

Monitoring Provision of Housing through the Planning System Towards Better Practice



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SECTION 1.

Why monitor?

Plan, monitor and manage

Planning Policy Guidance note 3: *Housing* (PPG3) sets out a new policy direction for the delivery of housing through the planning system based upon the ‘plan, monitor and manage’ approach. An essential feature of plan, monitor and manage is that housing requirements and the way they are to be met should be kept under regular review. In particular, PPG3 requires effective monitoring to underpin “*the strategy of maintaining an adequate supply of land and buildings for housing and to enable its managed release*”¹. Monitoring, generally, is the key to successful forward planning. It should form the basis on which the regional planning body periodically manages the review and roll forward of the regional strategy and local planning authorities keep their plans up to date.

Paragraph 77 of PPG3 lists the features of housing supply and characteristics of new residential development which should be central to monitoring activity. These are the focus of this guide and are set out in Table 1. The guide also provides pointers to what could be monitored to understand better the housing context in which planning policies are developed and delivered.

Monitoring the effectiveness of planning strategies in regional planning guidance and development plans will involve a range of issues in addition to those covered in this guide, for example the impact of planning policies on the natural environment. This guide should, therefore, be read alongside the guidance on monitoring in PPG11² and PPG12³.

The guide is based on a programme of research with local planning authorities. The advice it contains draws from current examples of good practice but reflects the need for monitoring to reflect the new expectations set out in PPG3. Its purpose is to provide a starting point for establishing good practice in monitoring the provision of housing through the planning system. It does not change the requirements of local authorities to make available information to DETR about housebuilding and the dwelling stock in their area, for example in the Housing Flows Reconciliation⁴ return or annual HIP Operational Information return.

1 PPG3, paragraph 76.

2 PPG11: *Regional Planning*, Chapter 16. See also the forthcoming guide to setting targets and indicators.

3 PPG12: *Development Plans*, Chapter 2. See also *Development Plans: a good practice guide* HMSO 1992.

4 The new annual *Housing Flows Reconciliation* return is being provided by local authorities on a pilot basis from 2000/01, and substantively from 2001/02. Its purpose is to consolidate a range of DETR housing data returns in the one form.

Effective monitoring

Monitoring is critical in developing and implementing a sound policy framework to achieve the overall land use objectives for an area. It helps address two central questions:

- *are policies being applied?*

if not, is this because the policy is faulty in some way and needs to be reviewed or is it because implementation procedures need to be changed?

- *are they the right policies?*

if not, can the policies be revised or are new policies needed?

Monitoring should be integral to policy development and review. Information collection and the monitoring of trends is seldom useful in itself. An effective monitoring system should:

- inform the development of policies in plans and regional planning guidance; and,
- provide an early warning when policies are not being implemented, not meeting objectives or are being overtaken by events.

Table 1: Planning for housing: scope of monitoring

Aspect	Scope of monitoring
Housing supply	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • numbers of dwellings provided in a plan area • proportion of dwellings provided on previously-developed land and through conversions of existing buildings • numbers of dwellings provided on windfall sites • numbers of affordable dwellings provided
Development characteristics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • variety of types and mix of sizes of housing • density of new development • car parking provision
Understanding the housing context	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • population • housing need • housing stock • unpopular housing

The basis of good practice in monitoring is to develop policies which are clear, precise and capable of being monitored.

Policies with clear targets – for example, the percentage of new dwellings to be built on previously-developed land – provide the best basis for effective monitoring. Providing the information is to hand, monitoring the application of such policies is relatively straightforward.

Policies which express an overall objective but do not include quantified targets – for example, a general encouragement to provide a variety of dwelling types – are less satisfactory. The application of the policy can be monitored but its success without reference to a target is hard to judge.

This guide will help local planning authorities draft precise and measurable policies. In the interim, there is still a need to monitor the impact of existing qualitative policies. For instance, where a policy encourages mix and variety in housing provision, but without quantification, the dwelling mix of new schemes can be monitored and reported to show both the mix of what is being permitted/built and whether that mix is changing over time. Geographic differences can also be identified, for example within districts/unitary authorities' areas and between those in the same county or region. For such a policy, monitoring performs a valuable role in identifying the direction of change and comparative performance. Coupled with better knowledge about local housing requirements, this information should then be used to define a more precise policy in the future.

Some policies may require a two-part approach to monitoring. For example, in the case of a policy which looks for the provision of affordable housing on sites which meet certain criteria (size, location etc) the questions that have to be asked are, first, whether the policy is being applied to the right sites (in terms of criteria set out in the plan) and, second, what is the number of affordable dwellings achieved on each site? Monitoring will identify whether the policy is being applied in the correct circumstances and (assuming it is being applied correctly) the effect of the policy. Again, monitoring can help refine the precision of the policy, preferably with clear quantification, so as to facilitate a better understanding of its impact.

Responsibility for monitoring

This guide is directed primarily at district and unitary authorities, as the main source and collectors of information. Other arrangements for monitoring which have been found to work successfully are not precluded and full use should be made of monitoring mechanisms already in place where these have proved reliable. Local planning authorities are encouraged to adopt the most cost-effective approach to information collection to support their monitoring arrangements.

How information is collected and shared between authorities is a matter for local consideration and agreement. However, the monitoring activities of district and unitary authorities should be planned and co-ordinated in a manner that allows for effective monitoring and reporting by structure planning authorities⁵ and at the regional level. It is therefore essential that a consistent approach to monitoring and reporting is adopted by constituent authorities in their areas.

⁵ This refers to the 'two tier' arrangement of local government where county authorities prepare structure plans and to the situation where a joint body prepares a structure plan on behalf of a group of unitary authorities or other joint structure plan arrangements between shire counties and unitary authorities.

SECTION 2.

Monitoring in practice

Establishing a framework

An effective monitoring system should address a number of distinct aspects of planning for housing. The table in section 1 sets out these broad categories and, within these, what should be monitored. This section considers in more detail the practical implications of monitoring and provides advice on each aspect and on what should be monitored.

Before starting any monitoring work, there needs to be clarity about the monitoring framework to be established. Questions to be asked include:

- what is to be monitored?
- what information needs to be collected?
- how reliable is the information and how should it be interpreted?
- how will the information collected be reported?

