



Consultation on proposed changes to the
Department's statistics:

Land Use Change Statistics, Rationalised Collection
of Local Authority Housing Statistics and Publication
of Regional Statistics





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Consultation on proposed changes to the Department's statistics: Land Use Change Statistics, Rationalised Collection of Local Authority Housing Statistics and Publication of Regional Statistics

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Summary of consultation

Scope of the consultation

Topic of this consultation:	<p>Proposed changes to the Department for Communities and Local Government's statistical activity.</p> <p>The first part seeks users' views on what data to collect and the method of collection in order to ensure that the Land Use Change Statistics will continue to meet users' priority needs whilst maximising value for money.</p> <p>The second part proposes a revised data collection following a review of annual local authority housing statistical returns in order to reduce the data burden on local government. The review aimed to ensure that only the highest priority and most relevant data items are collected centrally by the Department in order to reduce burden on local government whilst maintaining a national evidence base for monitoring and developing policy.</p> <p>The third part seeks users' views on the proposal to end publication of the Department's statistics at a regional level in the light of the closure of the Government Office network. This part of the consultation covers all statistics published by the Department.</p>
Scope of this consultation:	<p>As part of the drive to deliver cost savings across government, we are considering how best to meet the needs of users of the Land Use Change Statistics in a cost effective way. Four options have been identified to achieve this and we are seeking users' opinions on the relative importance of the various categories of land use change and the method of data collection.</p> <p>The proposed new local authority housing data collection rationalises data returns in the following areas:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1) Annual statistical data returns from local authorities via the Housing Strategy Statistical Appendix / Business Plan Statistical Appendix / Housing Sales Monitoring return (P1B form).2) Key information on rents and stock from the Housing Revenue Account administrative returns.3) Key aggregate level information from the discontinued

	<p>Register Of Licensed Houses in Multiple Occupation collection.</p> <p>Whilst the scope of the data review did not include related collections by the Tenant Services Authority or the Homes and Communities Agency we have sought to avoid duplication with other data collections and to use consistent definitions and questions where appropriate.</p> <p>The third part of the consultation on regional statistics covers all of the Department's statistical outputs.</p>
Geographical scope:	England.
Impact Assessment:	An impact assessment is not required as this is a technical consultation relating to the Department's statistical activity,

Basic Information

To:	<p>Any person or body who provides data for, uses or has a strong interest in the Department's official statistics, outputs or data collections within the scope of this consultation.</p> <p>E.g. members of any relevant statistics user groups; businesses; other Government departments; local authorities; voluntary organisations; consultants; academics; members of the public.</p>
Body/bodies responsible for the consultation:	Neighbourhoods Analysis Division and Strategic Statistics Division within the Department for Communities and Local Government.
Duration:	<p>Start Date: 9 January 2012</p> <p>End Date: 5pm on Monday 2 April 2012</p> <p>Duration: 12 weeks</p>
Enquiries:	<p>Requests for further information should be directed in the first instance to:</p> <p>Housing.statistics@communities.gsi.gov.uk</p> <p>Or</p> <p>Bob Garland Neighbourhoods Analysis Division</p>

	<p>Department for Communities and Local Government 4/J4, Eland House Bressenden Place London SW1E 5DU 0303 444 2273</p>
<p>How to respond:</p>	<p>Formal responses should be submitted via email to: Housing.statistics@communities.gsi.gov.uk</p> <p>Please put “Consultation” in the subject line.</p> <p>If sending your response by post, please address to:</p> <p>Bob Garland Neighbourhoods Analysis Division Department for Communities and Local Government 4/J4, Eland House Bressenden Place London SW1E 5DU</p> <p>It would be helpful if responses are submitted using the attached template presented in Annex 1.</p>
<p>Additional ways to become involved:</p>	<p>As this is a largely technical issue with specialist interests, it will be a written exercise. Additionally, key user groups are being engaged directly, for example through the Central and Local Information Partnership Housing and Planning sub-groups and by direct email contact to invite them to participate.</p>
<p>After the consultation:</p>	<p>The responses on the Land Use Change Statistics will be used to inform the letting of a new contract to provide Land Use Change Statistics from April 2012.</p> <p>The responses on local authority data rationalisation will be used to inform the new <i>English Local Authority Statistics on Housing</i> data collection for 2011/12, from April 2012.</p> <p>The responses to the consultation on regional statistics will be used by the Department to inform its publication of all statistical outputs.</p>

	A summary of the consultation responses will be published on the Department's website shortly after the consultation has closed.
Compliance with the Code of Practice on Consultation:	This consultation complies with both the Government's Code of Practice on Consultation and the United Kingdom Statistics Authority's Code of Practice for Official Statistics (http://www.statisticsauthority.gov.uk/assessment/code-of-practice/index.html)

Background

Getting to this stage:	The proposals presented in this consultation were informed by a number of reviews, consultations, financial constraints and new policies. Further detail is given below.
Previous engagement:	<p>The Department has carried out a number of previous engagement activities, primarily:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i) With local authorities on the burden of housing data collections, including through comments on the draft Single Data List published in December 2010; ii) With a wider audience on the consultation of the draft Statistics Plan for the Department (April to June 2011) and on the frequency and content of the Land Use Change Statistics (April 2010); iii) With the Central and Local Information Partnership Housing sub-group, throughout 2011, to discuss proposals to review, reduce and rationalise forms.

Overview

The Government is committed to reducing the burden on local authorities of providing data returns to central government and to ensuring that the statistics we collect and publish are aligned with the Government's priorities and meet user needs.

The first part of this consultation is on our Land Use Change Statistics. It seeks users' views on the options of what data to collect and the method of collection in order to ensure that the Land Use Change Statistics will continue to meet users' priority needs whilst maximising value for money.

The second part of this consultation proposes a rationalised collection of housing data from local authorities to reduce the burden on local authorities of providing data returns to central government. This covers the existing collections through the Housing Strategy Statistical Appendix, the Business Plan Statistical Appendix and Local Authority Housing Sales Monitoring (P1B form) along with consideration of other key data collections that have or are shortly due to cease. The proposed rationalisation reflects the review of social housing data requirements from local authorities as announced in the Department's draft Statistics Plan (consulted on earlier this year).

The third part of this consultation seeks to understand user views on the need for regional statistics and the proposal to end publication in this format in the light of the closure of the Government Office network.

This consultation will run for 12 weeks, from 9 January to 2 April 2012.

Chapter One: Land Use Change Statistics

1.1 Introduction

Aim

This document invites comments on the Department for Communities and Local Government's proposals for the future data collection and production of the Land Use Change Statistics.

