



Department for
Communities and
Local Government

Changes to the Department's statistics on Land Use Change, Local Authority Housing Statistics and Regional Outputs

Summary of consultation responses

September 2012

Department for Communities and Local Government

© Crown copyright, 2012

Copyright in the typographical arrangement rests with the Crown.

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

This document/publication is also available on our website at www.communities.gov.uk

Any enquiries regarding this document/publication should be sent to us at:

Department for Communities and Local Government
Eland House
Bressenden Place
London
SW1E 5DU
Telephone: 030 3444 0000

September 2012

ISBN: 978-1-4098-3653-7

Contents

Introduction	1
Chapter 1: Land Use Change Statistics	2
Chapter 2: Rationalised Local Authority Housing Data	5
Chapter 3: Statistics at Regional Level	17
Annex A: List of Respondents	18

Introduction

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.

To help us address these commitments, the Department ran a consultation from 10 January to 2 April 2012 which addressed three areas of statistics. The first part of this consultation was on our Land Use Change Statistics and sought users' views on options for 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 proposed a rationalised collection of housing data from local authorities to reduce the burden on local authorities of providing data returns to central government. This covered 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 third part of this consultation sought to understand user views on the need for regional statistics and proposed to end publication in this format in the light of the closure of the Government Office network.

Further details of the rationale for the proposals can be found in the original consultation document¹.

¹ <http://www.communities.gov.uk/publications/corporate/statistics/consultchangesstats>

Chapter 1: Land Use Change Statistics

Summary of responses

Summary of proposals

This part of the consultation invited comments on the Department for Communities and Local Government's Land Use Change Statistics, in particular on proposals for future data collection and production.

Land Use Change Statistics show the amounts of land changing from one use to another. They are important evidence for planning and widely used. They are, however, expensive to produce and the options for consultation sought ways of meeting users in more cost effective ways.

The consultation addressed the frequency of data collection and data coverage. Three options for data coverage were identified:

A. Retain current data coverage

Under this option the Department would continue to collect data on all of the 25 categories. 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 consultation responses.

Overview of main findings

Summary

The consultation confirmed the importance of Land Use Change Statistics for monitoring the outcomes of planning policy. Statistics on changes to developed use were seen as particularly important, but there was also a significant interest in rural changes to provide the complete picture.

Response

There were 27 responses to this part of the consultation. No respondent requested anonymity or confidentiality of response. Most (48%) were from local authorities. A list of all respondents is given in Annex A.

Type of organisation	No. of responses	% of total responses
Local Government	13	48%
Central Government	4	15%
Academic/Research	1	4%
Other user	9	33%
Total	27	100%

Note: Three separate responses from the Office for National Statistics have been counted as one response.

Analysis

Data Coverage

The first preference of the majority of respondents (56 per cent) was Option A 'Retain Current Data Coverage'. Some 39 per cent preferred Option B 'Retain Changes to all developed uses'.

The arguments for retaining the current coverage included:

- Provides monitoring of the full impact of planning policies both on both urban and rural areas
- Important for feeding into the Office for National Statistics' work on Environmental accounts
- Maintains a continuous dataset that has been running for over 25 years.

The relative importance of individual developed land use categories was indicated by the proportion of respondents regarding them as essential. The most highly rated land uses were:

- Residential (41% of respondents viewed as essential)
- Highways (30%)
- Industry (30%)
- Offices (30%)
- Retail (30%)

- Storage (26%)
- Community Buildings (26%)
- Leisure and recreation buildings (26%)
- Utilities (26%)

Frequency of Reporting

Some 71 per cent of respondents preferred continuation of annual reporting and 29 per cent favoured 3 yearly.

Continuous Recording or Regular Stock take

Response revealed no strong preference. It appears, however, that this was viewed as a 'technical' issue and what was important was that either method was designed to deliver the required outputs.

