

LOCAL INFORMATION SYSTEMS CASE STUDIES:
FINAL REPORT

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About Oxford Consultants for Social Inclusion

Oxford Consultants for Social Inclusion (OCSI) helps local government and other public sector organisations identify deprived neighbourhoods, target resources, evaluate programme effectiveness and strengthen regeneration bids. OCSI, Oxford University's first spin-out company from the social sciences, launched in October 2003.

OCSI's consultancy is based on nearly two decades of ground-breaking research at the Social Disadvantage Research Centre (SDRC) in the University's Department of Social Policy and Social Work. The SDRC is a world leader in area-based deprivation research, developing the National Indices of Deprivation, for England, Wales, Northern Ireland, and Scotland.

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Section 1 Local Information Systems Case Studies

1.1 Introduction

- 1.1.1 This report is based on a preliminary survey of Local Information Systems¹ carried out as a scoping study for the ODPM Neighbourhood Renewal Unit (NRU), and presents the consultants impressions on the “state of play”. It is not based on comprehensive analysis of all local information systems, which will be the subject of a more detailed study commissioned by the NRU.
- 1.1.2 This report is an output from the Data Provision for Neighbourhood Renewal project carried out by OCSI, signposting nationally published datasets useful for Neighbourhood Renewal purposes, as well as relevant datasets held by local agencies.
- 1.1.3 The five case studies presented below cover:
- The Leicester Shire Online Research Atlas
 - Bristol State of the Neighbourhoods
 - Norfolk Data Observatory
 - Rotherham Neighbourhood Statistics
 - Newham Neighbourhood Information Management System
- 1.1.4 The case studies are based on OCSI’s analysis of each system as well as telephone interviews with the main contact for the system. The case studies were selected by the NRU from a short-list provided by the consultants based on preliminary analysis of all known Local Information Systems, including some initial interviews.
- 1.1.5 Telephone interviews covered the following points:

Setup

- Reasons for originally setting-up
- Partner agencies involved
- Costs / resources and source of funding

Access

- Is access open to general public, or restricted through logins?
- What user groups is the system aimed at, for example partner agencies, research analysts, policy decision makers, elected members, Community and Voluntary Sector, general public?
- User statistics

Information

- Datasets incorporated, including nationally published and locally-held
- Outputs, or for what has the system information been used

General

- Major problems and issues encountered, either ongoing or that were solved

¹ Local partners refer to their local information systems in a variety of ways including “data observatory”, “online atlas”, “area profiler” and, “local information system”.

- Contact details (web address and interviewee details)

1.2 Scope and nature of Local Information Systems

- 1.2.1 Most if not all Local Authorities have some form of statistics/information pages, typically providing summaries of data across the authority from Census, IMD and other national sources. These are similar in style/size to the NeSS area profile reports.
- 1.2.2 A number of Local Authorities also run their own local information system with a wider range of data. These are distinguished from the summaries above by a wider range of data, small area data, interactive features (often including data downloads, search, tables, charts and/or maps).
- 1.2.3 We estimate that most Local Authorities have access to a local information system. Many Authorities without their own local information system refer to other relevant systems, run by County (in the case of Districts), sub-Region or Regional groups. In other words, very few are using NeSS as a one-stop shop.
- 1.2.4 The nature of the systems vary widely across Local Authorities, from well designed and developed systems containing a range of local data / analysis and interactive features, to more simple systems containing a limited range of nationally published data.

1.3 Information content

- 1.3.1 Every local information system contains a wide range of nationally published data already available on NeSS and other national sources including DWP and NOMIS. This is often tabulated, charted and/or mapped in ways not done by NeSS. In each case these datasets have been downloaded from national sources and uploaded into the local information system – leading to wide duplication of data across the different systems.
- 1.3.2 We have not analysed whether datasets that have been revised by national sources have been similarly amended at local level, for example Census tables found to contain errors after release. However there is a potential risk that not all systems will be updated when data is revised – for example we have come across systems that have not updated the IMD 2004 following revision (which may have an impact on identification of the most deprived areas).
- 1.3.3 The majority of local information systems also provide locally-sourced data. Including crime counts, education data (now just starting to be made available on NeSS), PCT health datasets, Housing Benefit / Council Tax Benefit datasets, local housing stock survey data, quality of life survey data, Higher Education applications, and so on.

