



# Land Use in England, 2017

This is the first release of an experimental statistic presenting figures on land use in England as at April 2017. The release is accompanied by an interactive report that allows users to explore the data. The report is available here: <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/land-use-in-england-experimental-statistics>.

These statistics are being published alongside a wider consultation on the future of the land use change statistics and could potentially become part of the regular future statistical publication. Users can find the consultation here <https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/land-use-change-statistic-proposed-changes>

The headline statistics from this publication are:

- In total, 8 per cent of the land area of England is developed with 92 per cent not developed.
- The biggest land use category in England is agriculture at 63 per cent.
- The biggest developed category of land use in England is transport and utilities at 4 per cent.
- 1 per cent of the total land area of England is of a residential use with residential gardens accounting for a further 5 per cent.
- 7 per cent of the land designated as Green Belt in England is developed with 93 per cent of land of a non-developed use.
- Of the Green Belt land area, 0.3 per cent is of a residential use with residential gardens accounting for a further 3.2 per cent.
- 6 per cent of land in National Flood Zone 3 is developed with 94 per cent of land of a non-developed use.

## Planning

*An experimental  
official statistics  
release*

31 May 2019

Introduction	1
Land use in England	2
Land use within the Green Belt	5
Land use in areas of high flood risk	6
Accompanying live tables	6
Technical notes	7
Enquiries	11

### Responsible Statistician:

Sophie Ferguson

### Statistical enquiries:

Office hours:

0303 444 2006

[sophie.ferguson@communities.gov.uk](mailto:sophie.ferguson@communities.gov.uk)

### Media Enquiries:

0303 444 1209

[newsdesk@communities.gov.uk](mailto:newsdesk@communities.gov.uk)

