



Plans for the 2010 Place Survey
Consultation paper



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Summary of consultation

Scope of the consultation

Topic of this consultation:	Plans for the 2010 Place Survey.
Scope of this consultation:	Responses to this consultation will help inform the content, guidance and outputs of the 2010 Place Survey, alongside other sources of evidence.
Geographical scope:	England.
Impact Assessment:	An impact assessment is not required as this is a technical consultation relating to Official Statistics outputs.

Basic Information

To:	Any organisation or individual that carries out the Place Survey or uses its results. This includes local and central government, academics and private organisations.
Body/bodies responsible for the consultation:	Head of Profession for Statistics, Communities and Local Government.
Duration:	6 weeks from Tuesday 30 March 2010 to 5pm on Monday 10 May 2010.
Enquiries:	Emma Crowhurst, Dan Howard, or John Mildinhall Local Governance Research Unit Communities and Local Government 3/H6, Eland House Bressenden Place London, SW1E 5DU 0303 444 x2294 , x2625 or x2621 PlaceSurvey@communities.gov.uk
How to respond:	Please send responses, preferably via email, to: PlaceSurvey@communities.gov.uk c/o Janice Newman Local Governance Research Unit Communities and Local Government 3/H6, Eland House Bressenden Place London, SW1E 5DU

Additional ways to become involved:	<p>Local authority representatives and other interested parties have already been given the opportunity to provide views on the Place Survey via a feedback exercise and a series of Road Show events last year. However CLG is using this additional written to exercise to ensure that as wide a group of stakeholders as possible are able to express their views about plans for 2010.</p> <p>We have established a Reference Group, comprising representatives from the Department, other central government departments (and independent bodies) with an interest in the Survey, and local government. If you are interested in finding out more about this group please get in contact with John Mildinhall (john.mildinhall@communities.gov.uk).</p>
After the consultation:	<p>The responses will be used alongside other sources of evidence to inform the content of the 2010 Place Survey questionnaire and its accompanying Manual.</p> <p>A summary of the consultation responses will be published on the CLG website.</p>
Compliance with the Code of Practice on Consultation:	<p>As this is a technical consultation on statistical outputs it is not a formal 12-week public consultation.</p>

Background

Getting to this stage:	<p>The Place Survey was carried out for the first time in 2008, and its results published in June and September 2009 following a Statistical Quality Review. As well as examining the methodology used for the 2008, the Review made recommendations for 2010.</p> <p>After the 2008 process, we sought views and suggestions from local authority representatives and other interested parties, using both a feedback exercise (run by the Audit Commission) and Road Show events in London, York and Birmingham organised by LARIA (the Local Authorities Research and Intelligence Association) during 2009.</p> <p>Ahead of the 2010 Survey we have established a Reference Group, comprising representatives from the Department, other central government departments (and independent bodies) with an interest in the Survey, and local government.</p>
Previous engagement:	<p>The first Place Survey took place towards the end of 2008, and followed a formal 8-week public consultation between December 2007 and February 2008, in which users and stakeholders were invited to comment on the proposed methodology (including survey mode, frequency and timing) and questions. The methodology and questionnaire subsequently used in 2008 were informed by responses to this consultation.</p>

Section 1

Introduction

Aim

This document invites comments on Communities and Local Government's plans for the 2010 Place Survey.

The Place Survey results are Official Statistics and Communities and Local Government (CLG) has a duty to comply with the Statistics and Registration Act 2007. As part of this Act, Official Statistics producers should comply with a code of practice¹. Two of the main principles are:

- Ensuring the statistics meet user needs
- Engaging users on changes to statistics.

This consultation is engaging the users on plans for the 2010 Survey and aims to ensure that its statistics meet users' needs. The consultation will run for six weeks from Tuesday 30 March 2010.

Background to the Place Survey

The Place Survey is a biennial postal survey, first run in 2008, which collects information on people's perceptions of their local area and the work of their local authorities and partners. It is a very large survey, with over 543,000 people aged 18 or older across 329 local authorities in England responding in 2008. Local authorities are responsible for running the Survey in their own area, using a standardized methodology, questionnaire and Manual provided by CLG. The next Survey is due to run in autumn 2010.

