

**Rachel Murphy**

English Housing Survey Team  
Strategic Statistics Division  
Department for Communities and Local  
Government  
Fry Building, 2 Marsham St  
London SW1P 4DF

**Date:** 11 Feb 2015

**Consultation on the future of the English Housing Survey**

Thank you for the opportunity to respond on behalf of the Greater London Authority to the consultation on the future of the English Housing Survey (EHS).

The EHS data (that is, the raw data deposited with the UK Data Archive) is a uniquely important resource for the GLA, as it is the sole source of data available to inform and monitor a range of key Mayoral policies. The EHS was also the most important single data source for the 2013 London Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA), which provided evidence on London's future housing needs to inform the London Plan and the Mayor's 2050 Infrastructure Plan. More details of the uses made by the GLA of EHS data are provided below.

- London Housing Strategy: EHS data on a range of topics was used to inform the development of the Mayor's statutory London Housing Strategy and to present key facts in the Strategy document itself. Analyses used included estimates of overcrowding by tenure (including the trend in severe overcrowding, which is used to monitor a Mayoral target), affordability, energy efficiency, decent homes and satisfaction with accommodation. A wide range of EHS data was also analysed for purposes of the GLA's 'Housing in London' report, the evidence base for the Housing Strategy.
- Strategic Housing Market Assessment and London Plan: The GLA produced its own SHMA in 2013, at considerable saving to the public purse, by making intensive use of EHS data to analyse patterns of demographics, affordability and housing need in London. Without up to date EHS data it would not have been possible to produce the SHMA in its current form, and a key part of the evidence base for the Further Alterations to the London Plan could have been undermined. These alterations significantly increased the housing targets in the London Plan, a vital part of the Mayor's policy to ensure that London provides the homes it needs over the coming years. The SHMA results were also used as a key input into the Mayor's 2050 Infrastructure Plan, a document that set out London's future requirements for infrastructure investment totalling hundreds of billions of pounds.

While appreciating the need to make the best use of scarce public funding, the GLA would strongly support the retention of the EHS in as close to its current form as possible, in particular with the same frequency and at least the same sample size. The frequency and sample size of the survey are particularly important to the GLA, as for many applications we must already combine several years' worth of data (usually three) to produce reasonably robust estimates. Any 'pause' or move to a biennial survey would require aggregating data over an even longer period, substantially reducing the timeliness and relevance of the results, and could affect the GLA's ability to carry out a new SHMA for the next London Plan review on the model of the 2013 report.

Depending on the results of this consultation exercise, there may be scope to reduce the level of detail on some topics. To assist in any such re-scoping we provide below a list of particularly important topics which should continue to be covered in detail. Individually, some of these variables are available from other sources (for example, energy efficiency from the National Energy Efficiency Data-framework), but these sources do not allow the cross-tabulation against key variables of interest such as tenure or income that makes the EHS so valuable.

Priority variables:

- Tenure
- Detailed demographics (age, sex, relationships, ethnicity, etc)
- Income and housing costs
- Number of bedrooms and bedroom standard
- Length of residence and reasons for moving
- Tenure aspirations and satisfaction with home and with tenure
- Housing problems - e.g. harassment
- Dwelling age
- Floor area
- Number of floors in building
- Decent homes, HHSRS and cost of investment required
- Energy efficiency level and installed measures
- Spatial variables such as region and area typology

I and GLA colleagues would be keen to meet with you to explain these comments more fully before any firm decisions are made on changes to the EHS. In the meantime, if you need any more detail please contact James Gleeson (020 7983 4817 or [james.gleeson@london.gov.uk](mailto:james.gleeson@london.gov.uk)).

Yours sincerely



**Jamie Ratcliff**

Assistant Director - Programme, Policy and Services  
Housing and Land  
Greater London Authority