In developing the framework it is important to consider both permissions granted and additions to the stock. Monitoring permissions produces information about whether policies are 'biting' and highlights early on if policies are proving difficult to implement or producing unwelcome and/or unexpected outputs. Monitoring the number and characteristics of completions⁶ in an area demonstrates the scale and type of new homes being added to the stock. It must always be remembered that completions can be the product of out of date policies and are not always by themselves a reliable barometer of current policy.

Housing supply

NUMBERS OF DWELLINGS PROVIDED IN A PLAN AREA

Dwelling completions

The information supplied to DETR by local authorities in the Housing Flows Reconciliation return will provide the basic data on housebuilding and stock change – from new buildings, conversions (to or from a dwelling) and demolitions⁷. There should be consistency between the information supplied to DETR, that used for local monitoring purposes and the information provided to regional planning bodies. Definitions should be clear and in particular stock changes should be capable of being described in terms of net additions (as it is the net increase in housing stock that provides the opportunity to meet housing requirements). There can be confusion and misunderstandings when different numbers describing the same thing are used in different places.

⁶ Completions here includes conversions and change of use as well as new build.

⁷ DETR provides separate advice to local authorities on completing its Housing Flows Reconciliation return.

Monitoring permissions

By monitoring planning permissions, planning authorities can identify the potential amount of housebuilding activity for future years. Comparison between annual completions and permissions granted gives a broad indication of the strength of the local market for new dwellings and conversions.

At any one time, there will be a 'stock' of permissions – that is, permissions granted in previous years (and which have not lapsed) and where completions have yet to occur. Comparison between the stock of permissions and the rate of completions provides another indication of the state of the market and can help inform the managed release of land.

Recording committee decisions (and the details of the application to which they relate) together with permissions granted under delegated powers provides the basis for monitoring permissions. In monitoring permissions, care must be taken to avoid the double counting that may arise from different types of permission (outline/reserved matters, etc) relating to the same development proposal or through a site benefiting from a number of permissions which are mutually exclusive.

Generally it should be sufficient to record only outline and full permissions because these define the amount and character of the housing to be provided. However on some sites, particularly very large schemes, this simple rule can give a misleading picture. The exact numbers and character of dwellings eventually permitted may only emerge as reserved matters are dealt with – often for individual phases of a development. Therefore, local planning authorities should ensure that, where necessary, they track the progress of proposals.

There is no single best way to deal with this matter and the appropriate response will depend on the amount of information provided with the outline application and how much detail of the site's development is resolved through reserved matters applications. It is therefore crucial that there is consistency and transparency about what is being monitored and that planning authorities which share information adopt a common approach.

There also needs to be consistency in recording permissions (of whatever type). They should only be 'counted' on the date shown on the permission (or decision letter when the application has been considered by the Secretary of State) and there needs to be clarity in the expression of anticipated yields (normally net).

Delivery rates

Planning authorities can assess the delivery rate of permissions – that is the number of dwelling completions that a stock of permissions is likely to generate and over what time.

By building up a picture of trends in delivery rates, a planning authority is in a better position to understand the levels of windfall development it can anticipate and the sites for housing and buildings for conversion and re-use it needs to identify to meet its housing requirements. Developing a robust understanding of delivery rates is an important element of the plan, monitor and manage approach set out in PPG3.

By comparing delivery rates for different types of site (for example, between sites on previously-developed land and land not previously developed, between allocated sites and windfalls) a fuller picture is built up. This adds to the understanding of the amount of land (and what sort of land) that needs to be made available to achieve a desired level of housing completions over a period of time.

PROPORTION OF DWELLINGS PROVIDED ON PREVIOUSLY-DEVELOPED LAND AND THROUGH CONVERSIONS OF EXISTING BUILDINGS

In their Housing Flows Reconciliation return to DETR, local authorities are asked to record the number of dwelling completions on undeveloped and previously-developed sites and can therefore assess the relative contribution of each⁸. This information should be consistent with that used to assess performance against the Best Value indicators, set out by DETR's Best Value Indicators for 2000/01 (SI 2000 N0 896) and with that used to assess performance against the national target⁹.

Planning authorities also need to monitor permissions granted to establish how many dwellings permitted are on previously-developed and how many on greenfield sites. This is particularly important, especially in the early years after the introduction of PPG3, as it is the pattern of permissions which will provide a fuller picture of changing policy responses and allow authorities to predict future performance.

Annex C of PPG3 provides the definition of previously-developed land that should be used for all monitoring purposes. In monitoring planning permissions and completions on such sites, local authorities can draw on the work undertaken for the National Land Use Database to classify different kinds of previously-developed sites. For example, vacant and derelict sites or those in current use which are allocated or have permission for redevelopment.

As well as classifying sites into the two broad categories of previously-developed and greenfield, planning authorities may find it useful to have a better understanding of the sources of previously-developed sites. This information will help in building up a picture of trends in the change of land uses in their area; for example, of the type and former use of previously-developed land.

NUMBERS OF DWELLINGS PROVIDED ON WINDFALL SITES

Delivery rates and previous use of windfall sites (compared with those for allocated sites) should be analysed. This will be valuable information in future plan reviews and (along with urban housing capacity studies¹⁰) will help in assessing the likely future contribution that can be expected from windfalls.

NUMBERS OF AFFORDABLE DWELLINGS PROVIDED

In monitoring permissions for affordable dwellings and the numbers provided, planning authorities have experienced difficulties as the number of such dwellings (and their specific tenure and dwelling type) on mixed tenure schemes are often only resolved through a planning obligation. It is therefore particularly important that permissions are carefully tracked and that the right systems are in place so that development control officers understand the importance of relaying information about permissions granted to those who are responsible for monitoring.

⁸ Conversions (be they residential to residential or from another use to residential) count as development on previously-developed land.

⁹ The national target is that by 2008, 60% of additional housing should be provided on previously-developed land and through conversions of existing buildings. This is measured in terms of new builds on previously-developed land plus net conversions, as a percentage of the total of all new builds and net conversions in each year. Previously-developed land is defined as in PPG3.

¹⁰ See PPG3 paragraph 24.

PPG3 asks local planning authorities to ensure that full information about planning obligations involving affordable housing is placed on the statutory planning register¹¹. This transparency in information about permissions for affordable housing should be helpful in ensuring the accurate monitoring of such developments.