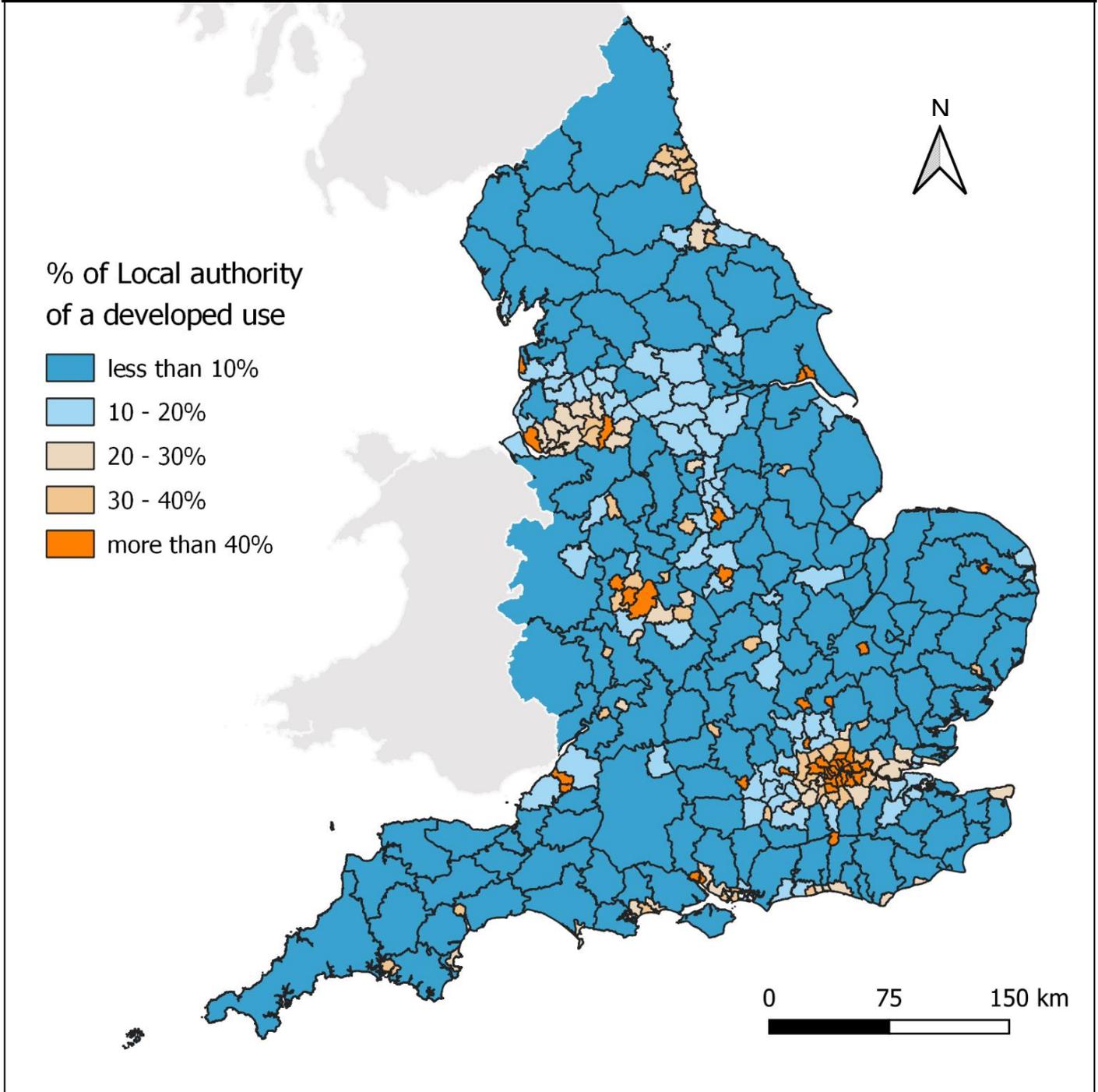
# Introduction

This statistical release presents summary statistics showing how different land uses are distributed across England. Land uses are classified across 28 land use categories (see Table BN1 in the technical notes) split between developed and non-developed land use types. Statistics on land uses within the Green Belt and within areas of high flood risk are also presented. Data are provided to the department by Ordnance Survey Ltd and based on a snapshot of land use in England in April 2017 taken from Ordnance Survey's AddressBase and Mastermap Topography products.

## Land use in England

The land area in England is predominantly of a non-developed use, with 92 per cent of the total England land area being split between non-developed land uses and 8 per cent split between developed land uses. The most developed local authority is the City of London at 85 per cent, the next most developed local authorities are Kensington and Chelsea and Islington with 67 per cent and 66 per cent of the land area of a developed use respectively. The local authority with the smallest proportion of land that is of a developed use is Craven at 2 per cent. The proportions of land use for all English local authorities are given in Live Table P400.

