

Welsh Government

Consultation Document

Review of Environment and Sustainability Statistical Outputs

Date of issue: **8 June 2011**

Action required: **Responses by 15 July 2011**

Overview	The Statistical Directorate of the Welsh Government is asking users of our environment and sustainability statistics for their views on our published outputs. Having increased the number of statistical outputs for environment and sustainability, the purpose behind this review is to seek users' views on whether these outputs are meeting their needs in order to assess their usefulness and any areas for improvement
How to respond	You can respond to the consultation by using the separate response form (in Word format). This can be emailed to stats.environment@wales.gsi.gov.uk or posted to Stephanie Howarth Environment Sustainability and Housing Statistics Statistical Directorate Welsh Government Cathays Park, Cardiff, CF10 3NQ
Further information and related documents	Large print, Braille and alternative language versions of this document are available on request.
Contact details	For further information please contact Stephanie Howarth Email: stats.environment@wales.gsi.gov.uk Telephone: Stephanie Howarth on 029 2082 5616

Data protection

How the views and information you give us will be used

Any response you send us will be seen in full by Welsh Government staff dealing with the issues which this consultation is about. It may also be seen by other Welsh Government staff to help them plan future consultations.

The Welsh Government intends to publish a summary of the responses to this document. We may also publish responses in full. Normally, the name and address (or part of the address) of the person or organisation who sent the response are published with the response. This helps to show that the consultation was carried out properly. If you do not want your name or address published, please tell us this in writing when you send your response. We will then blank them out.

Names or addresses we blank out might still get published later, though we do not think this would happen very often. The Freedom of Information Act 2000 and the Environmental Information Regulations 2004 allow the public to ask to see information held by many public bodies, including the Welsh Government. This includes information which has not been published. However, the law also allows us to withhold information in some circumstances. If anyone asks to see information we have withheld, we will have to decide whether to release it or not. If someone has asked for their name and address not to be published, that is an important fact we would take into account. However, there might sometimes be important reasons why we would have to reveal someone's name and address, even though they have asked for them not to be published. We would get in touch with the person and ask their views before we finally decided to reveal the information.

Why are the environment and sustainability statistical outputs being reviewed?

The number of statistical outputs for environment and sustainability has increased since 2006. The purpose of this review is to seek the views of users on whether these outputs are meeting their needs in order to assess their usefulness and any areas for improvement.

What statistical outputs are currently produced for environment and sustainability?

The current statistical outputs are:

- Local Authority Municipal Waste Statistics (annual and quarterly)
- Fly-Tipping Statistics
- The State of the Environment Report
- Sustainable Development Indicators

These can be accessed online:

<http://wales.gov.uk/topics/statistics/theme/environment/?lang=en>

<http://wales.gov.uk/topics/statistics/theme/sustain-develop/?lang=en>

Are there any proposed changes?

There are proposals to change some of the statistical outputs. We are seeking users' views on these proposals. These proposals relate to:

- Changing the presentation of statistics in both the annual and quarterly Local Authority Municipal Waste statistical releases.
- Changing the frequency of updates to the State of the Environment Report.

Further information on the proposed changes is provided in the questionnaire.

Environment and Sustainability Statistics – Review of Outputs

Our distinctive Welsh environment is one of our most valuable assets. It is important in its own right and for the range of vital services it provides us with. To build a sustainable future for Wales we need to manage the pressures we place on our environment more effectively and to address new challenges like climate change.

Sustainable development is about making the best use of our resources to improve our quality of life without damaging the resources or quality of life for future generations. The Welsh Government is one of only a few governments to have a legal duty with regards to sustainable development.

In order to help meet such challenges, the Welsh Government's Statistical Directorate collects analyses and disseminates data on many aspects of the environment and sustainability in Wales. The environment and sustainability statistics published by the Statistical Directorate are used to monitor progress towards a range of national, local and international targets. The statistics come from a range of sources covering Wales and the UK and enable comparisons to be made with other UK countries and internationally.

The growth of environment and sustainability statistics for Wales is a relatively recent development which has coincided with publication of the Welsh Government's Environment Strategy in 2006. Having increased the number of regular outputs, the purpose behind this review is to seek users' views on whether these outputs are meeting their needs in order to assess their usefulness and any areas for improvement.

Please give us your views on our environment and sustainability statistics outputs to help us in our future planning. We would like to receive responses to this review by **15 July 2011**.

If completing this form electronically we recommend that before starting you save it and work on this version using MS Word.

1. Name:

Job Title / Position:

Organisation:

Address:

Telephone number:

E-mail address:

2. What do you currently use environment and sustainability statistics for?

Please 'X' all that apply

- Research
- Inclusion in reports
- Briefing
- Benchmarking
- General background
- Policy development
- Decision making
- Funding allocations
- Monitoring
- Other, please specify below
- Do not use

To aid our understanding of the use and relevance of our statistics we would welcome any examples of how you have used our statistics in your work. Please use the space below ↘

3. How useful do you find the various types of presentation and analysis used in environment and sustainability statistics?

