Local Authorities (Charges for Property Searches) (England) Regulations
Local Authorities (Charges for Property Searches) (Wales) Regulations
Consultation
Local Authorities (Charges for Property Searches) (England) Regulations
Local Authorities (Charges for Property Searches) (Wales) Regulations

Consultation
Foreword

In January 2008 Communities and Local Government and the Ministry of Justice published a consultation paper on the future of local authority (LA) charging for property search services. On charging specifically, the proposals aimed to deliver:

- fair, open and transparent charges for the delivery of property searches
- open access to all the LA held data necessary to compile a search to ensure consumers have all the relevant information on which to base decisions when buying a home.

The Government is committed to open and fair competition in the delivery of property searches. We have already published guidance for LAs and personal searchers on access to search data. Following the recent consultation, we are now seeking your views on the impacts of revised draft charging Regulations. These Regulations, if implemented, aim to complete the conditions for open access arrangements and the levelling of the playing field in the provision of searches as envisaged by the Office of Fair Trading.

LAs should be providing access to personal searchers to all the data necessary to compile a property search in line with the good practice access guidance we published in January 2008. The charging proposals set out in this consultation paper would provide a transparent framework for LAs to recover ‘reasonable costs’ in delivering the necessary open access. This should enable all LAs to provide open access to the private sector and therefore negate the need for the insurance to cover any missing data.

Consumers rightly expect all the necessary information on which to base informed decisions when buying a home. All providers of searches should, therefore, also expect to have easy access to such data in order to give consumers the service they pay for. That is why we are consulting on these proposals. We welcome your views, in particular, on whether the proposals would support a more efficient and effective property searches market, and lead to better value for consumers.

We look forward to hearing your views.

Iain Wright MP
Parliamentary Under Secretary of State

Jocelyn Davies AM
Deputy Minister for Housing, Welsh Assembly Government
Section 1  Introduction

1.1 This consultation paper sets out draft Regulations (The Local Authorities (Charges for Property Searches) Regulations 2008) and a related statutory instrument, the Local Authorities (Charges for Property Searches) (Disapplication) Order 2008. The aim of these draft instruments would be to implement proposals on future arrangements for Local Authority (LA) charges for property search services. It is proposed to make separate regulations for England and Wales, respectively, in the form of the attached draft. The draft Regulations are based on local cost recovery as set out in Communities and Local Government and Ministry of Justice’s joint consultation paper Charges for Property Search Services which was published in January 2008. The proposals should:

- deliver greater consumer benefits by improving the quality of property searches and fairer competition
- ensure the improved delivery of property searches
- clarify for the avoidance of doubt, the legal basis for charges made by local authorities for property searches

1.2 These proposals, in conjunction with Communities and Local Government’s guidance on access arrangements published on 18 January 2008, implement the Office of Fair Trading’s recommendations for a level playing field between the public and private sectors in the delivery of property searches.

1.3 This consultation paper seeks views on the draft Regulations at Annex 1, particularly their likely impacts. A summary of the Regulations is set out in 4.1 below. This is a joint consultation on proposals to cover England and Wales. However, since the Secretary of State’s powers apply only to England, separate Regulations would be made for Wales by the Welsh Ministers.

1.4 The January 2008 consultation paper also contained proposals for future arrangements for setting the fee for a personal search of the local land charges register (LLCR) and whether the present fee should be changed. Ministry of Justice are considering the responses to the consultation. The draft statutory instruments in this consultation paper do not affect the fee for a personal search of the LLCR.

1.5 Draft guidance to accompany the proposed charging regime was also included in the January 2008 consultation. This will be reviewed in light of the responses received to that consultation and to this consultation paper.
Purpose of Consultation

1.6  Comments are sought on the draft statutory instruments at Annex 1 and the initial impact assessment at Annex 2. We particularly welcome views on whether the proposals would:

- support a more efficient and effective property searches market
- lead to better value for consumers – on average, better quality searches at lower prices.

1.7  In accordance with the code of practice on consultations, an accompanying Impact Assessment (IA) is at Annex 2.

1.8  A full 12 week formal consultation exercise was carried out on the initial charging proposals and views sort on the principle of amending the existing Local Authority (Charges for Land Searches) Regulations 1994 between 18 January and 18 April 2008. Given that this consultation is on draft Regulations that would implement those proposals, this consultation exercise will therefore run to **30 September 2008**. Responses should be sent to:

Charlene Gordon  
Communities and Local Government  
Property Searches Team  
Area A6, 4th Floor  
Eland House  
Bressenden Place  
London SW1E 5DU

Email: charlene.gordon@communities.gsi.gov.uk  
Tel: 0207 944 3752

* For organisations based in Wales, responses should be sent to:  
John G Rees  
Housing Directorate  
Welsh Assembly Government  
Rhydyfelin  
Merthyr Tydfil CF48 1U2

1.9  We will analyse the responses and produce a summary of them recording what changes have or have not been made as a result.

1.10  Please note that responses, including the names and addresses of respondents will be made available to anyone who asks for them unless confidentiality is specifically requested or disclosure would prejudice third parties. Our consultation criteria are set out at Annex 3.
Section 2  Background

2.1 One of the key recommendations of the Office of Fair Trading’s (OFT) 2005 report, *Property Searches – A Market Study*, addressed local authority (LA) charging for data to produce property searches. This stated that:

- “Central government should provide clear guidance for LAs on how they should recover the costs of providing property information in compiled and unrefined forms and, if LAs are to set their own prices for these two services, how they should set charges to avoid distorting competition in the supply of local property services”.

2.2 In its response to the OFT’s recommendations the Government noted that it ‘preferred’ a model based on local cost recovery. This was because such an approach would:

- enable LAs to set fees which recover costs reasonably incurred providing more flexibility than a centrally set fee, given that these costs could vary between authorities
- reduce incentives on LAs to restrict the availability of information, resulting from costs pressures when they are unable to recover costs
- be in line with recent trends to devolve decision making to a local level where appropriate and thereby be consistent with Government policy in England and was expressly stated in the local government White Paper *Strong Local Leadership Quality Public Services*.