Affordable housing in rural areas, which is permitted in accordance with a rural exception policy, should be recorded separately.

Development characteristics

THE VARIETY OF TYPES AND MIX OF SIZES OF HOUSING

PPG3 requires local planning authorities to formulate policies that secure an appropriate mix of dwelling size and type¹².

The Housing Flows Reconciliation return asks for information about the housing type and number of bedrooms for new housing. This can provide a starting point for reviewing existing policies, for developing more precise policies and for assessing the appropriateness and form of new policies.

There are other ways in which variety in dwelling provision can be described. The appropriate measures will depend on local circumstances. These might include:

- number of bedspaces per unit;
- habitable rooms per unit; and
- amount of floor area per unit.

DENSITY OF NEW DEVELOPMENT

PPG3 also requires local authorities to avoid the inefficient use of land, encourages housing developments which make more efficient use of land (expressed as dwellings per hectare net) and explains the circumstances where greater intensity of development should be sought¹³.

The implementation of density policies, their effectiveness and impact, will need to be monitored and, as with all monitoring, used to help review and refine relevant policies. Where there are no policies in place, monitoring the density of new developments is still important. It allows authorities to build up a picture of what is being achieved and provides the information needed to develop policies in the future.

Planning authorities will need information on the size of sites and the number of dwellings to be developed. This information provides the basis for analysing the density of development on sites granted planning permission.

¹¹ See PPG3 paragraph 20.

¹² See paragraphs 9 to 11.

¹³ See PPG3 paragraphs 57 and 58.

The density of new development needs to be calculated and recorded in a consistent way. Annex C of PPG3 provides advice on this. The densities recorded in the National Land Use Database are also on this basis.

CAR PARKING PROVISION

PPG3 requires authorities to revise their parking policies to allow for significantly lower levels of off-street parking provision, particularly for certain kinds and location of development¹⁴. Monitoring parking provision of both new housing completions and permissions will provide information helpful to authorities in revising parking standards and in identifying areas and development types most amenable to lower levels of provision. Thereafter, the monitoring process will assist authorities in keeping parking policies under review.

Understanding the housing context

There is a variety of factors that authorities can usefully take into account when defining their policies. For example, information on population, knowledge of the prices paid for housing¹⁵ and the condition and changing nature of the housing stock provide important background to monitoring the implementation of existing policies and in policy review.

A menu of possible indicators to appreciate this wider context is set out in Table 2 and Annex 2 provides a fuller description of these and the data sources which can be drawn on. Some indicators are best used at the authority-wide level, whilst others help identify geographic differences within an authority.

The list is not intended to prescribe information which should be collected – it indicates what could be considered (and pursued or rejected as appropriate to local circumstances). It should be read alongside the guidance to regional planning bodies on monitoring set out in PPG11, including on contextual indicators which go wider than housing issues. Plan, monitor and manage is concerned with the full range of social, economic and environmental interests.

Keeping track of the housing market, in all its different aspects, is a particularly important element of planning for the housing needs of the whole community. The 'housing market' should not be seen solely as the 'for sale' market. Monitoring should be concerned with all tenures of housing – be it for sale for owner occupation, private rent, social rent or other forms of affordable housing. It should also address all aspects of supply and demand. For example, local planning authorities should work closely with housing departments to assess and monitor the housing needs of those in their area¹⁶. Reviewing assessments of need, as well as monitoring the provision of affordable and special needs housing, will enable planning authorities to match more accurately need and supply; and, where necessary, review and revise plan policies.

¹⁴ See PPG3 paragraphs 59 to 62.

¹⁵ This refers to those who buy their home and those who rent.

¹⁶ DETR has issued further advice to assist local authorities in preparing local housing need assessments.

Table 2: Indicators for monitoring the housing context	
	Indicator
Population	Forecasts and estimates of population Forecasts and estimates of households and household types
Housing need	Need of those unable to afford general market housing Price Statutory homelessness
Housing stock	Size, tenure and type Condition Vacancies Second homes Demolitions
Unpopular housing	Differentials in house prices and time taken to sell Differentials in vacancies – market, local authority, RSL and private rented stock

SECTION 3.

Reporting

PPG12 requires local authorities to publish the results of plan monitoring on a regular basis¹⁷. At present, however, the reporting of results of any monitoring of housing activity which is undertaken by planning authorities is not universal – some authorities provide internal reports, some publish their reports, some do not comment on information in any routine way.

Regional planning bodies are asked to provide *annual* monitoring reports¹⁸. Planning authorities, at both local and strategic levels, are encouraged to adopt the same practice of regular public reporting on monitoring activities as part of plan, monitor and manage.

As well as providing a factual account of activity and market trends, annual reports provide an opportunity to explain and interpret information. The annual report, for example, could show what progress was being made in achieving the objectives set out in regional planning guidance and the development plan. The following are questions that could be addressed:

- are policies being implemented?
- if not, what are the reasons for this?
- what types of housing are being planned for (i.e. being granted permission) – how do they relate to PPG3 objectives and to the development plan?
- what types of site are being permitted for housing development – e.g. how much of this is on previously-developed land?
- how well does the amount and type of housing being planned for relate to the (changing) local circumstances?
- what do the indicators show to be the impact of the plan policies and the way they are being implemented?

As well as considering the local authority area as a whole, an annual report could also show where there are differences between areas within the same local authority.

The format of a monitoring report is a matter for local judgement. However, it could usefully address the main issues set out in the previous section and in particular the characteristics of housing completed during the year and permissions granted described in relation to each of the main aspects set out in paragraph 77 of PPG3¹⁹.

¹⁷ See PPG12 Chapter 2.

¹⁸ PPG11 Chapter 16.

¹⁹ See Annex 1.

Reports need not be overly long (say 6 to 8 pages) but should be well laid out and preferably well-illustrated with charts, graphs and maps. A common format repeated one year to the next can help the reader understand changes in local performance and the issues faced in their area. The information should be provided in a consistent format.

The timetabling of an annual report should allow it to feed into the regional monitoring process. Otherwise the timing of the report should be a matter of local judgement and agreement.

SECTION 4.