The Land Use Change Statistics are designated as 'National Statistics' as defined in the Statistics and Registration Act 2007. In accordance with this Act, producers of National Statistics have a statutory duty to comply with the Code of Practice for Official Statistics¹.

Two of the main principles are:

- ensuring the statistics meet user needs
- engaging users on changes to statistics.

This consultation seeks to engage users on the options of what data to collect and the frequency of collection and aims to ensure that these statistics will continue to meet users' priority needs.

Background and current methodology

The Land Use Change Statistics² record information on land use changes in England in terms of previous and new uses, the amounts of land affected and the location of the change. The land uses are grouped into two main categories: developed and undeveloped uses. The statistics show how much of each category is used for development. Although not published as part of the regular statistical publications, the land use change data also contain information on changes within the undeveloped uses such as a piece of land changing from 'forestry' to 'agriculture'.

The Land Use Change Statistics were first collected and published in 1985, with additional data on residential changes (the number of dwellings built and demolished) first collected in 1989. The previous and new uses of the land are recorded in 25 categories (see Table 1 below). Residential Gardens have been collected since April 2010, while the other 24 categories have remained almost

¹ <http://www.statisticsauthority.gov.uk/assessment/code-of-practice/code-of-practice-for-official-statistics.pdf>

² <http://www.communities.gov.uk/planningandbuilding/planningbuilding/planningstatistics/landusechange/>

unchanged since collection started meaning there is a rich time series of information on land use change in England.

The current data collection is by Ordnance Survey. A land use change is recorded as part of Ordnance Survey's map revision process, when the current land use category of a parcel of land differs from that depicted on the existing Ordnance Survey map. A change is also recorded where there is no change in the appropriate land use category, but there is a change to the dwelling count, such as when a house is demolished and one or more built in its place, or an additional dwelling is built within the grounds of an existing house. Finally, a change is recorded if Ordnance Survey is aware of a change of use of a building, such as a residential conversion. The data recorded in any one year depends on Ordnance Survey resources and how these are deployed on the different types of map revision survey.

Table 1: Categories used in the Land Use Change Statistics

Developed			Undeveloped		
Group	Category (codes)		Group	Category (codes)	
Residential	• Residential	(R)	Agriculture	• Agricultural land	(A)
	• Institutional and communal accommodation	(Q)		• Agricultural buildings	(B)
Transport and Utilities	• Highways and road transport	(H)	Forestry, open land and water	• Forestry and woodland	(F)
	• Transport (other)	(T)		• Rough grassland and bracken	(G)
	• Utilities	(U)		• Natural and semi-natural land	(N)
		• Water		(W)	
Industry and commerce	• Industry	(I)	Outdoor recreation	• Outdoor recreation	(O)
	• Offices	(J)			
	• Retailing	(K)	Vacant	• Urban land not previously developed ³	(X)
	• Storage and warehousing	(S)			
Community Services	• Community buildings	(C)	Residential Gardens	• Residential gardens	(RG)
	• Leisure and recreational buildings	(L)			
Vacant	• Vacant land previously developed	(V)			
	• Derelict land	(Z)			
Minerals and landfill¹	• Minerals	(M)			
	• Landfill waste disposal ²	(Y)			
Defence	• Defence	(D)			
Notes:					
Unless otherwise stated, 'previously developed land' corresponds with 'urban land use' and 'non-previously developed land' with 'rural land use'.					
1. Some mineral and landfill sites may be classed as non-previously developed land					
2. Classified as 'rural' land use					
3. Classified as 'urban' land use					

Uses of the Land Use Change Statistics

The Land Use Change Statistics underpin the monitoring and evaluation of the Department's policies relating to planning, land use, sustainable development, and protection of designated land and other green spaces. They are widely used within DCLG and across government particularly in relation to climate change and environmental protection issues.

The Land Use Change Statistics are a major and well used data set for the wider planning and housing user communities. Reports are published annually and an extensive set of Live Tables and supporting user documentation are made available on the Department's website for external users. They also have a rich potential for secondary analysis.

Background to the consultation

The Land Use Change Statistics are a complex and relatively expensive dataset to collect. As part of the drive to deliver cost savings across government, we are considering how best to meet the needs of users in a cost effective way. There are two considerations in achieving 'value for money':

- a. The data coverage – whether to collect all land use changes or just those that are particularly important to users. This could have a significant effect on the cost of producing the Land Use Change Statistics.
- b. The data collection method – for example a continuous record of every parcel of land changing use (the current method) or a 'census' like approach based on land use at intervals of one or more years, with a comparison with the previous stock take showing changes. This could lead to new and perhaps more efficient ways of collecting land use change information to be employed.

We have identified three options on different levels of data coverage for producing the Land Use Change Statistics and are now seeking users' views. However we also wish to know users' opinions on the relative importance of all categories of land use change, the method of data collection and the frequency of collection.

The results of this consultation will inform the letting of a new contract to provide Land Use Change Statistics from April 2012.

1.2 Options

A. Retain current data coverage

Under this option the Department would continue to collect data on all of the 25 categories given in Table 1 above. This would enable continued information on all land use changes in England including changes to a developed use (for example industrial to residential) and changes to and within the undeveloped land use categories (for example agricultural to forestry). We do not currently publish statistics on the latter set of changes.

B. Retain changes to all developed uses

Under this option the Department would collect data on all land use changes to developed uses (including those which happen in rural areas) but exclude changes where both the previous and new uses are within the undeveloped land use categories. This would enable the continued publication of the statistics which are currently included in the statistical release or in the Live Tables, but would mean that we could not provide information on changes to and within the undeveloped land use categories.

C. Retain changes to a subset of developed uses

Under this option the Department would collect data on all land use changes to a subset of the developed uses category, including those which happen in rural areas, but exclude all other changes, including any land use changes to an undeveloped use. This subset would be determined both by the Department's policy and business needs, and by the answers to question 1.3 below. However, it is anticipated that most currently published statistics would still be collected under this option.

1.3 Consultation questions

1.1. Please rank the above options in order of preference (e.g. A,C,B)

1.2. What are the advantages and disadvantages of each option?

1.3. (a) Please mark those of the following categories of land use change you would regard as essential to collect:

Categories	Essential ?
• Residential	
• Institutional and communal accommodation	
• Highways and road transport	
• Transport (other)	
• Utilities	
• Industry	
• Offices	
• Retailing	
• Storage and warehousing	
• Community buildings	
• Leisure and recreational buildings	
• Vacant land previously developed	
• Derelict land	
• Minerals	
• Landfill waste disposal	
• Defence	

1.3 (b) Please briefly describe why you have marked these categories as essential.

