



**Proposed changes to publication of statistics on
land use change, commercial and industrial
floorspace and town centre/retail development**

Consultation



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Introduction

The Department for Communities and Local Government currently publishes **quarterly** statistics on 'Land Use Change' and **annual** statistics on 'Commercial and Industrial Floorspace' and 'Town Centres-Retail Development'.

This consultation is asking for views on our proposals to change the frequency of the publication of 'Land Use Change Statistics' and options in terms of coverage and frequency of publication for 'Commercial and Industrial Floorspace' and 'Town Centres/ Retail Statistics'.

- a) Land Use Change Statistics. Reduce from quarterly publication to annual.
- b) Commercial and Industrial Floorspace and Town Centre/ Retail Development Statistics. Various options of coverage and frequency of the publications

The consultation will run for a period of eight weeks from 16 February to **14 April**. Please provide comments (by post or email) to:

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Planning Performance and Land Use
Housing Markets and Planning Analysis,
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Communities and Local Government,
Zone 2/J4
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We are also consulting directly with the Central and Local Information Partnership Planning Group and the National Retail Planning Forum Research Group.

These series are National Statistics and therefore under the Statistics and Registration Service Act 2007 CLG must comply with the code of practice that has three main principles:

- The burden on data suppliers
- Ensuring the statistics meet user needs
- Engaging users on changes to statistics.

Additionally, recognising the pressures on public resources, Communities and Local Government needs to consider value for money in the statistics it produces and whether they can be delivered more cost effectively but still meets user needs. CLG's Analytical Services Directorate has considered the range of its statistical outputs including those on 'Land Use Change', 'Commercial and Industrial Floorspace' and 'Town Centre/Retail Development'. Consideration of the uses of these statistics and the resources required to produce them led to the proposed changes to statistics on 'Land Use Change', 'Commercial Floorspace' and 'Retail Development'. The aim of this consultation is to provide a fuller understanding of the impact of any changes on users

Planned changes

Land Use Change Statistics

These statistics provide estimates of the amounts of land changing from one use to another¹. They are derived from Ordnance Survey's map revisions. The Statistics are published quarterly in May, July, October and January. A particularly important use has been monitoring the re-use of land for new housing. Other information includes:

- Changes on previously-developed land
- Density of new dwellings
- Changes within the Green Belt
- Changes within areas of high flood risk
- Changes to from 'undeveloped' to 'developed' uses.

There is a lag between the changes happening and being recorded by Ordnance Survey. Changes involving physical development (e.g. new houses or commercial buildings) are generally recorded more quickly than changes between rural uses (e.g. agriculture to forestry). This means that reliable estimates of changes to urban uses are available more quickly than other changes. Provisional estimates of the proportion of new dwellings built on previously developed land in the previous calendar year are available in May. Subsequent editions, in July, October and January, provide 'firmer' estimates as well some additional statistics that become possible because more data has been collected. For example, the October publication provides updated estimates on the area of land changing to residential use and statistics by local authority area.

We propose that one annual publication would provide the key statistics such as the percentage of new housing built on previously developed land plus provisional estimates for all the various other measures. We will consider the most appropriate timing for the publication so that the estimates are

¹ www.communities.gov.uk/planningandbuilding/planningbuilding/planningstatistics/landusechange/

sufficiently timely and robust. We are, at the same time, proposing to introduce an additional category of ‘residential gardens’ to distinguish between development on the ‘footprint’ of dwellings and the surrounding gardens. This meets a policy need in providing evidence on the issue of the extent of development on gardens.

It is proposed to reduce the frequency of publication of Land Use Change Statistics from quarterly to a single annual release.

Consultation questions

1. What impact does the proposal for one annual publication have on your use of CLG’s Land Use Change Statistics?
2. Do you have any suggestions for improving the statistics that would be presented in the annual publication?
3. Do you have any suggestions for additional analyses that might be included in an annual publication?

Commercial and Industrial Floorspace and Rateable Value Statistics and Town Centre / Retail Development in England Statistics

Communities and Local Government currently publish two annual statistical releases²:

- a. **Floorspace and rateable value of commercial and industrial properties (England and Wales)** – providing the total floor space and rateable value at the 1 April in the previous financial year, disaggregated by type of properties and region. The current published series runs from 1998 to 2008. More detailed geographical breakdowns are available on the Neighbourhood Statistics (Office for National Statistics) website for 2004 and 2005.
- b. **Extent of retail development taking place in England** – presents statistics on the amount of retail floorspace built during calendar year two years before the year of publication. The figures show how much of the retail floorspace built was within or adjacent to town centres. The figures are disaggregated by region. Summary data by local authority area was also made available on request with the statistical release in October 2009. Statistics for selected ‘Town

²

www.communities.gov.uk/planningandbuilding/planningbuilding/planningstatistics/commercialindustrial/
www.communities.gov.uk/publications/planningandbuilding/retaildevelopment2007

Centres' are also available of the State of the Cities Database for 1999 to 2004.

The statistics are important in measuring the impact of planning policy on commercial and retail development, particularly in relation to the new 'Planning Policy Statement 4 – Planning for Sustainable Economic Growth' that was published on 29 December 2009. The retail statistics, for example, show the proportion of new development within or close to town centres, measuring the effectiveness of policies to sustain town centres.

We propose to investigate more cost effective ways (including outsourcing) of producing these statistics and in improving the geographical disaggregation. There is, however, a trade off between frequency of publication and the degree of disaggregation. Both publications ('Commercial and Industrial Floorspace' and 'Retail Development') require resource intensive data manipulation and a finer level of geographical disaggregation means more work to assure robustness and avoid disclosure of individual businesses.

The options for consultation reflect consideration of demands to improve the coverage of the statistics and the need to produce them in as cost effective way as possible.

We are seeking views on the following options:

- a) Biennial publication of 'Commercial Floorspace' and 'Retail Development Statistics'**
- b) Biennial publication of 'Commercial Floorspace Statistics' and annual publication of 'Retail Development Statistics'**
- c) Biennial publication of Commercial Floorspace and Retail Development Statistics with some enhancement such as finer geographical disaggregation 'sub regionally' and possibly 'sub local authority'.**

Consultation questions

1. Please provide views on what impact each of the proposed options would have on your use of CLG's 'Commercial Floorspace' and 'Retail Development' Statistics.
2. Do you have any suggestions on how these Statistics might be improved?

Consultation criteria

This consultation document and consultation process have been planned to adhere to the Code of Practice on Consultation issued by the Department for Business Enterprise and Regulatory Reform and is 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.

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.

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).

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.

The Department for Communities and Local Government will process your personal data in accordance with the DPA and in the majority of circumstances this will mean that your personal data will not be disclosed to third parties. Individual responses will not be acknowledged unless specifically requested.

Your opinions are valuable to us. Thank you for taking the time to read this document and respond.

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:

CLG Consultation Co-ordinator
Zone 6/H10
Eland House
London SW1E 5 DU

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

Consultation process

Communities and Local Government invites comments on the proposed changes. The consultation will run until 14 April 2010.

When responding please state whether you are responding as an individual or representing the views of an organisation. Responses to this consultation must be received by **14 April 2010**.

You can email your response to:

bob.garland@communities.gsi.gov.uk

Or in writing to:

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