Electronic Survey of Empty Homes

Data Collection Schema

Schema Description and Field Definitions

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1 Document Control

1.1 REVISION HISTORY

Revision	Revision date	Summary of Changes	Changes marked
V2-0b	22/06/2006	Initial Draft for discussion	
V2-1	08/08/2006	Derived from v2-0b draft for issue with the v2-1 schema	

1.2 APPROVALS

This document requires the following approvals.

Name	Signature	Title	Date of Issue	Version

1.3 DOCUMENT PURPOSE

This document describes the XML schema that has been designed to facilitate the collection of information from local authorities on the occupancy/vacancy state of domestic dwellings, together with information on Council Tax exemptions and discounts that will enable the development of domestic vacancy statistics and detailed summaries as currently returned via the CTB1 process.

2 Background

2.1 ORIGINAL SCHEMA DESIGN

The data collection requirement and schema design have been developed form the original Domestic Vacancy Study conducted by ODPM in 2004/5. During the course of this Study, vacancy data was collected from the pilot local authorities in a simple spreadsheet or comma separated value (CSV) format. This approach proved adequate for the purposes of the pilot study and has continued to be used as an interim measure by authorities submitting information on domestic vacancy. However, it was concluded that, for wider implementation, a more robust and consistent format for data collection was required and, in line with e-GIF guidelines, an XML schema for the collection of domestic vacancy data was developed.

This schema was tested against data from the pilot study but has not so far been implemented for use with the local authority billing systems.

2.2 SCOPE OF PILOT VACANCY DATA REQUEST

The data requested from authorities for the pilot study were restricted to property identification (BA-reference plus UPRN and address if available), start dates and finish dates of any vacancy episodes, vacant dwellings being identified from the recorded Council Tax exemption classes. Information about occupied dwellings was not sought but was derived when the vacancy data were joined with the corresponding Council Tax List data provided by the Valuation Office Agency (VOA).

2.3 OTHER DATA SUBMISSIONS

Local Authorities are also required to submit information about dwellings on the Council Tax List in the form of 'CTB1' and 'CTB1s' returns. These returns, prepared each autumn, constitute a statistical snapshot of information about both occupied and vacant dwellings, including a breakdown of the numbers of dwellings attracting Council Tax exemptions and/or discounts.

3 Data Collection Requirement

3.1 COLLECTION OF ADDITIONAL DATA

Following on from the Domestic Vacancy Pilot and the development of the original schema, the data collection requirement has now been extended to include individual dwelling data from which the CTB1 and CTB1s returns could be computed together with comprehensive occupancy/vacancy data. To achieve this the schema described in this document now provides for the collection of information about all dwellings on the Council Tax List (vacant & occupied) including start and finish dates for each of the different exemption / discount categories as set out in the CTB1 requests.

3.2 SCHEMA DESIGN CONSIDERATIONS

There is a contrast between the current format of the CTB1 return, which is a snapshot of the local authority's data at a point in time, and the more comprehensive vacancy episode data collected for the Pilot. The Domestic Vacancy Study Report discussed the relative merits of collecting information on vacant dwellings over a full year (or indeed some other period of time) or simply taking a snapshot of vacant dwellings on a single day each year (as the CTB1 does) and concluded that a simple snapshot on the local authority data could not provide the basis for the required detailed analysis.

Continuing to treat the CTB1 returns and the vacancy data collection as separate exercises would not have achieved the planned improvements in efficiency and data quality. However, the study established that collection of detailed episode data for each appropriate exemption/discount class as applied to all dwellings on the Valuation List over a complete financial year would enable derivation of a snapshot, from which the CTB1 returns could be reproduced.

There is also a potential conflict in that the CTB1 returns are required in the autumn, whereas the detailed vacancy analysis is better based upon data for a complete financial year. Again, collection of detailed episode data means that if two year-to-date data extracts are requested, one shortly after the autumn cut off date for CTB1 returns and one at the end of the financial year, then any overlap or joining of the submitted episode data can be managed as part of the analysis process. The need to generate two extracts may appear onerous but will be offset by increased automation resulting from implementation of the proposed schema.

The 'Electronic Survey of Empty Homes' (ESEH) schema design has been based upon the collection of information about all dwellings on the Valuation List, both occupied and vacant, together with comprehensive episode data.

