

# Expert Panels in Communities & Local Government

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## Why have expert panels?

- In CLG they were part of Permanent Secretary's response to the Department's first Capability Review;
- One of the issues highlighted for us was the need to better embed the use of evidence and analysis across the Department, and strengthen CLG authority, influence and effectiveness;
- One of the proposals was to establish expert panels, with representation from academia, relevant think tanks and delivery partners.

## What role do they play?

### **For the Department**

- They provide easy access for Departmental analysts and policy to key external experts – providing opportunities to exchange ideas and check out theories in a safe environment;
- We have experts who better understand our interests and our information needs and can better gear their outputs;
- They offer re-assurance that the methods we employ are robust and up to date and our proposals are supported by the evidence

### **For the external experts**

- They enable external experts, who do not want to be contractors on research projects, to influence Departmental thinking and policy development.

## What are they like?

- Three expert panels have been running for well over 18 months
- 50 members across all three panels – including 6 who are on 2 expert panels, 1 on all 3 expert panels
- Multi-disciplinary
- 80% academics, 20% consultants

- Each Panel has a **Panel Lead** who is contracted to the Department and an **Internal Panel Manager** who is an analyst;
- The **Internal Panel Manager** and **Panel Lead** between them agree a forward programme of work and police ad hoc requests for specific pieces of work.
- **For ad hoc requests, the Panel Lead** puts requests around the Panel to see if people are available or decides who is best placed and approaches them directly.  
The analyst in the Department who is requesting the ad hoc work completes a template which specifies what is needed, by when etc. and at what cost.

## Regeneration and Economic Development: Expert Panel

- The REDA expert panel is led by Professor Michael Parkinson who is based at Liverpool John Moores University.
- His role is to manage the panel and publicise and develop the panel within the Department
- There is a web-site on the Liverpool John Moores University site about the expert panel.

This includes:

- The membership of the panel
- Events
- - Outputs from panel commissions – called REDA contributions on the webpage
- Members publications that are relevant to Regeneration and Economic Development
- Useful links & Contacts – a University and CLG contact person

<http://www.ljmu.ac.uk/EIUA/reda/index.htm>.

## What kinds of activities have members of the REDA expert panel been involved in?

- Ad hoc advice work: usually small scale and quick – typically between £5k and £10k, 5 days work with a 3 week turn round;
- Peer reviews
- Presentations and seminars
- Discussions with policy officials& Ministers

### Lead Panel and internal analysts assessment

The Panel has been successful because:

- Panel members have been very willing to respond flexibly often at short notice to tight deadlines;
- The work done by panel members has been of a high quality and timely, strengthening CLG colleagues' understanding of key issues and allowing them to give more robust advice to ministers;
- Good internal support by analysts.

## Commissioning ad hoc work from the Expert Panel:

