



Local Area Research + Intelligence Association

LARIA Newsletter June 2024

LARIA Updates

Building professional networks

Hi all,

I had the privilege of chairing the 11th Greater Manchester Analysts Network meetup during May. We had around 80 people (of our 250+ membership) in the room which was great to see and brought a real buzz and atmosphere to the event (especially over lunch and the lunchtime showcases).



The network has been around for over 5 years now and is a collaboration between public sector analysts across Greater Manchester, the Greater Manchester Combined Authority, and Policy@Manchester (part of the University of Manchester)... it is owned by the network and the people who attend rather than any one organisation.



We meet in-person twice a year and, based on what attendees told us, we split the day into three parts: Session 1 – presentations to the room on interesting pan-GM topics and analysis; Session 2 – chance to discuss and collaborate on a pan-GM project; Session 3 – focusing on new skills, learning and the transfer of knowledge from projects that people have delivered. We also protect some time at each event to ensure that members of the network have time to showcase their own work and/or reach out to their peers on a particular problem or project they are working on.

On the day we covered so much, including:

We heard about Policy@Manchester where there are great opportunities to connect in and join up with academics (and each other) around local priorities. They asked for topic ideas for future GM Policy Hub seminars and invited attendees to share those ideas with Policy@Manchester. For any LARIA members across GM [the link for ideas is here](#).

We then welcomed Professor David Topping who discussed the Digital Solutions Hub and decision-making. More information about this work is available here: [Data and decision making: how AI and data tools can help influence evidence-based policy change](#). As with the first item, David was also looking to create connections and develop meaningful business cases with the people in the room. The GM Analysts network will also use the approach that DSH used with Open Data Manchester on understanding the purpose of any product or analysis, to help set our own priorities/purpose in the future.

Then we had our discussion session focused on the GM Information Sharing Framework project, led by GMCA. The big message here was that we need to engage and influence this work, whether that be direct thoughts to the GMCA team, signing up for the Steering Groups, or simply attending workshops. We all agreed we just want the outputs to lead to greater consistency, clearer processes and ultimately speedier / simpler decisions.

During lunch we had our 'Forum' time where it looked like lots of conversations were going on with are showcase projects, including Manchester City Council with the work on Census and Education analysis, GMCA's overview of the updated Espresso Tool,

and University of Manchester who invited people to take a look at the Q-Step programme ([About Q-Step | Faculty of Humanities | The University of Manchester](#)) and how it matches students to placement opportunities.

Lancashire CC (supported by LGA for the Q&A) kindly made the journey over to Manchester and talked to us about their experience of using LG Inform+ to deliver high quality and efficient corporate reporting and benchmarking. My main takeaway was that this was a good example of where subscribing to a dataset(s) against a clear set of local objectives can be an efficient way of working, freeing up time for analysts to analyse and having a far greater impact on local decisions. I challenged the GM Network to think about what data we need and the different approaches we've each taken...could be opportunities to collaborate better.

Next up was Wigan Council and Alteryx, and an overview of how they've taken a structured approach to organising & managing data flows, showing examples of the benefits that have been achieved. Colleagues from Wigan described the same challenges we all have in terms of making the most of the data we hold and shared how they'd gone about resolving some of them. For me it was a nice segway from the previous presentation on opportunities to subscribe to datasets in different ways, this presentation talked about how the role of technology (and processes) can support in managing those data flows and linking a range of data to informed decision making. This is another area where we may want our network to think about the processes and tools we use, our requirements, and future opportunities.

And our final speakers were from the Spatial Data Unit (DLUHC) where they gave us a great insight into their priorities and how they link to our GM Region. It was great to have our central government colleagues in the room with us, something we'll keep doing, plus also lots of opportunities for us to collaborate and progress common priorities. Our network can be a really useful local voice into national thinking, so lets also keep thinking about what we want to do in that space.

Whilst this article might be a little bit of a self-indulgent celebration of the GM Analysts Network, I hope it illustrates that networks like these can work and can make a real difference. LARIA works hard on this nationally and our regional leads do the same across different parts of the country, but if each of us individually did a little bit to establish a network with our peers and create the connections between those networks then we can do great things.

We have brilliant analysts, researchers, data officers, etc already working across the public sector. We also have people who are starting their careers coming into the sector full of new ideas, skills and passion. We need to celebrate all that is great about our

sector, promote the opportunities within our sector (especially to any under-represented groups), empower people to try new things, and ultimately make a difference to the residents we serve.

I hope you've found this useful and as always happy to hear any views from others.