Information sources and their use

Housing completions

The DETR Housing Flows Reconciliation (HFR) return referred to earlier asks for much of the information about housing completions which will be needed to achieve effective monitoring of housebuilding activity.

However, some of the information about housing completions discussed in this guide is not covered by the HFR (e.g. contribution of windfall sites, delivery rates, density and car parking). There will therefore be a need to supplement the information drawn from the HFR return.

It will be important for planning authorities to put in place systems (be they manual or computerised) which allow the characteristics of housing completions to be identified by linking them back to the details collected when the housing was granted permission. As information about the characteristics of permissions is recorded systematically, information about the type of housing being built (and/or provided through conversions) will be easier to assemble. There may be a need for original survey work to monitor all relevant characteristics of completions.

The report of the Planning Information Group (PILG) Task Force on Housing Flow Statistics²⁰ made a number of recommendations about the introduction of common addressable systems to provide for better co-ordination of information within local authorities. Adoption of these principles has a wider application than just monitoring progress in planning for housing but the benefits for such monitoring would be significant – particularly in providing the full range of information about housing completions set out in this guide. The introduction of common addressable systems will also enable links to the National Land Use Database (NLUD).

Data capture for permissions

The planning application form can be key to authorities easily identifying and collecting information about the characteristics of proposed housing development. In considering what information should be sought, planning authorities need to review, in the light of the new policy in PPG3, what information they need in order to determine an application²¹.

²⁰ The Task Force report is available at the DETR website on www.housing.detr.gov.uk

²¹ See Regulation 3 and 4 of the Town and Country Planning (Applications) Regulations 1988.

The list below provides examples of information types on which authorities may wish to seek details via planning application forms:

- site location;
- site area²²;
- number of dwellings proposed;
- existing dwellings on site and numbers to be lost;
- current use of site and last known use (and date of cessation) if vacant (using the NLUD classification scheme);
- car parking spaces (existing and proposed);
- number of affordable dwellings proposed;
- type of dwellings (flat/bedsit/house/bungalow as appropriate); and
- size of dwellings by bedrooms (or other consistently used definition, as appropriate).

Authorities need also to consider how best to keep track of any amendments proposed by the applicant.

Making best use of other local authority information

Planning departments will be able to collect the basic information required to monitor house building activity, stock changes and planning permissions. But other departments²³ within the authority collect other types of information that will assist in monitoring activities, particularly in monitoring housing market trends (in their broadest sense) and in assessing the wider context. Sharing relevant information between departments is good practice and is strongly encouraged.

Housing departments collect information that can be important in developing an understanding of local housing needs and, in particular, about affordable housing. District council/UA's Housing Strategies typically provide information on changes in the Housing Register and homelessness, patterns of relets, housing association activity etc. All of this is useful information in monitoring the local housing market.

In monitoring the complete picture of annual changes to the affordable housing stock in their area, there are three information sources which need to be considered. First, authorities are asked to supply information to DETR (in the Housing Flows Reconciliation return) on completions, conversions and demolitions of housing provided by the local

²² Where appropriate, distinguishing between net and gross.

²³ It is appreciated that local authorities organise themselves according to local circumstances and that the specific department names referred to may not relate to named departments in authorities. The terms used are generic.

authority and registered social landlords. This provides part of the picture of affordable housing provision. Second, other additions to the affordable stock can come from specifically identified low cost market sale dwellings and even some forms of private market rent. Third, dwellings may transfer from the affordable stock to the private sector, for example through right to buy sales or shared ownership properties that are bought outright. The Housing Flows Reconciliation return also asks for information on this. Further details of these sources are provided in Annex 2.

Local housing need surveys, often led by housing departments, provide a 'snap shot' picture of local need for affordable housing to set alongside information collected more regularly.

Other data systems maintained by local authorities as part of their normal activities can provide useful sources of information. These systems are developed to meet particular duties and definitions used may not always be the same as those normally appropriate to planning. But this does not lessen the value of these alternative data sources – it just requires understanding of exactly what the information means.

Through the collection of council tax, authorities collect information on:

- vacant dwellings;
- other dwellings which are not a main residence; and
- dwellings with only one adult (but children could also be present).

Personal information collected for council tax purposes cannot be disclosed for any other purpose. It may however be possible to use aggregate data for statistical purposes. The responsibility for ensuring compliance with the Data Protection Act lies with the local authority.

External data sources

There are various sources of information about the sale housing market that can be used to identify trends in local house prices and to compare these with trends in neighbouring areas and/or the wider region and nationwide. These include information provided by HM Land Registry, certain lenders (notably Halifax plc and Nationwide) and DETR (Mortgage Lenders Survey).

The Valuation Office provides information on values of land for residential development for regions and the main towns and cities in its Property Market Report. Information is published twice yearly and marketed by Estates Gazette.

There is a range of other data sources providing general background information on, for example, stock size and tenure of stock (see DETR's Housing and Construction Statistics) and stock condition. Some of the information is available at local level whilst the rest is produced at regional or county level.

Each source tends to do a slightly different job and will, mostly, be used for different purposes. Annex 2 provides further details.

Tailor-made information collection exercises

There will be occasions when planning authorities want to supplement the information already collected routinely (either internally or externally) with special local data gathering exercises which look at a particular issue. Tailor-made information reviews can be important in developing an effective approach to monitoring.

One example of this would be to review a range of data sources to confirm that a particular area was subject to either very high or very low levels of demand. The data collected might include turnover and vacancy rates of social rented stock, house price trends and market activity (assessed through monitoring of local property press and estate agent details), vacancy levels in the private stock, trends in local school rolls etc. Building up a picture from a range of data sources requires a joint approach between, at least, the planning and housing departments.

Information from housebuilders

Local housebuilders will often have the best knowledge of the selling price of new homes and the types of households who are buying new homes – where they come from, what sorts of households, who is buying what, etc.

Although locally active housebuilders may be unwilling to supply confidential data, they may provide views on supply, demand, and prices. The House Builders Federation may be able to assist with contacts and provide general information.

As part of the process of working in constructive partnership with housebuilders, planning authorities may find it useful to establish a joint forum with the housebuilders active in their area to review, amongst other things, trends in the housing market.

Reliability of data sources

The Annexes to the Guide set out the relevant data sources which are available for monitoring purposes, how they may be accessed and their reliability.

