

# Quality Assurance

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## Appendix 11. Quality Assurance

### A11.1 Introduction

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The Cambridge sub-regional SHMA has been produced as described in Chapter 3 *Project structure and accountabilities*, and following the research brief set out in Appendix 1.

Within this structure, various elements of quality assurance apply to the Assessment, which we will continue to operate and improve in future. These are referred to as “internal quality assurance” (section 11.2).

In addition in November 2007, the East of England Regional Assembly and GO-East commissioned “Strategic Housing Market Assessments in the East of England: a quality assessment of SHMAs to identify innovation and good practice”. Communities and Local Government (CLG) made funding available to each region, to quality assess Strategic Housing Market Assessments (SHMAs) against the framework in the national guidance, identifying innovation and good practice in their production and use. This is referred to as “external quality assurance” (section 11.3).

### A11.2 Internal quality assurance

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#### Through listening to partners

The SHMA has been undertaken as a project, which will be continuously monitored and updated as time progresses. The first phase is production of the consultation draft, and following consultation with our broad partnership team (see Chapter 4, *The participation ladder*) aims to be finalized in March 2008 and then published.

During development of the initial consultation draft, a project team has guided the content, format and methodology for the work being undertaken by the County Council Research Group (CCRG). The Project Team includes a range of partners to help ensure a broad ranging and comprehensive Assessment is produced, which takes account of a variety of stakeholder interests and approaches.

The broader Partnership Team has input at various stages, including an early workshop outlining the SHMA guidance and process, initial outcomes and asking for Partners hopes and fears for both the housing market and for the Assessment itself (see Appendix 10, *Outcomes of consultation throughout the process*).

The second Partnership workshop updated Partners on the final CLG guidance, and focused discussions on more specific areas of the housing market that people had an interest in and made an input to our understanding of.

Part of the consultation has also included attending meetings and taking the SHMA “message” to other stakeholders, such as Chief Planning Officers, rural housing enablers, the Development Industry Forum, the Cambridge Land Owners Group. These have provided helpful information and guidance on various aspects of the SHMA.

#### Through technical abilities and systemsd at the CCRG

The Cambridgeshire County Research Group is a highly qualified and technically competent unit, which holds the highest standards for research and has detailed local knowledge, used to interpret and analyse data and information for the SHMA.

As at April 2008 a new data assessment system was taken up at the County Council to check data validity and risk. This will be implemented for future data input to the SHMA, and will add to overall quality assurance for the SHMA.

### **Through cross-referencing data sources and reviewing data prior to use, particularly in the housing need section**

Following production of the chapters which provided the data needed to assessment market, all the data was loaded into spreadsheet format to ensure that, in all calculations, the source data was available, the calculations were consistently applied, and any specific circumstances or notes added to help understand and update in future. These provided the source data detailed in Chapter 27, *Identifying housing need*.

Following consultation the SHMA team has added Appendix 13, a further *Technical Appendix* which sets out calculations, triangulations and judgements in more detail than we had originally planned to launch. However it became clear from the consultation that people were very interested and needed to know more about what data had been used and how, so this appendix will provide a further level of detail.

For those less detailed enquiries, we have retained a summary audit trail within Chapter 27 which gives a simpler account of the calculations.

® In addition the SHMA will seek independent assessment of the technical appendix, to assist us in developing and improving our methodology, triangulation, calculations and explanations in future. We will look to commission this work in 2008 and to apply its outcomes as soon as possible after the verification work is completed. This will become part of our future work plan, and will involve further involvement and consultation with our stakeholders in future on the technical aspects of the SHMA.

### **Through joint review and editing**

The chapters of the SHMA were reviewed by some or all of the project team and, in particular cases, specific interest groups prior to launch for consultation. For example the County Council's Gypsy and Traveller Unit reviewed that chapter.

### **Through consultation on the draft**

Initially a 6 week consultation period was set, but due to the launch date (10th December) and to a few of the more crucial sections not being launched until 12th December this was extended to 8 weeks. At 12th December all the crucial chapters were available on the Cambridgeshire Horizons website, while three "supporting" sections were still to follow (these are: Change log; outcomes of consultation and Quality Assurance which were not judged as essential to read and understand the outcomes of the assessment itself, though important to support the final publication).

### **Through using accredited data sources**

Making use wherever possible of accredited data sources which are themselves quality assured, which have an established position as credible data sources, and which offer consistency between authorities. These include Census, CORE, HSSA etc.

### **A11.3 External quality assurance: EERA's quality assurance work**

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#### **Project purpose and objectives**

In 2007, Savills and Opinion Research Services (ORS) were appointed to undertake quality assurance and good practice research for EERA. Their methodology focuses on 3 key areas:

- Stage 1: evaluation of SHMA methodology.
- Stage 2: assessment of SHMA outcomes and interpretation against evidence base.
- Stage 3: communication and presentation of findings.

The Purpose of the study was to undertake a quality assessment of SHMAs in the region to:

- Identify innovation and good practice in their production and use and disseminate the learning;
- Establish a baseline for future SHMA research in the region, identifying common data sources and opportunities for a more consistent regional approach to support the regional evidence base, in particular a future Single Integrated Regional Strategy (SIRS).

The Objectives of the study were to:

- Quality assess planned, emerging and completed SHMAs against the framework set out in the national guidance, comparing and analysis of the different approaches taken;
- Identify how existing/current housing needs assessments have been reflected, including provision for Gypsies and Travellers;
- Identify and map using GIS any gaps in coverage of the region / areas of duplication (sub-regional/pan-region), analyse the implications and make recommendations for the next cycle of SHMAs;
- Identify innovative approaches and models of good practice and facilitate their dissemination, including cross-boundary partnership working (extent and effectiveness of) and the application of SHMAs;
- Provide an analysis of SHMA application and recommendations for future use (e.g. how SHMAs could support and inform sub-regional housing strategies and LDFs, as well as broader policy objectives and links to Local Area Agreements, regional and national policy formulation);
- Assess the extent to which the SHMA can be used as a consistent evidence base to inform the review of the Regional Spatial Strategy
- Identify common data sources and any gaps (knowledge, training), and recommend a more consistent approach to support the regional evidence base.

#### **Outcomes**

In March 2008, draft outcomes were presented to a joint meeting of regional housing and planning advisory groups (known as RHAG and RPAG). The final report was due for production in April 2008.

An important requirement will be to facilitate dissemination of the identified learning, innovative approaches and good practice throughout the course of the study to better

support the commissioning groups in the development and application of SHMAs. This was completed through production of a new SHMA Toolkit.

### **Future tasks**

We look to the final report (April 2008) to provide quality assurance for each SHMA in the East of England Region, and accompanying toolkit to help guide production and revision of SHMAs in the East of England.

By comparing approaches taken and methods used, participation structures and levels of communication, we hope to learn form and continuously improve the Cambridge Sub-Regional SHMA.

In Cambridge sub-region we plan to take an active part in sharing learning with other SHMA teams who are embarking on the "journey", particularly following consultation on the first SHMA and our third workshop.

### **Update at April 2008**

The EERA quality assurance report and an SHMA toolkit have now been published and are available at <http://www.eera.gov.uk/Text.asp?id=SX85B5-A77FDDC8&cat=463>.