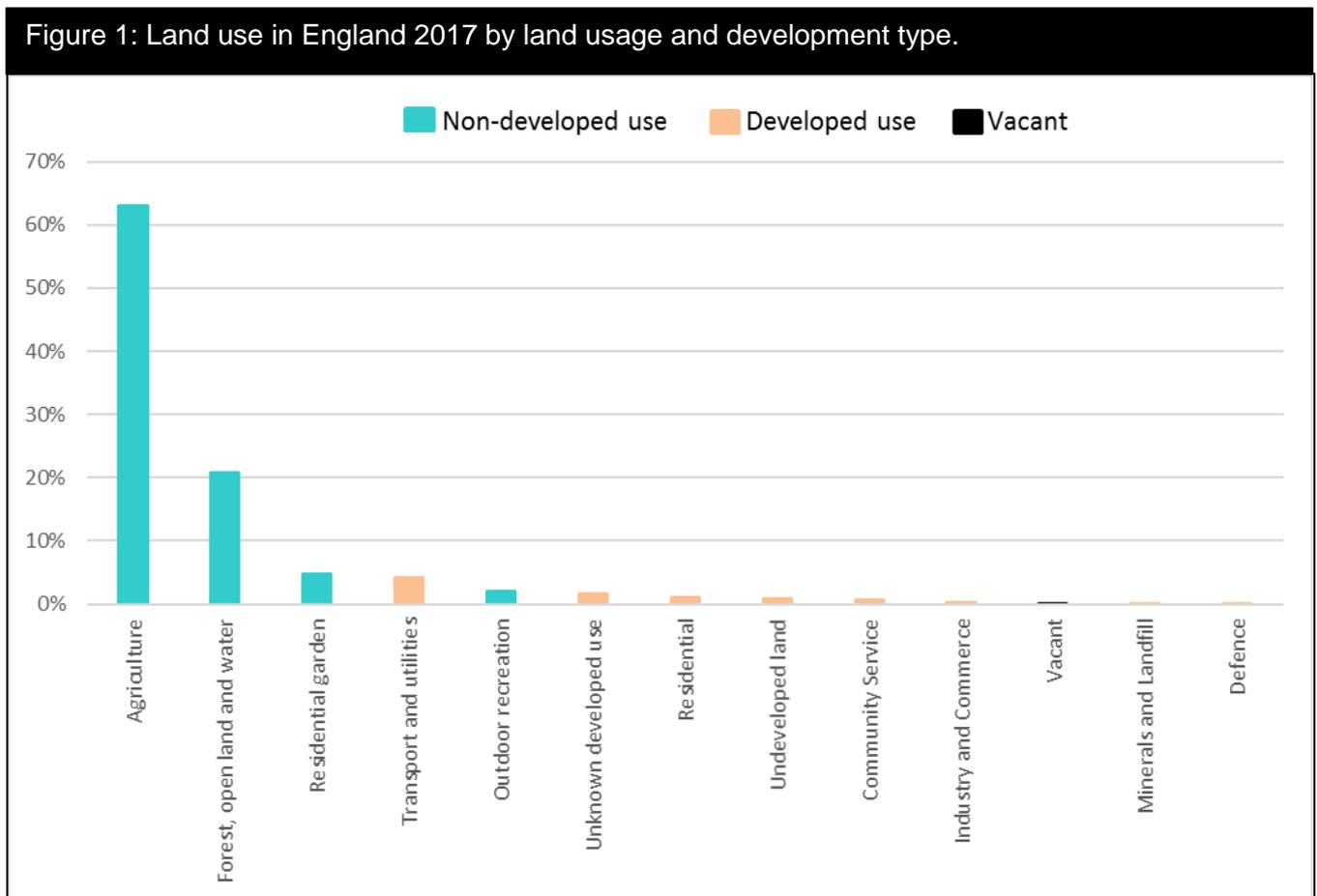
Map 1: Developed Land use in England – the percentage of the local authority land area that is of a developed use.



Produced by the Housing and Planning Analysis Division, MHCLG  
© Crown copyright and database rights 2018 OrdnanceSurvey10002857

**Data Source:** OS Boundary-Line

The three biggest land uses in England are agriculture at 63 per cent, forest, open land and water at 21 per cent and residential gardens at 5 per cent. Figure 1 shows how the land use of England is split across the different land use groups and developed and non-developed uses.



Local authorities vary widely in their proportions of the different land use groups. The proportions of land use for all English Local authorities are given in Live Table P400. You can also use our interactive dashboard of land use summary statistics, select a local authority and see how its land area is split between the different land uses given in Figure 1.