ANNEXES

Annex 1

PPG3 Monitoring and Review Themes

Numbers of dwellings provided in a plan area

Activity/Indicator	Source	Availability	Reliability	Usefulness
<p>Completions compared with notional annual provision in development plan.</p>	<p>LA own data. DETR Housing Flows Reconciliation (HFR) return.</p>	<p>Readily available. Completions – Proposed DETR return; to be collected with effect from 2000/01 for some authorities, and from 2001/02 for all. Covers new housing and conversions.</p>	<p>Robust data although recognise small discrepancies may arise year on year.</p>	<p>Early indication of under/over supply in the context of plan, monitor and manage. Also provides basic information on strength of market. But interpretation needs be within context of overall development plan strategy.</p>
<p>Completions against permissions.</p>	<p>Completions – see above Permissions – LA own data.</p>	<p>Completions – see above Permissions – requires annual compilation of number of dwellings given permission. Care needed to avoid ‘double counting’ of permissions. Need to be consistent about recording permissions (see Guide).</p>	<p>Robust data which is readily available to LA.</p>	<p>Provides very broad indication of strength of market. If completions running well ahead of permissions suggests a very buoyant local market.</p>
<p>Delivery rate.</p>	<p>LA own data.</p>	<p>Readily available; requires LA to monitor permissions and allocations and ‘track’ through to completion.</p>	<p>Robust information from LA records BUT recognised that this will involve tracking historic permissions. Therefore monitoring delivery rates may be best viewed as longer-term exercise which will be increasingly useful over time.</p>	<p>Important in showing relative performance of different types of sites (e.g. urban v suburban, greenfield v previously-developed).</p>
<p>Gains and losses through conversions.</p>	<p>Completions – LA own data and DETR HFR return. Permissions – LA own data.</p>	<p>Completions – Proposed DETR return – to be collected with effect from 2000/01 for some authorities, and from 2001/02 for all. Permissions – from in-house data.</p>	<p>Planning permissions will identify a high percentage of conversions.</p>	<p>Trends in conversions can be very important to local housing provision – particularly in high density/flatted housing areas and where significant trends to/from houses in multiple occupation.</p>

Proportion of dwellings provided on previously-developed land and through conversions of existing buildings				
Activity/Indicator	Source	Availability	Reliability	Usefulness
Completions measured in terms of new builds on previously-developed land plus net conversions, as a percentage of the total of all new builds and net conversions in each year.	LA own data and DETR HFR return.	DETR return – to be collected with effect from 2000/01 for some authorities, and from 2001/02 for all.	Robust data although recognise small discrepancies may arise year on year. DETR's Land Use Change Statistics provide independent measures of recycling which can be compared with LA's own figures.	Critical in assessing achievement of policies/targets for housing on previously-developed land.
Permissions measured in terms of new build on previously-developed land plus net conversions, as a percentage of the total of all new build and net conversions in each year.	Planning applications – LA own data.	Annex C of PPG3 provides definition of previously-developed land. NLLUD provides a template for analysis of type of previous use.	Robust data but requires good data capture at time of planning application.	See above. Analysis of permissions allows local authority to assess whether policies/targets are being implemented and likely future achievement of policies/targets.

Numbers of dwellings provided on windfall sites				
Activity/Indicator	Source	Availability	Reliability	Usefulness
Completions on windfall sites compared with total completions and development plan assumptions and source of land for windfall sites.	LA own data.	Readily available but requires appropriate linkage between information on permissions and completions. Recognised that quality of information in early years may be 'patchy'.	Robust data in long term. Need for transparency in classifying previous use – NLLUD provides a useful template.	Provides basic information on contribution of windfall sites and can be compared with assumed contribution shown in Plan. Trends in 'sources' of sites can aid future plan reviews.
Permissions granted for housing on windfall sites compared with total permissions and development plan assumptions and source of land for windfall sites.	LA own data.	Readily available.	Robust data. Need for transparency in classifying previous use – NLLUD as one possible template.	As above.

Numbers of affordable dwellings provided				
Activity/Indicator	Source	Availability	Reliability	Usefulness
Numbers of permissions and completions of social rented, low cost home ownership and low cost market housing achieved on purely affordable housing sites and in mixed schemes delivered through S106 agreements.	<p>Completions – LA own data and DETR HFR return but this excludes low cost home ownership and low cost market sale.</p> <p><u>Permissions</u> – LA own records.</p>	<p>Completions – Proposed DETR return – to be collected with effect from 2000/01 for some authorities, and from 2001/02 for all. Information needs to be supplemented by own data on provision of other types of affordable housing (e.g. low cost sale)</p> <p><u>Permissions</u> – LA own data – but care needed to ensure accurate recording.</p>	<p>Robust data but requires good data capture at time of planning application.</p>	<p>Identifies level of delivery of affordable housing and comparison with policy objectives and whether emerging problems in delivery.</p>
Purchase of existing satisfactory dwellings by RSLs as additions to the affordable stock.	RSLs active in area.	<p>Readily available through regular liaison with RSLs – usually by housing department.</p>	<p>Reliable – requires sharing of information between housing and planning departments.</p>	<p>Combined with above information, identifies level of delivery of affordable housing and amount of housing being changed from other tenures.</p>
Sites identified for affordable housing or which are otherwise suitable but do not deliver affordable housing and reasons for this.	LA own records.	<p>Readily available – requires analysis of permissions granted and refusals for sites originally identified for affordable housing and/or which accord with other plan policies.</p>	<p>Reliable but requires appropriate analysis of permissions/refusals.</p>	<p>Identifies any emerging problems in delivery of affordable housing.</p>

