

Executive Summary



Data-Driven Society: People, Places & Policy

March 2020



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Executive Summary

In January 2020, 85 delegates from local and central government, the voluntary, community and enterprise sector, academia and other interest groups attended the NILS collaborative symposium, Data-Driven Society: People, Places and Policy in Belfast City Hall. The purpose of this symposium was to bring together data users and providers to talk about the future provision of data in Northern Ireland, and how to translate data into meaningful information. The programme was informed by feedback received by the NILS Research Support Unit from earlier initiatives.

This report documents the day's discussions, and includes contributions from the invited speakers as well as comments put forward from the round table discussion sessions. The Executive Summary provides an overview of the key points raised.

1. Open and Spatial data

1.1 Importance of incorporating Section 75 data into research and policy development

1.2 OpenDataNI holds comprehensive types of data under a broad range of themes

1.3 What can be done under the Open Government Licence and issues around open data including GDPR

1.4 Construction of Northern Ireland Multiple Deprivation Measures

1.5 Use of spatial data to enhance existing research and identify trends by area.

1.6 Questions surrounding a data hub or centralised service for NI detailing exactly what data is available and where to find this information

2. Community Data

2.1 Use of data from a Belfast perspective, including drivers, benefits and challenges

2.2 Belfast Region City Deal – a multi-million pound, digital innovation eco-system which is set to bring together data experts from various industries, enable knowledge exchange and set-up a common approach to big data sourcing and management

2.3 Layering data can bring new perspective to existing research questions e.g. check out the detail data projects

2.4 Is data quality and issue when sharing data and/or using data from an organisation with limited resources for data management

2.5 Lack of resources (time, expertise funding) are a major barrier in maximising potential of data

3. Individual and Household Data

3.1 Key changes for Census 2021, including the online questionnaire system and new question topics and amendments

3.2 Northern Ireland Longitudinal data as a useful administrative and longitudinal data source, spanning 40 years and has significant potential to investigate social policy in NI

3.3 Showcase of a series of studies on mental health, using various combinations of datasets to answer different research questions with the available data

3.4 Discussion of advantages of individual level datasets compared to accessibility challenges