

R&I News cont...

life outcomes, and investigated at which level in the organisational hierarchy there appears to be most scope to influence quality of life.

The full report has been published as a CHE Research Paper (46) and a summary of the project has been published as a 'Policy Briefing' (Castelli A, Jacobs R, Goddard M, Smith P. *Geographical variation in quality of life: The role of public service organisations*). Both are available to download free of charge from <http://www.york.ac.uk/inst/che/publications/index.htm>

CRLS (ONS Centre for Regional and Local Statistics)

Personal insolvency statistics

Personal insolvency statistics from the years 2000 to 2008 are now available on the Neighbourhood Statistics website (www.neighbourhood.statistics.gov.uk). These datasets, made up of bankruptcy orders and individual voluntary arrangements, are available at local authority level and have been supplied by the Insolvency Service (www.insolvency.gov.uk), the organisation that administers and investigates the dealings of those made bankrupt and companies and partnerships wound up by the court in England and Wales.

Publication on Neighbourhood Statistics extends the research value of this data still further because the information can now be investigated using the extensive analytical guidance available on the website, providing local authorities with the means to carry out in-depth analysis. The information can also be cross referenced with other Neighbourhood Statistics datasets, for instance those that detail information on Benefits, the Indices of Deprivation and Business 'Births' and 'Deaths'.

For more information go to www.neighbourhood.statistics.gov.uk or email better.info@ons.gov.uk

Durham County Council

Broken windows theory and collective efficacy

The "Stronger and Safer Communities" National Performance Indicators have concentrated minds on how to address perceptions of community safety. In a recent article, Lawrence Serewicz of Durham County Council suggests that knowledge of contemporary theories about crime and disorder can help to drive practical interventions that improve the quality of life of residents, as well as perceptions of community safety.

Read the article at <http://tinyurl.com/yajwo73> or contact Lawrence.Serewicz@durham.gov.uk for further information.

The ISSUES Project

Population transience: why cities fail to meet recycling targets?

The EPSCR-funded SUE_WASTE project has undertaken a broad study of kerbside recycling performance in Portsmouth to understand why UK authorities are failing to meet their recycling targets. These failings predominantly arise in cities where medium- and high-density housing causes problems for collections that rely on householder segregation of waste.

A recycling participation survey of 62,299 households was carried out in June - July 2005 and repeated in June - July 2007 in Portsmouth, one of the most densely populated cities in Europe.

Householder participation in the kerbside scheme was recorded over three consecutive collections (6 weeks). There was very little change in overall participation between the two surveys, with 78.4% of households participating in recycling in 2005 and 78.2% in 2007. Although this shows recycling to be the "normal" activity, conducted by most households in both surveys, 10% of households were found to be "new recyclers" and 10% seemed to stop recycling (i.e. they were found to be recycling in 2005 but not in 2007), with the more densely populated areas being "hot spots" of change.

R & I News cont...

The ISSUES Project

The **Sustainable Urban Environments (SUE)** Programme (<http://www.urbansustainabilityexchange.org.uk/>) is an EPSRC-funded portfolio of research looking at ways of improving sustainability in the urban environment, and the **ISSUES** project (**Implementation Strategies for Sustainable Urban Environment Systems**) is its knowledge transfer arm.

Planning and Designing an Inclusive Journey Environment

One of the initial SUE consortia, called Accessibility and User Needs in Transport for Sustainable Urban Environments (AUNT SUE), 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.

A typical tool is the **Street Design Index** ('SDI'), using Geographical Information Systems (GIS) to enable designers and planners to model the urban environment more comprehensively, and to understand how its diverse features can affect users' perceptions of streets and public areas. The Index can be used to identify areas that are perceived negatively by pedestrians and so have the potential to restrict their movements.

For more details contact Prof. Graeme Evans (g.evans@londonmet.ac.uk) or visit www.aunt-sue.info/tools.html

New Model for Domestic Energy Consumption

CityForm is another SUE consortium, with its own website at <http://www.city-form.org/>. Its specialist research into domestic energy use has found that existing models of how people use their homes and the energy they consume are outdated.

In the past, traditional domestic energy models identified kitchens and living rooms as the higher energy consuming rooms of a house. But the new research shows that people are now more likely to use their bedrooms as living spaces, using technology for entertainment and office work and propelling bedrooms into the high energy consuming category.

CityForm's survey of homeowners in Leicester and Sheffield cross-referenced information about how they use their homes with their actual energy output. Analysis then revealed that the number of bedrooms in a household was the most significant indicator of its energy consumption.

These results also revealed a direct link between energy use and technology ownership. As technology becomes increasingly important to our everyday lives, these findings could impact heavily on how we calculate domestic energy consumption in the future and even how local authorities classify households for tax purposes.

The results have been submitted to the UK Government's Foresight study into creating sustainable communities by 2020.

For further information contact Dr. Keith Baker: keith.baker@sistech.co.uk

Northwest Regional Development Agency & The Local Futures Group**Understanding the North West's 'role of place'**

The Northwest Regional Development Agency (NWDA) Research Team is currently undertaking a project exploring the role of 'place'. As part of this project they have been making use of the full range of Place Profiles from the Local Futures Group.

The Team provides cross-cutting support to NWDA colleagues and partners, in the form of data and analysis, monitoring and benchmarking, economic assessment, briefings on data and policy and by commissioning research. It also helps to disseminate and widen access to data and intelligence via the dedicated web portal, the Regional Intelligence Unit (RIU).

Currently, the Regional Intelligence Unit are researching the role of 'place' and looking at the wider agenda for the region, including issues such as quality of life and culture. Thinking spatially about the regional economy is the key to developing new ideas and ways of connecting both at the local and global scale. The research the RIU have already conducted has shown that understanding 'place' is important but has also made clear that it is a difficult concept with varied meanings.