The variety of types and mix of sizes of housing

Activity/Indicator	Source	Availability	Reliability	Usefulness
<p>Size of dwellings monitored for completions and permissions.</p>	<p><u>Completions</u> – LA own data and DETR HFR return.</p> <p><u>Permissions</u> – LA own records.</p>	<p><u>Completions</u> – Proposed DETR return – to be collected with effect from 2000/01 for some authorities, and from 2001/02 for all.</p> <p><u>Permissions</u> – readily available</p> <p>Size to be analysed in terms of bedrooms per dwelling (but authorities may wish additionally to use other measures e.g. bedspaces per hectare).</p>	<p>Robust data but requires good data capture at time of planning application</p>	<p>Identifies achievement of mix of sizes in new housing supply. Can compare with development plan policies and/or with information and broader monitoring issues to assess (changing) local need for different size of dwellings, to develop (more) robust policies in future plan reviews.</p> <p>Can also be related to site locations, to identify if different mix of sizes is being achieved in some parts of a local authority area rather than in others.</p>
<p>Dwelling type monitored for completions and permissions.</p>	<p>Completions and permissions – LA own data.</p>	<p><u>Completions</u> – readily available but requires appropriate linkage between information on permissions and completions</p> <p><u>Permissions</u> – should be relatively straightforward to monitor</p>	<p>Robust data in long term but requires good data capture at time of planning application. Requires clarity of definition of dwelling types.</p>	<p>Identifies achievement of variety of house types in new housing supply.</p> <p>Can compare with development plan policies and/or with information from broader monitoring of housing market issues to assess (changing) local need for different types of dwelling, to develop (more) robust policies in future plan reviews.</p> <p>Can also be related to site locations, to identify if variety of type is being achieved in some parts of a local authority area rather than in others.</p>
<p>Affordable housing (see earlier table)</p>				

Density of new development				
Activity/Indicator	Source	Availability	Reliability	Usefulness
Number of dwellings per hectare – completions and permissions.	Completions and permissions- LA own data.	Completions – Readily available but requires appropriate linkage between information on permissions and completions <u>Permissions</u> – should be relatively straightforward to monitor.	Robust data in long term. Consistency required in measuring site area. See PPG3 Annex C for definitions of density measures.	Identifies whether authority is achieving densities in housing development consistent with plan policies and PPG3 guidance, to develop (more) robust policies in future plan reviews. Can also be used to identify differences in density between different parts of authority area.
Number of dwellings per hectare – related to site accessibility.	Completions and permissions – LA own data.	See above.	See above.	Helps identify whether density of development is related to accessibility of site location.
Car parking provision				
Activity/Indicator	Source	Availability	Reliability	Usefulness
Number of off-street car parking spaces per dwelling for completions and permissions.	Completions and permissions – LA own records.	Completions – readily available but requires appropriate linkage between information on permissions and completions. Planning permissions should be relatively straightforward to monitor.	Robust data in long term but requires good data capture at time of planning application. Needs consistent definitions.	Identifies whether achieving car parking provision consistent with plan policies. Can also be used to identify differences in parking provision between different parts of authority area (e.g. between more and less accessible locations) and in the provision of different dwelling types.

Annex 2

Monitoring the Housing Context

Indicators and information sources				
Indicator	Source	Availability	Reliability	Usefulness
POPULATION				
Estimates of 'current' population totals and by age bands and gender.	Office for National Statistics (ONS) mid-year estimates.	Widely available from ONS at local authority level.	The official mid year estimates.	Basic data source.
Estimates of 'current' population totals and by age bands and gender.	LA own estimates (if produced).	Dependent on own procedures.	Reliable but must always recognise these will be estimates.	Basic data source.
Estimates of 'current' population totals and by age bands and gender.	Voluntary survey via electoral registration.	Optional LA initiative: additional survey form enclosed with electoral registration form, but completion must be on voluntary basis.	Limitations as for all postal surveys. Can only collect minimal information. Must be confident that collection of additional information will not affect main task of electoral registration.	Useful as a check on population estimates but with provisos about reliability of data collected – excludes people not entitled to vote. Can be used to collect (limited) other information e.g. on migration trends.
Population projections.	ONS sub-national population projections.	Published in ONS publication series PP2.	The official population projections.	Basic data source in terms of total numbers and structure of population.
Household mid year estimates.	DETR	Regularly published, for example at local authority level in ONS Regional Trends.	Reliable but must always recognise these are estimates.	Basic data source.
Household projections.	DETR	At local authority level, available from the Household Projection Service.	Must always recognise projections are based on past trends and should be aware of underlying assumptions.	Basic data source both in terms of total numbers and household type.
Population of 70+ years and 16/17 year olds.	Electoral registration.	Information collected for compilation of electoral register. Requires in-house analysis within data protection rules.	Assumes all households complete and return their forms accurately.	A check on population estimates. Shows households with at least one elderly person (i.e. 70+) and scale of potential newly-forming households.
Full range of demographic data.	1991 Census.	Widely available within LAs or from ONS.	1991 information which is increasingly out of date. Under-enumeration could be a problem for some areas such as parts of London.	Limitations because of age of data but provides base against which to measure trends. May be only comprehensive source of information on commuting patterns.

Indicators and information sources (continued)

Indicator	Source	Availability	Reliability	Usefulness
HOUSING NEEDS	Households registering with LA for social housing.	LA housing department; – shown in HIP returns to DETR.	Information collected by LA; readily available.	Measure of need for affordable housing. Care needed in interpreting information. Trends over time provide pointers to increasing/ reducing affordability and/or issues of low/high demand. Information derived from register needs to be set against information on current supply of social housing (i.e. relets and vacancies).
Homeless households.	LA housing department; shown in annual HIP and quarterly P1E returns to DETR.	Information collected by LA; readily available.	Robust information but important to identify trends in homeless acceptances and household types accepted.	Measure of expressed need for affordable housing. Care needed in interpretation.
Local housing need assessments.	Local authority own survey.	Readily available.	Limitations as for any survey based findings, but good practice guidance on need assessments available from DETR.	Provides more comprehensive review of local area needs than other partial indicators but needs to be kept under review. Other indicators can help in keeping up to date information on scale and type of need for affordable housing.
Take up of housing association properties.	CORE (Continuous Recording of RSL lettings and sales).	Quarterly bulletins on general needs lettings. Six monthly bulletins on low cost home ownership sales and ‘supported’ house lettings. Data available at local authority level. Joint DETR/Housing Corporation sponsored survey – available from Joint Centre for Scottish Housing Research.	Relies on data from housing associations.	Provides information on characteristics (household type, previous tenure, employment status etc) of those taking up affordable housing and can be used to compare patterns between areas.