3.3 IMPACT

In most cases, local authorities will rely upon their billing system suppliers to provide a suitable system upgrades that will generate the required XML data extract. It will be important that the content and format of the data request as specified by the schema are practically aligned with the data held in the billing systems so as to avoid ambiguity in their extraction and thereby ensure that the quality of the collected data is consistent with its planned analysis and use. The current consultation on this initial draft of the schema will help to achieve this goal.

4   The Schema

4.1 E-GIF REQUIREMENTS

The design of the schema follows the 'e-Government Schema Guidelines for XML' and makes use of the architectural schemas available through GovTalk, in particular the BS7666 Address Schema (*BS7666-v2-0.xsd*) and the Common Types Schema (*CommonSimpleTypes-v1-3.xsd*)

4.2 SCHEMA DESCRIPTION

The structure of the schema (*ESEHvacancyAndCTB1Extract-v2-1.xsd*) is based upon a 'DomesticDwellingExtract' root element that contains:

- A header, which identifies the Billing Authority, the start-date and end-date of the reporting period for which vacancy records have been extracted and a date/time of data creation.

- The body, which contains a list of 'TaxableDwellings'

- A trailer, which contains a count of the dwelling and episode records (for audit) and a date/time stamp

The individual data fields and their correct usage are described in the field definitions table below.

4.3 SCHEMA STATUS

The comments received during the consultation on version 2-0b of the schema are listed in the accompanying schema revisions document, together with responses to each of these comments and the revisions that have been applied to the ESEH Schema which is now issued at version 2-1 for pilot implementation.

4.4   SCHEMA DIAGRAMS

The following four figures show the structure of the schema.

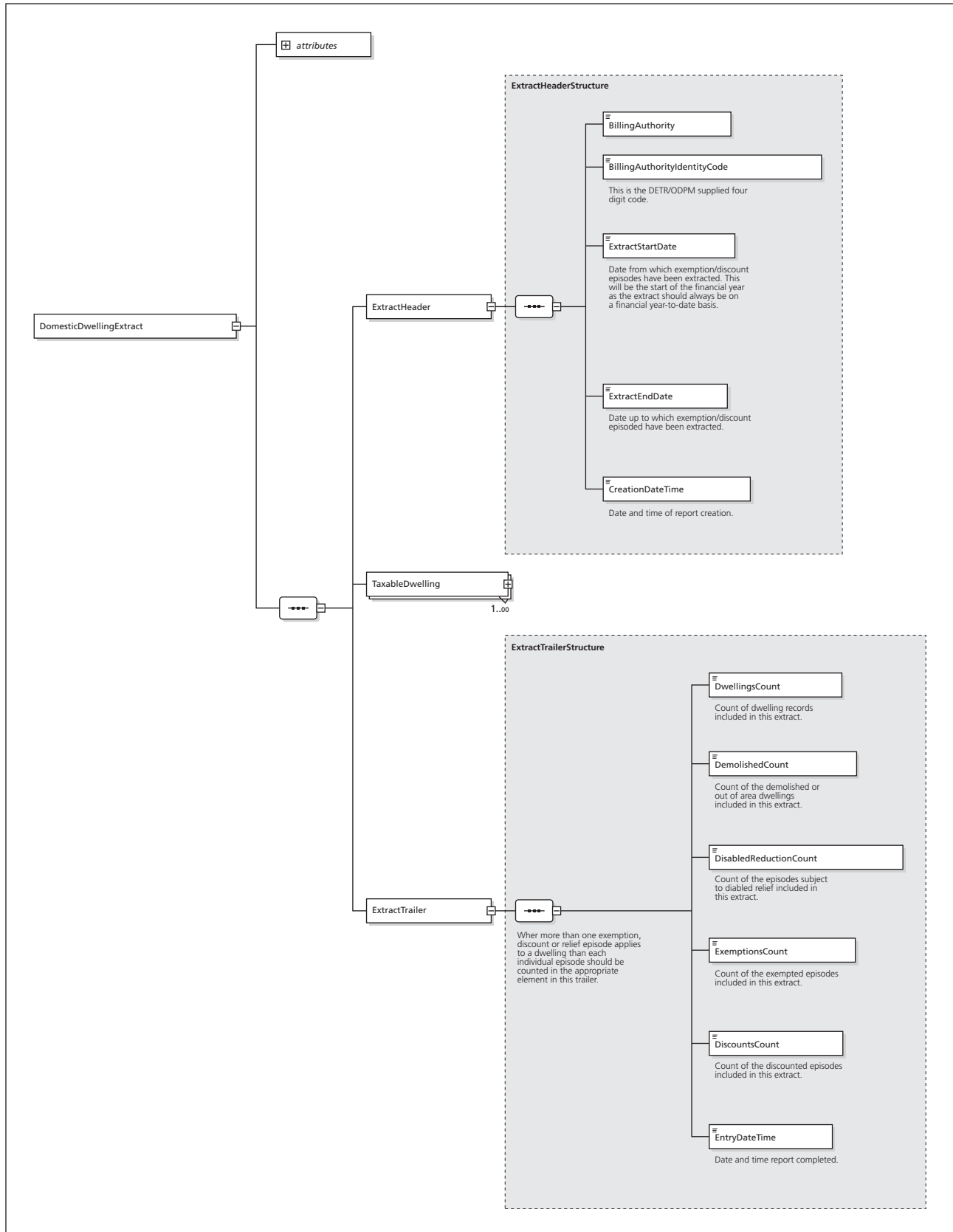**Figure 1 – Top Level Showing Structure of Header and Trailer**