2.3 Communities and Local Government, jointly with Ministry of Justice, therefore commissioned consultants, KPMG, to assess the OFT’s proposed charging models and devise a methodology for LA charging. In doing so it assessed the options of a centrally set charge and local cost recovery against three criteria: creation of a level playing field, minimising LA cost burdens; and complexity. KPMG’s conclusion was that cost recovery for provision of unrefined data was the best way forward and proposed a model to deliver this.

2.4 The proposed model (represented in the diagram at 2.5) shows the ‘unrefined’ data set necessary to compile a property search (to the left of the dotted line) and the compiled property search required in a HIP as ‘refined’ information (to the right of the dotted line). The ‘data set’ includes other registers such as the local enquiries search source data e.g planning and building regulations, roads, compulsory purchase; and the Local Land Charges Register.
2.5 Essentially the model enables LAs to recoup costs they reasonably incur in delivery property search services. In doing so the Regulations aim to ensure that competition between LAs and private search companies begins from the same price base i.e. identical cost for the necessary data set from which either party could then compile a search.

2.6 Public consultation was carried out on KPMG’s proposals and related draft guidance for LAs from 18 January to 18 April 2008. In total 902 responses were received.
Section 3  Summary of consultation and proposed way forward

3.1  Broadly the responses to the consultation were divided between LAs and the personal search sector. LAs overwhelmingly welcomed the proposals for local cost recovery while the personal search sector was circumspect or opposed. However, the common factor between both was the need to address the issue of powers for LAs to charge and provide clarity on this issue. The introduction of revised charging regulations would deliver this. The Office of Fair Trading welcomed the direction set out in the January 2008 consultation on charges for property search services, noting that it believed the proposals, provided they are effectively implemented and monitored, would lead to greater competition and efficiency in the sector, and as a result create savings for consumers.

3.2  Concern was expressed by the personal search sector on the proposed monitoring arrangements to ensure reasonable and transparent charges. The draft Regulations would progress this issue in line with the KPMG proposals to include specific requirements in the proposed draft Regulations. We expect this, coupled with the ‘LA Performance Framework’ and LA accounting practice in the Best Value Approved Code of Practice, would deliver transparency and a route for challenge to any ‘unreasonable’ charges.

3.3  In parallel with the January 2008 charging consultation, work was carried out by Ted Beardsall, (Deputy Chief Executive of the Land Registry) to consider the functioning of the property searches market. The report from this work was published on 12 June 2008 and notes that:

- “The ‘mixed economy’ of public and private sector service provision based on the level playing field and fair competition principles that Government is endeavouring to secure, should better serve the consumer.”

3.4  To implement the cost recovery regime proposed in the attach draft Regulations and provide the necessary clarity on charging that all parties seek, we would introduce a new Local Authorities (Charges for Property Searches) Regulations 2008, and revoke the Local Authority (Charges for Land Searches) Regulations 1994. However, before taking final decisions we are seeking views on the draft Regulations and particularly the impacts of such an approach.
Section 4  The Local Authorities (Charges for Property Searches) Regulations 2008

4.1 Draft Local Authorities (Charges for Property Searches) Regulations 2008 are set out at Annex 1. The Regulations aim to provide the necessary clarity that stakeholders have been seeking in terms of what can be charged for and how. They would apply to the provision of the necessary unrefined data to compile a property search and provide for LA charges for compiled searches. In summary the draft Regulations:

- set out the relevant definitions used for the purposes of the Regulations including what is meant by ‘access to property records’
- revoke the Local Authority (Charges for Land Searches) Regulations 1994
- make clear that LAs cannot charge for ‘free statutory information’ (information required to be provided by a LA under an enactment)
- provide for LAs to charge for providing property search services including for access to property records
- set out the principles for LA charging based on cost recovery (i.e. how charges must be assessed) including the equal application within and across LA departments
- provide for LA charges for compiled searches
- set out arrangements for LAs to ensure transparency in setting charges.

Initial Impact Assessment (IA)

4.2 The accompanying Impact Assessment is at Annex 2. Given the limited availability of reliable data, the initial IA has necessarily had to adopt a number of assumptions. In particular, it assumes a worse case scenario where the market might pass on any new costs to the consumer. On that basis the IA indicates that the benefits of the proposals should outweigh their costs but that the up front costs of searches to consumers could rise. Given current limitations of information, we wish to assess these impacts further and welcome comments from consultees.
The Local Authorities (Charges for Property Searches) (Disapplication) Order 2008

4.3 This draft Order is also set out at Annex 1. It is a technical instrument, required to enable the draft Local Authorities (Charges for Property Searches) Regulations 2008 to be made. It is necessary because the enabling power underlying those draft regulations, section 150 of the Local Government and Housing Act only allows regulations to be made if no other relevant charging power exists. The draft order therefore proposes to disapply section 93 of the Local Government Act 2003. Instead, it is proposed that the draft Local Authorities (Charges for Property Searches) Regulations 2008 provide the legal basis for local authority charging, as they can be tailored to suit the property searches market. As the Secretary of State’s powers to make this order have been devolved in relation to Wales, it is proposed that the Welsh Ministers make a similar order for Wales.

This consultation paper invites comments on the draft Local Authorities (Charges for Property Searches) Regulations 2008, The Local Authorities (Charges for Property Searches) (Disapplication) Order 2008 and the related impact assessment.
Section 5  Next steps

5.1 Following the consultation which closes on 30 September the next steps would be to:

- analyse the responses and report to ministers
- lay any resulting Regulations – they would be subject to debate in both the House of Commons and House of Lords
- subject to the above, commence any new Regulations.