1.4 Costs

- 1.4.1 The costs shown in the case studies are provided to give an indication of resources used to support the Local Information System. Some cases include staff and “in kind” effort to develop datasets (for example the Leicester Shire Online Research Atlas), while other cases show only the direct costs of running the online system (for example the Rotherham system, which is one output from the much larger local Neighbourhood Statistics project)
- 1.4.2 As the costs shown are not consistent across the case studies, caution should be used when drawing comparisons between the different systems.

1.5 Other Issues

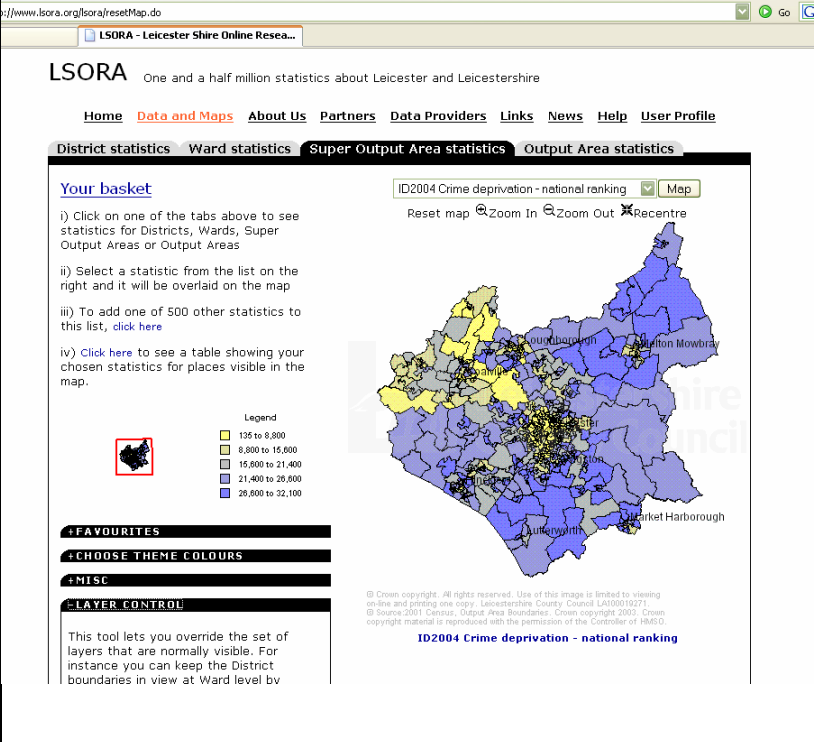
- 1.5.1 Levels of access: Many systems provide all data publicly, with data treated for disclosure before publication. Other systems provide secured login access to some or all datasets, with secured datasets typically providing a greater level of data/detail than available publicly.
- 1.5.2 Partnership: Many local information systems are the result of partnership working, especially where there is shared data from local sources. In many cases the process of developing a shared information resource may be an important part of building the partnership.

1.6 Further information

- 1.6.1 The NRU have commissioned a Local Information Systems project, due to report in April 2006. The project will assess the nature and scope of Local Information Systems across England, including their contribution to Neighbourhood Renewal.
- 1.6.2 The ODPM National Project on Knowledge Management contains a range of material relating to Local Information Systems:
 - catalogue.localgovnp.org.uk/pp/publication/results.asp?allwords=lis

Section 2 The Leicester Shire Online Research Atlas (LSORA)

"Now we're demonstrating the benefits, people are seeing the results and value of joint working, and we're bringing in additional partners with funding and data"

<p>www.lsora.org</p>	
<p>Overview</p>	<p>LSORA was launched in September 2004 to provide local partners with detailed data and analysis against the backdrop of national data such as the Census. Key advantages over NeSS were to include data from local partners, updated faster and more often, and available at a more detailed level than provided on NeSS. For example monthly crime data is provided at Output Area level.</p> <p>The Online Research Atlas allows users to view more than 500 statistics in interactive map and table format at Output Area, Super Output Area and ward level. Data can be exported as Excel format</p>
<p>What data is on it?</p>	<p>National datasets including Census 2001 and Indices of Deprivation 2004. Local datasets including crime data, LEA pupil attainment data, Further Education and work-based learning data, small area income estimates, Council Tax/Housing Benefits, and Health data including mortality rates, births and deaths, and Hospital admissions.</p>