Indicators and information sources (continued)

Indicator		Source	Availability	Reliability	Usefulness
HOUSING NEEDS (cont)	Social rented relets and shared ownership 'resales'.	HIP return and local authority own data.	Information collected by LA; readily available.	Reliable.	Provides information on supply of affordable housing from existing stock. Important to compare with patterns of demand in assessing future need for additional supply.
	Housing benefit recipients in private rented sector.	LA own data. Figures for individual rent officer areas published quarterly in Rent Officer Statistics.	Housing benefit records show overall picture but subject to data collection limitations.	Reliable.	Useful in assessing role of private rented sector in meeting affordable housing needs in area.
	Affordability. House price: income ratio.	Local Needs Assessment.	Readily available to local authorities which undertake a Local Needs Assessment.	Limitations as for any survey-based findings.	Provides more comprehensive review of local area needs than other partial indicators but needs to be kept under review. Other indicators can help in keeping up to date information on scale and type of need for affordable housing.
	Affordability. House price: income ratio.	Combining information on house prices with income data e.g. from New Earnings Survey (NES).	See below for sources on property prices.	Data sources have own limitations and must interpret results with care. Important to avoid simple averages – must look at 'spread' of both incomes and house prices. See also DETR good practice guide on needs assessments.	Provides up to date information on affordability and can use to identify important trends. But data limitations highlight need for careful interpretation. Must relate to situation of those on margins of 'affordability'.
	Property prices.	HM Land Registry (HMLR).	HMLR provides quarterly information on house prices at UA, county and regional level – can also provide information for smaller areas on request. HMLR publications can be found at the Land Registry website at www.landreg.gov.uk	HMLR uses simple average prices which reduces reliability for estimating trends – because a shift in the mix of dwellings sold within a particular type (e.g. detached house) will have an effect on the average price quoted. For smaller areas, this can be particularly important so HMLR data should be interpreted with care. But HMLR has benefit that it is not reliant on any one funder and offers complete coverage of the entire market in England – including the 25% or so of transactions that are cash purchases.	Unique source of information on house prices at local level. However, price change information from one period to the next must be interpreted with care because the averages are not mix-adjusted.

Indicators and information sources (continued)

	Indicator	Source	Availability	Reliability	Usefulness
HOUSING NEEDS (cont)	Property Prices.	DETR 5% Survey of Mortgage Lenders.	From DETR and Stationery Office (Housing and Construction Statistics). Provides quarterly data at national and regional level.	Based on a 5% sample of most mortgage lenders. Excludes cash purchases. The mix-adjusted prices provide a more robust indicator of price trends than the HMLR simple average data	Not directly useful at district, UA or county level but provides useful comparisons with national and regional trends and pointers to consumer behaviour. Gives basic data on property prices but also other information, e.g. price comparisons between new and second-hand properties and between purchase price for first time and other buyers.
	Property Prices.	Halifax plc and Nationwide Building Society.	Directly from provider or from Internet (www.halifax.co.uk and www.nationwide.co.uk). Monthly figures available at the national level for new and existing houses and for first time buyers and former owner occupiers. Quarterly data for regions and for post-towns (i.e. towns that provide the first letter(s) of post code).	Based on all mortgage applications approved by the lender, so both represent company-specific information. Also some mortgage applications may not go through to completion and the purchase price at completion may differ from that quoted on the mortgage application. Nevertheless prices taken from the mortgage approval stage provide a valuable early indication of house price movement.	Both the Halifax and Nationwide indices are very timely and provide the earliest indication of house price trends and useful comparative information.
	Housing Transactions.	HM Land Registry.	HM Land Registry provides quarterly information on property transactions at unitary authority, county and regional level, and can also provide information for smaller areas on request. Basic HMLR information is available free and can be found at www.landreg.gov.uk	The smaller the area covered, the less reliable the results for individual quarters. But HMLR data not reliant on any one funder and offers complete coverage of the entire market in England, including the 25% or so of transactions that are cash purchases.	Levels of transactions can be a useful guide to the market and can sometimes provide better pointers to local market trends than price movements. Transaction information also given by property types (flats, semi-detached houses etc). Information on trends over time and comparisons with neighbouring areas can show up a housing 'hotspot' or areas where market activity is weak.

Indicators and information sources (continued)

	Indicator	Source	Availability	Reliability	Usefulness
HOUSING NEEDS (cont)	New property prices and transaction levels.	Local house builders.	Local housebuilders may provide views on local demand, supply and prices. The House Builders Federation may be able to assist with contacts and provide general information.	Based on recent performance and will reflect new properties on the market at any one time. Value of information increases as number of housebuilders willing to share their information is increased.	Potential source of local information on sale patterns for new housing (price, speed of take up etc). Information about purchasers may also be available (dependent on information collected by builders) and could cover, for instance, first time buyers and previous home location.
	Land values.	Property Market Report, Valuation Office.	Property Market Report provides information on land values at national and regional level. Local housebuilders may provide collective information (see above).	Property Market Report relies on local District Valuers information.	Residential land value changes can give 'early warnings' of stresses in local land supply – of low and high demand. Can be a better early indicator than house price trends, but are also subject to a range of influences. Trends should not be used simplistically to inform policy directions.
HOUSING STOCK	Number and tenure of dwelling stock.	DETR Housing Flows Reconciliation (HFR) Return.	To be collected with effect from 2000/01 for some authorities, and from 2001/02 for all.	Expected to be reliable; guidance from DETR to improve consistency of data collection.	Expected to be very useful.
	Number and tenure of dwelling stock – local estimates.	1991 Census and LA in house updates including DETR P2A, P3J and P4 returns (or HFR return).	Census widely available – updates derived from annual figures on stock change collected 'in-house' on new build, conversions and demolitions. Size of stock supplemented by data on change of tenure (e.g. large scale voluntary transfers, right to buy).	Depends on availability of reliable data from in-house sources. As time progresses since Census, more difficult to maintain 100% accurate information. Important to check on 'tenure switches' between market and affordable stock. Estimates of private rented stock can be problematic – must be realistic about robustness of local estimates.	Provides important baseline figure of housing in area; must recognise where estimates are less robust and treat accordingly

Indicators and information sources (continued)