Communities and Local Government
Welsh Assembly Government
July 2008
Annex 1:

Draft Regulations laid before Parliament under section 150(6) of the Local Government and Housing Act 1989, for approval by resolution of each House of Parliament.

DRAFT STATUTORY INSTRUMENTS

2008 No.

HOUSING, ENGLAND

The Local Authorities (Charges for Property Searches) Regulations 2008

Made - - - - ***

Laid before Parliament ***

Coming into force - - in accordance with regulation 1(2)

The Secretary of State in exercise of the powers conferred by sections 150 and 152(5) of the Local Government and Housing Act 1989, makes the following Regulations:

Citation and commencement

1.—(1) These Regulations may be cited as the Local Authorities (Charges for Property Searches) Regulations 2008.

(2) These Regulations shall come into force on the day after the day on which they are made.

Interpretation

2.—(1) For the purposes of these Regulations, a local authority may grant access to property records in any of the following ways—

   (a) allowing a person to inspect or search property records at a place designated by the authority for doing so;

   (b) allowing the making of, or providing copies of, property records; or

   (c) the electronic transmission of property records, or copies of such records, and

in these Regulations, the expression “access to property records” is to be construed accordingly.

(2) In these Regulations, a reference to a local authority “compiling answers to enquiries about a property” means—

   (a) answering specific oral or written questions from any person about a property or property records; or

(a) 1989 c. 42. The powers under sections 150 and 152 of the Act are exercisable in relation to Wales, by the Welsh Ministers; see the reference to the Local Government and Housing Act 1989 in Schedule 1 to the National Assembly for Wales (Transfer of Functions) Order 1999 (S.I. 1999/672), and paragraphs 30 and 32 of Schedule 11 to the Government of Wales Act 2006 (c.32).
(b) any activities carried out by the authority for the purposes of answering such questions.

(3) In these Regulations—

“financial year” means a period of twelve consecutive months ending with 31st March;

“free statutory information” means information required to be provided by a local authority under an enactment, in circumstances where that enactment—

(a) prohibits a local authority from making a charge for doing so; or

(b) requires that the authority provides the information free of charge;

“local authority” means—

(a) a county council;

(b) a district council;

(c) a London Borough Council;

(d) the Common Council of the City of London; and

(e) the Council of the Isles of Scilly;

“property” means any building, structure or land;

“property records”—

(a) includes documents, registers, files and archives (held in any form by the local authority), which relate to any property;

(b) includes information derived from such documents, registers, files and archives; and

(c) excludes the local land charges register kept under section 3(2) of the Local Land Charges Act 1975(a);

“request” includes a written, oral, electronic or automated request; and

“unit charge” means the charge described in regulation 6(2).

Revocation and transitional provision

3.—(1) Subject to paragraph (2), the Local Authorities (Charges for Land Searches) Regulations 1994(b) are revoked.

(2) Where before the date on which these Regulations come into force, a local authority has received a request for—

(a) access to property records; or

(b) compiling answers to enquiries about a property;

and that request has not been complied with (or has only been partially complied with), these Regulations shall not apply in respect of such a request, and the Local Authorities (Charges for Land Searches) Regulations 1994 shall continue to apply to that request.

Scope of regulations 5 and 8

4.—(1) Subject to paragraph (2), regulations 5 and 8 apply in respect of—

(a) the grant by a local authority of access to property records; or

(b) a local authority compiling answers to enquiries about a property,

whether it does so under a power or duty, created or imposed by any enactment.

(2) Regulations 5 and 8 do not apply—

(a) where a local authority is entitled to make a charge for a service under an enactment other than these Regulations; or

(a) 1975 c. 76.

(b) S.I. 1994/1885.
(b) in respect of access to free statutory information, except to the extent that a local authority is providing a service which is supplementary to that described in the other enactment in question.

Charges for access to property records

5.—(1) This regulation applies for the purposes of the grant of access to property records to other persons, (including another local authority) by a local authority.

(2) Subject to regulations 6 and 7, a local authority may charge a recipient for access to property records.

(3) Nothing in these Regulations imposes a duty on a local authority to grant access to property records.

Calculation of charges for access to property records

6.—(1) Subject to this regulation, and regulation 7, a charge imposed under regulation 5(2) must be no more than the cost to the local authority of granting access to property records.

(2) Subject to paragraph (3), each single charge (the “unit charge”) for access to property records made during a financial year must be calculated by dividing—

(a) a reasonable estimate of the likely total costs to the local authority in granting access to property records during the financial year; by

(b) a reasonable estimate of the number of requests for access to property records likely to be received by the local authority (from any person, including another local authority) over that same financial year.

(3) A local authority must ensure that over the course of any period of three consecutive financial years, the total income from such charges does not exceed the total costs of granting access to property records.

(4) Where under paragraph (2), a local authority has made an overestimate or underestimate of the unit charge for a financial year, it must take this into account in determining charges for the following financial year.

(5) The charges applied under this regulation (including those applied within the local authority or to another local authority) must be applied equally to each recipient.

Interpretation of costs under regulation 6(1)

7.—(1) In regulation 6(1), “costs” means any costs to the local authority (including staff time, related salary costs and the creation and maintenance of records) reasonably incurred in connection with complying with a request for access to property records.

(2) In regulation 6(1), “costs” does not include—

(a) such costs as the local authority incurs in granting access to free statutory information; or

(b) such costs to the authority as are directly referable to the maintenance of free statutory information.

Charges by local authorities for compiling answers to enquiries about a property

8.—(1) Subject to paragraphs (2) and (3), a local authority may charge a recipient in respect of compiling answers to enquiries about a property.

(2) A charge made under paragraph (1) must be equal to the costs to the local authority of compiling answers to enquiries about the property.

(3) In addition to charges made under paragraph (2), an authority may make a charge, calculated at its discretion, in respect of—

(a) urgent requests; or
(b) the provision of more than a basic service, where the authority offers a choice of services.

(4) The charges applied under—

(a) paragraph (2) (including those applied within the local authority or to another local authority) must be applied equally to each recipient; and

(b) paragraph (3), may be applied differently by the local authority to different recipients.

Transparency in relation to setting of charges

9.—(1) During each financial year, a local authority must publish a statement setting out—

(a) the estimates the local authority has made under regulation 6(2) (estimates of total costs and estimates of numbers of requests) in respect of the unit charge for the following financial year;

(b) the basis for those estimates; and

(c) the amount of the unit charge proposed for the following financial year.

(2) During each financial year from 1st April 2010, a local authority must publish by 30th June of that year a summary setting out in respect of the preceding financial year—

(a) the total costs to the authority in granting access to property records;

(b) the number of requests for access to property records to which these costs relate; and

(c) the total income to the authority from charges made under regulation 5.

(3) During each financial year from 1st April 2010, a local authority must publish a summary setting out the total income to the authority from charges made under regulation 8 (compiling answers to enquiries about a property) in respect of the preceding financial year.

(4) The information to be published under this regulation must be approved by the person having responsibility for the administration of the financial affairs of the local authority under —

(a) section 151 of the Local Government Act 1972(a); or

(b) in the case of the Common Council of the City of London, under section 6 of the Local Government and Housing Act 1989(b).

Signed by authority of the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government

2008

Department for Communities and Local Government

Minister of State

EXPLANATORY NOTE

(This note is not part of the Regulations)

These Regulations allow local authorities to make charges for services provided in connection with property searches, specifically “access to property records” and “compiling answers to


(b) 1989 c. 42.
Local Authorities (Charges for Property Searches) Regulations

enquiries about a property”. The interpretation of both expressions is dealt with in regulation 2, along with other relevant expressions.

Regulation 3 revokes the Local Authorities (Charges for Land Searches) Regulations 1994, but makes transitional provision for the charges to be made by local authorities in respect of requests received while those Regulations were in force.

Regulation 4 specifies that the charging arrangements set out in the Regulations apply whether or not a local authority provides the services under a power or duty. However, they do not apply where the local authority is entitled to make a charge under an Act or instrument other than these Regulations. They also do not apply in respect of access to “free statutory information” (see regulation 2(3)).

Regulations 5, 6 and 7 deal with charges for the grant by a local authority of access to property records. Regulation 5(3) states that the provisions on charging for access to such records do not impose a duty on a local authority to grant such access. Regulation 6 provides that these charges must not amount to more than the cost of granting access. Specifically, each charge made (“a unit charge”), must be calculated by dividing an estimate of the total yearly cost in providing access by an estimate of the number of requests to be received that year. As the unit charge is based on estimates, paragraphs (4) and (5) provide that over a period of three consecutive years, a local authority must ensure that the total income from charges does not exceed their total costs. In addition, where a local authority has made an under or overestimate of the unit charge, it must take this into account in determining charges for the following year. Regulation 7 provides for the interpretation of “costs”.

Regulation 8 sets out the charges a local authority may make in respect of compiling answers to enquiries about property. These charges must be equal to the costs to the local authority in compiling answers, and an additional charge may be made in respect of urgent requests or where there is a choice of services.

Regulation 9 requires local authorities to publish certain information each year in connection with the charges made under these Regulations. Each year, a local authority must publish information relating to unit charges. Additionally, from 1st April 2010, each must publish a yearly summary of the total income and costs relating to access to property records, and a summary of the total income from compiling answers to enquiries. The information published under regulation 9 must be approved by the person having responsibility for the financial affairs of the authority.
2008 No.

HOUSING, ENGLAND

The Local Authorities (Charges for Property Searches) (Disapplication) Order 2008

Made - - - - ***

Laid before Parliament ***

Coming into force - - in accordance with article 1(2)

The Secretary of State in exercise of the powers conferred by section 94 of the Local Government Act 2003(a), makes the following Order:

Citation and commencement

1.—(1) This Order may be cited as the Local Authorities (Charges for Property Searches) (Disapplication) Order 2008.

(2) This Order shall come into force on the revocation of the Local Authorities (Charges for Land Searches) Regulations 1994(b).

Interpretation

2.—(1) For the purposes of this Order, a local authority may grant access to property records in any of the following ways—

(a) allowing a person to inspect or search property records at a place designated by the authority for doing so;

(b) allowing the making of, or providing copies of, property records; or

(c) the electronic transmission of property records, or copies of such records, and in this Order, the expression “access to property records” is to be construed accordingly.

(2) In this Order, a reference to a local authority “compiling answers to enquiries about a property” means—

(a) answering specific oral or written questions from any person about a property or property records; or

(b) any activities carried out by the authority for the purposes of answering such questions.

(3) In this Order—

(a) 2003 c. 26. The power under section 94 of the Act is exercisable in relation to Wales, by the Welsh Ministers; see the definition of “appropriate person” in section 124 of the Act, and paragraphs 30 and 32 of Schedule 11 to the Government of Wales Act 2006 (c.32).

(b) S.I. 1994/1885.
“property” means any building, structure or land; and
“property records”—
(a) includes documents, registers, files and archives (held in any form by the local authority), which relate to any property;
(b) includes information derived from such documents, registers, files and archives; and
(c) excludes the local land charges register kept under section 3(2) of the Local Land Charges Act 1975 (a).

Disapplication of section 93(1) of the Local Government Act 2003

3. Section 93(1) of the Local Government Act 2003 is disapplied in relation to the best value authorities named in article 4, when granting access to property records or compiling answers to enquiries about a property.

Authorities to which this Order applies

4. The best value authorities to which this Order applies are—
(a) a county council;
(b) a district council;
(c) a London Borough Council;
(d) the Common Council of the City of London; and
(e) the Council of the Isles of Scilly.