Uses of Land Use Change Statistics

The response brought out the importance of these statistics for monitoring the outcomes of planning policy. Specific additional uses included:

- Monitoring sources of land for housing
- Monitoring impacts on urban and rural environments
- Assessment of sustainable development
- Evidence for local authorities plans
- Monitoring protection of the countryside

Suggestions improving Land Use Change Statistics

These included

- Providing more data at local authority level
- Publication of more data on whole range of land use changes including rural ones
- Promote use more widely across Central Government

Suggestions for reducing costs

The ideas included:

- Assess whether a 'stock take' approach would bring savings
- Less frequent collection of land use changes that occur more slowly
- Reduce or combine land use categories

Next Steps

The responses to the consultation exercise have been valuable in shaping the recently launched procurement exercise for the Land Use Change Statistics to ensure that user needs are met in the most cost effective way. We have asked for bids that cover the whole set of land use changes, including those changes from an existing undeveloped use to a new undeveloped use (such as from Agriculture to Forestry).

Chapter 2: Rationalised Local Authority Housing Data

Summary of responses

Summary of proposals

This part of the consultation proposed a new annual data collection by the Department for Communities and Local Government to replace and rationalise existing housing data collections. This aimed to reduce the reporting burden on local authorities and focus centralised data collection on high priority areas.

Three existing housing data collections are to be replaced:

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

And some important data items previously recorded through three ceasing other collections included:

- 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

This change would take place from April 2012 for 2011/12 data collection.

Overview of main findings

There were 62 responses to this part of the consultation. No respondent requested anonymity or confidentiality of response. Most (77%) were from local authorities who are both key users and providers of the data. A list of all respondents is given in Annex A.

Type of organisation	No. of responses	% of total responses
Local Government	48	77%
Central Government	5	8%
Academic/Research	4	6%
Other user	5	8%
Total	62	

Most respondents welcomed the consolidation of the existing forms for collecting local authority housing data and the proposed new form. All but one respondent that commented on the rationalisation of the forms into a single collection welcomed this step. Many felt this would reduce the burden on local authority data providers.

Some detailed comments were received on parts of the form and an overview of these comments and our response to these is given in the next section. Many of these relate to definitions and coverage of questions: In general we are addressing comments through detailed guidance provided to help local authorities complete the form (which was not part of the original consultation).

The main changes between the form we are using to collect data for 2011/12 and the version issued for consultation are listed below:

Changes made to the 2011/12 form following consultation

Pre-filling of zeros on Interform ² for non-stock owning authorities for questions relating to local authority owned stock
Colour coded spreadsheet with named cell references for download showing tenure coverage of each question
Renumbered all questions on form, particularly Section I
Added questions on social and intermediate rent for I5 and I9 (non-registered providers)
Provided detailed guidance on scope and coverage of affordable housing figures
Included clear pointers to data on total stock by tenure and vacants in guidance
Private Sector dwellings (F6 and F3) – acknowledged in guidance that data may come from surveys that are not run each year
Added further guidance on reporting of EPC/SAP ratings, including advice on how to obtain access to national database
Included additional capital expenditure categories in F to meet obligations to the Cabinet Office’s Government Construction Strategy (HCA request)
Reworded F11 question text on Houses in Multiple Occupation
F13 – restructured question f13d on changes to Decent Homes

Detailed guidance and the revised form for 2011/12 has been produced and published on the Department’s website³. We anticipate, however, that further areas for improvement to the guidance and form will be identified through the process of collecting data in this first year and we will continue to work closely with data providers through the Central and Local Information Partnership and in response to other feedback to make further refinements as required.

² The web-based system used for data collection by the Department.

³ <http://www.communities.gov.uk/publications/housing/lahsguide201112>

Responses to each question

A summary of the responses received to each of the seven questions posed in the consultation is given below.

Question 1: Are you content with the proposed new form for collecting English Local Authority Statistics on Housing?

81% of respondents were content with the new proposed form. The dozen respondents that said they were not content with the form either suggested additional questions to be included on the form or sought further clarification on the scope of parts of the form. We have addressed these concerns through form changes or guidance.