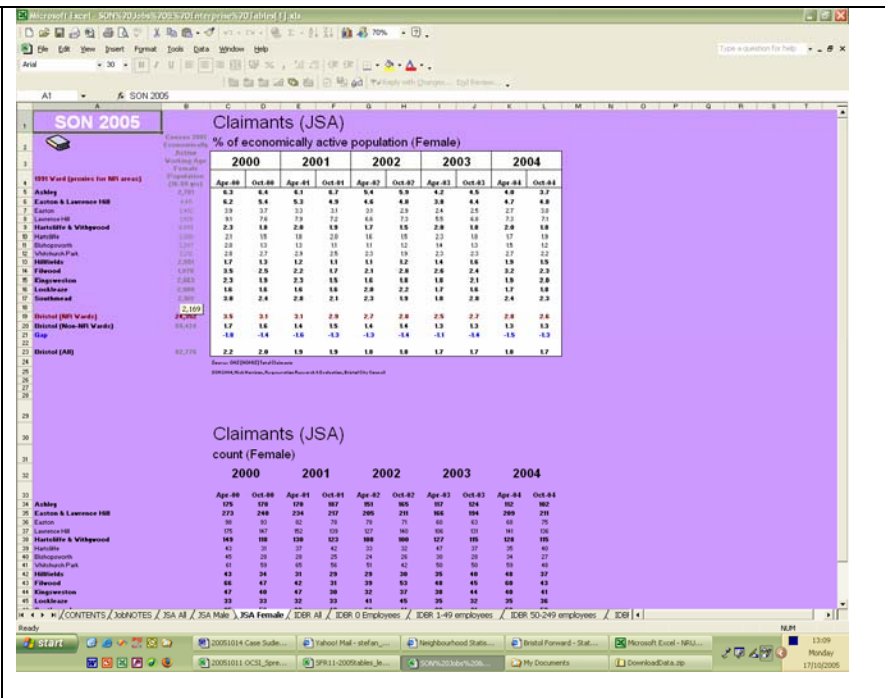
	There is also a range of qualitative, consultation and local research data and analysis available through the News section.
What partners are involved?	The project was initiated by the Leicester Shire Economic Partnership (SSP), the city's LSP the "Leicester Partnership", and the county LSP "Leicestershire Together". Individual partners from across the county and unitary authority include Leicestershire County Council and Districts, Leicester City Council, Police, and the Primary Care Trusts. Data has subsequently been contributed by other partners including the Learning and Skills Council, Connexions, Leicestershire Fire and Rescue, and the East Midlands Public Health Observatory (EMPHO)
How much does it cost?	Funding comes from 3 main sources: Leicester City NRF funding, County Partnership funding, and regional East Midlands Development Agency funding through the Leicester Shire Economic Partnership. Initial setup costs were in the region of £200K with similar second year development costs, which covers a full-time project manager and developer. Ongoing costs are predicted to be approximately £50K, with the project manager and developer roles becoming part-time.
Who's using it and what are they using it for?	<p>The first 2 years of operation have been a pilot, with restricted (login) access to the system in order to prove the concept as well as ensuring the necessary data confidentiality safeguards are in place. However it is intended that the system be opened up to the public in 2006. All members of the County and City LSPs are allowed access, including Voluntary and Community groups.</p> <p>There are 600 registered users of the system, with around half regularly active, and over 10,000 web-page impressions per month.</p> <p>The LSORA includes several case studies written by users of the system, explaining how they're using LSORA and what they're doing with the data and analysis. For example, how the District Councils are using the data to help target community cohesion projects and develop Local Development Frameworks.</p>
What difficulties have been encountered, and how solved?	The combination of the County and Unitary areas introduces challenges both in terms of partnership working and sharing data. Data sharing protocols were setup between the different partners, for example enabling the County and city LEAs to combine education datasets in order to get a more accurate picture of pupil attainment at small area level. Now that LSORA is demonstrating the benefits of a combined data source, people are seeing the results and value of joint working, and additional partners with funding and data are

	coming onboard.
Main contact	Ged Moss, GMoss@leics.gov.uk, 0116 265 8148 Project Manager

Section 3 Bristol State of the Neighbourhoods (SON)