Signed by authority of the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government

Minister of State

2008

Department for Communities and Local Government

EXPLANATORY NOTE
(This note is not part of the Order)

This Order disapplies section 93(1) of the Local Government Act 2003 in connection with property searches, specifically “access to property records” and “compiling answers to enquiries about a property”. The interpretation of both expressions is dealt with in article 2, along with other relevant expressions. The best value authorities to which this Order applies are set out in article 4.

Under article 1(2), this Order comes into force when the Local Authorities (Charges for Land Searches) Regulations 1994 are revoked. Those Regulations were made under section 150 of the Local Government and Housing Act 1989, and once revoked, are likely to be replaced with further Regulations to be made under section 150 in respect of charges for property searches.

(a) 1975 c. 76.
Section 93(1) of the Local Government Act 2003 enables best value authorities to charge for services and its disapplication will enable further regulations to be made under section 150 of the Local Government and Housing Act 1989. Under section 150(1)(b) of that Act regulations under that section providing that a charge may be imposed in respect of anything may only be made “in respect of which there is no power or duty to impose a charge apart from the regulations”.
Annex 2: Impact Assessment

Summary: Intervention & Options

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Department /Agency:</th>
<th>Title:</th>
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<tr>
<td>Communities &amp; Local Government</td>
<td>Impact Assessment of introducing cost recovery guidance to local authorities for property search data</td>
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<th>Stage:</th>
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<th>Date:</th>
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Related Publications: CLG/ MoJ Local Authority Property Search Services: Charges for property search services, a consultation paper

Available to view or download at:
http://www.

Contact for enquiries: Telephone:

What is the problem under consideration? Why is government intervention necessary?

Local Authorities (LAs) hold unrefined data required to compile property searches necessary for the home buying and selling process. LAs incur costs in the collection, maintenance, storage of this data and in the provision of access to such data by individuals and private search companies.

For effective competition to exist between public and private sectors in the provision of property searches, unrefined data should be both accessible and supplied to each party on an equal cost basis.

At present there is evidence that in some LAs competition is being distorted by over/under pricing of data or non-cost barriers to access to the data (e.g. excessive waiting times). Where LAs currently restrict access PSCs are able to use insurance to cover data gaps, yet this temporary provision is set to end on 31 December 2008.

What are the policy objectives and the intended effects?

The Office of Fair Trading report ‘Property searches – A market study’ (2005) stated Central Government should provide clear guidance for LAs on how they should recover costs.

By recovering costs LAs would create a level playing field for access to unrefined data. This should facilitate effective competition in the delivery of searches; improve the quality of searches and speed up their turnaround times; and, secure better value for money.
What policy options have been considered? Please justify any preferred option.

Leading on from the OFT report, KPMG were commissioned to assess charging methods and methodologies. The consultation recommended a ‘cost recovery’ model.

This impact assessment attempts to provide an initial assessment of the impact of such a costing regime, seeking views on these and the draft regulations that would be put in place, in the consultation document.

When will the policy be reviewed to establish the actual costs and benefits and the achievement of the desired effects?

The operation of HIPs will also be evaluated as part of the NAO vfm study, and a refresh of our 2006 baseline study which are both planned for 2010. In addition, from 2010-11 the department will conduct an annual assessment of local authority returns that set out the costs and income to the authority in providing access to unrefined data property records.

Ministerial Sign-off For select stage Impact Assessments:

I have read the Impact Assessment and I am satisfied that, given the available evidence, it represents a reasonable view of the likely costs, benefits and impact of the leading options.

Signed by the responsible Minister:

Date: 31 July 2008
## Summary: Analysis & Evidence

**Policy Option:** A  
**Description:** Cost recovery charging guidance for unrefined data

### Costs

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ANNUAL COSTS</th>
<th>Description and scale of key monetised costs by ‘main affected groups’</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>One-off (Transition) Yrs £</td>
<td>Increase in cost for PSCs of purchasing refined data – likely to be eroded by competition over time.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average Annual Cost (excluding one-off) £31m to £32m</td>
<td>LA loss of revenue from additional searches.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Total Cost (PV) £303m – £314m**

Other key non-monetised costs by ‘main affected groups’
Potential for legal challenge of LAs if charges set too high.

### Benefits

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ANNUAL BENEFITS</th>
<th>Description and scale of key monetised benefits by ‘main affected groups’</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>One-off Yrs £</td>
<td>LA able to cover costs and eliminate potential burden.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average Annual Benefit (excluding one-off) £38m to £42m</td>
<td>Reduced costs from insurance provision Reduced consumer costs due to duplication</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Total Benefit (PV) £368m – £405m**

Other key non-monetised benefits by ‘main affected groups’
More effective competition and better quality/speed of service.  
Clear legal framework for LA and PSCs to work with. Potential increased market share for PSC.

### Key Assumptions/Sensitivities/Risks

Based on assumption of 25% of PSC searches with insurance are duplicated. Other key assumptions listed in evidence base.