The Survey supplies data which currently informs 18 national indicators, across a number of Government Departments. These measure how well the Government's priorities, as set out in the Comprehensive Spending Review, are being delivered by local government. They form an important part of the streamlined local performance framework and contribute to the shift in focus away from customer satisfaction with services provided by local authorities to seeking residents' views on what it is like to live in an area. Data also help to monitor several DSO and PSA Indicators. The 2010 Survey aims to be comparable to the 2008 Survey, and so enable us to assess performance against baselines set using the 2008 results.

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

Users of the Place Survey

The Place Survey is a key element of the local performance framework, its results feeding ten per cent of the current national indicator set. Furthermore, over ninety per cent of single-tier and county councils currently include at least one Place Survey indicator within their statutory Local Area Agreements. The data are also used by the Audit Commission as part of Comprehensive Area Assessment.

Elsewhere within central government results from specific parts of the Survey are used by national indicator owners and other interested policy leads and analysts across a range of other government departments – including Home Office, Cabinet Office, Department for Work and Pensions, Department of Health, Department for Children, Schools and Families and Government Equalities Office.

The Survey is run by Local Authorities in their own areas, and detailed results – both the national indicators and other questions (which focus more on local authority run services and facilities) – are used extensively by local government in conjunction with other local research to gauge local views, aid communication with residents and inform policy at a local level. The Place Survey provides common standards and so comparable results across authorities, which enables benchmarking between areas.

The Survey results also have rich potential for secondary analysis.

Place Survey 2008 methodology

The 2008 Survey was developed through a wide public consultation including local and central government, between December 2007 and February 2008. A summary of the more than 400 formal responses was published by CLG in July 2008, and can be found on the CLG website²:

There was overwhelming support for a biennial survey with an autumn fieldwork period. Respondents felt that a biennial survey would be the appropriate frequency considering the costs of resources required at a local level to administer the Survey. It was suggested that a biennial survey would enable local authorities and their partners to respond to changes in the community in a timely way – and to gain feedback as to whether their interventions were having the planned impact. It was widely thought that more residents were likely to be available to respond during the autumn than other times of the year.

Over eighty per cent of responses to the consultation supported a postal methodology. It was considered to provide a good balance between cost, burdens and methodological robustness.

² <http://www.communities.gov.uk/documents/localgovernment/pdf/880186.pdf>

Cognitive testing of the questionnaire and two pilot postal surveys were used to test the effectiveness of the questionnaire and response rates. Problems with the public's engagement with the initial questionnaire (which focussed solely on national indicators) were identified through cognitive testing and running of the first pilot, reinforcing points made in consultation. This was addressed by adding additional questions, to improve the questionnaire's flow and meaningfulness to the public, which was tested in the second pilot.

A Manual³ providing detailed guidance to local authorities on the common standards and strategies expected in administering the Survey – including timetable, questionnaire, sample method, sampling frame, data collection, response rate, statistical reliability and submitting results – was published by CLG in July 2008, and can be found on the CLG website (alongside its Technical Annex⁴):

CLG also published the core questionnaire⁵, and a question bank⁶ (to be used by authorities who wished to add additional questions of particular interest to their locality, after the core questions).

Random probability sampling was used to select households to receive a questionnaire, so that each household in an area should have an equal, calculable and non-zero probability of being selected. A random sample of 6,000 addresses of adult residents aged over 18 was selected for each local authority from the Post Office Small Users Address File, and supplied to each authority. Local authorities were instructed to draw from this sampling frame on a random basis and meet the minimum required achieved sample of 1,100. Around fifty authorities stratified their sample in order to ensure adequate coverage of particular areas, such as wards. Weighting was undertaken to adjust for variability in characteristics of respondents.

Local authorities administered the Survey in their area either in-house or by contracting a survey company. The Manual urged local authorities to take all reasonable steps to maximise their response rates, including continuing trying to obtain more completed questionnaires once the minimum number had been reached. Suggestions were made on reasonable steps to be taken to maximise response rates including issuing two reminder letters to non-respondents, pre-paid envelopes and how to brand covering letters.