Please place an 'X' for each type

	Very useful.....Not useful				
	1	2	3	4	5
Data Tables	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Charts	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Bullet Points/ Headlines	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Statistical Releases	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Interactive (e.g. StatsWales)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Charts	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Commentary	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Please use the space below to add any comments on the presentation and analysis ↗

4. We would also value your comments on whether there are other statistics relating to the environment and sustainability that we don't currently publish data on that you feel we should publish statistics on. Please write your comments below. ↗

5. If we need to, can we contact you about your responses to this questionnaire?

Please 'X'

Yes No

6. We maintain an electronic distribution list, to which we email our latest outputs. Would you like to be added to this list to receive updates of these outputs?

Please 'X'

Yes No

We would like to seek your views on specific groups of our outputs. Please complete the following sections only for those groups of outputs that you make use of.

Municipal Waste Management – page 4

Fly-Tipping – page 7

State of the Environment – page 9

Sustainable Development Indicators – page 11

7. If you use any of the following **Municipal Waste Management** statistical outputs:

- [Municipal Waste Management \(quarterly\)](#)
- [Municipal Waste Management Report \(annual\)](#)

7a How do you rate...
Please 'X' all that apply

Excellent.....Poor

	1	2	3	4	5
i. the relevance of the statistical product? <i>The degree to which the statistical product meets user needs for both coverage and content.</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
ii. the accessibility of the statistical product? <i>Accessibility is the ease with which users are able to access the data, also reflecting the format(s) in which the data are available and the availability of supporting information.</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
iii. the clarity of the statistical product? <i>Clarity refers to the quality and sufficiency of the metadata, illustrations and accompanying advice.</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
iv. the comparability of the statistical product? <i>The degree to which data can be compared over time and domain.</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
v. the timeliness of the statistical product? <i>Timeliness refers to the lapse of time between publication and the period to which the data refer.</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Please use the space below to add any comments on the above, including suggestions for improvement ↗

7b We would be interested in understanding whether our statistical outputs on municipal waste management provide you with the information you need in an appropriate style and format.

- Does the commentary and analysis that are published help you understand how to interpret the statistics they refer to?
Yes No
- Are graphs, tables and maps used in the most effective way?
Yes No
- Through our statistical outputs and associated StatsWales tables are you happy with the level of detail of the statistics provided?
Yes No
- Do you have the information you need about the quality of the data to enable you to use the statistics with confidence and in an informed way?
Yes No

Please use this space to record any comments you wish to make ↗

7c At present, we publish provisional quarterly waste statistics and an annual report containing finalised waste statistics. The annual statistics include a wider range of waste products (e.g. rubble, beach cleansing) than the quarterly statistics. The definition used in the quarterly statistics is also the definition used for local government waste targets.

We would like to make the definition of the **key figures** in the annual report consistent with the quarterly figures to allow easier comparison. Data on the extra waste products (e.g. rubble, beach cleansing) will still be available, but will not be the key figure.

Would you agree with this proposal?

Yes No

Please write any comments below ↗.

7d Waste management trends vary with the seasons. Because of this, we currently compare each quarter's figures with the same quarter in the previous year. An alternative approach would be to compare figures using rolling averages covering the most recent four quarters (see annex A for more detail). This approach is taken by DEFRA in their statistical reports.

Would you agree with using this alternative approach?

Yes No

Please write any comments below ↴.

8. If you use any of the following annual **Fly-Tipping** statistical outputs:

- [Fly-Tipping](#)

8a How do you rate...
Please 'X' all that apply

Excellent.....Poor

	1	2	3	4	5
i. the relevance of the statistical product? <i>The degree to which the statistical product meets user needs for both coverage and content.</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
ii. the accessibility of the statistical product? <i>Accessibility is the ease with which users are able to access the data, also reflecting the format(s) in which the data are available and the availability of supporting information.</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
iii. the clarity of the statistical product? <i>Clarity refers to the quality and sufficiency of the metadata, illustrations and accompanying advice.</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
iv. the comparability of the statistical product? <i>The degree to which data can be compared over time and domain.</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
v. the timeliness of the statistical product? <i>Timeliness refers to the lapse of time between publication and the period to which the data refer.</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Please use the space below to add any comments on the above, including suggestions for improvement ↗

8b We would be interested in understanding whether our statistical outputs on fly-tipping provide you with the information you need in an appropriate style and format.

- Does the commentary and analysis that are published help you understand how to interpret the statistics they refer to?

Yes No

- Are graphs, tables and maps used in the most effective way?

Yes No

- Through our statistical outputs and associated StatsWales tables are you happy with the level of detail of the statistics provided?