Question 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?

61% of respondents did not suggest any items to be collected, 37% of respondents identified one or more items previously collected that should be retained. 2% did not respond to this question. Details are covered in the section below.

Question 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.

67% of respondents did not suggest any items that should not be collected, 30% of respondents suggested one or more items to be dropped. 3% did not respond to this question. Details are covered in the section below.

Question 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).

66% of respondents did not have any suggestions new items to be collected, 23% of respondents suggested one or more items to be collected. 11% did not respond to this question. Details are covered in the section below.

Question 5: Please provide any comments regarding the structure of the new form, including suggestions for improvement.

Very few comments were received on the structure of the form; these were generally positive and welcomed the new form structure.

Question 6: Please provide any further comments you may have on the proposals for the new form.

Few further comments were received and these generally related to issues already raised in their response to other questions.

Question 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:

- Burden is much greater than value
- Burden is somewhat greater than value
- Balance is about right
- Value is somewhat greater than burden
- Value is much greater than burden
- Unable to say

The table below summarises the distribution of responses received to this question. Many respondents did not answer this question as they were not data providers. Of those that answered this question, around two thirds felt that the value was balanced with or exceeded the burden of data provision (most, 42%, felt that the balance of burden and value was about right) whilst 21% felt that burden exceeded value.

Summary of responses to Question 7

	% of all respondents	% of responses made
a: burden much greater than value	3%	6%
b: burden somewhat greater than value	8%	15%
c: Balance is about right	23%	42%
d: Value somewhat greater than burden	8%	15%
e: Value much greater than burden	6%	12%
f: Unable to say	5%	9%
Not answered	47%	

Question 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?

A small number of suggestions were made to further reduce data reporting burdens on local authorities. The main suggestion made related to the Housing Flows Reconciliation return. This is a separate return from local authorities and was outside the scope of the review. The Housing Flows Reconciliation is collected annually from all local authorities outside London (statistics on housing flows in London are collected from London Boroughs by the Greater London Authority and shared with the Department). This return requests data on all housing flows (house building completions, conversions, changes of use and demolitions) in each district and reconciles these totals with stock figures for the beginning and end of the financial year. The Housing Flows Reconciliation data provides net additional supply each year and is combined with Census, other local authority data and returns made by housing associations to the Homes and Communities Agency⁴ to provide annual estimates of stock by tenure.

⁴ Through the Statistical Data Return for 2011/12; previously the Regulatory and Statistical Return collected by the Tenant Services Authority.

The Department separately reviewed the collection of data through the Housing Flows Reconciliation return for 2011/12 and removed the questions requesting data by tenure and by number of bedrooms. This substantially reduced the size of the form, from 152 numerical cells to fewer than 30.

Detailed responses, by section

General

Criteria for the review –

An occasional concern expressed by respondents was that the proposed rationalisation of the forms was overly focused on reducing data collection burdens rather than collecting data to monitor policy impacts. This is not the case. A primary purpose of data collection is to provide an evidence base for monitoring, assessing and developing government policies and providing public accountability. The criteria considered in deciding which questions to keep, which to drop and which new items to introduce were the need/use for the data, the burden of reporting it, the quality of the data received and availability of information from other sources. Therefore, a key criterion in the review process was the importance and relevance of that data for the policy evidence base. In addition to this, the wider use of this data for research and analysis purposes and for benchmarking and performance monitoring at a local level was taken into account. In the climate of tighter resources that both local and central government face, it is important to ensure that the cost of collecting data is balanced with the need and uses for that data.

Extended submission –

Some respondents asked for an extended submission date to reflect the change to data collection. The data being requested is generally a subset of that previously requested on the ceasing returns and therefore should be readily available. However, we do recognise that this change may require some data providers to adapt their systems. We therefore extended the data submission deadline for 2011/12 by a week. Local authorities have 3 months to submit data.

