

The New Place Survey: Recent Publications

On 7th July 2008, the Department for Communities and Local Government published several documents relating to the Place Survey. These included a summary of the responses received to the consultation document "The New Place Survey" and a technical manual.

Consultation responses and actions

Published on 17th December 2007, the consultation sought views on the definitions of the indicators to be collected through the Place Survey, and set out proposals for its methodology and content.

In total, 435 responses were received to the consultation from local councils, individuals and public sector organisations. The initial findings and recommendations have been shared with the relevant Government Departments and other agencies, including the LGA, Audit Commission, ACPO and local government representatives.

There was a reoccurring theme endorsing the principle of having a questionnaire on 'place' and of involving local people in the work of local authorities. It was stated that the Place Survey should focus on residents' views on their area rather than their views about the local authority.

Although the overall principle of the Place Survey was supported, reservations were expressed as to whether the content of the questionnaire as set out in the consultation document was viable as a questionnaire.

Perceived shortcomings included the questions being overly negative

in content (focusing on 'problems'), illogical question layout and too many antisocial behaviour questions. The definition of 'area' and the inconsistent meaning of area/ neighbourhood between questions were widely criticised, making the parameters of each question unclear for respondents. It was suggested that further work would need to be done to make some of the questions which had previously been used in face to face surveys, useable within a postal survey.

Based upon the responses to the consultation, the Government has decided that 19 national indicators will be sourced from the place survey (including N10 - visits to museums and galleries). In addition, the following have been agreed:

- The Place Survey will use an area brand.
- A more consistent and robust definition of area has been developed and agreed with key stakeholders for piloting and, if successful, use in the Place Survey.
- The covering letter of the Place Survey has been revised to clearly state what the survey is about, why the information is needed and how it will be used.
- A postal methodology will be used

- Two reminders will be sent out following the initial mail out with the questionnaire attached to each reminder.
- Communities and Local Government proposal of conducting a biennial survey with an autumn fieldwork period will be implemented with the first survey being carried out in 2008.
- The wording and layout of the questionnaire questions has been revised, including adding further questions to improve the flow of the questionnaire and reviewing the classificatory questions.
- A standard set of voluntary questions has been devised.
- Although the commissioning and administration of the survey could be undertaken entirely separately in two-tier areas, Communities and Local Government encourages a collaborative approach across the county and districts to help achieve economies of scale and reduce financial burdens.

The full document can be accessed at www.communities.gov.uk/documents/localgovernment/pdf/880186.pdf