1.4 How often would you prefer land use change data to be reported?

(a) Annually (as now) (b) Every 3 years (c) Every 5 years

1.5 What are the advantages and disadvantages of land use change information being collected (a) continuously or (b) as a stock take of changes over a period of time?

1.6. What do you use the Land Use Change Statistics for?

1.7. Do you have any ideas on how to make the Land Use Change Statistics more useful to your needs?

1.8. Can you suggest any other options for reducing the cost of producing the Land Use Change Statistics whilst maintaining their fitness for purpose?

Chapter Two: Rationalised Local Authority Housing Data

2.1. Introduction

Aim

This document invites comments from local authority housing data providers and users of that data on the proposed new annual *English Local Authority Statistics on Housing* data collection by the Department for Communities and Local Government.

The proposed new form would replace and rationalise existing housing data collections in order to reduce the burden on local authorities and focus centralised data collection on high priority areas. Three existing housing data collections are proposed to be replaced:

- Housing Strategy Statistical Appendix (HSSA)
- Business Plan Statistical Appendix (BPSA)
- Local Authority Housing Sales Monitoring (P1B form)

It is also proposed to include some important data items previously recorded through three other collections which have or are shortly due to cease:

- Housing Revenue Account Subsidy Claim - small section on rents and stock
- Housing Revenue Account Base Data - small section on rents and stock
- Register Of Licensed Houses in Multiple Occupation – information on mandatory licensable Houses in Multiple Occupation

With the aim of reducing burden on local government, only the highest priority and most relevant data items are to be collected in future to provide a national evidence base for monitoring and developing policy.

The proposed new collection on local authority housing also seeks to avoid duplication with data collected by other sources, such as the Tenant Services Authority and the Homes and Communities Agency, and to use consistent definitions and questions where the same topic areas are covered for other social housing providers in other returns.

The proposed new form would be implemented from April 2012 for collection of data on 2011/12.

This consultation document sets out some of the background to the current local authority housing forms that have been considered in this review, the outputs produced from these collections and their users and uses. It then outlines the evidence used to inform the review and the proposed new form is presented in Section 3 and attached in Annex 2.

Background to local authority housing data returns

The local authority housing returns covered by the scope of this consultation have long provided annual and some quarterly data on a wide range of subjects across housing policy areas including both social and private sector housing. The main areas covered in these returns include stock, vacant properties, waiting lists, private sector housing, sales of council houses, decent homes, lettings, energy efficiency and capital expenditure on local authority owned housing.

Housing Strategy Statistical Appendix

The purpose of this collection has been to bring together many basic and policy orientated housing data from a local authority, most of it relevant to the authority's housing strategy. It covers all tenures within each authority's own geographical area where comparisons between local authorities can be made. The range of topics covered includes:

- Dwelling stock and vacants
- Waiting lists and lettings
- Houses in multiple occupation
- Capital expenditure and receipts, and cash incentive schemes
- Private sector housing renewal assistance and private sector clearance
- Provision of affordable housing.

It is proposed that the same range of topics are covered in the new housing form although some of the data items have been rationalised (for further details on those items see Annex 3).

Business Plan Statistical Appendix

The Business Plan Statistical Appendix brings together management information and other programme of work data relating only to the local authorities' own stock (Housing Revenue Account). Because of this, it is only completed by those local authorities that own stock. The information collected has been used centrally to inform policy development and monitor progress on:

- Dwellings owned and location outside own administrative area
- Decent homes delivery
- Detailed information on capital works programme
- Management and service delivery
- Management and non management vacant dwellings by length of vacancy.

This return has gone through a deeper rationalisation than the Housing Strategy Statistical Appendix because of the move to Housing Revenue Account self-financing.

Further information on the Housing Strategy Statistical Appendix and the Business Plan Statistical Appendix data collections can be found at

<http://www.communities.gov.uk/housing/housingresearch/housingstatistics/housingstatisticsby/localauthorityhousing/dataforms/>

Housing Sales Monitoring return

The Housing Sales Monitoring return (P1B form) asks local authorities to report on the sales and transfers of local authority owned stock made each year. This includes sales through Right To Buy, Social HomeBuy or by other routes. This data was collected quarterly until 2010/11 when it was reduced in frequency to an annual return. The collection has been used by the Department to assess delivery of policy objectives and it is proposed that the essential data from the P1B form will be collected through the new housing form.

Further information on the social housing sales data can be found at <http://www.communities.gov.uk/housing/housingresearch/housingstatistics/housingstatisticsby/socialhousingsales/>

Register of Licensed Houses in Multiple Occupations

The Housing Act 2004 introduced compulsory licensing of Houses in Multiple Occupation from April 2006. The Register of Licensed Houses in Multiple Occupations automatically extracted data from the administrative systems put in place by local authorities to run this licensing and gave local authorities controlled access to the raw data to assist them in its implementation.

The Department's Draft Statistics Plan consulted on the proposal to cease Register of Licensed Houses in Multiple Occupations. It is proposed that key aggregate information on licensed Houses in Multiple Occupation will be collected through the new housing form.

Housing Revenue Account Subsidy Claim and Base Data Capture Forms

The Housing Revenue Account Subsidy Claim Form (01, 02, 03 & 04) and Housing Revenue Account Base Data Capture Forms (B1 & B2) are administrative data collections that are used to calculate the Housing Revenue Account subsidy to local authorities. They collect financial, income and expenditure information relating to the Housing Revenue Account, rent levels and stock composition information required to calculate the subsidy.

As part of the new Localism Act, Housing Revenue Account self-financing will be implemented from April 2012 and the current subsidy system will cease, removing the need for these administrative forms.

However, the data collected through these forms has been used for purposes other than calculating the subsidy. The Department has taken into account these wider uses of the data in its proposal to retain collection of some key data items. Housing Revenue Account income and expenditure data are planned to be collected as part of the Revenue Outturn and Revenue Budget returns made to the Department's Local Government Finance team whilst key information on rents and stock composition are proposed to be collected in the new housing form.

Current outputs

The housing statistical data collections that have been the subject of this review produce a number of published outputs. It is intended that the published Live Tables (listed below) will not be affected by the proposal to merge and rationalise data collection into the new form. The statistical releases will remain largely unchanged, although these products will need to evolve to reflect key topic areas. As with any substantive change to data collection, some local authorities may not initially be able to provide complete data for all new questions proposed on the form. The Department will need to review the quality of the data provided for the new questions and judge whether the derived statistics are fit for publication purposes, particularly in the first year of data collection.