### Price Base

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Price Base Year</th>
<th>Time Period Years</th>
<th>Net Benefit Range (NPV) £65m – £91m</th>
<th>NET BENEFIT (NPV Best estimate) £78m</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2007</td>
<td>15</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Question</td>
<td>Answer</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>--------</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What is the geographic coverage of the policy/option?</td>
<td>England</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>On what date will the policy be implemented?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Which organisation(s) will enforce the policy?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What is the total annual cost of enforcement for these organisations?</td>
<td>£</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Does enforcement comply with Hampton principles?</td>
<td>Yes/No</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Will implementation go beyond minimum EU requirements?</td>
<td>Yes/No</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What is the value of the proposed offsetting measure per year?</td>
<td>£</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What is the value of changes in greenhouse gas emissions?</td>
<td>£</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Will the proposal have a significant impact on competition?</td>
<td>Yes/No</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Annual cost (£-£) per organisation (excluding one-off)</td>
<td>Micro</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Are any of these organisations exempt?</td>
<td>Yes/No</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Impact on Admin Burdens Baseline (2005 Prices) (Increase – Decrease)</td>
<td>Increase of £ Decrease of £ Net Impact £</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Key: <strong>Annual costs and benefits: Constant Prices</strong> (Net) Present Value</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Evidence Base (for summary sheets)

IMPACTS OF CHARGING REGIME ON A TYPICAL LOCAL AUTHORITY (LA) & PERSONAL SEARCH COMPANY (PSC)

Current situation

Schedule 7 of the Home Information Packs (No2) Regulations 2007 requires a specified set of information that must be included in a ‘Local Enquiries’ search to ensure that consumers get the necessary information when buying a property on which to make informed decisions. This Local Enquiries search is a required document in a Home Information Pack.

The data held by Local Authorities (LAs) falls into two categories:

**Pre-unrefined data** is data that cannot be made publicly available as access would not comply with the Data Protection Act (‘DPA’) or pass a Freedom of Information (‘FOI’) test.; and

**Unrefined data** is data that would pass a DPA or FOI test (i.e. it may have been extracted from other sensitive data). The process of converting pre-unrefined into unrefined data can only be undertaken by the local authority. Unrefined data is the first point at which data is able to be accessed by a third party and where any further refinement of that data could equally have been undertaken by a third party.

This data would then be further refined (or more commonly known as **compiled**) to produce a property search. **Refined data** is data where the local authority has added some value to the unrefined data, but this value could equally have been added by the private sector using the same set of unrefined data.

**Rationale for government intervention**

LAs have an effective monopoly over the unrefined data required to compile property searches.

LAs incur costs in the collection, maintenance and storage of this information and may also incur additional expenditure in providing access to this information (eg printing, photocopying etc). LAs should be able to recover these costs. If this were not the case then LAs would effectively be subsidising the cost of providing private search companies (PSCs) access to data – thereby distorting competition in the process. As a result, LAs have powers, where appropriate to charge for access to the data used in compiling a Local Enquiries search.

For effective competition to exist in the market for compiling property searches, the unrefined data must be made available on terms that do not discriminate against PSCs on the basis of their status. Specifically, LAs should offer access to
others on comparable terms to those of LAs themselves when they compile local property searches. This would effectively create a ‘level playing field’ fostering competition and a better deal for consumers.

It is clear that, in many cases, this is not happening (see Annex). As a consequence, competition in the market for property searches, where LAs compete directly with private sector search providers, is not yet fully effective. In effect, we have a market failure.

The market failure is in two broad forms:

**Firstly**, where LA’s are erecting barriers (monetary or otherwise) to impede competition with PSC’s.

1. **Restrict access to one or more of the search records** – while PSCs are currently allowed to use insurance in such cases the ability for PSCs to compete with LAs on the basis of quality is hampered, raising questions about whether personal searches may not in some circumstances be accepted by some solicitors or mortgage lenders eg because the search report is incomplete.

2. **Allow access, but impose ‘unreasonable’ arrangements** – this may give LAs a competitive advantage in terms of turnaround time, and potentially leads to delays in the time taken to produce Home Information Packs (HIPs) eg where the number of appointments per PSC a day may be restricted.

3. **Allow access, but set access charges at a level significantly above that required to maintain data, cover costs and invest in information systems** – this might reduce incentives on LAs to price competitively, be cost efficient and innovate. This in turn could impact negatively on the price paid by consumers as there is no effective competition eg costs can vary for the same piece of data (from £5 to £69.50).

**Secondly**, where this time by way of poor LA decisions – is **where LA incurs a cost of compiling data** yet do not charge for it. In this case the PSC gains an unfair competitive advantage over LA’s. In effect the LA subsidises the PSC.

**Proposal**

The Consultation paper ‘Local Authority Property Search Services: Charges for Property Search Services’ published in January 2008 proposed that LAs should be able to charge, where appropriate, for unrefined data on a cost recovery basis (see consultation paper for more details).

To implement the cost recovery regime proposed and provide the necessary clarity on charging that all parties seek, we would introduce a new Local Authorities (Charges for Property Searches) Regulations 2008. However, before taking final
decisions we are seeking views on the draft Regulations and particularly the
impacts of such an approach.

Given the limited availability of reliable data, this initial IA has necessarily had to
adopt a number of assumptions. In particular, it assumes a worse case scenario
where the market might pass on any new costs to the consumer. On that basis
the IA indicates that the benefits of the proposals should outweigh their costs but
that the up front costs of searches to consumers could rise. These costs however
would be expected to erode over time as a result of competition. Given current
limitations of information, we wish to assess these impacts further as part of this
consultation exercise.

Intended effect

Assumptions

| 1.2 million | total number of annual searches. |
| 35:65        | estimated current market split between LA and PSC. |
| 780,000      | number of PSC searches per year. |
| £33          | average cost of unrefined data set (CLG survey). |
| £115         | average cost of LA compiled search. |
| £70 – £100   | average cost of PSC compiled search. |
| c. £7        | average cost of insurance per search (taken from £4.50 – £10 estimate). |
| 15 – 22.5%   | proportion of PSCs paying for unrefined data |
| 15 – 30%     | proportion of PSCs accessing some data for free. |
| *Note figures may not sum due to rounding. Details of calculation shown in annex. |
| 56 – 71%     | proportion of PSCs using insurance |

Current position

Around one-fifth of PSCs currently pay for some unrefined data and thus the
revenue received by LAs is £4.3m or £5.2m. Where there is no charge for
access and where data is charged but insurance used (assumed half of where
data is charged) LAs in total should receive £14.4m or £12.7m – this is a current
potential burden on the LA.