Authorities submitted their data by the end of January 2009. They also submitted specified meta-data on how the Survey was conducted – for example, the number of questionnaires sent out.

³ <http://www.communities.gov.uk/documents/localgovernment/doc/1153044.doc>

⁴ <http://www.communities.gov.uk/documents/localgovernment/pdf/880078.pdf>

⁵ <http://www.communities.gov.uk/documents/localgovernment/doc/880053.doc>

⁶ <http://www.communities.gov.uk/documents/localgovernment/doc/880095.doc>

Review following 2008 Survey

Following the submission of the 2008 Survey data to CLG, a Statistical Quality Review was commissioned to make recommendations on whether the results and the methodology used to calculate them were of sufficient quality to publish as Official Statistics, using the new Code of Practice for Official Statistics (published by the UK Statistical Authority (UKSA) in January 2009) as the statement of good practice.

The Review made technical and presentational recommendations which were implemented prior to publication of the 2008 Survey results in June and September 2009. These recommendations included a change to the weighting methodology to cap large weights and recalculation of confidence intervals to adhere to the methodology set out in the Technical Annex to the Manual, and a decision to publish data from authorities with low response rates with caveats.

In addition the Review made recommendations for future running of the Place Survey, as follows:

- Response rates in some local authorities were unacceptably low in the view of the Review team, although there was a fairly even spread of responses by ward in such areas. This nevertheless needs further attention next time the Survey is run. Estimating for non-response would be made easier if information was recorded at the point in the chasing-up process at which each questionnaire was returned, given that later responses are likely to have more in common with non-responders.
- In line with other similar surveys, some groups are over-represented in the sample, particularly older people – thus meaning that other groups are under-represented. This means that the weighting has quite a big impact on the estimates in some cases.
- Future Place Survey manuals should give clearer advice on stratification, and how the sample used in a local authority area might most usefully be stratified.
- While it is expected that there will be some differences between the responses to questions from a postal survey (like the Place Survey) and interview surveys, there remain some large differences between responses to the Place Survey and to the same question on other surveys. This needs further investigation in the longer term.
- The next Place Survey should aspire to be conducted to National Statistics standards (i.e. adhering entirely to the Code of Practice), reflecting its importance, whilst recognising the challenges involved in achieving a good response to a postal survey. Continuity of methods with the 2008 Survey is, however, important – to enable valid comparisons to be made between the two years.

A copy of the full Statistical Quality Review report can be found on the CLG website⁷.

In addition to the formal recommendations above, the 2008 Survey and its process were reviewed using feedback from local authorities and a series of Road Show events run by LARIA (the Local Authorities Research and Intelligence Association).

These review processes helped identify a range of issues to be considered prior to running of the next Survey, and we are now assessing whether changes should be made when it is repeated later this year. To do this we have established a Steering Group within CLG to take key decisions concerning the 2010 Survey. This group will be advised by a Reference Group (comprising representatives from the Department, other central government departments (and independent bodies) with an interest in the Survey, and local government), a Technical Advisory Group (including survey experts), and this web-based consultation aimed at key stakeholders and users.

We are keen to ensure that the Survey meets needs and that key planning principles are agreed.

Aims for the 2010 Place Survey

CLG aims to improve both the quality and processes of the 2010 Place Survey, taking on board recommendations set out by the Statistical Review and other feedback that followed the 2008 Survey.

Quality

CLG will be looking for an improvement in the response rate for some local authority areas – while the minimum number of 1,100 responses was successfully met by the vast majority of authorities during the fieldwork period of the 2008 Survey, this was sometimes at the expense of percentage response rates, which can have the effect of introducing bias into the results. CLG therefore plans to place more emphasis on response rate this time around. We will seek further advice from technical experts and discuss best practice with authorities who were able to achieve high rates in 2008, so that we are able to better advise authorities on how to achieve response rates acceptable from such a postal survey. This would help reduce reliance on weighting and increase the robustness of published data at authority level.

CLG will also be looking to increase response from groups underrepresented in the Survey last time around – for example younger people, ethnic minority groups and vulnerable people, again seeking technical advice, best practice and views from this consultation. Additionally there is a need to better understand the nature of non-respondents, possibly by looking at the answers of those people responding relatively late to the Survey who are likely to have most in common with them.