Mandatory questions –

This data collection forms part of the Single Data List and therefore is a required return from local authorities. However, some of the questions within the form are voluntary for completion and some are mandatory. A form cannot be submitted until all mandatory questions have been completed. The revised version of the form being used for data collection makes clear which questions are mandatory and which are voluntary. The majority of questions are voluntary and only questions carried over from existing returns where we think the data is absolutely essential or where we expect local authorities to have information available from their existing system have been made mandatory.

Some respondents made the useful comment that greater clarity is needed for some sections on the coverage of answers with regards to all local authority owned stock or only that within their Housing Revenue Account. We have clarified this in guidance.

Annual review –

Some respondents questioned whether data reflecting recent policy changes should be included, such as affordable rent and flexible tenures. These changes largely come into force from April 2012 and as the proposed form related to 2011/12 data collection we will be reviewing and developing the questions as required for 2012/13. Work has started on this and proposals are being discussed and developed through the Central and Local Information Partnership housing sub-group.

As part of our normal work programme we will continue to review the data we collect on an annual basis. This will be at a much smaller scale than the review that led to this consultation and therefore will be carried out with local authority data providers through the Central and Local Information Partnership and reflecting user feedback. Users of our statistics can provide feedback through the Housing Statistics enquiry account (housing.statistics@communities.gsi.gov.uk) or directly to the lead statistician named on our Statistical Releases.

Continuous Recording (CORE) –

The relationship between the local authority housing form and the Continuous Recording of Lettings (CORE) was questioned by some, particularly given that full ownership of CORE has now moved to the Department. The Department is fully committed to CORE and it is part of the Single Data List. Local authorities are expected to complete CORE. Response rates are improving, but still incomplete; around 70% of local authority lettings were recorded in CORE in 2010/11. The data collected in the new form on lettings (Section D) is used as a weighting framework for CORE. In the future it is intended that the majority of lettings data will be collected through CORE as the Department's preferred source but this will only be possible when CORE coverage of local authority lettings is more complete. The Department is working to help the remaining local authorities participate fully in CORE.

Non-stock owning authorities –

Several respondents commented that some questions are not relevant to authorities that do not own any stock. To facilitate data provision for these authorities we have taken two actions: the questions relating to local authority owned stock will be pre-filled with zeros on Interform (the web-based system used for data collection) and will be colour coded on the downloadable Excel version of the form to enable a quick reference guide for questions relevant to them.

Homelessness –

Six respondents remarked on the removal of questions in the HSSA relating to lettings to statutory homelessness. As explained in the consultation document, the separate data collection carried out by the Department on statutory homelessness (the P1E return) was not within the scope of the current review and will continue to provide quarterly data on households accepted as owed a main homelessness duty and the action taken by authorities for these acceptances. It is also being developed to cover changes resulting from the provisions of the Localism Act around local authorities' duties on homelessness (to the private sector).

The statutory homelessness statistical release and associated Live Tables did not, at the time of the consultation, explicitly present the number of cases where

the homeless duty has been ended through a social letting⁵. This can be obtained from the following cells on the P1E form:

e54a - section 5 - Applicant household accepted "Part 6" offer (including LA nomination to RSL) or an offer of an assured tenancy other than a "Part 6" offer - duty ended, no temporary accommodation provided

e7a3h - section 7 - Accepted "Part 6" of accommodation (including LA nomination) (S193(6)(c)) having been in temporary accommodation

e7a5h - section 7 - Accepted offer of assured tenancy other than "Part 6" offer (S193(6)(cc)) having been in temporary accommodation

e7b3h - section 7 - Accepted "Part 6" of accommodation (including LA nomination) (S193(6)(c)) having been in other temporary arrangements

e7b5h - section 7 - Accepted offer of assured tenancy other than "Part 6" offer (S193(6)(cc)) having been in other temporary arrangements

It is not possible through the P1E data to separately identify local authority and other social lettings but the total cases reported in these cells closely match the data reported through the HSSA:

Total number of households whose homelessness duty has ended into the social sector

