

Quality assurance review of High Speed 2 Property Compensation Consultation 2013 response analysis activity

Final analysis report by the Consultation Institute

Background

HS2 Ltd was established in January 2009 to investigate the feasibility and credibility of building new high-speed rail lines between London and Scotland. The first stage of work was the design of a new line between London and the West Midlands, providing a connection to London Heathrow Airport. Following delivery of the first stage of work to government during 2009, HS2 Ltd was commissioned to start detailed design work of routes north of the West Midlands to form a 'Y' network.

In January 2012, following a consultation carried out in 2011, the then Secretary of State announced the decision to proceed with HS2 Ltd's recommended route between London and Birmingham, now known as Phase One. HS2 Ltd is continuing with further work on the design and the Environmental Impact Assessment for Phase One, with a view to seeking legal powers to construct and operate the railway via a hybrid Bill. This was put before Parliament by the Secretary of State for Transport in November 2013.

In October 2012, the Government launched a national public consultation on long-term discretionary property compensation schemes to assist owner-occupiers of properties affected by Phase One of HS2 based upon the decisions outlined in the January 2012 Review of Property Issues document.

The decision about the Government's preferred discretionary property compensation schemes, set out in *Review of Property Issues* (in particular, the decision to proceed with consultation on a hardship scheme), was the subject of a legal challenge during the course of the 2012 consultation. The High Court ruled on 15 March 2013 that part of the 2011 consultation which dealt with potential property compensation arrangements had been unfairly delivered and as a result certain decisions contained in the *Review of Property Issues* were declared void.

Following the judgement, the Government gave an undertaking to the Court in March 2013 to launch a fresh consultation on property matters for HS2, including consultation on a property bond proposal. That consultation was the Property Compensation Consultation 2013.

On 12 September 2013, the Secretary of State launched the consultation on Property Compensation 2013. The consultation sought views on the Government's proposals for property compensation schemes for Phase One of HS2 between London and the West Midlands. The consultation ran for 12 weeks and closed on Wednesday 4 December 2013.

The purpose of this consultation was to enable the Government to make informed decisions on a set of compensation measures, taking account of the views of those individuals and organisations who expressed their opinions on the proposals.

The consultation document set out:

- the criteria against which HS2 Ltd and the DfT proposed to develop long-term discretionary property compensation schemes for Phase One of HS2
- a range of discretionary compensation options to be considered, comprising express purchase, a voluntary purchase scheme, a property bond scheme and a long-term hardship scheme
- an approach to renting homes to their former owners following Government purchase
- an overview of the compensation code
- a summary of a property bond option, as proposed by Deloitte LLP.

Consultees were invited to respond to seven questions:

1. What are your views on the criteria put forward to assess options for long-term discretionary compensation?
2. What are your views on our proposals for an express purchase scheme?
3. What are your views on the proposed long-term hardship scheme?
4. What are your views on the 'sale and rent back' scheme?
5. What are your views on our alternative proposals for renting properties to their previous owners?
6. What are your views on our proposals for a voluntary purchase scheme within a 'rural support zone'?
7. What are your views on the option to introduce a 'time-based' property bond scheme within a 'rural support zone' as an alternative to the voluntary purchase scheme?

A number of documents and maps were made available to enable people to provide informed responses to the consultation:

- The High Speed Two: Property Compensation Consultation 2013 for London-West Midlands HS2 Route Consultation Document, setting out in full each of the proposed compensation measures and providing background information on the HS2 scheme;
- a summary document providing a summary outline of each of the main proposals and including a pull out paper response form;
- a leaflet providing basic information on the consultation, a schedule of public events and information on how to access further information;
- a series of 107 maps showing the boundaries of the safeguarded area and those of the proposed rural support zone, including notes on mapping providing guidance on how the rural support zone was drawn.

HS2 Ltd and DfT raised awareness of the consultation process in a number of different ways:

- once the consultation had been launched HS2 Ltd commissioned Royal Mail to send a leaflet to properties within postcodes that are intersected by a boundary one kilometre either side of the centre line of route;
- letters were sent to MPs, chief executives and leaders of local authorities and parish council clerks along the Phase One line of route to inform them of the launch of the consultation;

- members of each of the 26 community forums along the Phase One line of route were sent basic information about the consultation;
- emails were also sent to statutory organisations and those who provided a valid email address in their response to the October 2012 Property Compensation consultation;
- HS2 Ltd used its social media presence to advertise the launch of the consultation. Regional press releases and local advertisements in newspapers were issued to raise awareness of the consultation and public events.