Data collected through the Housing Strategy Statistical Appendix (HSSA) and the Business Plan Statistical Appendix (BPSA) are published in an annual statistical release, normally in November following the end of the financial year³. This statistical release is supported by a number of Excel tables ('Live Tables'):

- Table 100 Dwelling stock: Number of Dwellings by Tenure and district: England
- Table 116 Dwelling stock: local authority stock, by district from 1994
- Table 119 Stock of non-decent homes in the Social Rented Sector, England
- Table 600 Rents, lettings and tenancies: numbers of households on local authorities' housing waiting lists, by district from 1997
- Table 601 Rents, lettings and tenancies: local authority lettings⁴, by region: England from 1988/89
- Table 611 Vacant Dwellings: local authority vacant dwellings, by region: England from 1989

The detailed reported data are also published on the Department's website⁵. Detailed data collected through the new rationalised form will similarly be published by individual local authority.

The Neighbourhood Statistics Services website⁶ receives the basic tenure data for each local authority as collected from the HSSA and BPSA returns and this information would continue to be provided from the new form.

³ The 2010/11 Statistical Release is available at <http://www.communities.gov.uk/publications/corporate/statistics/lahousing201011>

⁴ The breakdown of local authority lettings within this table includes a category of new lettings to homeless acceptances. These data will no longer be available in this form. Data on all social lettings to homeless acceptances are available from the Department's National Statistics on Statutory Homelessness.

⁵ See links to data for each year from <http://www.communities.gov.uk/housing/housingresearch/housingstatistics/housingstatisticsby/localauthorityhousing/dataforms/>

⁶ <http://www.neighbourhood.statistics.gov.uk/dissemination/>

Data on average local authority rents collected through the current Housing Revenue Account forms are currently published in Live Tables 701 and 702⁷ and the questions included in the new form would enable these to be continued.

The data collected on local authority sales through the P1B form are published through an annual statistical release on *Social Housing Sales*⁸ and Live Tables normally in the September following the end of the financial year. The proposed new form would enable these outputs to be continued in their current form. Depending on the timetable for the new data collection it may be necessary to release the data on social housing sales in the November alongside the rest of data collected in the new proposed form.

The official statistics on *Affordable Housing Supply* published by the Department⁹ draw on some data collected through the Housing Strategy Statistical Appendix. The proposed new form has been designed to provide the data needed to provide a complete picture of affordable housing supply whilst taking into account other data sources available and the data collection burden on local authorities. It is anticipated that the revised questions proposed in the new form will enhance the data quality and coverage of the affordable housing supply statistics. The format of the outputs should not be affected.

Uses of the local authority housing statistics

All the outputs covered above are used for a wide range of purposes by a variety of users:

- Ministers and officials in the Department and its agencies for monitoring and evaluation of housing policies, resource allocation, performance monitoring and cost-benefit analyses.
- Other Government departments and their agencies (e.g. the Office for National Statistics, Department for Energy and Climate Change, Department for Work and Pensions) to feed into their own analytical frameworks and monitor related policies.
- Ministers as evidence in parliamentary accountability (e.g. to answer Parliamentary Questions).
- Local authorities for service planning and benchmarking against surrounding and similar authorities.
- Professional institutes, consultants and academics for modelling, analysis and evaluation of housing need/supply.
- Industry and market research companies for evaluation of market trends.
- Voluntary organisations for analysis and promotion of housing conditions.

⁷ <http://www.communities.gov.uk/housing/housingresearch/housingstatistics/housingstatisticsby/rentslettings/livetables/>

⁸ The 2010/11 release is available at <http://www.communities.gov.uk/publications/corporate/statistics/socialhousingsales201011>

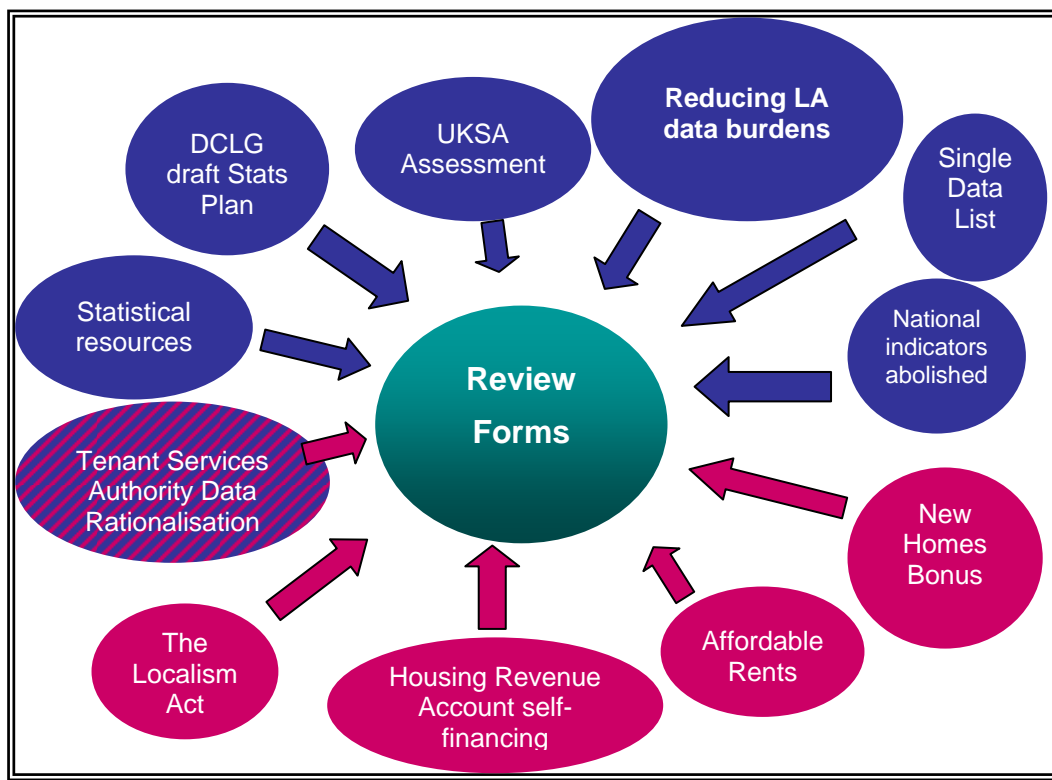
⁹ The 2010/11 release is available at <http://www.communities.gov.uk/publications/corporate/statistics/affordablehousing201011>

- Media to highlight current housing news and trends of national or local interest.
- Members of the public to satisfy their information needs.