	P1E ¹	HSSA ²	P1E/HSSA
2006/07	55,973	58,966	95%
2007/08	50,337	52,036	97%
2008/09	44,733	47,080	95%
2009/10	34,877	36,194	96%
2010/11	31,907	33,552	95%

¹ Cells e54a + e7a3h + e7a5h + e7b3h + e7b5h

² Cells hse3d + hse4d (post 2007/08) or hse6ad + hse7ad (prior to 2007/08)

Part of the undercount in the P1E data reflects incomplete responses from local authorities to this part of the P1E form. We will review the guidance on these cells, encourage local authorities to complete this part of the form, and review the live tables to provide clearer data for users on the number of cases where the homeless duty has ended with a social letting.

The Continuous Recording (CORE) of lettings also provides detailed data on social lettings made to homeless households including the type and source of letting (e.g. local authority or housing association and whether direct or through local authority nomination). Private Registered Providers are required to complete CORE as part of the Homes and Communities Agency's Regulatory Standards, and local authorities are required to complete CORE as it forms part of the Single Data List. Around 70% of local authority lettings were reported in 2010-11; response rates are on an upward trend and the Department is working with local authorities to increase participation and data completion levels.

The data collected through these existing returns provide good data for monitoring local authority activity with regard to homelessness and we feel it would unnecessarily add to the burden on data providers by duplicating this on the local authority housing form.

⁵ The total number of social lettings to homeless households has since been included as an additional column in Live Table 778.

Section A

The new form proposed to only collect data on stock owned by local authorities and other public sector bodies. Ten (16%) respondents highlighted the importance of data on total dwelling stock and a breakdown by tenure. The Government agrees that this is part of the core evidence base on housing and is committed to maintaining a data series on dwelling stock. An annual Statistical Release is produced on dwelling stock which brings together data from different sources to provide local authority level dwelling stock estimates by tenure. This is available at

<http://www.communities.gov.uk/housing/housingresearch/housingstatistics/housingstatisticsby/stockincludingvacants/> (in particular Live Table 100). These tables will use the local authority owned and 'other public sector' dwelling stock figures collected in the new form. As total dwelling stock estimates are available from other sources it would be a duplication of effort and burden to ask local authorities to report this data. It is not possible to pre-fill the form with this stock data as it is not available until later in the year. We have explained this in guidance.

Section B

One respondent questioned whether data should be collected on buy-back of ex-council dwellings. This question was previously collected through the P1B return but no substantive user base for this data was found during the review process. It is possible with the changes to Right to Buy policy from April 2012 that there will be more user demand for this information. We will therefore keep this under review and consider for the 2012/13 data collection.

Three responses suggested that it would be useful to monitor applications for Social HomeBuy as a measure of demand and take-up of this product. To date there have been fairly low numbers of Social HomeBuy applications (387 total local authority applications received to 2010/11) and sales (25 local authority sales). Monitoring application levels of this scheme is not therefore a high priority item for data capture but we will keep this under review, particularly as the changes to Right to Buy discount caps feed through.

Section C

Five respondents expressed some concern on reporting the number of households on their waiting lists by reasonable preference category. Some requested further clarity on how these should be answered where they do not directly relate to the authorities' own points/banding system.

Local authorities are required to frame their allocation scheme to give reasonable preference to people in these categories. This is a legal requirement and therefore local authorities should wish to ensure they are meeting these requirements. It is recognised that there is local variation in how the reasonable preference groups are used and defined by local authorities, and this does not undermine the information provided. Detailed guidance on how to complete these questions has been developed and we recognise that some development of systems may be required to monitor more accurately in future.

Section D

One response suggested re-including the HSSA question on local authority nominations taken up to dwellings let in other local authority areas. The Government recognises that it is important to be able to track lettings across local authority boundaries, particularly with changes coming in through the Localism Act and Welfare Reform. However, information on where lettings and nominations have been made across local authority boundaries can be obtained from the Continuous Recording of Lettings Logs (CORE). This will improve as the response rate to CORE increases.