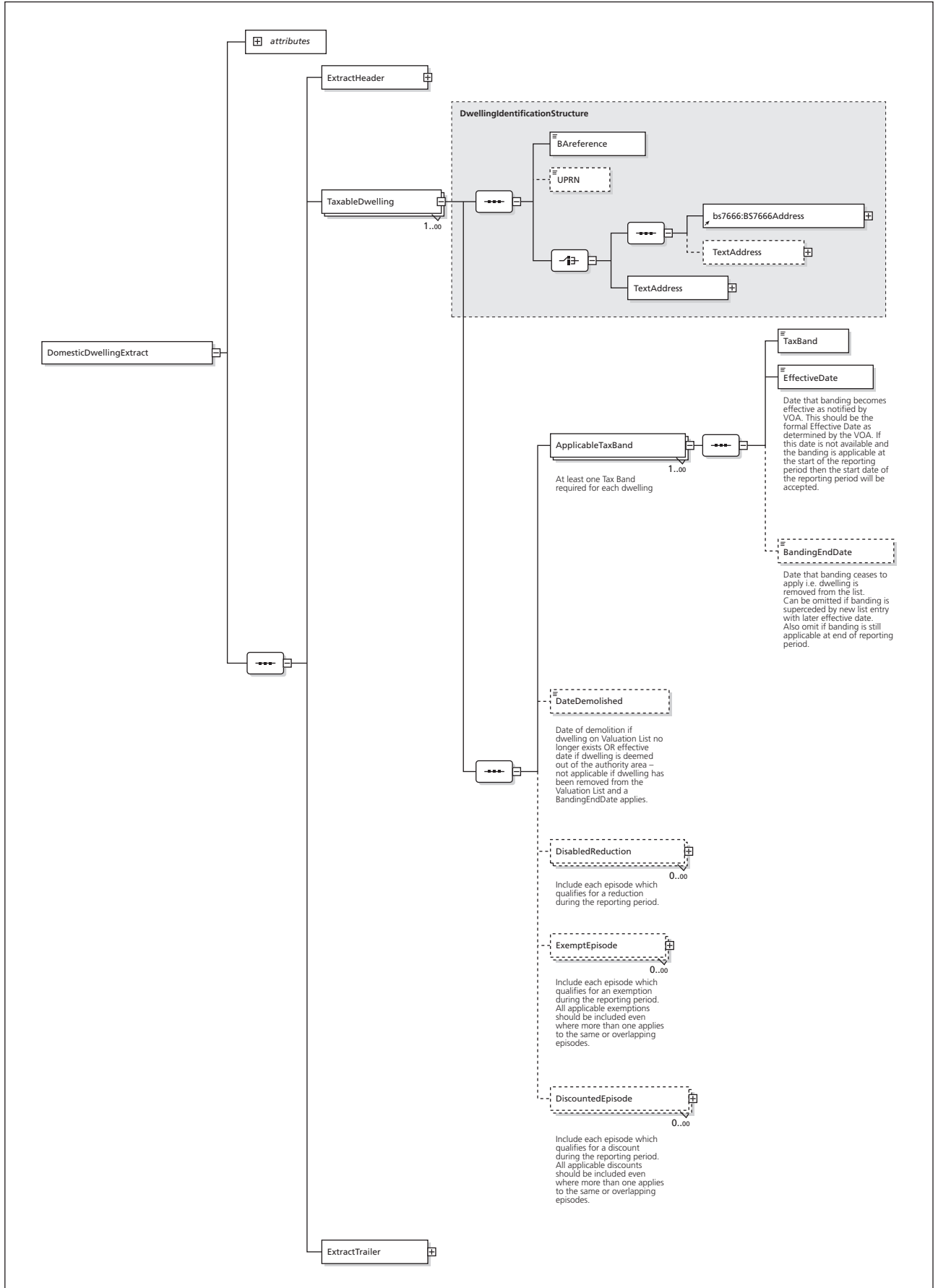## Figure 2 – Dwelling Identification and Tax Band Details