⁷ <http://www.communities.gov.uk/publications/localgovernment/statisticalreviewplacesurvey>

Finally we plan to expand certain sections in the Manual to give additional guidance in areas useful to local authority practitioners – such as advice on how samples might usefully be stratified, and whether addresses that are second homes should be sent a questionnaire.

Process

CLG recognises that it is very important to avoid the uncertainty that surrounded the processes and timings of analysis and publishing of the 2008 results.

We therefore plan to put clear and realistic procedures, publication plans and timetables in place early in the 2010/11 process, ensure that stakeholders are engaged throughout and that communication remains fluent.

The publication of Place Survey results will be pre-announced in accordance with the UKSA guidance at the earliest opportunity.

Data ownership and use

There is also a need for greater clarity about the ownership and use of Place Survey data next time around, and assurance that processes comply with both the UKSA Code of Practice for Official Statistics, and the government commitment to make public data public. It is important that lessons are learned from the 2008 process and there is clarity from the outset about how, when and by whom the data will be processed, published and used to meet all Official Statistics and public data requirements.

Comparability

A key purpose of Survey is to provide 2010 figures comparable to the 2008 baselines, against which progress can be assessed. The importance of comparability was also set out in the Statistical Review.

To ensure that results remain comparable, we therefore do not propose making major changes to the Survey for 2010.

Section 2

Plans for 2010

The Place Survey is due to run again in 2010. This section outlines the plans for the Survey and issues that need to be resolved, and seeks users' views on these.

Maintaining comparability to 2008

The Statistical Review emphasised the importance of continuity of methods with the 2008 Survey, to enable valid comparisons to be made between 2010 data and the 2008 baselines. **To ensure that results remain comparable, we do not propose to make major changes to the Survey for 2010. The following issues are therefore not being consulted on.**

a. Biennial survey

The previous consultation (which took place between December 2007 and February 2008) provided a clear consensus that a biennial survey gave an appropriate balance between cost, burden and user need. The statistical need remains for the Survey to be repeated as it provides data to inform the local performance framework and it is therefore due to run again in 2010.

b. Timing of fieldwork

The previous consultation found that autumn was the favoured time of year to run the Survey in terms of maximising response rates, and the same time of year will be used in 2010. This should allow comparability between the two Surveys.

c. Mode, format and length of Survey

The postal methodology was the favoured option from the previous consultation, balancing cost against the required sample size. These reasons still stand, and it is important to use the same survey mode in 2010 to ensure comparability with the 2008 results. The 2010 core questionnaire will follow the same format as previously and will be of a similar length.

d. Technical Methodology

To ensure comparability with the previous results, the methodology used in 2010 will be the same as that used for calculation of the final 2008 results (including those recommendations set out in the Statistical Review).

Issues for consideration

Issue 1 – Content of core questionnaire

Questions

2010 is the second year that the Place Survey will run, and we do not propose to make any major changes to the questionnaire in terms of questions asked, response options provided or its layout.

This is to ensure that comparability to the 2008 results is retained and to provide a second set of data points for the questions. The 2008 questionnaire design process was subject to consultation, cognitive testing, piloting and review (during the Statistical Quality Review). For 2010 we aim to improve the quality of data collected, rather than make changes to what is collected.

Changes to wording of questions – Changing the wording of existing core questions or their response options would result in a loss of comparability to the 2008 results, which is one of the main aims of the 2010 Survey. However we will be looking to correct an error in the response options of Q32 (number of adults aged 18 or over living at the address) in Section 9: About Yourself.

Removal of questions – It is likely that data from all current questions are being used in some individual local areas or by other stakeholders, and removing questions from this second Survey would cut off the data source and damage the time series. Removing questions could also have the effect of changing the context of other questions, and interrupting the flow of the Survey, thus risking damage to comparability more generally.

Addition of questions – Similarly adding questions would risk changing the context and flow of existing questions, and jeopardise comparability. New questions would increase length of the questionnaire, which could risk reductions to response rate.

We therefore do not propose to make major changes to the questionnaire content, response options or layout for 2010, but welcome views on this proposal and will consider strong arguments for changes.