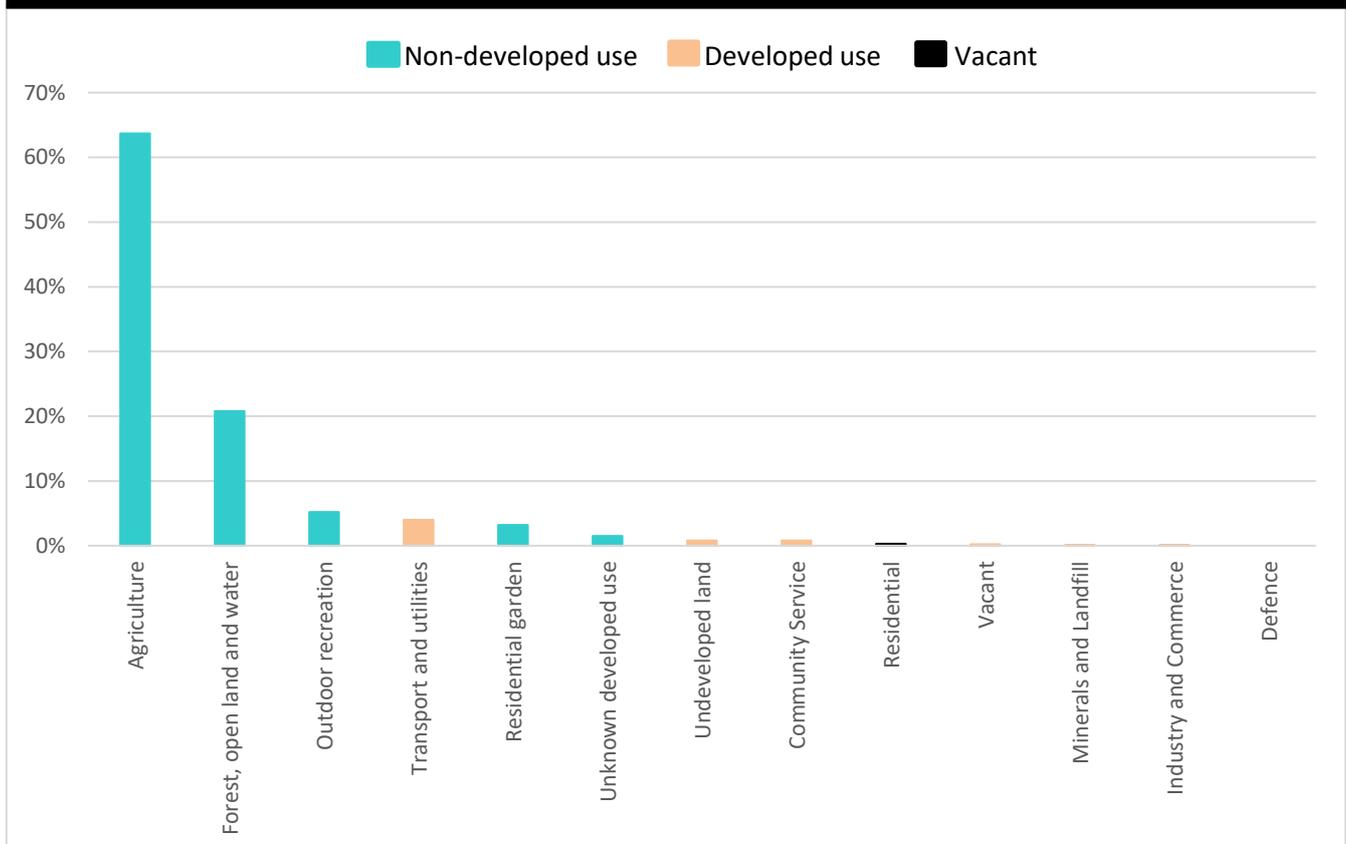
You can find the interactive report here:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/land-use-in-england-experimental-statistics>

# Land use within the Green Belt

Around 13 per cent of England was designated as Green Belt as at April 2017, distributed around 15 urban areas. The split between developed and non-developed land uses within the Green Belt reflects that for the country as a whole, with 7 per cent of land within the Green Belt of a developed use. Of the total Green Belt land area for England, 0.3 per cent is of a residential use. The aim of Green Belt Policy is to prevent urban sprawl by keeping land permanently open.

Figure 2: Land use in designated Green belt of England 2017 by land usage and development type.