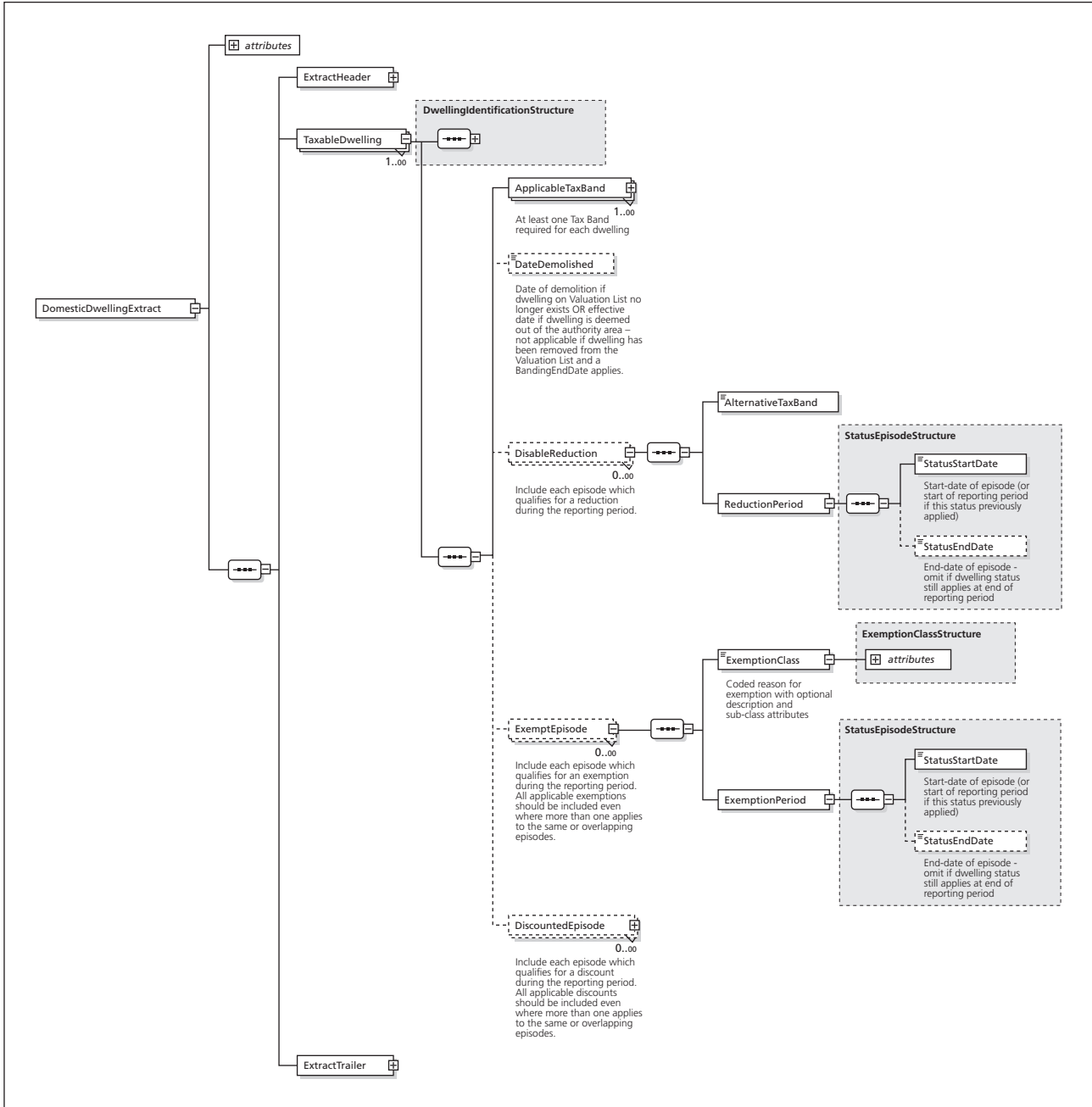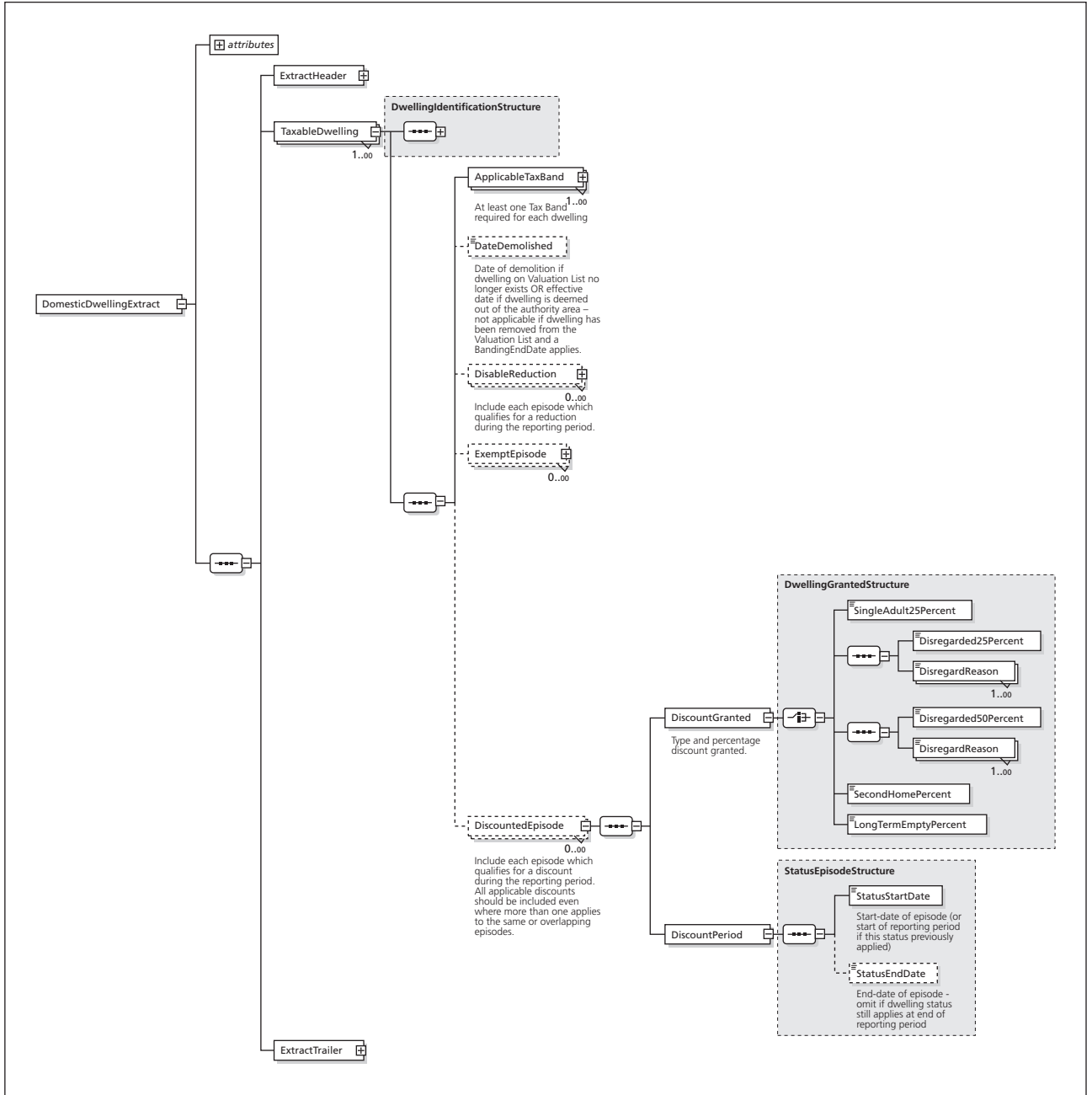## Figure 3 – Disabled Relief and Exemptions Structures