"The State of the Neighbourhoods plugs the gap between the Floor Targets Interactive data and our ten priority area outcomes – helping us identify the impact of our programmes"

www.bristolforward.net/evaluation/neighbourhoods.asp

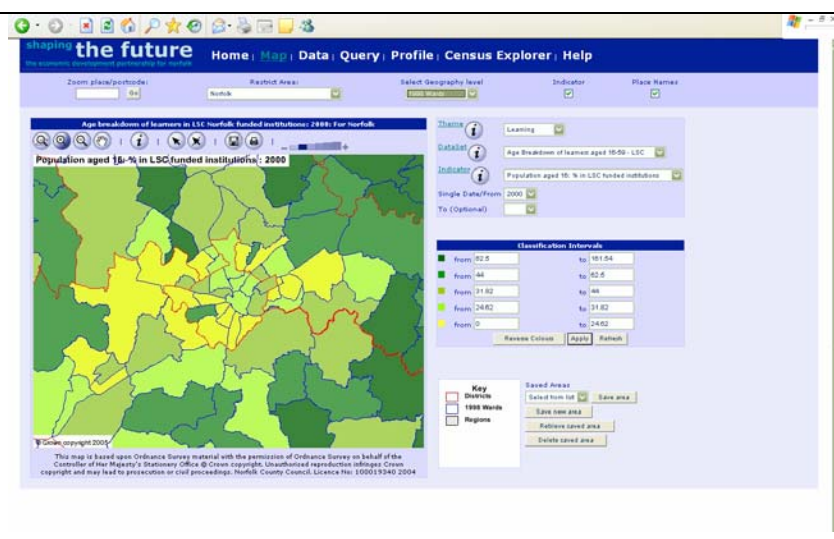
	<p>Overview</p> <p>The Bristol State of the Neighbourhoods (SON) was developed to meet the recognised need in Bristol for tracking progress in the ten city NRF priority areas. Alongside more qualitative evaluation of the NRF, and the District level data provided by the NRU Floor Targets Interactive website, the SON provides quantitative outcome data at small area level – allowing research and evaluation teams to identify the impact of projects across Bristol, and monitor how the gaps between the most deprived areas and the city as a whole are changing over time.</p> <p>All data are available through a set of Excel spreadsheets, with separate spreadsheets for each key Neighbourhood Renewal theme. These are downloadable from the SON website, which also provides analysis of the data in terms of Floor Targets.</p>
<p>What data is on it?</p>	<p>The emphasis on the datasets provided by SON is on small area regularly updated data, enabling progress in the ten priority areas to be monitored. Data is provided aggregated to each of the NRF priority areas, as well as over Bristol as a whole and the non-NRF areas.</p> <p>A mix of local and national data is provided, including data from</p>

	<p>NOMIS, the ONS Business Registers, DWP claimant counts, Police force, the LEA and Primary Care Trust. Datasets include pupil attainment, pupil absences and exclusions, local Quality of Life survey data (including smoking and exercise data, as well as fear of crime), Hospital admissions, unemployment claimants, ONS business unit data, reported crimes, and road safety data.</p> <p>In order to provide data at small area level, NRF resources were used to boost the Bristol Quality of Life survey in the ten priority areas.</p>
What partners are involved?	Developed by the Bristol City Council, with funding from NRF. Data was provided by a range of agencies including Bristol City Council, Avon and Somerset Police, and the Primary Care Trust.
How much does it cost?	The SON system was developed with NRF funding, with setup resources estimated to be one half-time analyst role for one year. The use of Excel for disseminating the information meant technical development and training costs were massively reduced - much of the time was spent in building relationships between the different partners in order to share datasets.
Who's using it and what are they using it for?	<p>The SON helps support decentralised management for the New Deal for Communities and other Neighbourhood Renewal programmes. With the data freely available, a wide variety of groups are using the information to evaluate the impact of funds, as well as steer further spending. As well as groups within the partner agencies, users also include area project managers, housing managers and residents.</p> <p>The data in SON is also encouraging partner agencies to look at their data in terms of inequalities – helping develop the case for mainstreaming NRF programmes. For example the PCTs used the 10 city NRF priority areas as a basis for targeting health programmes.</p> <p>Analysis of the data by the SON team also focuses on picking out key points to communicate back to the partners providing the data – helping strengthen the case for further data sharing.</p>
What difficulties have been encountered, and how solved?	<p>All partner agencies needed to be happy with sharing data at small area level – much of the time taken in setting up was spent on developing relationships with the different agencies.</p> <p>It was also important to be clear that SON definitions matched those used by the partner agencies, for example ensuring that data released through SON on Bristol-wide pupil attainment matched that released by the LEA.</p>
Main contact	Nick Harrison, South-West Supporting Evidence for Local Delivery (SELD), Nick.Harrison@swo.org.uk, 01823 447397

