

READERS' LETTERS

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'CORE' VALUES SAFE AT BGS



Sir, In answer to Culshaw and Lee's criticism of BGS policy (*Geoscientist* 21.10 p11), we invite readers to review our four-year strategy (links on website) which is unchanged since publication in spring 2009. It highlights the change from 'systematic' to 'responsive' survey. BGS will complete this by the end of the strategy period, while at the same time ensuring that the 2D UK survey is refreshed and, where necessary, newly surveyed. The strategy also introduces a strong focus on re-mapping the UK shelf.

The change to BGS science described in the strategy involves introducing "more understanding of the observations". This means developing and quantifying geological models in order to help provide solutions to problems and make predictions

that are of value to BGS stakeholders, including the UK public and government.

The strategy has led to staff changes, over the past four years cutting the workforce from ~780 to ~630 FTE (full-time equivalents) mostly in administration and technical support. In the last two years BGS has lost 52 scientists - and hired about 45, shifting our balance of skills from geology and palaeontology to geophysics, marine geology, Earth observation and process modelling.

The BGS Board has been replaced by an Advisory Committee, including senior figures from industry, government and academe. Also, in 2009 our parent Department (Business, Innovation and Skills) created the BGS Government Advisory Panel, allowing closer interaction

with government departments than BGS has enjoyed for decades. Despite our smaller workforce, output metrics (web hits, digital downloads of reports, maps and scientific publications) are up significantly.

BGS, as a NERC 'research centre', is at the heart of discussions about delivering better-integrated science, delivering on the 'impact agenda' for Earth and environmental sciences, while also providing infrastructure support for universities and government. We aim to achieve savings by sharing support and science services, and to produce new science through joint programming.

BGS is at the leading edge of a number of initiatives that are already paying substantial dividends.

John Ludden and Denis Peach