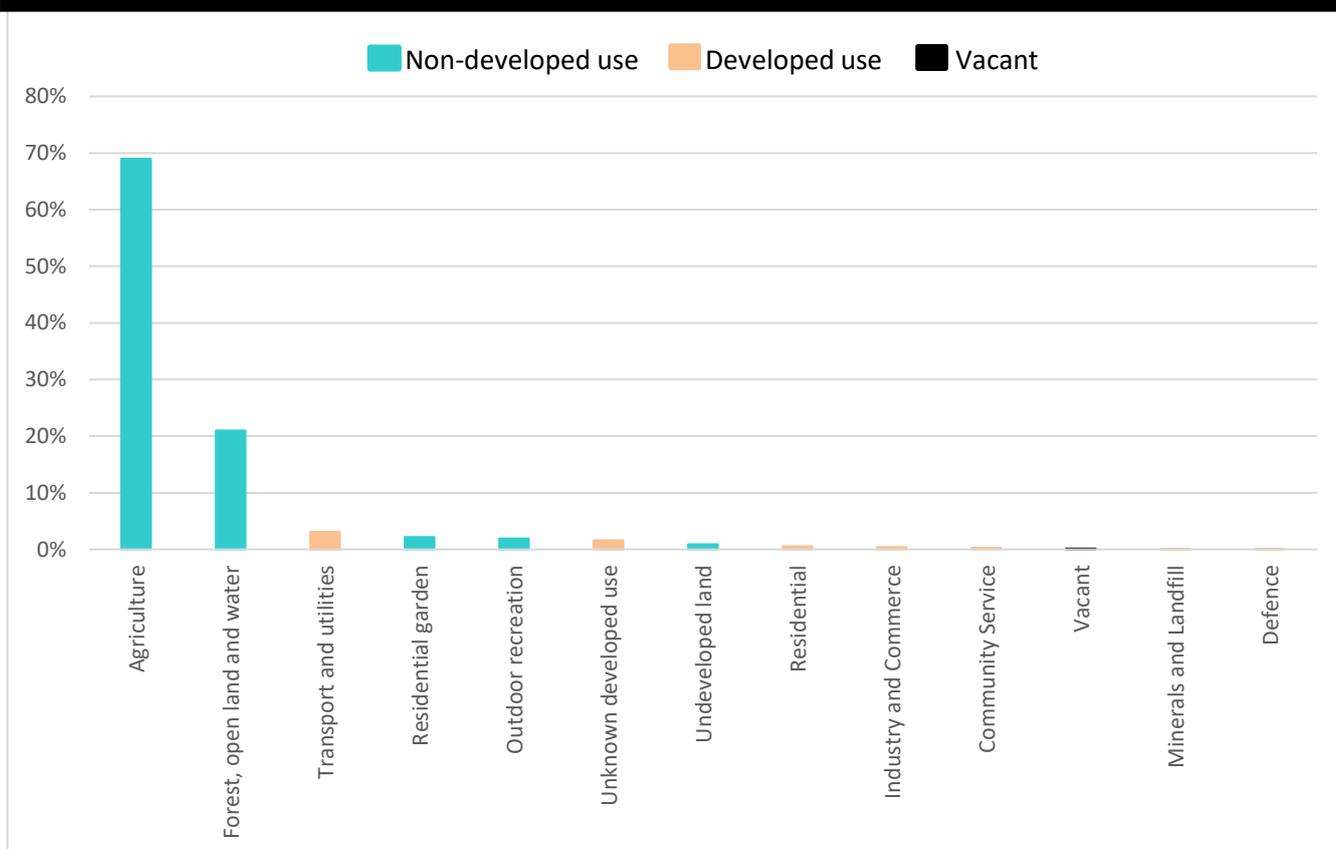
The proportions of land use for all English local authorities that have land within the Green Belt are given in Live Table P401. Statistics are published annually on the Green Belt and can be found here: <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/green-belt-statistics>

# Land use within areas of high flood risk

The total area of high flood risk in England is approximately ten per cent. They are areas estimated to be at risk of at least a one in one hundred chance of flooding each year from river areas or at least a one in two hundred chance of flooding from the sea. These are approximate boundaries and do not take into account any flood defences.

Six per cent of land in National Flood Zone 3 is of a developed use, 2 percentage points less than across the country as a whole. Of the total area of land for England which is National Flood Zone 3, 69 per cent is of an agricultural use, while 0.5 per cent is of a residential use.

Figure 3: Land use in National Flood Zone 3 for England 2017 by land usage and development type.



The proportions of land use for all English local authorities in National Flood Zone 3 are given in Live Table P402.