	Katherine Williams, Bristol City, Katherine_williams@bristol-city.gov.uk
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Section 4 Norfolk Data Observatory (NDO)

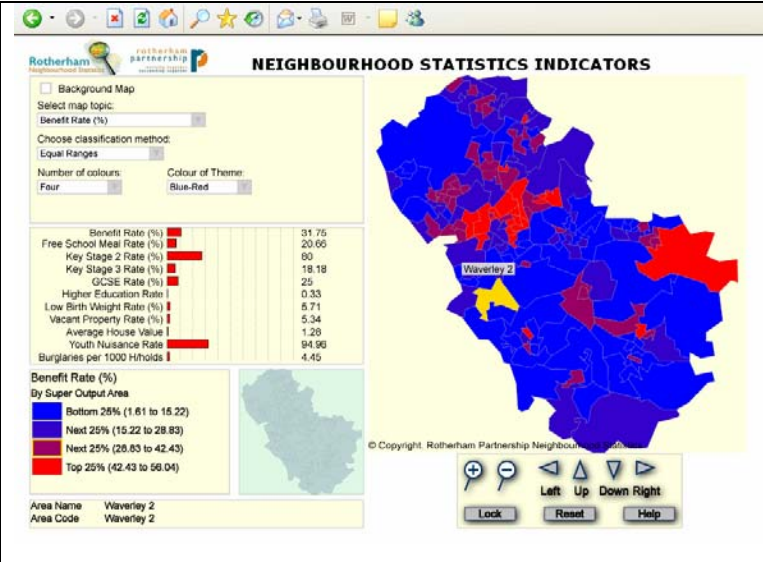
"The objective is to become and remain the primary source of core data, information and knowledge which informs and supports the evaluation of Norfolk's Community and Economic Strategies"

<p>www.norfolkdata.net</p>	
<p>Overview</p>	<p>The Norfolk Data Observatory is the primary source for detailed data across the county. Interactive features allow users to view data in map and table format at a variety of geographical scales.</p> <p>Data is organised by theme, including business, labour market, learning, demography, deprivation, health, crime and Census 2001. Within each theme, a mixture of national and local datasets are provided.</p>
<p>What data is on it?</p>	<p>Nationally produced published data sets, including DWP benefits, Indices of Deprivation 2004, ONS 2001 Census, and ONS business information.</p> <p>Locally sourced administrative data, including Norfolk Constabulary crime data, Connexions Yr 11 destination data, Eastern Support Services health data, LSC Individual Learner Records data.</p> <p>Commercially purchased data sets, including CACI household income data.</p> <p>NDO are also working with Children's Services to publish data from their pupil records such as Key Stage results and free school meals data, and also with the Data Planning Group (LSC, Connexions and Children's Services) to explore possibilities of using NDO as repository for data and reporting requirements for</p>

	13-19 year training and skills provision.
What partners are involved?	<p>Partners currently include Norfolk County and District councils, Norfolk Constabulary, Connexions, Eastern Support Services and the LSC.</p> <p>There are also established data sharing protocols with Citizens Advice Bureau, City College Norwich, Cultural Forum Board and Adult Education to aggregate and analyse their administrative data for service planning – the potential for publishing this data on NDO is being explored.</p>
How much does it cost?	Funding has been provided by a variety of partners over the past 4 years, including Norfolk County Council, East of England Development Agency, Learning and Skills Council, Training and Enterprise Council, and the LogIn e-Govt programme. A longer term funding model is currently being explored within the County Strategic Partnership
Who's using it and what are they using it for?	<p>Logins are required for the system, with the site recording 4,500 visitors over the 6 months prior to Sep 2005. There are over 1,000 registered users.</p> <p>More than 150 people from various organisations have attended formal training sessions, over 40 from the district councils, and significant numbers from Norfolk Constabulary, Fire Service, NHS PCTs, City College, Libraries, UEA, Connexions and various community groups.</p>
Main contact	Wendy Pontin, Demography and Information Team Leader, 01603 222 737, wendy.pontin@norfolk.gov.uk