Section E

Fourteen (23%) respondents asked for data on vacant stock of all tenures, or private sector stock, to be included. Questions on all private sector and registered social landlord vacant properties were previously removed from the HSSA as part of the review that took place in 2008. This was because of alternative available data sources (e.g. the Tenant Services Authority data on housing association vacants) and the quality of the data reported in these questions on the HSSA was not consistently robust.

The Government agrees that maintaining a data series on vacant stock is part of the core evidence base on housing. Annual Live Tables are published which bring together data from different sources to provide vacant dwellings at a local authority level. These are available at <http://www.communities.gov.uk/housing/housingresearch/housingstatistics/housingstatisticsby/stockincludingvacants/livetable/> (in particular Live Tables 611, 613 and 615). These tables will use the local authority owned and 'other public sector' vacant stock figures as reported through the new form. Figures on total vacant properties are taken from the Council Tax Base returns made by local authorities. These returns are signed off by the Chief Financial Officer and are subject to robust checks by the Department's Local Government Finance Statistics team. The figures on long-term vacant dwellings (broadly those which have been vacant for more than six months) are used for the New Homes Bonus and are again put into the public domain for further comment/checking and revisions have been made where required in the last two years. Council Tax Base statistics are published through bi-annual statistical releases at <http://www.communities.gov.uk/localgovernment/localregional/localgovernmentfinance/statistics/counciltaxbase/>

As total vacant stock estimates are available from other sources it would be a duplication of effort and burden to ask local authorities to also report this data and more than one data source may lead to confusion.

Some respondents asked specifically for the question on private sector homes vacant for less than 6 months to be retained as this tenure breakdown is not available from existing sources and it can be a useful metric for performance benchmarking. Whilst some local authorities will have good quality information to report on private sector properties empty for 6 months or more, this is not the case for all. The quality of data reported in the HSSA has been variable, which very much limits its value for performance benchmarking, as well as for most other uses.

The Department already does not collect data on the *total* (i.e. not only those empty for 6 months or more) number of private sector properties which are vacant, so the published tables described above do not provide figures specifically on the private sector, leaving the split of vacant dwellings figures by tenure incomplete. However this is mitigated for users of the data by the fact that the tables do show figures for the total number of vacant homes (regardless of tenure), and the figures for the local authority and housing association tenures. Local authorities may wish to collect and publish data on vacant private sector dwellings in their area, but the Government does not believe it is appropriate to require this reported centrally.

Some respondents expressed concern over the potential interpretation of data on local authority vacant stock that are not available for letting. In some cases this will reflect stock that is awaiting demolition and may have been acquired to enable regeneration of an area. The coverage of these figures will be explained in footnotes to the data when it is published.

Section F

A number of respondents welcomed the new data collection on energy efficiency measures.

Three respondents commented on the removal of management and maintenance costs (previously in the BPSA Section E). During the review process, the data collected on the Housing Revenue Account administrative returns and the Local Government Finance forms⁶ were also considered. There was an overlap in the information collected through these financial returns and that requested on the BPSA. Management and maintenance costs form part of the overall expenditure and income associated with housing and will be collected as part of the Revenue Outturn form for 2012/13 onwards. This data will therefore continue to be available but will be published under Local Government Finance Statistics⁷.

Five local authorities responded that they would not be able to provide timely data on the EPC rating of private sector stock as this is generally obtained through a periodic stock condition survey. From 22nd April 2012 Energy Performance Certificates lodged on the national Energy Performance Certificate register (<https://www.epcregister.com/>) are being made publicly available⁸. Authorised organisations, including local authorities, can have access to the Energy Performance Certificate data in bulk. Details on how to obtain this data is available at

<http://www.communities.gov.uk/documents/planningandbuilding/pdf/2121747.pdf>

We have made clear in the guidance that it is at the discretion of the local authority as to how they provide the best estimate for their area. This may be based on data extracted from the EPC register, or from information collected through a local survey. If survey data is used and the date of this survey is not in

⁶<http://www.communities.gov.uk/localgovernment/localregional/localgovernmentfinance/statistics/>

⁷<http://www.communities.gov.uk/localgovernment/localregional/localgovernmentfinance/statistics/revenueexpenditure/>

⁸<http://www.communities.gov.uk/documents/planningandbuilding/pdf/2116850.pdf>

the current reporting year, authorities will be asked to indicate this in the notes accompanying the form.