Definition of local area

The 2008 Place Survey defined “local area” as follows:

“Local area is defined as 15-20 minutes walking distance from the respondent’s home”

This is in line with the definition used by the Department’s Citizenship Survey.

During the feedback process concern was raised this definition is not suitable for some sparsely populated rural areas, and that the standard definition should be expanded to include a caveat to make it more meaningful for these areas in terms of the outcomes that are being measured – for example, by using the following type of addition to the wording:

“Local area is defined as 15-20 minutes walking distance from the respondent’s home (unless in a very rural area, where you should consider local area to mean ...)”

We recognise that the current wording may not be ideal for all areas, but have found it difficult to derive a succinct and workable revised definition. Changing the definition at this stage could jeopardise comparability with 2008 results in very rural areas if respondents’ views are systematically affected by a change to wording, and also bring the Place Survey out of line with the Citizenship Survey.

We would therefore welcome further views on this.

Questions:

1. Should we make any changes to the existing core questionnaire content – questions, response options or layout – for 2010? Should we consider changing the wording of any questions, removing questions or adding questions?
2. Should we consider expanding the definition of “local area” to include a caveat for sparsely populated rural areas, and if so, how? Is there a risk to damaging comparability with the 2008 results for such areas if we were to do so?

Issue 2 – Inclusion of additional questions of local interest

The consultation that took place ahead of the 2008 Survey found that the majority of respondents were in favour of enabling authorities to add a limited number of additional questions of local interest and reflecting local priorities, to the end of the core questionnaire. The majority also agreed that provision of a question bank – including a set of questions with standard wording, compiled in collaboration with key stakeholders – from which to select these additional questions was a sensible approach. The number of additional questions included by authorities was restricted by the overall maximum questionnaire length of twelve pages.

Initial analysis suggests that there is no evidence that use of additional questions reduced response rates in 2008 for those authorities that chose to include them, even though they would have led to a longer questionnaire. However the use of such questions was limited to a minority of authorities – eighty three authorities used this flexibility in 2008.

We would therefore welcome views as to whether the option to include additional questions should continue in the same way for the 2010 Survey, or whether there should be a move to a standardised, core questionnaire for use by all authorities.

Questions:

3. Should authorities continue to be able to add a limited number of additional questions to the end of the questionnaire? Should these be restricted to standardised questions from a question bank?

Issue 3 – Response rates

Low response rates in certain areas were identified as an area for improvement by the Statistical Quality Review. This is a subject that CLG are working to address in 2010, and we would be interested to hear views on good practice and how improvements could be made following the experience of 2008.

Response from under-represented groups

The Statistical Review found that response rates in some local authorities was unacceptably low in the view of the Review team in 2008, and recommended that this issue be addressed in 2010. It also identified that certain groups were underrepresented in Survey responses – including younger people – which is likely to be in part a result of the postal methodology used. We are therefore considering whether making an option available to complete the form on-line could increase response for certain groups. The postal survey mode would not be affected – the household would be selected at random and sent a paper copy of the questionnaire as previously – but the option to complete an identical electronic rather than paper version of the questionnaire could be offered.

We would welcome views as to whether it would be feasible for local authorities or their contractors to provide this additional on-line response option; whether you believe it could increase response rates from under-represented groups; and whether it could cause comparability problems if some authorities were able to offer the option and others were not.

Collecting information about point of response

The Review also suggested that collecting information about the point in the chasing up process at which each questionnaire was returned could be used to estimate the effect of non-response, given that the later responses – for example those completing the form after the first and second reminder – are likely to have more in common with non-respondents. As outlined in 2008, there is evidence that use of two reminders is helpful in eliciting responses from harder to reach groups in the community who would often not have responded initially. Recording the date of receipt of the form by the local authority could be used as a proxy for the stage of the chasing process at which the form was completed. Again we would welcome views.

Questions:

4. Would it be feasible for local authorities or their contractors to provide an additional on-line response option to the Survey; do you believe it could increase response rates from under-represented groups; and could comparability problems arise if some authorities were able to offer the option and others were not?
5. Would collection of information about the point of response be helpful? Would it create additional burden on authorities or their contractors?
6. Do you have any examples of good practice or other views on how to improve response rates for 2010?