Section 5 Rotherham Neighbourhood Statistics

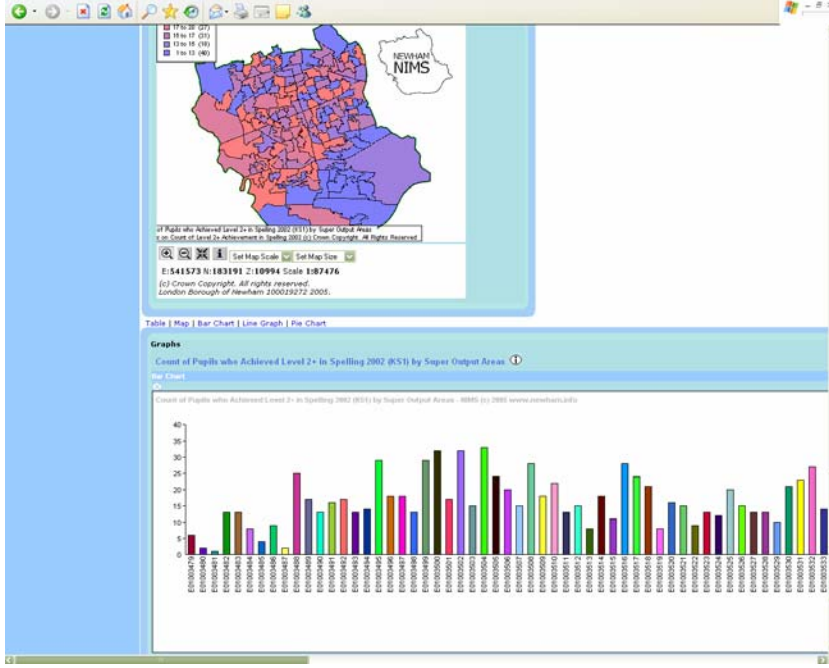
"Better information at local level for targeting and monitoring"

<p>www.rotherham.gov.uk/graphics/YourCouncil/Statistics+on+Rotherham www2.rotherham.gov.uk/statsmaps/main.htm</p>	
	
Overview	<p>The Rotherham Neighbourhood Statistics project was setup under the Single Regeneration Budget Round 6 programme, with further support from the NRF. The focus was on developing and analysing sub-ward level information that could be updated annually - ward level data is not adequate for Rotherham Neighbourhood Renewal purposes, with most wards across the Borough containing extremely deprived areas.</p> <p>The Neighbourhood Statistics project developed the Local Index of Multiple Deprivation (LIMD), a small area measure of deprivation based on local data-sources able to be updated annually. The LIMD was used to target the Rotherham Neighbourhood Renewal Strategy, with local partner data at small area level also used to monitor progress in priority target areas.</p> <p>The Neighbourhood Statistics website is one of the project outputs - data from local partners is provided in map, chart and table format, with data also provided aggregated to local communities.</p>
What data is on it?	<p>Data in the LIMD and web system is provided by partners from across the Rotherham LSP, including Council Tax / Housing Benefits, Free School Meals, Key Stage 2/3, GCSE, Higher Education applications, Low Birth Rate, Vacant Property, House Values, Youth Nuisance,</p>

	<p>Burglaries, Car Crime, Violence, Robbery, and Criminal Damage.</p> <p>The web system also provides national datasets including Census 2001 and Indices of Deprivation 2004 data.</p>
What partners are involved?	The Neighbourhood Statistics project is funded by the Rotherham LSP under the NRF. Partners from across the Rotherham LSP provide data including Rotherham Borough Council, Police Force, and Primary Care Trust.
How much does it cost?	The full Neighbourhood Statistics project consists of 2 full time officers. The website maps were developed by external consultants, with ongoing license costs of £2.5K.
Who's using it and what are they using it for?	The information is used by partners across Rotherham, with the LIMD initially used to identify target areas for the NRF programme. The data is also used by Voluntary and Community groups across the Borough, and also to develop a variety of Borough level strategies and reports. Other users include the Housing Market Renewal Pathfinder.
What difficulties have been encountered, and how solved?	Initial difficulties in the project were mainly to do with developing information held on corporate databases into data suitable for monitoring and targeting Neighbourhood Regeneration programmes. For example a significant amount of address matching and geocoding was required in order to develop reliable small area datasets.
Main contact	Michael Hellewell, 01709 822 787, Michael.Hellewell@rotherham.gov.uk