2.2. Evidence to inform the review

The objective of the review was to ensure that data are collected centrally on only the highest priority and most relevant data items in order to reduce burden on local government whilst maintaining a national evidence base for monitoring and developing policy. The review and rationalisation of the annual local authority housing statistical forms has been informed by several other factors. These are illustrated in Figure 1 below and reflect a range of statistical drivers (blue areas) and new Government policies on housing (pink areas).

Figure 1: Drivers for the review



Statistical drivers

Department's Draft Statistics Plan – The Department's draft plan of statistical activities and outputs for 2011/12 was consulted on earlier this year¹⁰. This plan reflected the Coalition Government's strategic objectives and the need to make departmental savings as outlined in the Spending Review. It also reflected the Government's Transparency agenda and the Single Data List initiative. The

¹⁰ <http://www.communities.gov.uk/publications/corporate/statistics/plan201112consultation>

consultation closed on 3 June 2011 and a formal response is to be published separately.

In this draft plan, the Department announced that it would conduct a review of social housing and housing strategy data requirements from local authorities, in consultation with the Central and Local Information Partnership Housing subgroup. This review would also take account of the recommendations of the Tenant Services Authority's data rationalisation review, the implementation of self-financing for council housing and other housing policy changes.

Responses to the consultation on the draft plan have been taken into account in this review and were in favour of the proposal to review and rationalise the housing forms.

Single Data List -The Single Data List¹¹ is a catalogue of all the datasets that local government must submit to central government. The Secretary of State Eric Pickles committed that local authorities would not be obliged to provide any data which is not on the list without extra funding. After consultation, the Department published the list in July 2011 of all 2011-12 data requirements by central government, arm's length bodies, non-ministerial departments and other public bodies. The list indicates that the Housing Strategy Statistical Appendix, the Business Plan Statistical Appendix and the Housing Sales Monitoring (P1B) form are under review and the proposal to reduce and rationalise these forms is consistent with the commitment to reduce the burden of data collection further. Subject to the outcome of the current consultation, these three forms will be removed and the proposed new housing form added to the Single Data List. Comments made on the draft Single Data List have been taken into account in this review.

Other sources of evidence gathered through statistical activities used to inform this review include:

The United Kingdom Statistics Authority undertook a National Statistics assessment of the Department's main housing statistical outputs between December 2010 and April 2011. This process included contacting users and data providers to seek comments on the statistical outputs within the framework of the Code of Practice for Official Statistics. There were 71 response received around the local authority statistical releases and the evidence gathered by the Statistics Authority has also been used to inform this review. The Department is currently addressing the formal requirements made by the Statistics Authority.

The data rationalisation project by the Tenant Services Authority has also shaped the outcome of the review. We have worked closely with the Tenant Services Authority to avoid duplication and ensure consistency of approach on areas of common data collection from local authority and private registered providers, for example on mutual exchanges and evictions. The decision by the Tenant Services Authority to suspend the National Register of Social Housing has also impacted on the prioritisation of some questions from the current forms.

¹¹ <http://www.communities.gov.uk/localgovernment/decentralisation/tacklingburdens/singledatalist/>

Policy changes

Central statistical data collections must evolve to collect the data required to monitor and evaluate Government policies. The Coalition Government has introduced a number of new policies that impact on the central and local requirements for housing statistics.

The main policy changes that have influenced the proposed new data collection form are:

The Localism Act¹² was introduced to Parliament on 13 December 2010. The Act shifts power from central government back into the hands of individuals, communities and councils. For social housing, it outlines the change to a more localised, decentralised approach to tenure, allocations, mobility and homelessness, giving local authorities greater flexibilities whilst ensuring protection of the most vulnerable. This has led to the proposed removal of sections of the current forms relating to responsibilities that have now passed to local government (e.g. reduced data on local authority participation in Choice Based Lettings) but also to the prioritisation of other data to monitor the impact of policies enabled by the Act, for example on social housing allocations.

Housing Revenue Account self-financing¹³ will be implemented as part of the Localism Act and brings to an end the current Housing Revenue Account subsidy system from April 2012. This gives local authorities more incentives and flexibility to manage their own housing stock. Under the new system, council landlords will keep all their rental income and use it to finance their own stock, ending the annual subsidy relationship with the Government.

There are a number of administrative data collections used to calculate the Housing Revenue Account subsidy and these will also cease once self-financing has been implemented. These administrative forms collect a combination of financial information such as income and expenditure and basic monitoring information such as rent levels and stock composition. Whilst being an administrative data source for calculating the subsidy, the data are actually used more widely for a number of purposes. It is therefore important that some of the information collected on the Housing Revenue Account forms continues to be collected by incorporating them into other existing data collections. In particular, information on stock composition and average weekly rents by Housing Revenue Account size were prioritised for data collection through the proposed housing form. Housing Revenue Account income and expenditure is planned to be collected as part of the Revenue Outturn and Revenue Budget returns to Local Government Finance.

The Affordable Homes Programme¹⁴ sets out the approach to delivery of new affordable homes between 2011 and 2015. Under this programme Affordable

¹² <http://www.communities.gov.uk/localgovernment/decentralisation/localismbill/>

¹³ <http://www.communities.gov.uk/publications/housing/selffinancingprospectus>

¹⁴ <http://www.homesandcommunities.co.uk/affordable-homes>

Rent will be the main type of new housing supply which provides a more diverse offer for the range of people accessing social housing. Affordable Rent homes will be made available to tenants at up to a maximum of 80% of market rent and allocated in the same way as social housing is at present. Landlords will have the freedom to offer Affordable Rent properties on flexible tenancies tailored to the housing needs of individual households. The Government has introduced a series of other measures such as changes to tenure (e.g. the ending of the requirement to offer lifetime tenancies or the new flexibility to offer shorter terms); greater flexibility for local authorities in their strategic housing role and new options to increase mobility for social tenants. These changes, where appropriate, have been reflected in the questions proposed in the new form. Although local authorities will not be able to offer Affordable Rent flexible tenancies until the Localism Act is enacted, some changes have been made in preparation for this.

The Welfare Reform Bill¹⁵ was introduced to Parliament on 16 February 2011 and introduces a wide range of reforms that will deliver the commitment by the Coalition to make the benefits and tax credits systems fairer and simpler. Data requirements to monitor elements of the Bill that may have an effect on housing policies are proposed to be covered in the new form. In particular:

- Rent arrears (for current tenants and total)
- Evictions (by reason)
- Houses in Multiple Occupation

The Energy Bill¹⁶ was introduced on 16 March 2011 by the Department of Energy and Climate Change. As part of the 'Green Deal', there is provision for a new financing system to enable fixed improvements to the energy efficiency of homes. It also creates the framework to enable and secure low-carbon energy supplies. As a consequence, the Department of Energy and Climate Change needs to identify the number of dwellings and associated expenditure by local authorities on energy efficient insulation and renewable energies. The new form therefore proposes more detailed data collection on capital works for energy efficiency.

Decent Homes¹⁷ - Whilst there is a reduced level of funding against previous years due to spending constraints, the Government has committed over £2 billion in capital funding to help towards completing the Decent Homes programme in the social sector - £1.6bn of which is available to local authority landlords to help tackle the backlog of homes that are not meeting the Decent Homes standard. Data on actual and forecast dwellings made decent through backlog funding are therefore proposed to be collected in the new form by those authorities receiving the funding. By contrast, the programme for Decent Homes no longer exists for the private sector so questions on the total number of non-decent homes which

¹⁵ <http://www.dwp.gov.uk/policy/welfare-reform/legislation-and-key-documents/welfare-reform-bill-2011/>

¹⁶ http://www.decc.gov.uk/en/content/cms/legislation/energy_bill/energy_bill.aspx

¹⁷ <http://www.homesandcommunities.co.uk/ourwork/existing-stock>

have received assistance to become decent or were cleared/demolished are not included in the proposed new form.

The New Homes Bonus¹⁸ is part of the Coalition commitment to growth and aims to provide a financial incentive for new housing. Although it has not led to any specific proposed changes in the data collected through the new housing form, it is mentioned here for awareness as data collected on affordable supply in the new form will inform the official statistics on additional affordable housing supply which are used in calculating the bonus.

Engagement with local government data suppliers

The Department works regularly with the Central and Local Information Partnership Housing sub-group on the annual review and design of the housing forms. The minutes of meetings of this group are available through the website at

<http://www.clip.local.gov.uk/lgv/core/page.do?pagelid=31632>

Suggestions by local authority data suppliers that have been gathered over recent years for improvements to the forms have been taken into account in the current review.

The Department has worked closely with the Central and Local Information Partnership Housing sub-group throughout the current review and rationalisation of the housing data forms. The review was informed by a workshop of members in May 2011 to identify their priorities for centralised data collection through the Housing Strategy Statistical Appendix and the Business Plan Statistical Appendix forms and what items should continue from the Housing Revenue Account Subsidy Claim and Base Data forms. Proposals have then been discussed as they evolved through formal meetings in July and October and the group was also invited to comment on detailed data requirements for key topics by correspondence (energy efficiency, affordable housing, Houses of Multiple Occupation, private sector renewals and the Housing Health and Safety Rating System).

All the contributions to the workshop, meetings and correspondence papers have informed the process and been taken into account when designing the proposed new form.

¹⁸ <http://www.communities.gov.uk/housing/housingsupply/newhomesbonus/>

2.3. Proposed new form

The review and rationalisation of existing housing data collections has led to the proposal for a single new '**English Local Authority Statistics on Housing**' form to collect annual data from local authorities. The proposed new form is presented in Annex 2. It rationalises and replaces the Housing Strategy Statistical Appendix (HSSA), the Business Plan Statistical Appendix (BPSA) and the Housing Sales Monitoring return (P1B form) and brings in only essential items from those forms.

To help understand the relationship between the current forms being replaced and the new form, Annex 3 sets out the current forms and identifies which questions are proposed to be retained unchanged (in **green**), retained but merged or modified (in **purple**), or proposed not to be collected in the new form (in **red**).

We are proposing to remove many questions from the current forms in order to reduce data burden on local authorities. Two main criteria have been used to identify lower priority items. First, that the Government policy is no longer in place or central monitoring is no longer appropriate under the localism agenda. The main questions that have been removed following this first criterion are:

- HSSA Section C detail on approaches to Choice Based Lettings.
- HSSA Section H and much of BPSA Sections D and E on capital expenditure on Housing Revenue Account stock, reflecting the move to self financing from April 2012.
- HSSA Section K Private Sector Renewal Assistance has been modified to reflect that funding under the Private Sector Renewal programme is no longer available.
- Detailed data on Social Homebuy (P1B form) as low take up of the scheme suggests just summary data on sales can be collected.
- Data on buy-back of council dwellings and local authority mortgage indemnities (P1B form) as data quality has been low and no central data user was identified.

Secondly, where data are available from other sources:

- HSSA Section E: Lettings to homeless acceptances. Headline figures on total social lettings to homeless acceptances are available from the Department's quarterly National Statistics on Statutory Homelessness (P1E form) and the detailed data are not widely used by the Department.
- HSSA Section A on total stock and vacants as this can be obtained from data collected to inform the Council Taxbase. Published live tables would continue to bring together data on stock from different sources to provide an overall picture of stock and vacants by tenure and local area.
- HSSA section N on affordable housing supply has been adapted to reflect data available from the Homes and Communities Agency.
- BPSA Section F on possession orders as data on the number of possession claims and number of possession claims leading to an order by social landlords are published quarterly by the Ministry of Justice.

The new English Local Authority Statistics on Housing form can be seen in Annex 2. Each question has been colour coded as follows:

- **purple** for questions brought directly from the HSSA
- **blue** for questions brought directly from the BPSA
- **green** for questions brought directly from P1B form
- **pink** for questions brought directly from the Housing Revenue Account forms
- **orange** for questions derived from Register Of Licensed Houses in Multiple Occupation

The form also indicates the cell reference in the original collection where possible. Not every local authority would be required to answer every question as some questions capture activities relevant to a subset of local authorities, for example questions relating to the management of stock owned by the local authority would only be answered by stock owning authorities.

The new form reflects the Government's policy priorities and new questions have been designed to capture high priority data. Proposed new questions are shown in white. Some of these refer to policies that do not come into effect until after April 2012 so the questions are shown as optional for 2011/12 reporting.

The proposed merger and rationalisation into a new form presents the opportunity to adopt a more relevant name that covers the scope of the remaining data and a more logical structure of content. The structure of the new form organises the data into wider topics than in the forms it replaces. This will allow greater flexibility in annual updates and more durability of the naming of the sections as they do not depend on specific policy requirements. It also aligns more closely with the framework in which data are analysed in the Department.

The new topic structure organises data as follows:

Section A: Dwelling Stock – Total number of dwellings in local area owned by local authority and other public sector, local authority owned stock by bedroom number, total value of own stock, changes to stock, private sector demolitions.

Section B: Disposals - All local authority stock sales including Right-to-buy, Social Homebuy, other sales and transfers to Housing Associations.