Figure 4 – Discounts Structure

4.5   FIELD DEFINITIONS

No.	Field Group	Field Name	Description	Allowable Entries	Status
Header					
1.		BillingAuthority	Name of Billing Authority submitting the extract	Text	Mandatory
2.		BillingAuthorityIdentityCode	Four digit code number allocated by ODPM/DCLG and used by VOA to identify the Billing Authority	Four digit integer	Mandatory
3.		ExtractStartDate	Start date from which dwelling information has been extracted for this submission. This will be the start of the financial year as the extract should always be on a financial year-to-date basis.	Date: YYYY-MM-DD	Mandatory
4.		ExtractEndDate	End date up to which dwelling information has been extracted for this submission	Date: YYYY-MM-DD	Mandatory
5.		CreationDateTime	Date and time of report creation	Date / time	Mandatory
Taxable Dwelling					
	Dwelling Identity		*All dwellings appearing in the valuation List should be included – each appearing once with the various discounts and exemptions listed.*		
6.		BAreference	The unique reference assigned by the Billing Authority to each dwelling on the Valuation List	Up to 25 characters alpha-numeric	Mandatory
7.		UPRN	The Unique Property Reference Number assigned to the identified property in the LLPG	12 digit integer	Initially optional but will become mandatory
8.		BS7666Adress	The structured BS7666 address of the dwelling	One or both forms of address to be included	At least one address is mandatory - BS7666 address to become mandatory
9.		TextAddress	Simple text address where BS7666 address is not yet available		
	Banding		*One or more tax bands are required for each dwelling depending on whether there are any changes during the reporting period.*		
10.		TaxBand	Council Tax Band assigned by the VOA	'A' through 'I' for Wales 'A' through 'H' for England	Mandatory
11.		EffectiveDate	Date that the Banding becomes effective as notified by VOA. This should be the formal Effective Date as determined by the VOA. If this date is not available and the banding is applicable at the start of the reporting period then the start date of the reporting period will be accepted	Date: YYYY-MM-DD	Mandatory

No.	Field Group	Field Name	Description	Allowable Entries	Status
	Banding				
12.		BandingEndDate	Date that Banding ceases to apply i.e. if dwelling is removed from the Valuation List. This field can be omitted if Banding is superceded by new list entry with later effective date. It should also be omitted if Banding is still applicable at end of reporting period.	Date: YYYY-MM-DD	Only required if banding ceases to apply i.e. removal from List
13.	Demolished	DateDemolished	Date of demolition if the dwelling on the Valuation List no longer exists or effective date if the dwelling is deemed to be out of the BA area - not applicable if dwelling has been removed from the Valuation List and a BandingEndDate applies	Date: YYYY-MM-DD	Mandatory where applicable
14.	Disabled Reduction	AlternativeTaxBand	The alternative Band assigned to the dwelling where a disabled reduction applies. (Use band 'Z' where the reduction applies to a band A dwelling)	'A' through 'I' plus 'Z'	Mandatory where applicable
15.		StatusStartDate	Start-date of the episode to which the disabled reduction applies OR start-date of reporting period if the reduction previously applied	Date: YYYY-MM-DD	Mandatory where applicable
16.		StatusEndDate	End-date of the episode to which the disabled reduction applies. This field should be omitted if the reduction still applies at the end of the reporting period	Date: YYYY-MM-DD	Mandatory where applicable
	Exempt Episode		*Include each episode which qualifies for an exemption during the reporting period. All applicable exemptions should be included even where more than one applies to the same or overlapping episodes.*		
17.		Exemption Class	The class of exemption applicable to the dwelling for this episode	'A' through 'X'	Mandatory where applicable
18.		Description	Additional description if required for clarification	Attribute:text	Optional
19.		ExemptionSubClass	Additional sub-class of exemption where used	Attribute:text	Optional
20.		StatusStartDate	Start-date of the episode to which the exemption applies OR start-date of reporting period if the exemption previously applied	Date: YYYY-MM-DD	Mandatory where applicable
21.		StatusEndDate	End-date of the episode to which the exemption applies. This field should be omitted if the exemption still applies at the end of the reporting period	Date: YYYY-MM-DD	Mandatory where applicable