Indicator	Source	Availability	Reliability	Usefulness
HOUSING STOCK (cont)	Number and tenure of dwelling stock – national and regional estimates.	Quarterly and annual figures published in Housing and Construction Statistics.	As time progresses since Census, figures become less accurate and are not as reliable or comprehensive.	Provides essential baseline figures at regional and national level.
Completions, conversions and demolitions by tenure.	DETR HFR return.	To be collected with effect from 2000/01 for some authorities, and from 2001/02 for all.	Expected to be reliable – guidance from DETR to improve consistency of data collection.	Expected to be very useful.
Vacants.	Empty Homes Strategy; council tax analysis; HIP returns to DETR.	Local authority's own data. For use of Council Tax records, compliance with Data Protection Act is responsibility of local authority.	Council tax records – check with department responsible to identify potential reliability problems. Necessary to distinguish between 'casual vacancies' and long-term vacant properties.	Demonstrates whether best use is being made of existing stock. Provides early warnings of areas of low demand and indicators of effectiveness of policies for area regeneration.
Vacants – social housing.	HIP returns and Housing Corporation.	Annually at local authority level.	Both LA and RSL vacancy figures are obtainable from HIP returns. However, RSL vacancy figures from Housing Corporation annual RSR are more reliable.	Important source of information of vacancy levels in social stock. Provides early warnings of areas of low/high demand for social housing.
Second homes.	Analysis of council tax records.	Local authority's own data (compliance with Data Protection Act is responsibility of local authority).	Council tax records – check with department responsible to identify potential reliability problems.	Demonstrates extent of second homes market in area and whether there are 'hot spots'. Data should be interpreted with care; best used as trend information.
Dwelling size.	1991 Census and 'in house' updates including P2A and HFR return to DETR.	Census widely available. Updates derived from annual returns to DETR on housing completions.	Local authorities will differ in preferred measure of size of dwelling for new housing but necessary at least to cover number of bedrooms. With increasing time since Census, recognise difficulties in estimating changes within existing stock; robustness of estimates needs to be made clear.	Provides baseline information against which to frame policies about future dwelling size mix sought in area. Need is to compare size of property available against future household requirements.

Indicators and information sources (continued)

Indicator	Source	Availability	Reliability	Usefulness
HOUSING STOCK (cont)				
Dwelling size and type	English House Condition Survey	From DETR: carried out every five years. National, regional and local level; latest survey in 1996. Available from Stationery Office and DETR housing website (www.detr.gov.uk)	Survey of over 20,000 dwellings and households. Representative at national and regional levels and groups of local authorities	Useful information to consider regional/national trends
Condition of stock, without basic amenities	1991 Census	Widely available	Information from last Census is increasingly out of date	Focuses on particular aspects such as availability of facilities
Condition of stock	English House Condition Survey	From DETR: carried out every five years. National, regional and local level; latest survey in 1996. Available from Stationery Office, and DETR housing website	Survey of over 20,000 dwellings and households. Representative at national and regional levels and groups of local authorities	Information provided on age and condition of stock. Relates conditions of properties to tenure at national level. Valuable information on trends in conditions for larger areas but also provides information to compare with local picture
Condition of stock	Stock surveys. Authorities undertake (sample) stock surveys of public and private housing for a variety of reasons	In house, on own stock (where relevant) plus data on other stock (e.g. from EHO on houses in multiple occupation)	Dependent on what the authority collects for other (i.e. non-planning) purposes	Can provide a more up-to-date picture of the condition of the stock, albeit partially
Losses through demolitions	DETR Housing Flows Reconciliation return	Proposed DETR return – see above. Some housing demolitions require planning permission – but not all will. Other housing demolitions picked up through ‘prior approvals’ procedures (see Circular 10/95)	Should be high level of reliability	Where number of demolitions is significant can have an impact on requirement for new housing. Important to recognise where demolitions arise through planned redevelopment/ regeneration of area
Persons per room	1991 Census	Widely available	Detailed information at local level but data from last Census is increasingly out of date	Shows how space is being used and provides indicators of high levels of occupancy, related to housing need

Indicators and information sources (continued)

Indicator	Source	Availability	Reliability	Usefulness
HOUSING STOCK (cont)	Persons per room and RSL purchases)	Survey of English Housing Stationery Office and reference libraries. Electronic data sets available from Essex Archive. National and regional level data	Continuous dwelling-based survey of 20,000 per annum. Provides more up-to-date and reliable information than Census	Wide range of information about property type, occupancy and movements between tenures
Tenure change (RTB and RSL purchases)	LA housing department – shown in quarterly P1B returns to DETR; and from RSLs in area	Should be readily available – may require annual check with RSLs. Annual figures for local authorities and RSLs published in Housing and Construction Statistics	Reliable information of tenure change where changing from social rented/shared ownership to owner occupier or vice versa. More difficult to identify changes between owner occupied and private rented. Latter can be drawn from housing benefit analysis and EHO information on houses in multiple occupation	Important to understand tenure profile of area and movement within stock. Purchase of market housing by housing associations can have important implications for provision of affordable housing – especially where associations purchasing at ‘bottom’ end of sale market
UNPOPULAR HOUSING	Area house price differentials – notably price change differentials	In-house local surveys of property press	Property details in press do not necessarily equal agreed sale price and properties advertised not necessarily all properties for sale and actual sale price and asking price may be different BUT information is a reasonable indicator of localised trends and patterns	Only source of information readily available to identify differences within local property market. Vital information to identify areas of low demand; early warning of areas in decline
Time taken to sell	As above	As above	Property details in press not necessarily all properties for sale, but information is a reasonable indicator of localised trends and patterns	Only source of information readily available to identify differences within local property market. Time taken to sell is a very good indicator of areas of low demand

Indicators and information sources (continued)

Indicator	Source	Availability	Reliability	Usefulness
UNPOPULAR HOUSING (cont)	Rate of social rent relets and vacancies – LA stock	Local authority own data; HIP return	Readily available	Provides factual basis for assessing social rented areas of low/high demand and trend information can give early warning of emerging problems
Rate of social rent relets – RSLs	CORE (Continuous Recording of RSL lettings and sales)	See earlier	Reliable, but care needed in dealing with transfers within an area. Can be combined with other information e.g. transfer requests into/out of area to provide robust overview of areas of low demand	Provides information on number of RSL lettings and rental levels achieved. Combined with data on total stock, turnover figures and vacancies provides powerful indication of areas of high/low demand for social housing