Paul Holme

Head of Performance, Research & Intelligence @ Manchester City Council (and 'twice a year' the chair of the GM Analysts Network)

News

Save the Date

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Local Area Research + Intelligence Association

We're pleased to announce that on Tuesday 26th November 2024, LARIA, supported by the Local Government Association will hold their one day conference and awards at the LGA offices in London, which will also celebrate LARIA turning 50!

The theme for this year's conference is 'We are not alone: artificial intelligence and data science – friend or foe?'

Registration and applications for awards submissions will open early September.

CACI | DO AMAZING
THINGS WITH DATA

Bolster route optimisation & cut costs for Home to School Transport (HTST)

[Get in touch to learn more](#)


Home to School Transport Solutions



At a time when budgets are under so much pressure, facilitating Home to School Transport (HTST) efficiently has never been more important for public sector organisations. Recent reports project costs tripling to **£1.125bn over a decade** due to rising demand.

Local authorities are struggling to sustain safe, reliable, and cost-effective statutory transportation for vulnerable children amidst tightening budgets and increasing demand for the service.

CACI's suite of route optimisation solutions combined with our demographic data provides local authorities with the necessary route planning, management, and segmentation tools needed to cut costs and safely transport vulnerable children to school.

With our data and technology solutions you can:

- Save operational costs
- Improve efficiency and services
- Improve ESG & resident-centric operations
- Keep all stakeholders up to date in real time

Together, we can pave the way for a brighter future for our children and communities.

[Register your interest to discuss how CACI's route optimisation software solutions can support your community needs](#)

Survey on crime analysts use of text data analysis



Researchers from the VISION consortium are developing Natural Language Processing software for crime analysts and researchers who wish to analyse free text data such as crime reports.

To inform this work we are conducting a survey of crime data analysts to establish what your skills and needs are with regard to Natural Language Processing. If you are working with crime data or are working with someone else who analyses it, then please consider completing or forwarding this short survey. By taking part you will be helping us to tailor the software to the needs of those analysts that will use it. The survey should take between 5-7 minutes to complete.

[The link to the survey is here.](#)

GeoPlace announces winners of the 2024 Exemplar Awards



As a reflection of outstanding achievement, GeoPlace has announced the winners of its 2024 Exemplar Award, the Data Linking Award, the Peer Award and the Data Quality & Improvement Awards. These accolades reflect the progress, change or improvement in systems and processes run by the nation's local authority Address and Street Custodians.

Claire Holloway, Head of Corporate Services, Local Government Association presented the awards to the winners. Find out [who won here](#).

Census review work improves funding allocations for two London Councils

The address management team at Royal Borough of Kingston upon Thames and Sutton Council is the winner of GeoPlace's 2024 Data Linking Award for its work across the boroughs to ensure that address data was as accurate as possible prior to the 2021 census. The increase in data quality resulted in more accurate funding allocations, efficient services and the creation of three new wards due to the identification of additional properties within the borough.

Find out more about [their work here](#).

Courses, Training Events and Webinars

LARIA Webinars

We are currently in the process of finalising two webinars which will take place mid-July and will be free for members to attend.



Registration will open very soon, keep your eyes peeled!

Jobs



Job Title: Research & Analysis Manager

Managed By: Head of Research, Data and
Insight

Contract Terms: Permanent employment

Location: Hybrid with optional part-time access to office base in Bristol

Salary: c. £40,000- £45,000 FTE for a 4-day week

CTP is a 4-day week organisation

Salary dependent on experience

Hours: 4 day/week

We are flexible employers- the work pattern will be agreed with the successful candidate

We are also open to requests to work less days or a potential job share

Deadline: 17:00 BST on 29th July 2024

Do you think everyone across the UK should live in a place where people and nature thrive? So do we – let's talk.

Centre for Thriving Places (CTP) is a globally recognised leader in the practical application of wellbeing economics and supporting places to create the conditions for people and planet to thrive. We're looking for a new Research & Analysis Manager, to work with our team to play a key role in supporting various areas of work – see the [Job Description here](#) for more details.

To submit a job advert to appear in the newsletter or on the LARIA website, please download and complete this [form](#) (Full Corporate and Corporate Members only). You can also post Job Vacancies on the Jobs Board in the LARIA [Members' Area](#).

The next newsletter submission deadline is [Thursday 25th July](#).

Are you a Corporate or Full Corporate Member?

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Local Area Research + Intelligence Association

Your LARIA Corporate Membership entitles you to submit content to the monthly LARIA newsletter, if you have any research, events, job adverts, resources or news which you would us to include please send it to admin@laria.org.uk.

The next newsletter submission deadline is **Thursday 25th July**.

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