An estimated 41% of LAs ‘restrict’ access to unrefined data (eg long-waiting
times). In these cases LAs forego any revenue they may receive, whilst PSCs may
use insurance to cover gaps where data is ‘unavailable’.

Where insurance is used to cover gaps in searches consumers do not receive all
the required information, limiting the benefit of the search. In addition, there are suggestions that some searches with insurance are being rejected by solicitors, requiring the seller to duplicate their search.

There are issues around the quality of personal searches eg the use of insurance to cover missing data. If 25 per cent of searches with insurance being duplicated the effective price of searches for consumers would be considerably higher. Instead of paying an average £85 for a PSC search – because of duplication – consumers may effectively pay an average £101 – £107 for a search.

Impact of charging proposals

By charging at cost LAs would not have to bear all the cost of delivering the service. With all the data charged for LA revenue received will rise by £22.3m or £20.7m (given 50% of data charged at cost is currently covered by insurance). However, LAs will lose the potential revenue gained from searches that are currently duplicated. This loss – minus the cost incurred in producing – is estimated at £9.0m or £11.7m.

For a PSC there is an additional cost of £22.3m or £20.7m of producing a search for a PSC. However, the cost is offset slightly by the savings from no longer having to purchase insurance, which is estimated at £3.1m or £3.9m (£7 paid on each search with insurance – estimated at 56%-71% of PSC searches). The cost of providing a search has thus risen by £19.2m to £16.8m. The cost of a PSC search – assuming 100% of the costs are passed onto the consumer could rise potentially higher than the effective cost of £101 currently.

Some of this cost may be passed onto consumers; however any increase will be offset by eliminating the need for duplication (as a result of missing data) and restrained by competition. If we assume 25% of searches with insurance are rejected by solicitors and consumers thus have to purchase another search from an LA (at £115) the savings would be £12.6m or £17.3m. The elimination of duplications also reduces the additional LA searches that are produced. Therefore, as discussed above, LAs may lose up to £9.0m or £11.3m.

Importantly and additionally, the quality of searches will be improved under the proposals – consumers want complete searches. The use of insurance by PSCs ends on 31 December 2008 therefore without full data PSCs won’t be able to continue to compile searches. The proposals will deliver better quality personal searches and therefore better value for money for consumers.
Summary matrix

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Benefits</th>
<th>Costs</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>LAs</td>
<td>Able to recover costs – additional revenue from charging for unrefined data, £22.3m or £20.7m.</td>
<td>Revenue gained from duplicate searches, less cost of data £9m or £11.7m.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PSCs</td>
<td>Saving from insurance, £3.1m or £3.9m.</td>
<td>Additional cost of unrefined data, £22.3m or £20.7m</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Better quality searches as have access to all data.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Consumers</td>
<td>Better value for money – savings from potential duplication, £12.6m or (£17.3m).</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Greater efficiency in delivery of searches from increased competition.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>£38m or £41.9m</td>
<td>£31.3m or £32.4m</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Conclusion

The proposals will deliver greater, and more effective, competition between LAs and the private sector. Consumers will also benefit from better quality personal searches and therefore realise better value for money – at present many searches are compiled with incomplete data which could lead to problems in the future.

The proposals will remove the potential for personal searches to be rejected by a buyer's solicitor as they will contain all the necessary data – this means the effective cost of a PSC search is currently much higher. Assuming 100% of costs are passed on to consumers, given 56% of personal searches have insurance, if an estimated 37% of searches with insurance are duplicated the 'effective' cost of a search will be lowered. If – in our range – the number of PSC searches with insurance is nearer 71%, with 26% of searches duplicated the 'effective' cost of the search will lower.
However, both PSCs and LAs need to remain competitive, therefore market pressures will restrain any potential increase in search prices in the short term and the effective competition the proposals deliver will place pressures on prices to fall in the medium to longer term.

**Specific Impact Tests: Checklist**

Use the table below to demonstrate how broadly you have considered the potential impacts of your policy options.

Ensure that the results of any tests that impact on the cost-benefit analysis are contained within the main evidence base; other results may be annexed.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of testing undertaken</th>
<th>Results in Evidence Base?</th>
<th>Results annexed?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Competition Assessment</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Small Firms Impact Test</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Legal Aid</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sustainable Development</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Carbon Assessment</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other Environment</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Health Impact Assessment</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Race Equality</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disability Equality</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gender Equality</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Human Rights</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rural Proofing</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Annexes

**Competition assessment**

The guidelines aim to create a level playing field by correcting the market failures that currently exist. This will enhance competition for local enquiry searches to the benefit of the consumer – a view supported by the OFT’s response to the previous consultation.

With no intervention – hence the temporary use of insurance provision ending 31 December 2008 - PSCs in areas where LAs obstruct access to data would no longer be able to complete searches, effectively giving monopoly to the LA.

**Small firm’s impact**

By allowing equal access to unrefined data PSCs (large and small) will be able to compete in every LA. If the new guidelines were not introduced – and the temporary insurance provision ended – PSCs would be eliminated from an estimated 41% of LAs where there is no access to certain data, and potentially much more where LAs choose to continue or restrict access to data.

Equal access to data will also increase the quality of searches enabling better competition with LAs – because PSC searches will also contain all required data. This will eliminate the issue of duplicates and improve the reputation of PSC searches, allowing for an increase in market share (for large and small firms).

In some areas the cost of unrefined data will increase, however as shown, the cost is still likely to be lower than the average LA. Thus with a better product (containing all the data) there is scope for PSCs to increase market share (including small firms).