Respondents were offered a range of ways to engage with the consultation. A dedicated consultation website was developed providing information and an online response facility. Hard copies of the documents were made available and sent out on request. HS2 Ltd organised a series of 28 Information Events at community venues along the Phase One line of route between 30 September and 2 November 2013, providing an opportunity for people affected by the route to view relevant maps and proposals, and to speak with appropriately qualified members of staff about how the discretionary compensation proposals described in the consultation document might apply to them.

People could respond to the consultation in a number of ways all of which were advertised on consultation material including the www.gov.uk website. The three response channels – a freepost address, an email address and an online response form – were free for respondents to use. The online response form and the email address (subject to the user’s account settings) provided confirmation messages explaining that each response had been successfully received by Dialogue by Design. Practical considerations prevented the use of confirmation messages for responses submitted in hard copy via the freepost address.

In total 17,780 responses were received to the consultation, made up as follows:

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| · Online response form | 549 |
| · Offline response form | 356 |
| · Letter or email | 694 |
| · Standardised organised response | 14,512 |
| · Semi-standardised organised response | 1,669 |

The consultation was owned and managed by HS2 Ltd and the Department for Transport (DfT). Dialogue by Design (DbyD) was commissioned to provide a consultation website and email address for the consultation and then to receive, collate and analyse responses made via the website, email or the freepost address. A final report on the consultation was presented to HS2 Ltd in February 2014.

Independent Peer Review

Objective

On 9 August 2013 the Consultation Institute (TCI) was appointed to conduct a detailed quality assurance review and to provide assurances that the methodologies used by Dialogue by Design (DbyD) were robust and correctly applied. In this document we present details of the scope of our quality assurance review, and set out our findings and conclusions.

Scope of the assessment

The scope of the assessment was set out as follows:

Review of project management and procedures

Ensure that the response analysis company has established and continues to maintain effective project and risk management procedures and protocols

Consider the suitability of the response analysis company's project plan, the rigour and systematic nature of internal quality assurance procedures, the suitability of documented processes and protocols for handling responses and internal protocols and processes to capture key messages accurately from a variety of response types whilst minimising loss of data

Review of response handling and analysis methodology

Consider the suitability of the response analysis company's coding framework (development and implementation), analytical methodology (development and implementation), consistent understanding by staff across all response types, confirmation that analysis of responses was accurate and unbiased, handling receiving and entering data, storing responses in a safe secure and auditable way that complies with Data Protection Act and other legal requirements and quality assurance processes to ensure views are appropriately incorporated into the overall analysis of responses

Shadow the response handling and analysis activities employed by the response analysis companies, shadowing a proportion of responses

Review of project reporting

Assessment of project reporting methodology and how this has been applied

Consider the suitability of the response analysis company's reporting processes, method of collating responses and providing them to HS2 Ltd and quality assurance processes to effectively monitor and ensure responses have been analysed and reported on fairly and accurately

Comment on initial draft consultation report

Final Analysis Report

Provide a Final Analysis Report shortly after the response analysis company has provided their final report. Report to set out findings and recommendations.

Peer review team

The peer review was conducted principally by two Associates of the Consultation Institute whose qualifications and skills are summarised below. In addition, Fraser Henderson, another Associate, and a specialist in the technical aspects of e-traffic and of database storage, contributed to the assessment of Dialogue by Design's systems for receiving and storing responses in a secure and auditable way that complies with Data Protection Act and other legal requirements. None of them had any involvement in the design of the consultation process or the delivery of the consultation.

Mike Bartram is a specialist in public consultation with over 20 years experience in the field of transport and infrastructure. He wrote the first draft of what became the Government's Code of Practice on Consultation. As Head of Consultation at Transport for London (TfL) he managed several major consultation projects and wrote the organisation's *Consultation Toolkit* which was shortlisted for a London

Transport award. After leaving TfL he managed the consultation on the £3 billion Greater Manchester Transport Innovation Fund, which received over 85,000 responses. Working with Barry Creasy, he managed the Institute's peer review of the response analysis of the consultation on the government's high speed rail strategy and proposed HS2 Phase One route in 2011.

Barry Creasy is a specialist in consultation methodologies. He spent 19 years as an educational researcher and research adviser for the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority (QCA), using and augmenting his experience in writing questionnaires, running focus groups, conducting research interviews, and analysing and reporting data. He was one of a two-person team who managed the nationwide qualitative data-based Dearing Curriculum Review consultation in 1994, and subsequently managed the ongoing annual questionnaire-based Monitoring Curriculum and Assessment Project in over 1000 schools. Barry also provided research advice to teams across the whole of QCA. More recently, Barry has worked as an independent consultant, conducting consultation and evaluation exercises for arts, science and educational organisations (including the Royal Society and The Nuffield Foundation), emergency service organisations, and infrastructure projects (Thames Water/Optimise) as well as teaching courses on questionnaires, focus groups and data analysis for TCI. He worked with Mike Bartram on the Institute's peer review of the response analysis of the consultation on the government's high speed rail strategy and proposed HS2 Phase One route in 2011.

Method

In this section we describe the tasks we conducted to complete the quality assurance review.

The review was principally conducted through reading documentary evidence, and interviewing key personnel at DbyD about the response analysis process. The documents scrutinised were as follows:

- Property Compensation Consultation 2013 for London-West Midlands HS2 Route Consultation Document and summary document
- DbyD data journey document, setting out the systems and procedures used by DbyD to process and manage data received by them as part of the consultation
- DbyD tender submission document
- DbyD project plan
- DbyD coding framework
- DbyD consultation summary report

TCI also undertook the following:

- Inception meeting to clarify expectations and share key documents (16 September)
- Initial visit to DbyD offices to discuss questions arising from review of data journey document (29 October)
- Further visit to DbyD offices to observe a coding standardisation meeting and interview coders, and to clarify answers to outstanding questions arising from review of tender submission document (12 December)
- Shadow coding exercise: coding of a sample of 88 consultation responses by TCI and comparison with codes allocated by DbyD coders (December-January)
- Meeting with report writers and opportunity to raise detailed coding questions arising out of shadow coding exercise (14 January)

TCl provided HS2 Ltd with three summary reports:

- Review of project management and procedures (20 November)
- Report on shadow coding exercise (10 January)
- Review of response handling and analysis methodology (20 January)

In addition to this final summative report, TCl also provided formative input into the reporting process through detailed comments on DbyD's initial draft Consultation Summary Report.

Findings: General introduction

In its review of the analysis of HS2 Ltd's 2011 consultation on Phase 1 of the HS2 route, TCl made a general statement about the complexities of analysing complex qualitative data, and it is worth re-stating this view, since these general points are also highly relevant to the current exercise:

"Anyone designing a consultation questionnaire has to decide to what extent to use closed (quantitative) questions or open (qualitative) questions. Fully quantitative 'tick-box' exercises often request and present information in an over-simplified way, and can satisfy a demand for precise figures; this may also add weight to the (incorrect) perception that a consultation is 'a vote'. A fully qualitative approach, using open questions, can provide rich and complex detail about people's views and attitudes, and a wealth of information to help inform decisions.

Notwithstanding the above, there is often a demand, in high-profile qualitative consultations, for strength of opinion to be represented through numbers and statistics. Where consultation questions yield entirely qualitative data, there are particular challenges in translating this into a representation of strength of opinion (particularly from a self-selecting sample that will frequently represent more polarised views than a statistically selected representative sample of a population). A score against a constructed code arising from a qualitative exercise is, however systematically it is done, more open to question than a similar score against a tick-box answer in a rigorously constructed quantitative question.

The analysis and synthesis of qualitative data from a high volume of self-selecting respondents presents considerable challenges, requiring a clear understanding of the type and level of the information that is needed in a final report, the different ways in which responses can be made, the variation in style and complexity of responses, the political and campaigning dimension possible in the consultation, and, not least, an in-depth understanding of the issues involved, so that the huge volume of text that respondents produce can be condensed, analysed and synthesized with confidence, and that 'what goes in comes back out'. There are challenges in producing robust systems that ensure all information is collected, logged and recorded; that all information is analysed correctly (including complex nuances or technical submissions); and that the subsequent synthesis accurately reflects the views of respondents."

The analysis of qualitative data from a series of questions seeking views on a complex and multiple set of proposals for compensation arrangements presents even more of a challenge – firstly because the likelihood of misunderstanding of the complex proposals by respondents is high (or that respondents, faced with a complex set of proposals to read in detail, may opt, instead, to sign a standard response that roughly represents the general views they hold), but secondly, because this consultation was neither a straight choice between mutually exclusive options, nor was it a vote. We accept that the way in which the consultation questionnaire has been designed (with very open questions about each scheme, and with the consultation not being a straight ‘popularity contest’ between options) has presented a challenge to DbyD in outlining that clear picture. We also accept that there are dangers in presenting too many detailed conclusions from data that comes from a self-selecting sample of respondents – in that readers of the report may be tempted to generalise findings (i.e. assume that responses from particular types of respondent are representative of that group in general).

Review of project management and procedures

TCI examined in detail DbyD’s initial proposal, together with its Data Journey document, which set out protocols and procedures for managing the following:

- Receipt of responses (both online and offline, via the consultation website, via e-mail, through Freepost, and via intermediaries such as HS2 Ltd);
- Data entry: how various responses – including both free-text responses and those which followed the question format of the consultation document – were checked and entered into DbyD’s analysis database;
- Analysis – including the protocols governing the construction of a coding framework, how responses from key stakeholders would be dealt with;
- Reporting – including report style and structure;
- Managing concurrent consultations – which set out the protocols for dealing with any responses received pertaining to the concurrent HS2 Ltd consultation (on Phase 2 of the route);
- Miscellaneous additional protocols – including procedures for dealing with multiple and duplicate submissions, illegible handwritten responses, late responses and requests for information.

Subsequent to the analysis, TCI raised several queries on the documents with DbyD, and discussed these, receiving answers to our satisfaction. We acknowledge that DbyD do perform several checks to look for exact duplicate responses submitted by the same respondent across the different response types. However, one small point remained unresolved, concerning instances where respondents had sent more than one submission. If a respondent submitted a response online, this response remained ‘open’ during the consultation period, and a respondent could update it with new information, or revised views; the system would automatically prompt analysts to re-visit this response, so that new/revised information could be coded; this would only be true for offline responses (including e-mails) if the respondent sent in a revised response and *indicated it as such* (i.e. there was no process in place for matching offline responses against previous ones and collating/amending information across the responses received). However, we acknowledge the practical difficulties of doing so and the potentially disproportionate time that might have been required. We understand that the approach to dealing with multiple submissions was discussed and agreed in advance with HS2 Ltd.

TCI’s data –security specialist also reviewed the DbyD protocols for data security, and received satisfactory responses to all queries raised.

Conclusion

TCI is satisfied that the protocols and procedures for managing the project put in place by DbyD were robust and in line with good practice; we are satisfied that security of data was maintained, and that everything possible was done to ensure all submissions were entered and accounted for, and that the general procedures for dealing with the complexities of receiving and analysing large amount of submissions of text information in varied formats were of a high standard.

Review of response-handling and analysis methodology

Procedure for receiving, storing, logging and entering responses

TCI relied on reading relevant documentation and holding follow-up meetings, rather than live observation, to carry out this part of the review. The answers to the questions received in two meetings with DbyD (with staff responsible for these processes) reassured TCI that the procedures as described in the Data Journey were being followed.

Conclusion

TCI is satisfied that the protocols and procedures for receiving, storing, logging and entering responses, as set out in DbyD's Data Journey, were being followed.

The coding frame

A meeting was held with DbyD's Analysis Manager – responsible for the coding process overall, including development of the codeframe – together with a member of the coding team, and questions posed around the development of the coding frame. The codeframe for this exercise to some extent already existed, as the consultation was a re-run of the original in 2012. The initial areas in the earlier frame were used as a 'skeleton' framework, and as data began coming in, the Analysis Manager began creating codes. That said, a number of adaptations were made from this early stage, not least because of the differences in compensation schemes being consulted on. Even when the schemes had not changed substantially, DbyD deviated from the basic subtheme structure where required and created a number of codes which had not existed previously when new issues were raised. DbyD also adopted a 'mirror-coding' system – that is, the codeframe for each theme/question attempted to maintain a consistency with the other questions; all of the codes were mirrored across questions, and were made 'live' as they were required (so, for example, codes for likely impact due to noise were present in the set of codes for the question relating to each scheme). Following the creation of the initial frame, and as more responses arrived, more coding staff were attached to the exercise, and the frame developed as more data was coded.

Conclusion

TCI is satisfied that the procedures for development of a codeframe were appropriate, robust, and in line with good practice.

The coding team

At the meeting described above, the training of coders/analysts was also discussed. All analysts had been required to pass an initial test of their ability to understand and code free text to headings; they then received briefings, became familiar with the materials (questions, consultation background, codeframe etc), and began small amounts of supervised coding, followed by more sampled supervision, then becoming full coders. Coders also have on hand an Instructions Document comprising diagrams on how to use DbyD's collation tool, as well as a number of key instructions for coding and an explanation of different types of errors that occur in quality checking or marking assessments. Coding was generally by theme /question: one team of analysts – led by a senior coder responsible for ensuring consistency of coding – would concentrate on coding responses to a specific question, Teams were also allocated to non-fitting responses (e.g. postcards or longer submissions that did not necessarily follow the question format). The same codeframe was used for all responses.

Conclusion

TCI is satisfied that the procedures to hire, train and supervise analysts were robust.

Accuracy and process of coding

TCI assessed the coding process by attending meetings and interviewing relevant managers and staff, rather than through live observation. A member of the team attended a standardisation meeting and (see above) was able to interview the Analysis Manager and a member of the coding team and pose a series of detailed questions about the coding process. In addition, the Quality Audit exercise of coding (see below) gave considerable insight into the process itself. Standardisation of coding is essential in an exercise of this nature – in effect, a team of coders/analysts have to think in the same way, so that the same response would be coded in the same way by different members of the team, thus ensuring consistency and a 'gestalt' understanding of the data. As indicated above, each question was allocated a leader, and there were one or more other analysts working on that question. Discussions between coders took place on a regular basis; these were either hierarchical or less so, depending on the topic, and would either be formal – through a series of standardisation meetings – or informal (on-the-spot queries, or discussions via the on-screen messaging system that DbyD had set up). Only the Analysis Manager could give permission for a code to be created (although analysts could create codes for locations – places mentioned). The standardisation meetings allowed analysts to raise issues and queries about particular responses (or sections of responses) and discuss the nuances of these, in order to agree on a standard code or set of codes that would best capture them.

The Quality Audit exercise

A member of the TCI team coded a sample of 80 complete responses (containing an appropriate mix of short standard responses, online individual responses, longer hard-copy responses and lengthy stakeholder submissions) using DbyD's codeframe. The coding was compared with DbyD's coding of the same responses and feedback supplied. The exercise threw up a few anomalies which DbyD were able either to explain, or took on board, or re-visited.

Conclusion

In general TCI is satisfied that the systems (both technical and organisational) employed by DbyD to ensure the validity of the coded data, and the consistency of the coding process were robust.

Review of project reporting

The analysis/reporting process

A member of the TCI team attended a report-writing standardisation meeting, and additionally was able to interview a small group of the report-writers. The report was structured around the consultation questions – a chapter per question, with some chapters dedicated to general issues arising from the data (either issues that applied generally across all the schemes proposed, or general issues at a higher level, such as challenge to the HS2 project itself, or issues of politics). Each chapter had a lead author, and some of these authors had also been senior coders for the question that their chapter dealt with, so they had first-hand experience of the issues. The report writers sat in the same room, and were able regularly to talk informally with each other. They also queried the coders (particularly so in the case of report writers who had not been responsible for a question they were writing about). More formal standardisation meetings also took place (as indicated above, the TCI team member attended one of these), at which authors discussed how best different issues might be written up, and where best they might appear in the report (this was particularly the case with more general issues, or issues that applied to more than one proposed scheme). Each report-writer also had reference to a list of ‘soft material’ – notes of arising themes raised by coders.

Each report writer ensured that all possible comments related to a particular question were covered; each report writer also compiled a list of general points that were made within their question, and passed this to those writing the ‘general’ chapters.

Conclusion

TCI is satisfied that DbyD put in place robust processes to ensure that all the coded data from the responses was completely reviewed and taken into account when the report was written.

DbyD’s report

DbyD produced a draft report in January 2014, and TCI provided formative input to the second draft – both in terms of individual comments on specific sections of text in the report, and an overarching set of comments. These comments were received by DbyD and either answered or incorporated into the final version of the report. The remaining paragraphs of this section of TCI’s report deal with the issues arising from the report that TCI believe remain.

As set out in the General Introduction above, we believe that DbyD faced considerable challenges in producing a meaningful and readable report that reflects accurately the views of consultees. In general, TCI believes that DbyD’s report is well written, and reflects reasonably the views of respondents. TCI is also aware that the consultation provided other means for decision-makers to gain an understanding of consultees’ views on the property compensation proposals – through making the database of consultation responses available to decision-makers.

Conclusion

The consultation question structure presents challenges for the understanding and analysis of complex issues. TCI is satisfied that DbyD has understood and addressed these challenges.

Data from different types of respondents

TCl is aware that DbyD is reluctant to break down responses by respondent type out of a genuine concern that readers will attempt to draw conclusions about such respondents generally in the larger population (for example, respondents who live in a particular area). Further, we understand that the approach to the disaggregated reporting of responses was agreed by DbyD and HS2 Ltd. However, on closer examination, it is clear that the whole dataset is skewed considerably by the large number of campaign responses/organised responses (these amounted to 14,512 out of the total 17,780; a further 1,669 responses were semi-standardised, that is, they contained a degree of standardisation, or stock response phrases). Whilst a position of 'blindness to numbers' in a qualitative report is a methodologically sound position to take, TCl believes that in this case, the overwhelming contribution to the final results of these standardised responses presents both analyst and reader with a severe challenge in maintaining the qualitative nature of the report, and cannot be ignored. In effect, these respondents have created, out of the *qualitative* consultation, their own *quantitative closed-answer* response pattern (almost like a set of signatures to a series of petitions), and this needs to be dealt with so that readers of the report have a clear idea where the 'popularity' (i.e. high response numbers) of certain viewpoints comes from, and can separate this numerically overwhelming set of responses out from other responses, dealing with each group separately. This in no way suggests a judgement about those who sign and return a standardised response (e.g. that they are more important because of their numbers, or less important because they have not written their views in their own words). It is TCl's belief that a consultation is about providing information not only about *what* was said, but *who* said it (e.g. individuals, elected representatives, stakeholder organisations and campaign groups), within the context of the consultation responses; how those who read the report wish to use this information is then up to them. To this end we believe that the report could have been improved by indicating as much as possible where views came from – and the large numbers involved in the standardised responses immediately suggest that this group of respondents should be dealt with separately. This could be by providing a separate section on such responses, or simply by discussing their response pattern within the main text – for example, it can be seen from Appendix 2 that all of the nine standard-response postcards mention support of the HS2AA property bond proposal (and it may well be that the standardised e-mail, letter and online responses also included this as text); the paragraphs of the report (11.3.3 and following) could include an indication of how many respondents supported the HS2AA scheme via a standardised response.

In the light of the above TCl is also surprised that the report, in its discussion of the data, does not separate out responses from individuals, organisations, elected representatives and campaign groups. We understand that the approach to reporting stakeholder responses was agreed by DbyD and HS2 Ltd, reflecting HS2 Ltd's and Government's preference that all respondents should receive equal weighting at the stage of analysis. Stakeholder (as opposed to individual) responses occupy a particular position within a consultation – although, in terms of numerical weighting they are not 'higher', nonetheless, they represent the views of organisations with interest and expertise in the area, or they may be views of elected representatives, who speak for a particular constituency of people. Readers of the report may wish to consider such responses separately (reflecting the way, in a more multi-method consultation, such stakeholders would be consulted in a way other than via a standardised response form). DbyD's report occasionally brings out some of these views as quotes (for example, the quotations in 7.3.14 from Transport for London, or in 12.2.9 from the National Farmers Union), but there seems to be no systematic attempt to discuss their views in the context of the response pattern. It will, of course, be possible for readers of the report to consult the database and view such

responses separately. Nevertheless, TCI believes that the report could go further to bring out the views of such stakeholders.

Conclusion

TCI believes that DbyD's report could go further in separating out the views of different types of respondent, so that readers of the report can get an understanding of what different constituencies of consultees are saying, and where the strengths of opinion come from. We would also like to see an appendix setting out in full all stakeholder responses.

The use of textual terms to describe number

Textual ways of expressing quantities of respondents, such as 'many', 'numerous', 'some', 'a few' or 'a small number' are used throughout the report, and the rider in paragraph 4.2.4 states: "We have not adopted a rigorous metric for use of quantifiers in the report – reporters have exercised their editorial judgement over what quantifiers to employ. Quantifiers used are therefore generally relative to the number of responses raising the topic discussed, rather than an objective measure across the report." While TCI would not wish to see more precise use of numbers in the report, we believe that the locally contextual way of using such terms could be confusing to readers, and we would have liked to have seen more consistency in the use of these terms across the report. We have reservations about an approach that requires readers to go to an appendix and do too much data-mining in order to get the full picture.

There are also instances where points given numbers and points given no numbers are contrasted; a reader feels most confused when, for example, two viewpoints are contrasted, and one is given a large number, and the other no number at all, and so is left with comparing, for example 11,824 with 'several'. This task would have been made additionally easier if the contributions from standardised responses (see the section above *Data from different types of responses*) had been separated out.

Conclusion

TCI believes that the textual quantifiers could have been further standardised so that they carried a consistency of meaning across the report, and their use alongside numbers checked to ensure clarity.

Quotations

TCI has some concern about the way quotations are used throughout the report. Quotations are powerful, and research has shown that quotations have more hold in the memories of readers than figures or facts presented in a drier way. It is therefore important that quotations are used sensibly – in general, to illustrate 'important' points.

DbyD includes quotes based on the strength of the quotation itself and the extent to which it illustrates the general point made in the narrative. Their objective across the summary report is to provide quotations from a range of respondent types and not to overuse quotes from a single respondent.

How 'importance' is gauged is debatable, and this is also compounded by the way in which all respondent views are combined (see the section above on *Data from different types of responses*), but generally TCI believes that there should be some feel for it coming from a high strength of opinion (be that from a high number of respondents, or from a stakeholder whose experience holds weight); without some

systematic reason for the use of a quotation, a viewpoint can be made stronger than it may actually appear in the data, simply by highlighting it with a quotation. There are a number of places in the report (for example, in paragraphs 8.3.10, 9.3.18 and 10.3.24) where extremely low numbers (the report states one or two respondents) making a point are used as the basis for a quotation. The test of a good set of quotations would be that if the rest of the text were removed, they would still leave the reader with the same overall impression of the information presented.

Conclusion

TCI would wish to see evidence of a more consistent use of quotations in the report, such that they do not give disproportionate weight to 'minority' opinion.

List of conclusions

TCI is satisfied that the protocols and procedures for managing the project put in place by DbyD were robust and in line with good practice; we are satisfied that security of data was maintained, and that everything possible was done to ensure all submissions were entered and accounted for, and that the general procedures for dealing with the complexities of receiving and analysing large amount of submissions of text information in varied formats were of a high standard.

TCI is satisfied that the protocols and procedures for receiving, storing, logging and entering responses, as set out in DbyD's Data Journey, were being followed.

TCI is satisfied that the procedures for development of a codeframe were appropriate, robust, and in line with good practice.

TCI is satisfied that the procedures to hire, train and supervise analysts were robust.

In general TCI is satisfied that the systems (both technical and organisational) employed by DbyD to ensure the validity of the coded data, and the consistency of the coding process were robust.

TCI is satisfied that DbyD put in place robust processes to ensure that all the coded data from the responses was completely reviewed and taken into account when the report was written.

The consultation question structure presents challenges for the understanding and analysis of complex issues. TCI is satisfied that DbyD has understood and addressed these challenges.

TCI believes that DbyD's report could go further in separating out the views of different types of respondent, so that readers of the report can get an understanding of what different constituencies of consultees are saying, and where the strengths of opinion come from. We would also like to see an appendix setting out in full all stakeholder responses.

TCI believes that the textual quantifiers could have been further standardised so that they carried a consistency of meaning across the report, and their use alongside numbers checked to ensure clarity.

TCI would wish to see evidence of a more consistent use of quotations in the report, such that they do not give disproportionate weight to 'minority' opinion.