Section 6 Newham Neighbourhood Information Management System (NIMS)

"NIMS is unique in Newham as a central data and information sharing resource to encourage partnership working"

<p>www.newham.info</p>	
<p>Overview</p>	<p>NIMS was launched in Sep 2004 by the Newham LSP as a central data repository for analysis. It provides tools create maps, charts and tables. Alongside the datasets, the corporate Research Unit also provides analysis and interpretation of the information across Newham.</p> <p>Interactive mapping and charting features allow users to select view datasets, as well as export to Excel. Users can also build more complex queries. Users can also view data at a variety of geographical levels. Other features include a "Location Finder", showing the nearest service facilities by postcode or map selection.</p>
<p>What data is on it?</p>	<p>Alongside national data from the Census, Indices of Deprivation 2004, DWP benefits, NIMS includes a wide variety of local partner datasets at small area level including Council Tax and Housing Benefits, recorded crimes, fires, pupil attainment data, hospital admissions including A & E, and life expectancy and mortality data.</p>
<p>What partners are</p>	<p>All partners across the LSP are involved, including Newham District Council groups, Metropolitan Police force, Fire Brigade,</p>

involved?	Primary Care Trust, Newham University Hospital Trust, and the Mental Health Trust.
How much does it cost?	<p><i>NRF funding was provided to 2006, and Newham are currently developing the business case for support after 2006. NRF funds for the first two years were £330K, covering full development and staff costs, with future ongoing costs of £150K covering staff and dataset development.</i></p> <p>The project is currently funded by NRF. Long-term funding is currently being explored. External developers have developed the backend technology, while Newham ICT provide regular system service and maintenance. Three full-time staff are employed on the project</p>
Who's using it and what are they using it for?	Data from NIMS is used by partners and users from across the borough to analyse issues thematically and to examine trends. This information is then used to support appropriate strategies and plans, and their evaluation. For example, the Newham Alcohol Reduction Strategy and other reports were compiled using NIMS data. Sure Start and Early Start programmes have also included their data and boundary files to assist front-line staff with mapping and answering catchment area queries.
What difficulties have been encountered, and how solved?	NIMS encourages data sharing between partners, however to allay concerns over data confidentiality, Data Sharing protocols were setup with data owners able to decide who to share specific datasets with. As a result, some sensitive datasets are restricted to partners with login access. Also, it was agreed that partners provide data to NIMS already aggregated to small area, so NIMS does not process any personal data.
Main contact	Wendy Chong, 020 8430 6493, Wendy.Chong@newham.gov.uk

Section 7 Other local information systems

7.1.1 A number of other local information systems were examined as potential case studies, including:

- **Liverpool Asset Management System:** An internal information system setup by Liverpool City Council Business Unit to support requests from groups across the Liverpool First partnership and the general public. Initially setup in response to the Housing Market Renewal initiative. The system includes national information such as Census data, as well as local corporate system databases, Registered Social Landlord datasets, and housing sales data purchased from Land Registry. All data is geocoded to small area level. Additional Liverpool regeneration data is available from the Liverpool CC website for priority areas and wards across the City, along with Floor Target Action Plans linking the evidence to policy. Contact Chris Villar.
- **Manchester iMPact:** The website is due to be relaunched at the end of the year, and Manchester have requested that the website address not be publicised until the release. The iMPact system is based on the early Area Thematic Profiler. Contact Iain Sykes.
- **Sheffield Neighbourhood Information System:** Available as CD on request from Sheffield. The Excel-based SNIS provides headline indicators for each of the Sheffield priority areas. Contact David Barrett.
- **Coventry Statistics** www.coventrystatistics.org.uk. The main Coventry Statistics website is currently unavailable, with a planned relaunch at the end of 2005. Contact Helen Shankster.
- **Brighton and Hove CityStats** www.citystats.org. Report commissioned by South-East Public Health Observatory on the site has full details of how the system was setup, including partnerships, data sharing and problems solved. Contact Louise Hulton
- **Rochdale Stats and Maps** www.statsandmaps.org.uk, Contact Jane Silvester
- **Bradford Community Statistics Project** www.communitystats.org.uk/