No.	Field Group	Field Name	Description	Allowable Entries	Status
	Discounted Episode		*Include each episode which qualifies for a discount during the reporting period. All applicable discounts should be included even where more than one applies to the same or overlapping episodes*		
22.		SingleAdult25Percent	Percentage discount (25) if single adult discount applies to this episode	'25'	Discount granted to be recorded against appropriate discount type for each episode
23.		Disregarded25Percent	Percentage discount (25) if all but one adult are disregarded for this episode.	'25'	
24.		DisregardReason	Reason(s) for disregard of other adults in dwelling – may be more than one.	One of allowable enumerations	
25.		Disregarded50Percent	Percentage discount (50) if all adults are disregarded for this episode.	'50'	
26.		DisregardReason	Reason(s) for disregard of each adult in dwelling – may be more than one.	One of allowable enumerations	
27		SecondHomePercent	Percentage discount (0-50) if second home discount applies to this episode.	'0' through '50'	
28.		LongTermEmptyPercent	Percentage discount (0-50) if long term empty discount applies to this episode. *(Note: Where non-statutory discounts still apply to some dwellings, these should be recorded as 'Long Term Empty' with appropriate discount level.)*	'0' through '50'	
29.		StatusStartDate	Start-date of the episode to which the discount applies OR start-date of reporting period if the discount previously applied	Date: YYYY-MM-DD	Mandatory where applicable
30.		StatusEndDate	End-date of the episode to which the discount applies. This field should be omitted if the discount still applies at the end of the reporting period.	Date: YYYY-MM-DD	Mandatory where applicable
Trailer			*Where more than one exemption, discount or relief episode applies to a dwelling then each individual episode should be counted in the appropriate element in this trailer*		
31.		DwellingsCount	Count of the individual dwelling identity records included in the extract.	Integer >0	Mandatory
32.		DemolishedCount	Count of the demolished or out of area dwellings included in the extract.	Integer >= 0	Mandatory
33.		DisabledReductionCount	Count of the individual episodes for dwellings subject to disabled relief included in the extract.	Integer >= 0	Mandatory
34.		ExemptionsCount	Count of the individual episodes for dwellings subject to exemptions included in the extract.	Integer >= 0	Mandatory
35.		DiscountsCount	Count of the individual episodes for dwellings subject to dicounts included in the extract.	Integer >= 0	Mandatory
36.		EntryDateTime	Date and time of completion of report.	Date / time	

4.6   IMPLEMENTATION EXAMPLES

If a property had the following episodes during a year:- • 1st April - Exempt (from earlier than start of reporting period) • 15th May – Change to Long Term Empty • 22nd August – Change to Single Person Discount • 9th November – Change to Full charge How would this be shown? What if there was a band change during this period or if from 12th December it was exempt again?	In effect, there will be a 'complex element' or group of data for each episode (or period of liability) so in this example, there would be the following elements: • 1st April - 14th May: Exempt carried over from earlier than the start of the reporting period • 15th May - 21st August: Long Term Empty • 22nd August - 8th November: Single Person Discount • 12th December - 31st March: Exempt e.g. hospital or residential care Note that no exemption or discount is recorded between 9th November and 11th December which indicates that full CT is chargeable. There would be at least one element to record the applicable CT Band but were there a band change during the reporting period then a further element would record the band and its effective (or start) date. The impact of this would automatically be computed by the DCLG validation process when extracting start and end dates for the vacancy episodes and the figures for the CBT1.
If there was a disabled band reduction granted/cancelled during the reporting period AND a VOA band change during the period but with different dates to the disable band change, how would the data be shown? i.e.: • 1st April - property in Band D • 10th June - disabled relief granted (alternative tax band now C) • 9th August - property re-banded by VOA to band C (alternative tax band now B) • 25th October - disabled relief cancelled	In this example there would be an element to indicate that CT band D applies from 1st April (or previously) and another element to record the VOA re-banding to C with effective date of 9th August. There would then be an element to record the disabled relief episode from 10th June to 24th October. If preferred the disabled relief could be recorded as two elements - one from 10th June to 8th August and the second from 9th August to 24th October. Either way, the validation process would reconcile this overlap.
In the case of Discounts/Disregards, would an element be required for each disregarded person where there is more than one (e.g. two apprentices living together)	Only where there are different reasons for the disregard or the disregards apply to different dates. So for the two apprentices living together over the same dates, one element is required.
In this same example, if one of the apprentices moved out then 50% discount still applies but for a different reason – single person who is disregarded.	In this case the same 50% discount still applies (i.e. all residents are disregarded) so new element is not strictly required. However if, as is thought likely, the billing system records the two situations separately then it is preferable that two elements are included.