Several respondents suggested an alternative wording for the question on mandatory licensable Houses in Multiple Occupation. This has been used in the revised form and explained in the guidance.

One authority asked why data are to be collected on public authority decent homes when for many the decent homes programme has finished. Decent Homes are still a priority for the Government and this information is required to monitor the obligation to maintain the Decent Homes standard. The requirement to have accurate monitoring returns which provide detailed Decent Homes data was raised by the Public Accounts Committee (see in particular recommendation 8⁹). The response also asked how private sector non-decent homes are to be monitored. The Department's annual English Housing Survey provides a national picture for private sector non-decent homes and those with category 1 hazards under the Housing Health and Safety Rating System and it would be unduly burdensome to ask local authorities to report this.

The Homes and Communities Agency requested that some of the categories previously included on the BPSA that provide information on detailed housing costs be re-introduced. This is to meet the Homes and Communities Agency's and the Department's obligation to the Government Construction Strategy¹⁰, where information is required to benchmark costs (refurbishment and construction) that can demonstrate effectiveness of efficient procurement. The expenditure category in Question 25 has been expanded accordingly.

Section G

Two respondents asked for questions on the time taken to carry out repairs to be retained as this provides an important barometer of the quality of service provided to tenants by social landlords. Data is captured in the English Housing Survey on tenant satisfaction, including landlord repairs¹¹.

Section H

No comments received.

Section I

A number of local authority data providers felt that the scope and definitions of the data being requested on affordable housing supply were unclear. We recognise that this is a particularly complex area and that it can be difficult to

9

<http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm200910/cmselect/cmpubacc/350/350.pdf?q=decent>

¹⁰ <http://www.cabinetoffice.gov.uk/resource-library/government-construction-strategy>

11

<http://www.communities.gov.uk/housing/housingresearch/housingsurveys/englishhousingsurvey/ehstables/ehshouseholdtables/attitudesandsatisfaction/> E.g. Table FT5421

assess the questions without the accompanying guidance. Detailed guidance has now been developed which explains the definitions and scope of each question.

Some authorities queried the implication that non-registered providers would not be providing properties for social rent. This is further complicated by the leasing arrangements that can take place. The questions on non-registered providers have therefore been expanded to include homes let at social or intermediate rents, where these meet the definitions set out in Planning Policy Statement 3 (for 2011/12) and the National Planning Policy Framework (from April 2012)

For most questions in this section we have adopted the approach of only asking local authorities to report on provision which the Government is not already able to monitor through returns to the Homes and Communities Agency. We recognise that in order to complete this accurately, local authorities will need to be aware of the provision of affordable housing in their area which is reported to the Homes and Communities Agency.

They should already be in this position given local authorities' overall role in planning and monitoring housing supply in their area and ensuring that this meets local needs. Local authorities should have or should seek to establish good working relationships and information flows with social and private developers that are operating in their area.

The Homes and Communities Agency publishes biannual official statistics on housing provided by their programmes¹². Data for the financial year are published by the Homes and Communities Agency around June and from 2011/12 tables have been included showing the local authority breakdown. Further information on the affordable housing reported to the Homes and Communities Agency by private Registered Providers (housing associations) or private developers in a local authority area have also been sent directly by the Homes and Communities Agency to local authorities. This has been further explained in the detailed guidance.

¹² <http://www.homesandcommunities.co.uk/national-housing-statistics>

Chapter 3: Statistics at Regional Level

This part of the consultation focused on the Department's proposal to end the publication of statistics at the level of the former Government Offices for the Regions and to seek views on alternative geographical presentations.

In total, 75 written responses were received from local authorities, Central Government, professional networks and associations, academia, voluntary sector organisations and other respondents.

In light of the responses received, and taking into account the rationale for the original proposal, the Department has decided to include additional sub national geographies where appropriate in its statistical publications, promote local authority level data, and end the publication of regional statistics.

The Government's policies use alternative sub-national geographies, for example the Local Enterprise Partnerships, or 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.

The Department will plan for the inclusion of statistics for Local Enterprise Partnerships and upper tier authorities in those releases where it would be appropriate and meaningful to do so. We recognise that there are some challenges associated with the Local Enterprise Partnership geography, including a changing membership over time which hinders temporal comparisons and the difficulty in assessing patterns across the country given the relatively large number of Local Enterprise Partnerships. We will explore ways in which our presentation of statistics can address these challenges.

Recognising that the majority of respondents still see some benefit in regional statistics, we will, where possible make data available that allows users to create their own regional statistics. For example, in some cases, local authority data will be published from which regional aggregates could be derived.

We will cease publication of summary statistics by region in all Departmental statistics outputs published from October 2012 onwards where they would not cause a change to the pre-announced publication date. We will move towards presenting data by alternative sub-national geographies from 2013 and the Department plans to have completed the implementation of changes by the end of that year.

Annex A: List of Respondents

The following respondents have commented on one or more parts of the consultation.

Organisation
Ashfield Council
Ashfield District Council
Ashford Borough Council
Association of North East Councils
Bath and North East Somerset
Birmingham Council
Bolton Council
Bracknell Forest Council
Bradford Council
Bristol Council
Bromley Council
Bucks County Council
Building and Social Housing Foundation
BURISA
Bury Council
Business Development Analyst
Cambridge Centre for Housing and Planning Research
Campaign for the Protection of Rural England
Central and Local Information Partnership, Housing Sub-group
Central Bedfordshire
Centre for Cities
Centre for Urban and Regional Studies, Birmingham University
Chartered Institute of Housing
Cheshire East Council
Cheshire West & Chester Council
City of Stoke-on-Trent
Colchester District Council
Council of Mortgage Lenders
Coventry City Council
Cumbria Business School
Defra
Department for Business, Innovation and Skills
Department for Transport
Department for Work and Pensions
Derbyshire County Council
Dorset County Council
Durham County Council
Ealing Council
East Midlands Councils
Environment Agency
Essex County Council
Experian
Gloucestershire County Council
Greater Willington Town Council

Halton Council
Hampshire County Council
Helen Chadwick Consulting
Herriot Watt University
HMRC and VOA
Homes and Communities Agency
House Building Federation
Housing Statistics Network
Housing Studies Association
Joseph Rowntree Foundation
Kirklees Council
Leeds City Council
Lewisham Borough Council
Liverpool Council
Local Government Association
Local Government Yorkshire & Humber
London Borough Lewisham
London Councils
Manchester Council
National Housing Federation
National Statistician
NERIN
Newcastle University
North Somerset Council
North Tyneside Council
Office for National Statistics
Ordnance Survey
Oxford City Council
Pendle District Council
Preston City Council
Private individual
Regional Studies Association
RenewableUK
Royal Town Planning Institute
RSPB
Rutland Council
Salford Council
Sheffield Council
Shelter
Social Housing Federation
South East England Councils
South Gloucestershire Council
South Somerset Council
South West Observatory/ Local Intelligence Network
Southwark Council
St Helens Council
Stockton Council
Stoke on Trent Council
Suffolk County Council
Teignbridge District Council
Tendring District Council
Thanet Council

The Royal Society for the Protection of Birds
Town and Country Planning Association
Trafford Council
University of Warwick
Voluntary Organisations' Network North East
Warwickshire County Council
Wealdon District Council
Welsh Government
Welwyn Hatfield Council
West Midlands Councils
West Midlands Planning and Transportation Sub Committee.
Wigan and Leigh Council
Wiltshire County Council