Section C: Allocations - Households on waiting lists, including by number of bedrooms required and by reasonable preference group, changes to waiting list criteria and use of additional preference criteria; participation in Choice Based Lettings schemes.

Section D: Lettings, nominations and mobility schemes - Lettings from local authority own stock to existing social tenants; New social tenancies, by type of tenancy; Mutual exchanges by origin; Dwellings let by housing type; Secure tenancy conversions; Nominations taken up, by type of provider; Lettings in other areas moving from own stock.

Section E: Vacants - Vacant local authority and other public sector dwellings within own area, local authority owned vacant dwellings by length of vacancy.

Section F: Condition of dwelling stock - Energy efficiency of local authority stock, including average Energy Performance Certificate (EPC) / Standard Assessment Procedure (SAP) ratings and capital works; EPC/SAP ratings for private sector stock; Dwellings in local area and those owned by the local authority with Housing Health and Safety Rating System category 1 hazards; Estimated total, mandatory licensable and licenses issued of Houses in Multiple Occupation, including those found with Category 1 hazards; Number of total, private and owner-occupied dwellings improved through loans, grants and other assistance for repairs; Stock, change and management of non-decent dwellings, including use of backlog funding; Capital expenditure on social housing stock, including capital works.

Section G: Stock Management - Average re-let time for local authority stock; Evictions, by reason.

Section H: Local Authority Rents & Rent Arrears - Rents, including by number of bedrooms; Rent arrears and rent reductions and losses.

Section I: Affordable housing supply – New supply not reported to Homes and Communities Agency, split by new build / acquisitions, ownership and product; Total supply in populations of less than 3,000 people and new build in rural exception sites; Planning permissions granted; Financial value of developer contributions; Cash incentive scheme grants.

The table below shows how the questions and sections in the current housing forms map into the topics in the new English Local Authority Statistics on Housing form.

	Section in new form	Relationship with current forms
A	Dwelling Stock	HSSA (A, L), BPSA (A,D, C questions 2 to 6), Housing Revenue Account stock
B	Disposals	P1b (reduced)
C	Allocations	HSSA (C, questions 1, 2, 4)
D	Lettings, nominations and mobility schemes	HSSA (D)
E	Vacants	HSSA (A), BPSA (E, 18-22)
F	Condition of dwelling stock	HSSA (A, B, G, K), BPSA (B, D questions 1 to 6, E), data on licensed HMOs
G	Stock management	BPSA (E, F)
H	Local authority rents & rent arrears	Housing Revenue Account rents, BPSA (E)
I	Affordable housing supply	HSSA (N, J)

Subject to the outcome of this consultation, it is intended that the new form will be put in place for data collection from April 2012 for reporting on 2011/12. Detailed guidance for local authority data providers to support data entry and submission will be developed early in 2012 in liaison with Central and Local Information Partnership Housing sub-group. At the same time, the existing forms would be discontinued and therefore 2010/11 would be the last year for which data from the current forms are available.

2.4. Consultation questions

- 2.1 Are you content with the proposed new form for collecting English Local Authority Statistics on Housing?
- 2.2 Are there any data items in the current forms that would no longer be collected through the new form that you consider should be collected and retained as national data sets? Please specify the reasons, including the use you currently make of the data and their priority to you (high, medium, low).
- 2.3 Are there any data items proposed to be collected in the new form that you consider should not be collected? Please specify the reasons, including the quality, consistency or availability of the data.
- 2.4 Do you have any suggestions for other new data items that should be collected through the new housing form? Please specify the reasons, including the use you would make of the data and their priority to you (high, medium, low).
- 2.5 Please provide any comments regarding the structure of the new form, including suggestions for improvement.
- 2.6 Please provide any further comments you may have on the proposals for the new form.
- 2.7 If you will be a provider of the data collected in the new form, please consider the balance between the value of the data collected and the burden of supplying the data and indicate whether:
 - a. Burden is much greater than value
 - b. Burden is somewhat greater than value
 - c. Balance is about right
 - d. Value is somewhat greater than burden
 - e. Value is much greater than burden
 - f. Unable to say
- 2.8 The main aim of the review and the resulting proposed changes in the centralised collection of local authority housing data is to reduce burden on local authorities. Do you have any suggestions for other steps we can take to reduce burdens on local government in this area?

Chapter Three: Regional Statistics

3.1 Introduction

Aim

To understand user views on regional statistics in the light of the closure of the Government Office network.

It has been proposed to end the publication of statistics at the former Government Office regional level.

Background

The primary focus of statistical data collection in the Department is at a local authority level. However when publishing data we usually provide statistics at a range of geographic levels typically Local Authority, Statistical Region and an England total.

The abolition of the Government Office network at the end of March 2011 was central to the Government's wider aims of transferring power from central government to local councils and local communities. In the Government's view, the nine offices were an inefficient tier of government based on arbitrary boundaries rather than representing the areas that citizens most identified with or areas with common economic problems and market conditions or the most sensible boundaries for coordinating more centralised government functions, such as fire and resilience. The Government Office boundaries were the same as those for statistical regions defined using the Nomenclature of Territorial Units for Statistics (NUTS), as defined in European legislation¹⁹.

Many of the Government's policies now use alternative sub-national geographies, for example the newly created Local Enterprise Partnerships, and many policies operate at the local level, for example the New Homes Bonus. Use of the former Government Office regional boundaries no longer provides a coherent framework for considering policies following the abolition of the Government Office network, the Regional Development Agencies and Regional Strategies.

In light of the move away from regional level administration and the Government's commitment to further progression of the decentralisation agenda, this consultation seeks user views on geographical levels for statistical outputs. The responses to this consultation will be used by the Department to inform its presentation of **all** statistical outputs.

¹⁹ Nomenclature of Territorial Units for Statistics (NUTS) was created by Eurostat as a single hierarchical classification of spatial units used for statistical production across the European Union.

3.2 Consultation Questions

In view of the abolition of the Government Office Network and the move away from regional level administration, it has been proposed to end the publication of regional-level statistics.

3.1 Do you agree with the proposal to end the publication of statistics at the former Government Office regional level?

3.2 What alternative presentation would you find helpful e.g. Local Enterprise Partnership areas, NUTS 2 (counties or groups of counties) or some other?

3.3 For any geographic level suggested please explain how the statistics are or would be used, and what actions and decisions are likely to be taken using them.

3.4 If we stop publishing statistics at a regional level, would there be an impact on you or your customers. If so, what would that be?

4. All Consultation Questions

All of the questions posed in this consultation are summarised below. You may provide answers to any or all parts of this consultation in your response.

