

FORESTRY COMMISSION ANNUAL REPORT ON STATISTICAL SURVEYS IN WALES (COMPLIANCE AND QUALITY IMPROVEMENT PLAN)

PURPOSE

1. This report provides details of the statistical surveys carried out or authorised by the Forestry Commission in 2005-06, sets out the programme of surveys proposed for 2006-07, and presents outline plans for the following two years. **Approval is now sought for the survey programme for 2006-07 to proceed in Wales.**

BACKGROUND

2. UK Government Departments are required to provide Ministers with an annual “Compliance and Quality Improvement Plan” that reports on all the statistical surveys of businesses and local authorities carried out in the previous year and sets out the plans for the future.

3. This report covers regular and ad hoc statistical surveys of businesses and local authorities in Wales. Some of these surveys run at the same time in Scotland and England, so summary information for the 3 countries and GB totals are presented in an Annex.

RESPONSE BURDEN

4. The response burden is the estimated cost of the staff time required to fill in the survey questionnaires. The hourly rates supplied by the Survey Control Unit of ONS have been used. In calculating compliance costs, account is taken of expected response rates, with a minimal cost estimated for each non-respondent.

Outturn

5. For surveys of business that started in 2005-06, the total response burden was £610. This is much less than expected at the start of the year, because two of the GB-wide ad hoc surveys planned for 2005-06 were postponed. The provision for miscellaneous surveys was much greater than required, and has now been reduced for future plans. A customer satisfaction survey for FC Wales Schools Education Service has now been brought into the scope of this report, with an estimated response burden of £1,810 in 2005-06; this is classified as a survey of local authorities.

Plans

6. Approval is now sought for the programme of surveys to start in 2006-07, with an estimated response burden in Wales of £1,800 for businesses and £1,850 for local

authorities (schools). Of this £390 is for the three regular surveys for National Statistics, £1,410 for ad hoc surveys of businesses, and £1,850 for the Schools Education Service survey.

7. Outline plans for Wales suggest an estimated response burden of £2,200 for 2007-08 and £2,300 for 2008-09 for businesses. The Schools Education Service survey is planned to continue, with estimated response burdens of £1,900 in 2007-08 and £2,000 in 2008-09.

REGULAR SURVEYS OF BUSINESSES

8. The Forestry Commission regularly carries out three voluntary postal surveys of businesses in Great Britain to gather information on sawmills, round fencing and private sector removals. Results from these surveys and other enquiries to wood processing industries are published in "UK Timber Statistics", "Forestry Facts & Figures", "Forestry Statistics" and other statistical publications available on the Forestry Commission Internet site. These statistical outputs became part of National Statistics from August 2001 and were included in a National Statistics Quality Review of forestry statistics, which was published in December 2002. Results from the surveys are also used in compiling UK statistical returns for international organisations.

9. In 2005/06, a total of 38 businesses in Wales were approached, with an estimated response burden of £380. It is planned that the three surveys will continue to run each year with little change. The response burden is estimated at £390 for 2006-07 and around £400 in each of 2007-08 and 2008-09.

AD HOC SURVEYS OF BUSINESSES

10. One ad hoc survey was run in Wales in 2005-06. As part of a study on Valuing Forest Recreation, surveys of local businesses were carried out to estimate the extent to which visitor spend remains in the local economy, to give LM3 local multipliers. A total of 30 businesses in Wales were approached for this survey, with 17 responses received, giving a total compliance cost of around £230. The planned GB surveys of Plant Health customers and National Inventory woodland owners were delayed.

11. Plans for surveys in Wales in 2006-07 include a small part of the GB-wide Plant Health Customer Survey. It is expected that other ad hoc surveys of businesses to run in Wales in 2006-07 will cover no more than 200 businesses with a total compliance cost of no more than £1,390.

12. The field survey for the next National Inventory of Woodland and Trees (NIWT) is now expected to commence in 2009, so any linked survey of woodland owners is now outside the scope of this 3-year plan. Other miscellaneous business surveys in Wales in 2007-08 and 2008-09 are expected to cover up to 250 businesses per year with an associated annual compliance cost of up to £1,900 per year.

SURVEYS OF LOCAL AUTHORITIES

13. The Schools Education Service of FC Wales (previously in Forest Enterprise Wales) started a customer satisfaction survey around 2002, for school visits to forests and for the service's visits to schools. This has not previously been reported as a statistical survey, but it has now been agreed that it should be brought within scope from 2005-06. Around 500 questionnaires are distributed each year, with around 100 responses. Including time for non-respondents, this gives an estimated compliance cost of £1,810 in 2005-06, increasing to £1,850, £1,900 and £2,000 in the following three years.

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