students to complete short term projects.

Organisations use this programme to access the skills and knowledge of undergraduate and postgraduate social science students. Placements typically last for 8 weeks on a full time basis.

To register your interest and request an application pack call 0870 850 0322 or email enquiries@stepenterprise.co.uk

Events

LARCI Events

Shaping a new Research Council programme on Connected Communities – LARCI input workshop 1 June 2009:

ThinkTank Birmingham Science Museum, Millennium Point, Curzon Street, Birmingham B4 7XG

This small, invitation-only workshop is an exciting opportunity to be involved in shaping and guiding a new research programme from the major public funders of UK

research, the [Research Councils UK](http://www.researchcouncils.ac.uk). The workshop is targeted at senior local government practitioners and third sector workers, selected for their expertise and experience of drawing out the best in their local communities. Contact andrea.turner@esrc.ac.uk for more information.

Social Enterprise and Community Empowerment (LARCI/ Social Enterprise Coalition/ Dept for Communities and Local Government)

10th June

The benefits of encouraging and engaging community and a sense of civic society have been lauded by policy makers in recent times. This ranges from the increase in democratic engagement by accessing self defined communities that share issues, to the increased benefits from and responsiveness of services owned and delivered by communities themselves. Recent policy developments have aimed to increase the level at which communities are involved in both these mechanisms as a form of empowerment, with social enterprise as an important means to deliver both the ownership of service, and the skills to constructively engage.

This seminar will be organised in collaboration with LARCI, the Social Enterprise Coalition (SEC) and the Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG).

To attend a seminar or to receive a copy of the research briefing, please contact Marzena Bien (marzena.bien@esrc.ac.uk) in the ESRC's Knowledge Transfer team on 01793 413137.

LARCI /ESRC Public Services Programme 'What's Shaping Public Service performance? A research perspective' 16 July, Birmingham:

This seminar presents a cross-section of academic and practitioner perspectives on improving the management and delivery of public services, driven by local government requests for better informed research, policy and practice. For more information go to: <http://www.publicservices.ac.uk/events/what%e2%80%99s-shaping-public-services-performance-a-research-perspective/>

Alternatively, contact andrea.turner@esrc.ac.uk to register for this free event.

Core Cities/Living With Environmental Change programme/LARCI: climate change workshop aimed at local government practitioners

Date and location to be confirmed. Contact andrea.turner@esrc.ac.uk for details.

Other Events

Infrastructure- Systems and interventions 2nd June 9-11.30am

In order for UK plc to embrace the economic upsurge in 2012(?) our infrastructure needs to be readdressed. Now is the time to merge our ambitions for green standards with our everyday landscape. With government in command of investment capital, there is a great opportunity to plan out systems that simultaneously provide economic stimulus with a network upon which future communities can plug into. What will these networks comprise of? How can business and the market be encouraged to assist in its creation?

Introduction by Richard Hastilow- Chief Executive RIBA with contributions from Stephen Hill- C02 Future Planners, Hugh Mulcahey- Gensler and Nick Gibbins, Associate Director, Upstream Sustainability Services - Jones Lang LaSalle.

BOOK TICKETS AT: <http://www.buildingfutures.org.uk/projects/building-futures/futures-fair-09/infrastructure/>

The future of our towns and cities is shaped by a variety of socio-economic factors which, in 2009, has never felt more fragile. The current economic crisis has laid bare unresolved tensions and the needs of our towns and cities. Now is a great time to consider what lies ahead and rethink our strategic approach to the built environment. .

Futures Fair 09- Society and Stimulus is supported by the Engineering & Physical Sciences Research Council (EPSRC) www.epsrc.ac.uk and RIBA CPD. Building Futures is an RIBA initiative. Visit www.buildingfutures.org.uk for more information.

Devolution in a Downturn: Divergent approaches to sustainable economic prosperity?

22 June 2009, 12:00-4:00 Belfast

Devolution to Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland coincided with a period of unprecedented economic growth and increasing public spending, but a decade on very different economic and fiscal conditions pose a stern test for the UK's devolved administrations and Whitehall. This timely Institute for Public Policy Research (ippr) event will explore the different policy approaches being taken by the four UK home nations in order to secure sustainable economic prosperity and fight the recession.

The event will consider the impact of the downturn across the UK and the response of the devolved administrations and Whitehall, hearing from policy experts including **Professor David Bell**, Stirling University and **Neil Gibson**, Oxford Economics. It will also discuss devolved approaches to a range of policy areas, including **Professor Ewart Keep**, Cardiff University, on adult skills

policy; **Professor Jon Shaw**, Plymouth University, on transport policy; and **John Adams**, independent policy researcher, on economic development policy. A panel of expert respondents from each of the home nations will be assembled to add depth and context to the discussions.

Please contact Holly Andrew on h.andrew@ippr.org to confirm your place and receive further details.

Assessing Privacy Impact 30th June:

Whether it is news stories about data loss or the press discussing rights to privacy, there is no doubt about the need to address privacy as an issue with important public policy implications. A series of regulatory and legislative requirements have to be met by business and government departments, with initiatives such as the Government's 2008 Data Handling Review mandating the conduct of privacy impact assessments. Whilst guidance from the information Commissioner has been a good starting point on how to assess privacy impact and on how to meet the requirements of legislation, a range of questions still remain for businesses, large and small, whether data holders or vendors who consult on security and privacy or supply privacy enhancing technologies. These questions are not simply ones of clarity but also ones of practice, both in terms of establishing cost-effective standardisation and objectivity. The situation is made more complicated because consumer views about privacy are mixed. Some view privacy as a luxury good which can be exchanged in the short term for quick financial gain, others are anxious about the aggregation over time of tradable personal information. For many there isn't a problem.