Land Use Change Statistics

- 1.1. Please rank the above options in order of preference
- 1.2. What are the advantages and disadvantages of each option?
- 1.3. Which categories of land use change would you regard as essential to collect and why?
- 1.4 How often would you prefer land use change data to be reported?
 - (a) Annually (as now) (b) Every 3 years (c) Every 5 years
- 1.5 Would you prefer land use change information to be collected continuously or as a stock take of changes over a period of time?
- 1.6. What do you use the Land Use Change Statistics for?
- 1.7. Do you have any ideas on how to make the Land Use Change Statistics more useful to your needs?
- 1.8. Can you suggest any other options for reducing the cost of producing the Land Use Change Statistics whilst maintaining their fitness for purpose?

Local Authority Housing Data Collection

- 2.1 Are you content with the proposed new form?
- 2.2 Are there any data items in the current forms that would no longer be collected through the new form that you consider should be collected and retained as national data sets? Please specify the reasons, including the use you currently make of the data and their priority to you (high, medium, low).
- 2.3 Are there any data items proposed to be collected in the new form that you consider should not be collected? Please specify the reasons, including the quality, consistency or availability of the data.
- 2.4 Do you have any suggestions for other new data items that should be collected through the new housing form? Please specify the reasons, including the use you would make of the data and their priority to you (high, medium, low).

- 2.5 Please provide any comments regarding the structure of the new form, including suggestions for improvement.
- 2.6 Please provide any further comments you may have on the proposals for the new form.
- 2.7 If you will be a provider of the data collected in the new form, please consider the balance between the value of the data collected and the burden of supplying the data and indicate whether:
 - a. Burden is much greater than value
 - b. Burden is somewhat greater than value
 - c. Balance is about right
 - d. Value is somewhat greater than burden
 - e. Value is much greater than burden
 - f. Unable to say
- 2.8 The main aim of the review and the resulting proposed changes in the centralised collection of local authority housing data is to reduce burden on local authorities. Do you have any suggestions for other steps we can take to reduce burdens on local government in this area?

Regional Statistics

- 3.1 Do you agree with the proposal to end the publication of statistics at the former Government Office regional level?
- 3.2 What alternative presentation would you find helpful e.g. Local Enterprise Partnership areas, NUTS 2 (counties or groups of counties) or some other?
- 3.3 For any geographic level suggested please explain how the statistics are or would be used, and what actions and decisions are likely to be taken using them.
- 3.4 If we stop publishing statistics at a regional level, would there be an impact on you or your customers. If so, what would that be?

5. Confidentiality and data protection

Information provided in response to this consultation, including personal information, may be disclosed in accordance with the access to information requirements (mainly the Freedom of Information Act 2000, Data Protection Act 1998 and the Environmental Information Regulations 2004). If you wish the information you provide to be treated as confidential, please be aware that, under the Freedom of Information Act, there is a statutory Code of Practice with which public authorities must comply and which deals with, amongst other things, obligations of confidence. In view of this it would be helpful if you could explain to us why you regard the information you have provided as confidential. If we receive a request for disclosure of the information we will take full account of your explanation. However, we cannot give an assurance that confidentiality can be maintained in all circumstances. An automatic confidentiality notice generated by your IT system will not, of itself, be regarded as binding on the Department.

A summary of the responses to this consultation will be published on the Department's website www.communities.gov.uk within three months of the close of consultation. Any confidential responses will be included in the statistical summary of numbers of comments and views expressed, although the respondent will not be identified.

6. How to respond

This statistical consultation will run for 12 weeks from 9 January, closing at 5pm on 2 April 2012.

When responding, please state whether you are responding as an individual or representing the views of an organisation. If responding on behalf of an organisation, please make it clear who the organisation represents, and where applicable, how the views of the members were assembled. Comments are invited from all interested parties who wish to be involved in this consultation process.

Please send your response on this consultation (preferably by email and using the accompanying consultation questionnaire in Annex 1) to:

Housing.statistics@communities.gsi.gov.uk

Please put "Consultation" in the subject line.

If sending your response by post, please address to:

Bob Garland
Neighbourhood Analysis Division
Communities and Local Government
4/J4, Eland House
Bressenden Place
London
SW1E 5DU

7. About this consultation

- 7.1 This consultation document and consultation process have been planned to adhere to the Code of Practice on Consultation issued by the Department for Business Innovation and Skills and are in line with the seven consultation criteria, which are:
1. Formal consultation should take place at a stage when there is scope to influence the policy outcome.
 2. Consultations should normally last for at least 12 weeks with consideration given to longer timescales where feasible and sensible.
 3. Consultation documents should be clear about the consultation process, what is being proposed, the scope to influence and the expected costs and benefits of the proposals.
 4. Consultation exercises should be designed to be accessible to, and clearly targeted at, those people the exercise is intended to reach.
 5. Keeping the burden of consultation to a minimum is essential if consultations are to be effective and if consultees' buy-in to the process is to be obtained.
 6. Consultation responses should be analysed carefully and clear feedback should be provided to participants following the consultation.
 7. Officials running consultations should seek guidance in how to run an effective consultation exercise and share what they have learned from the experience.
- 7.2 Representative groups are asked to give a summary of the people and organisations they represent, and where relevant who else they have consulted in reaching their conclusions when they respond.
- 7.3 Information provided in response to this consultation, including personal information, may be published or disclosed in accordance with the access to information regimes (these are primarily the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (FOIA), the Data Protection Act 1998 (DPA) and the Environmental Information Regulations 2004).
- 7.4 If you want the information that you provide to be treated as confidential, please be aware that, under the FOIA, there is a statutory Code of Practice with which public authorities must comply and which deals, amongst other things, with obligations of confidence. In view of this it would be helpful if you could explain to us why you regard the information you have provided as confidential. If we receive a request for disclosure of the information we will take full account of your explanation, but we cannot give an assurance that confidentiality can be maintained in all circumstances. An automatic confidentiality disclaimer generated by your IT system will not, of itself, be regarded as binding on the Department.

- 7.5 The Department for Communities and Local Government will process your personal data in accordance with DPA and in the majority of circumstances this will mean that your personal data will not be disclosed to third parties.
- 7.6 Individual responses will not be acknowledged unless specifically requested.
- 7.7 Your opinions are valuable to us. Thank you for taking the time to read this document and respond.
- 7.8 Are you satisfied that this consultation has followed these criteria? If not or you have any other observations about how we can improve the process please contact:

DCLG Consultation Co-ordinator
Zone 4/J1
Eland House
London
SW1E 5 DU

Or by e-mail to: consultationcoordinator@communities.gsi.gov.uk