# Accompanying live tables

Accompanying Live Tables are available to download alongside this release:

P400 Land Use: England and English local authorities - proportion of total land area by usage type

P401 Land Use: England and English local authorities - proportion of total land area by usage type in the Green Belt

P402 Land Use: England and English local authorities - proportion of total land area by usage type in National Flood Zone 3

These tables can be accessed at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/land-use-statistics>

## Technical notes

The Code of Practice for Statistics was published in February 2018 to set standards for organisations in producing and publishing official statistics and ensure that statistics serve the public good. Whilst this statistical release is an experimental output and not a National Statistical release, the principles of transparency of high-quality analytical outputs have been used in the production and content of this release.

## Data collection

Land use experimental statistics are derived from data produced for the department by Ordnance Survey Ltd. The data is based on two of Ordnance Survey's products: AddressBase and Mastermap Topography. The data Ordnance Survey provides to the department includes the land use classification, the area of land use, its location and the local authority to which it is mapped. Summary statistics are made available at national and local authority level. Statistics are also calculated on other geographies, such as the Green belt or areas of high flood risk.

## Data quality

The Ordnance Survey's data products that were used to derive the land use data are subject to numerous quality assurance tests to meet the required quality criteria before their publication. Prior to the department formally taking receipt of the land use data, Ordnance Survey has checked it meets the required performance criteria and worked with the department's statisticians to test, develop and improve the outputs' validity.

The department aggregates the data to local authority and national level and performs analysis against available contemporaneous boundary files of the Green Belt and areas of high flood risk. The department's statisticians compare the aggregated data against previous and current data for comparable LA areas and national trends.

The department has previously published a quality assurance statement alongside the publication of the land use change statistics. This quality assurance strategy has been applied equally to this land use experimental statistical release. This document gives a full overview of the quality assurance procedures in place. It has been produced in conjunction with the UK Statistics Authority's guidance on using administrative data, available at:

<https://www.statisticsauthority.gov.uk/monitoring-and-assessment/monitoring/administrative-data-and-official-statistics/>

## Revisions policy

The figures included in this release were updated on 12 June 2019 to reflect updates to the associated live tables to include data for some local authorities that were not initially included.

This policy has been developed in accordance with the UK Statistics Authority Code of Practice for Statistics and the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government Revisions Policy (found at <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/statistical-notice-dclg-revisions-policy>). The policy covers two types of revision:

### Non-Scheduled Revisions

Where a substantial error has occurred as a result of the compilation, imputation or dissemination process, the statistical release, live tables and other accompanying releases will be updated with a correction notice as soon as is practical.

### Scheduled Revisions

The Land Use Statistics publication is produced from static versions of Ordnance Survey products and as such is not subject to any scheduled revisions.

## Related statistics

### Land Use Change Statistics

Land Use Change Statistics are a rich source of information which show how land use has changed in England. The information includes the nature of the changes, the areas of land affected and the locations of the changes. These changes are recorded to and from the same set of 28 land use categories as used here. Land Use Change Statistics focus on changes to a developed use, in particular to residential development. It presents National Statistics on these changes in land use in England recorded in 2017-18. Statistics on changes within the Green Belt and changes within areas of high flood risk are also presented. The Land Use Change Statistics collection can be found here:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/land-use-change-statistics>

## User engagement

This experimental statistical release accompanies a consultation on how the Land Use Change statistics are used. Users are encouraged to provide feedback on how well these experimental statistics and Land Use Change statistics meet your needs.

The consultation on how the Land Use statistics are used and information on how to provide feedback on their presentation is available here:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/land-use-change-statistic-proposed-changes>

The deadline for comments is 31 July 2019.

Alternatively, comments on any issues relating to this statistical release are welcomed and encouraged. Responses should be addressed to the "Public enquiries" contact given in the "Enquiries" section at the end of this bulletin.

The department's engagement strategy to meet the needs of statistics users is published here:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/engagement-strategy-to-meet-the-needs-of-statistics-users>

## Notes

1. These land use statistics are estimates.
2. This is an experimental statistics publication and is produced to the standard set out in the Code of Practice for Statistics.
3. Land use is not focused on a single day because it is derived from a range of products, each having their own publishing date. These dates are spread out over a number of weeks, but chosen to centre around 1 April.
4. Vacant land is identified by Ordnance Survey as unclassified land, bounded by hoardings etc., around the perimeter. It is also yet to be attributed to an address. It is not possible within the experimental summary statistics presented here to define whether the vacant land is of a developed or non-developed land use type.
5. Residential land area is limited to the on the ground footprint.
6. Only building features can be classified as 'defence' within the land use data, such as barracks and administration offices. This is because a defence classification is mainly

indicated by the address data used within the land use analysis. It is not indicated by the large-scale topographic data used. Hence, large areas such as firing ranges and military airfields, cannot be identified by the current process.