The aim of this seminar will be to bring forward ideas that can help inform best practice and explore the evidence base on which processes and technologies can be developed and deployed.

This seminar is in collaboration with the Cyber Security KTN.

To attend a seminar or to receive a copy of the research briefing, please contact Marzena Bien (marzena.bien@esrc.ac.uk) in the ESRC's Knowledge Transfer team on 01793 413137.

Data Visualization Day 7 July 2009, London

Leicestershire County Council has been collaborating with City University, London on a number of joint projects. One of the joint projects has been to develop and learn Data Visualization techniques that can be used in the local government environment to support and enhance decision-making. A one-day workshop has been organised to promote data visualisation. Find out more [here](#).

Insider Voices—Human dimensions of low carbon technology
Bailbrook House Hotel, Bath, UK, July 14th - 15th 2009

When it comes to a low carbon future, the technologies and finances are increasingly available – so why is it still so hard to get things moving? Offering frank insights on what happens when particular systems, technologies, groups and individuals collide, this conference will shed light on the insider experiences of nine low carbon technology projects. Delegates will contribute their own experiences through interactive sessions and creative dialogue and reflection, and apply the project's learning to their own efforts moving forward.

The conference will provide essential learning, practical support and cross-sector networking for policymakers, local authorities, businesses and activists – in fact, anyone interested in bridging the policy/practice gap and acting now for a low carbon future.

For more information contact Kathryn Tate on 01225 383 175 kat21@management.bath.ac.uk

LARCI Newsletter

If you have any other thoughts, comments or suggestions for our newsletter we would like to hear from you.

Which sections do you read?

Which do you find useful?

Which have you used?

Have you made contacts through the newsletter or followed up on any of the items?

We need your input so that we can deliver information you use. If you have a great photo you would like to see on the front cover then please contact us.

Contact: Victoria Morrisroe, LARCI Marketing & Communications Manager
victoria.morrisroe@esrc.ac.uk

Next Issue

The next issue of the LARCI newsletter will be published in August 2009. We welcome any articles and items of interest for inclusion to be sent to LARCI@esrc.ac.uk

Copy deadline 17 July 2009



Useful links

Research Councils' Bulletins

Each of the Research Councils' produces e-bulletins summarising research outputs, consultations and other information of interest to stakeholders. To register visit:

AHRC:

<http://www.ahrc.ac.uk/news/>

BBSRC:

<http://www.bbsrc.ac.uk/news/email.html>

EPSRC:

<http://www.epsrc.ac.uk/MediaEnquiries/default.htm>

ESRC:

http://www.esrcsocietytoday.ac.uk/ESRCInfoCentre/index_press.aspx

MRC:

<http://www.mrc.ac.uk/Newspublications/index.htm> [http://](http://www.mrc.ac.uk/Newspublications/index.htm)

www.mrc.ac.uk/Newspublications/index.htm

NERC:

<http://www.nerc.ac.uk/news/rss/>

STFC:

<http://www.so.stfc.ac.uk/rss/rss.xml>

RCUK:

<http://www.rcuk.ac.uk/aboutrcuk/publications/default.htm>

Research Council Searchable Databases

AHRC: <http://www.ahrc.ac.uk/FundedResearch/BrowseResearch.aspx>

BBSRC: <http://www.bbsrc.ac.uk/science/grants/>

EPSRC: <http://gow.epsrc.ac.uk/>

ESRC: <http://www.esrcsocietytoday.ac.uk/ESRCInfoCentre/research/>

MRC: <http://www.mrc.ac.uk/ResearchPortfolio/index.htm>

NERC: <http://gotw.nerc.ac.uk/goti.asp?c=1>

Research Council future programmes and opportunities:

AHRC: <http://www.ahrc.ac.uk/FundingOpportunities/Pages/default.aspx>

BBSRC: <http://www.bbsrc.ac.uk/science/Welcome.html>

EPSRC: <http://www.epsrc.ac.uk/ResearchFunding/Opportunities/FutureCalls.htm>

ESRC: <http://www.esrcsocietytoday.ac.uk/ESRCInfoCentre/PSZ/Research/default.aspx>

NERC: <http://www.nerc.ac.uk/funding>

Collaboration Opportunities

LARCI Brokering Service

LARCI provides a brokering service for local authorities interested in collaborating with academics on research projects, and vice versa. If you have a query, contact: andrea.turner@esrc.ac.uk.

Your Ideas

Events

We are currently developing our Events programme, and are looking for input, particularly from local government practitioners. Is there a particular issue or research need that you would like to see addressed? Would you be interested in co-hosting an event (workshop, seminar)? To discuss or register your interest, contribute to this newsletter, comment on the content, or join the mailing list

Contact: Andrea Turner, LARCI Research Coordinator
andrea.turner@esrc.ac.uk or telephone 01793 413121.



Local Authority Research Council Initiative

The Local Authority Research Council Initiative (LARCI) was established in 1997 to bring local authorities and the Research Councils into closer partnership. LARCI aims to facilitate communication between the Research Councils and local authorities at a strategic and operational level, leading to better informed research, policy and practice.

LARCI operates through an Operational Group comprising representatives of the following Research Councils, local and central government: Arts and Humanities Research Council (AHRC); Audit Commission; Biotechnology and Biological Sciences Research Council (BBSRC); Communities and Local Government (CLG); Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC); Engineering and Physical Sciences Research Council (EPSRC); Improvement and Development Agency (IDeA); Local Authorities Research + Intelligence Association (LARIA); Local Government Association (LGA); Medical Research Council (MRC); Natural Environment Research Council (NERC); Society of Local Authority Chief Executives and Senior Managers (SOLACE) and Research Councils UK (RCUK).