

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 2006-07, sets out the programme of surveys proposed for 2007-08, and presents outline plans for the following two years. **Approval is now sought for the survey programme for 2007-08 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 three 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 response burdens, account is taken of expected response rates, with a nominal cost estimated for each non-respondent.

Outturn

5. For surveys of business in 2006-07, the total response burden was £470. For the regular surveys, this was slightly higher than anticipated, because of improved response rates. As planned, the only ad hoc survey affecting Wales was a GB-wide customer survey for the Plant Health Service. In the plans, a provision had been made for other miscellaneous surveys of businesses, but none were required. A customer satisfaction survey for FC Wales Schools Education Service is included in this report as a survey of local authorities, with an estimated response burden of £1850 for about 100 responses.

Plans

6. Approval is now sought for the programme of surveys to start in 2007-08, with an estimated response burden in Wales of £5,850 for businesses and £1,950 for local

authorities (schools). Of this £460 is for the three regular surveys for National Statistics, £3,950 for planned ad hoc surveys of businesses, £1,440 provision for other miscellaneous surveys of business and £1,950 for the Schools Education Service survey. Further details are given below.

7. Outline plans for Wales suggest an estimated response burden for businesses of £2,400 for 2008-09 and £2,900 for 2009-10. The Schools Education Service survey is planned to continue, with estimated response burdens of £2,100 in each of 2008-09 and 2009-10.

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 "Forestry Facts & Figures", "Forestry Statistics" and other statistical publications available on the Forestry Commission Internet site, and are also used in compiling UK statistical returns for international organisations. 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. The surveys are reviewed each year with the Expert Group on Timber and Trade Statistics.

9. In 2006/07, a total of 39 businesses in Wales were approached, with an estimated response burden of £450. It is planned that the three surveys will continue to run each year with little change. The response burden is estimated at £460 for 2007-08 and around £500 in each of 2008-09 and 2009-10.

AD HOC SURVEYS OF BUSINESSES

10. The only ad hoc survey of business in Wales in 2006-07 was a small part of the GB-wide Plant Health Customer Survey, which included 3 businesses in Wales. Last year's plans included provision for other ad hoc surveys of businesses to run in Wales in 2006-07, covering up to 200 businesses with a total response burden of up to £1,390, but in the event no other surveys were required.

11. In 2007-08, as part of Cyd Coed evaluation, there is planned to be a survey of 164 community groups in the Objective One area (West Wales and the Valleys), with a response burden of around £2500. A GB-wide survey of forest business health, following similar surveys in 2004 and 2001, is planned to monitor trends in turnover, profitability and employment in forest sector businesses; based on the previous surveys it could go to about 100 businesses in Wales, with a response burden of around £1,000. Two other planned GB-wide surveys are in response to objectives in the Scottish forestry strategy, to assess the construction timber market and sales of genetically improved stock from forest nurseries; together they are planned to go to fewer than 50 businesses in Wales, with a total response burden of around £400. As in last year's plan's, we propose to make provision for other miscellaneous business surveys in Wales in 2007-08 to cover up to 200 businesses, with a response burden up to £1,440.

12. The outline plans include customer surveys for Plant Health Service in 2008-09, and a follow-up to the construction timber market study in 2009-10, each of which will include a few businesses in Wales. In addition, we propose to make provision for other miscellaneous business surveys in Wales to cover up to 250 businesses in each year, with a response burden up to £1,900 in 2008-09 and up to £2,000 in 2009-10.

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 was brought within scope of survey control reporting from 2005-06. Around 500 questionnaires are distributed each year, with around 100 responses. Including time for non-respondents, this gives an estimated response burden of £1,850 in 2006-07, increasing to £1,950, £2,100 and £2,100 in the following three years.

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