Issue 4 – Statistical outputs

The 2008 Place Survey results were published by CLG in 2009 – the national indicator figures and other key results in June, and the remaining results in September. The publications took the form of two short Statistical Releases^{8,9} with accompanying tables showing results at a national, regional and local authority level.

We are interested in user requirements for the statistical outputs for the 2010 Survey, and are seeking views.

Staggered results

The 2008 results were published in two stages in order to release the national indicator results and other key figures into the public domain as soon as possible after completion of the Statistical Quality Review.

The Code of Practice for Official Statistics sets out clear guidance about the quality of statistical outputs, and also that they should be released as soon as they are judged ready and that user needs are accounted for in setting the timetable for release.

We are therefore seeking views on whether users would prefer similarly staggered results following the 2010 Survey (with headline figures released earlier than the full set of results), or whether a single more comprehensive Release be issued (which is likely to take longer to compile).

⁸ <http://www.communities.gov.uk/publications/corporate/statistics/placesurvey2008>

⁹ <http://www.communities.gov.uk/publications/corporate/statistics/placesurvey2008update>

Content of Statistical Release and other outputs

We would also be interested to hear views on the content of CLG's Statistical Release(s) that follow the 2010 Survey, in terms of analysis and tables that would be useful to users, again bearing in mind that more detailed releases would be likely to take longer for CLG to produce.

Finally, other CLG-run Surveys (including the Citizenship Survey and English Housing Survey) lodge their full (non-disclosive) respondent level datasets at the UK Data Archive, to enable further analysis and adhere to the commitment to make public data public. CLG would like to be able to do the same for the Place Survey 2010 dataset, but we would be interested to hear views on whether this would be a useful resource, or whether there are any concerns about doing so.

Questions:

7. Should CLG release Place Survey 2010 data in two successive Statistical Releases (as last time), in order to release key headline data as soon as possible, or should we publish all Place Survey 2010 results at the same time (this may mean that users would have to wait longer for key headline data)?
8. What analysis and tables would you be interested in seeing in the Place Survey 2010 Statistical Release(s)? Would you be interested in the lodging of a non-disclosive version of the respondent level dataset at the UK Data Archive, or do you have any concerns about this?

Section 3

Consultation questions

In summary the full list of questions asked in this consultation is:

1. Should we make any changes to the existing core questionnaire content – questions, response options or layout – for 2010? Should we consider changing the wording of any questions, removing questions or adding questions?
2. Should we consider expanding the definition of “local area” to include a caveat for sparsely populated rural areas, and if so, how? Is there a risk to damaging comparability with the 2008 results for such areas if we were to do so?
3. Should authorities continue to be able to add a limited number of additional questions to the end of the questionnaire? Should these be restricted to standardised questions from a question bank?
4. Would it be feasible for local authorities or their contractors to provide an additional on-line response option to the Survey; do you believe it could increase response rates from under-represented groups; and could comparability problems arise if some authorities were able to offer the option and others were not?
5. Would collection of information about the point of response be helpful? Would it create additional burden on authorities or their contractors?
6. Do you have any examples of good practice or other views on how to improve response rates for 2010?
7. Should CLG release Place Survey 2010 data in two successive Statistical Releases (as last time), in order to release key headline data as soon as possible, or should we publish all Place Survey 2010 results at the same time (this may mean that users would have to wait longer for key headline data)?
8. What analysis and tables would you be interested in seeing in the Place Survey 2010 Statistical Release(s)? Would you be interested in the lodging of a non-disclosive version of the respondent level dataset at the UK Data Archive, or do you have any concerns about this?
9. **Do you have any further comments on plans for the 2010 Survey?**

Section 4

Confidentiality and data protection

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

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

Section 5

How to respond

This statistical consultation will run for 6 weeks from Tuesday 30 March, closing at 5pm on Monday 10 May.

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

Please send your consultation response (by email or post) to:

PlaceSurvey@communities.gov.uk

c/o Janice Newman
Local Governance Research Unit
Communities and Local Government
3/H6, Eland House
Bressenden Place
London
SW1E 5DU

Section 6

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 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
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