**Risk assessment**

One potential risk of a ‘cost recovery’ model of this type is that LAs will not abide by the guidance. However, there are two reasons why this is not likely to be widespread. Firstly, PSC’s have the ability to legal challenge where access to data is restricted or overcharged (though the propensity and ease of PSCs doing this however, are difficult to identify). Secondly, the cost recovery model contains a transparent best practise formula for calculating cost recovery. This means that LAs must show the calculation of their ‘cost recovery’ fee. Communities and Local Government will conduct an annual assessment of LA cost and income returns to monitor the effect of this proposed new charging regime.
Calculations

Note: although we expect the number of transactions to fall this year (RICS estimate by 40%), because the appraisal period is 15 years, we assume the size of the market remains at 2006 levels ie 1.2 million searches in total.

From the consultation document

**Table 1: Average cost of data per LA**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Planning</th>
<th>Building</th>
<th>Traffic</th>
<th>Roads</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Average cost</strong></td>
<td>£1.75</td>
<td>£10.69</td>
<td>£13.70</td>
<td>£6.90</td>
<td>£33.04</td>
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<tr>
<td>Provide access free</td>
<td>181</td>
<td>62</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>75</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Charge for access</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>27</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Deny access</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>62</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>12</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sample</td>
<td>203</td>
<td>174</td>
<td>98</td>
<td>114</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Calculating the proportions by individual data subject (eg for those LAs providing access for free 181 divided by planning sample of 203 gives 89%).

**Table 2: Proportion of LAs**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Planning</th>
<th>Building</th>
<th>Traffic</th>
<th>Roads</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Provide access free</td>
<td>89%</td>
<td>36%</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>66%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Charge for access</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>29%</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>24%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Deny access</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>36%</td>
<td>41%</td>
<td>11%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Using both tables above we can calculate weighted costs. For example, 89% of LAs currently give free access, and thus in future will have to pay £1.75 for planning data. This gives an addition cost of £1.2m (when multiplied by the number of PSC searches).

The total columns thus give the total costs across the four data groups who currently provide, charge and restrict access. Thus the additional cost of £22.3m is calculated from the total revenue from LAs that currently provide free access, plus the cost of those who deny access, plus our assumed 50% of those that currently charge and use insurance. This gives us £22.3m.

**Table 3: Estimated additional cost of data (a)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Planning</th>
<th>Building</th>
<th>Traffic</th>
<th>Roads</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Provide access free</td>
<td>£1,217,069</td>
<td>£2,971,083</td>
<td>£3,162,184</td>
<td>£3,540,789</td>
<td>£10,891,125</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Charge for access</td>
<td>£94,138</td>
<td>£2,396,034</td>
<td>£3,162,184</td>
<td>£1,274,684</td>
<td>£6,927,040</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Restrict access</td>
<td>£53,793</td>
<td>£2,971,083</td>
<td>£4,361,633</td>
<td>£566,526</td>
<td>£7,953,035</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Although the above results relate directly to the consultation document, traffic and roads data is predominantly not held by LAs, but by County Councils. Therefore, many LAs who stated they gave free access simply do not hold the data and data would be available at cost from the County Council. This means the 30% and 66% allowing free access to traffic and roads data (table three) is overestimated.

As a result we assume half do not hold the information, but are charged by the County Council. This increases the ‘charge for access’ for traffic and roads to 45% and 57% respectively. Once again we assume half of those charged for access will use insurance, which (using the same methodology as above) gives an additional cost of £20.7m.

**Table 4: Estimated additional cost of data (b)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Planning</th>
<th>Building</th>
<th>Traffic</th>
<th>Roads</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Provide access free</td>
<td>£1,217,069</td>
<td>£2,971,083</td>
<td>£1,602,900</td>
<td>£1,776,060</td>
<td>£7,567,112</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Charge for access</td>
<td>£94,138</td>
<td>£2,396,034</td>
<td>£4,808,700</td>
<td>£3,067,740</td>
<td>£10,366,612</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Restrict access</td>
<td>£53,793</td>
<td>£2,971,083</td>
<td>£4,361,633</td>
<td>£566,526</td>
<td>£7,953,035</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

From table 2 above, we also calculate our estimates of those who currently provide for free, charge and deny access for all data – this is needed to work out how many use insurance and hence savings and the savings from duplications.

Traffic is the most expensive component of data. Currently 30% of LAs provide free access to traffic data. The corresponding figure for all other data groups is greater (thus we assume that if there is free access to traffic data, there will also be free access to the other components). As a result we have a maximum estimate of 30% provide free access to all data.

Corresponding figures show 41% currently restrict access to traffic data and 30% charge for access. These figures are treated as minimums. Given our assumption that half of those charging for data use insurance – this gives a best estimate of 56% of PSC searches currently use insurance.

Given our assumptions of traffic and roads data outlined above, the estimates above are adjusted. This gives up to 71% of PSC using insurance, 15% allowing free access and 22.5% paying for unrefined data. These figures provide our ranges throughout the IA.
Annex 3  The consultation criteria

1. The Government has adopted a code of practice on consultations. The criteria below apply to all UK national public consultations consisting of a document in electronic or printed form.

   i. Consult widely throughout the process, allowing a minimum of 12 weeks for written consultation at least once during the development of the policy

   ii. Be clear about what your proposals are, who may be affected, what questions are being asked and the timescale for responses

   iii. Ensure your consultation is clear, concise and widely accessible

   iv. Give feedback regarding the responses received and how the consultation process influenced the policy

   v. Monitor your department’s effectiveness at consultation, including through the use of a designated consultation co-ordinator

   vi. Ensure your consultation follows better regulation best practice, including carrying out a Regulatory Impact Assessment if appropriate.

2. The code does not have legal force but is regarded as binding on UK departments and their agencies unless Ministers conclude that exceptional circumstances require a departure from it. The full consultation code may be viewed at:


3. If you are not satisfied that this consultation has followed the above criteria or you have any other observations about ways of improving the consultation process, then please contact:

   Albert Joyce
   DCLG Consultation Co-ordinator
   Floor 6, Zone H10
   Eland House
   Bressenden Place
   London SW1E 5DU

   Email: albert.joyce@communities.gsi.gov.uk