

Appendix 2: The Household Survey 2007

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Appendix 2. The Household Survey 2007

A2.1 Purpose of this Appendix

This appendix provides a short note on the methodology of the Household Survey run in 2007. A general report on survey responses is available, but was not intended for and was not used in the SHMA. Specific ad hoc analyses of the results were used in parts of the SHMA and are referenced in the appropriate parts of the SHMA text and in the *Technical Appendix* (A13).

A2.2 Introduction to the survey

The household survey was conducted by MRUK Ltd through face-to-face interviews in the homes of just over 3,000 residents across Cambridgeshire. The interviews were split evenly between the five districts, giving at least 600 interviews in each district.

The survey was intended to:

- Provide information for the SHMA to supplement the information available from published sources.
- Provide a set of data which was consistent with previous Housing Needs Assessment (HNA) surveys. This was to allow comparison with previous surveys, if necessary, and to allow a traditional HNA to be carried out, should the CLG require that alongside the SHMA. At the time of commissioning the survey, there was debate about whether an HNA would need to be carried out alongside the SHMA. As was generally, but not universally, expected, the CLG guidance does not include the need for an HNA alongside an SHMA.

The CLG Guidance encourages the use of published sources, but accepts that surveys may need to be commissioned where there are gaps in the published data. The SHMA project team will continue to investigate published sources to take the place of future household surveys, or possibly to allow for a shorter and more specific questionnaire to be used in future surveys. We would hope to include our two Suffolk “observers” in any future primary research to help strengthen our sub-regional approach.

A2.3 The questionnaire

Questions covered previous HNA themes as well as some additional themes. In many cases it was possible to use tried and tested questions. MRUK piloted the questionnaire internally and monitored the responses, particularly in the early interviews. No major problems were identified in the interviews and only one minor problem – that some respondents were unwilling to name their mortgage provider.

A2.4 Interviews

The interviews were carried out with adult residents and achieved by making one initial call and up to four calls back at each address at different times of the day and week.

A2.5 Sampling

The 600 interviews in each district were achieved by taking a simple random sample of 900 in each district then interviewing at least 65% of that sample.

A2.6 Confidence intervals

At the County level 3,000 interviews represents a margin of error of at most +/-1.8% at the 95% confidence level.

In each district, the 600 interviews represent a margin of error of at most +/-4.1% at the 95% confidence level.

A2.7 Reporting, weighting and using the results

MRUK were asked to provide a straightforward report of the survey results with the minimum analysis. A cleaned data set of the results was passed to Cambridgeshire County Council Research Group (CCCRG) who undertook detailed analysis to provide information for the SHMA where published data was not available or was inadequate. This approach was considered to offer the best value for money by providing a general report, but being a practical way to ensure that specific, detailed, analyses could be undertaken for minimal cost.

The analysis used for the SHMA was weighted according to tenure for each district. The sampling method produced almost exactly the same number of responses in each district (by design). To allow for this, the County level data was also weighted by district population, taking account of anomalies such as the large student population in Cambridge. However, no County level data was used in the SHMA.

A2.8 General confidence in the survey

It is important to note that the method used for this survey does not differ in any substantial respect from a traditional HNA survey. It used face-to-face interviews with a random sample of households and so on. The results were weighted appropriately before use. Therefore, it is possible to have exactly the same amount of confidence in this survey as in any previous HNA survey carried out in Cambridgeshire – neither more nor less. A smaller margin of error could have been achieved in each district by running more interviews in each district, but it should be remembered that confidence intervals +/-3%, +/-4% and +/-5% are commonly accepted in social surveys.

A2.9 Quality checking

MRUK ran their standard well-documented quality controls throughout the project. For example, the company is formally accredited through the Market Research Society as working to the Interviewer Quality Control Scheme (IQCS), the highest level of quality control obtainable within the Market Research Industry.