7. The land use categories used in compiling these summary statistics are shown below in Table BN1. For full details on what are included in these groups and categories please refer to the [Land use change statistics methodology changes guidance](#).

**Table BN (Background Note) 1: Land use categories, groups and divisions**

Developed land			Non- developed land		
Group	Category (codes)		Group	Category (codes)	
<b>Residential</b>	Residential	(R)	<b>Agriculture</b>	Agricultural land	(A)
	Institutional and communal	(Q)		Agricultural buildings	(B)
	Accommodation				
<b>Transport and</b>	Highways and road transport	(H)	<b>Forestry, open land and water</b>	Forestry and woodland	(F)
	Utilities			Rough grassland and	(G)
<b>Utilities</b>	Transport (other)	(T)		Bracken	
<b>Industry and Commerce</b>	Industry	(I)	Natural and semi-natural	(N)	
	Offices	(J)	Land		
	Retailing	(K)	Water	(W)	
	Storage and warehousing	(S)			
<b>Community Services</b>	Community buildings	(C)	<b>Outdoor recreation</b>	Outdoor recreation	(O)
	Leisure and recreational	(L)			
	Buildings		<b>Residential Gardens</b>	Residential	(RG)
<b>Minerals and landfill</b>	Minerals	(M)	Gardens		
	Landfill waste disposal	(Y)			
<b>Defence</b>	Defence	(D)	<b>Undeveloped land</b>	Undeveloped land in urban areas	(X)
<b>Other developed use</b>	Unidentified building	(~B)	<b>Vacant land</b>		
	Unidentified general manmade surface	(~M)	<b>Vacant</b>	Vacant land	(V)
	Unidentified structure	(~S)			

8. Details of officials who receive pre-release access to Land Use Statistics up to 24 hours before release can be found at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/ministry-of-housing-communities-and-local-government/about/statistics>

9. The Green Belt analysis is based on annually updated data sets of digitised boundaries provided to MHCLG by local authorities. Land can only be removed from the Green Belt through the local planning process. Land uses have been mapped against Green Belt

boundaries for 2016-17, published by MHCLG

10. Land uses have been mapped against National Flood Zone 3 for 2016 published by the Environment Agency.

## Enquiries

**Media enquiries:** 0303 444 1209

Email: [newsdesk@communities.gov.uk](mailto:newsdesk@communities.gov.uk)

**Public enquiries and Responsible Statistician:**

Sophie Ferguson

Email: [planning.statistics@communities.gov.uk](mailto:planning.statistics@communities.gov.uk)

Information on Official Statistics is available via the UK Statistics Authority website:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/announcements>

Information about statistics at MHCLG is available via the department's website:

[www.gov.uk/government/organisations/department-for-communities-and-local-government/about/statistics](http://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/department-for-communities-and-local-government/about/statistics)

© Crown copyright, 2019

*Copyright in the typographical arrangement rests with the Crown.*

You may re-use this information (not including logos) free of charge in any format or medium, under the terms of the Open Government Licence. To view this licence, [www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence/](http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence/) or write to the Information Policy Team, The National Archives, Kew, London TW9 4DU, or email: [psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk).

This document/publication is also available on our website at [www.gov.uk/mhclg](http://www.gov.uk/mhclg)

If you have any enquiries regarding this document/publication, email [contactus@communities.gov.uk](mailto:contactus@communities.gov.uk) or write to us at:

Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government  
Fry Building  
2 Marsham Street  
London  
SW1P 4DF  
Telephone: 030 3444 0000

May 2019

For all our latest news and updates follow us on Twitter: <https://twitter.com/mhclg>

ISBN: 978-1-4098-5465-4