Yes No

- Do you have the information you need about the quality of the data to enable you to use the statistics with confidence and in an informed way?

Yes No

Please use this space to record any comments you wish to make ↗

9. If you use any of the following **State of the Environment** statistical outputs:

- [State of the Environment statistical release](#)
- [State of the Environment interactive report](#)

9a How do you rate...
Please 'X' all that apply

Excellent.....Poor

	1	2	3	4	5
i. the relevance of the statistical product? <i>The degree to which the statistical product meets user needs for both coverage and content.</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
ii. the accessibility of the statistical product? <i>Accessibility is the ease with which users are able to access the data, also reflecting the format(s) in which the data are available and the availability of supporting information.</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
iii. the clarity of the statistical product? <i>Clarity refers to the quality and sufficiency of the metadata, illustrations and accompanying advice.</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
iv. the comparability of the statistical product? <i>The degree to which data can be compared over time and domain.</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
v. the timeliness of the statistical product? <i>Timeliness refers to the lapse of time between publication and the period to which the data refer.</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Please use the space below to add any comments on the above, including suggestions for improvement ↗

9b We would be interested in understanding whether our statistical outputs on the state of the environment provide you with the information you need in an appropriate style and format.

- Does the commentary and analysis that are published help you understand how to interpret the statistics they refer to?
Yes No
- Are graphs, tables and maps used in the most effective way?
Yes No
- Through our statistical outputs and associated StatsWales tables are you happy with the level of detail of the statistics provided?
Yes No
- Do you have the information you need about the quality of the data to enable you to use the statistics with confidence and in an informed way?
Yes No

Please use this space to record any comments you wish to make ↗

9c We currently update the state of the environment report twice a year, in July and December. Very few of the indicators in the report are able to be updated twice a year. With the current pressures on resources, we would like to reduce the frequency of the state of the environment report. This would mean that we would stop the December update and only update the report once a year in July.

Would you agree with this proposal?

Yes No

Please write any comments below ↗

10. If you use any of the following **Sustainable Development Indicators** statistical outputs:

- [Sustainable Development Indicators statistical release](#)
- [Sustainable Development Indicators “in your pocket” booklet](#)
- [Sustainable Development Indicators interactive report](#)

10a How do you rate...
Please 'X' all that apply

Excellent.....Poor

1 2 3 4 5

i.	the relevance of the statistical product? <i>The degree to which the statistical product meets user needs for both coverage and content.</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
ii.	the accessibility of the statistical product? <i>Accessibility is the ease with which users are able to access the data, also reflecting the format(s) in which the data are available and the availability of supporting information.</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
iii.	the clarity of the statistical product? <i>Clarity refers to the quality and sufficiency of the metadata, illustrations and accompanying advice.</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
iv.	the comparability of the statistical product? <i>The degree to which data can be compared over time and domain.</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
v.	the timeliness of the statistical product? <i>Timeliness refers to the lapse of time between publication and the period to which the data refer.</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Please use the space below to add any comments on the above, including suggestions for improvement ↗

10b We would be interested in understanding whether our statistical outputs on sustainable development indicators provide you with the information you need in an appropriate style and format.

- Does the commentary and analysis that are published help you understand how to interpret the statistics they refer to?
Yes No
- Are graphs, tables and maps used in the most effective way?
Yes No
- Through our statistical outputs and associated StatsWales tables are you happy with the level of detail of the statistics provided?
Yes No
- Do you have the information you need about the quality of the data to enable you to use the statistics with confidence and in an informed way?
Yes No

Please use this space to record any comments you wish to make ↗

11. We have asked a number of specific questions about environment and sustainability statistics. If there are any related issues that we have not addressed, please use this space to report them ↴

Thank you for completing this questionnaire.

Please return by **15 July 2011** to:
Stephanie Howarth
Environment, Sustainability and Housing Statistics
Statistical Directorate
Welsh Government
Cathays Park, Cardiff, CF10 3NQ

Or by email to **stats.environment@wales.gsi.gov.uk**

Annex A

Rolling Averages for Municipal Waste Data (re. question 7c)

Waste management trends vary with the seasons. Because of this, we currently compare each quarter's figures with the same quarter in the previous year.

An alternative approach would be to present figures as rolling averages covering the most recent four quarters. This approach is taken by DEFRA in their statistical reports.

How would rolling quarters work?

As an example, the quarterly statistical release which covers data up to the end of June 2011 would provide comparisons between the periods April 2010 – March 2011 and July 2010 – June 2011. These periods are represented by arrows A and B in the diagram below.

The next statistical release would provide comparisons between periods July 2010 – June 2011 and October 2010 – September 2011. These periods are represented by arrows B and C in the diagram below.

	Apr-Jun 2010	Jul-Sep 2010	Oct-Dec 2010	Jan-Mar 2011	Apr-Jun 2011	Jul-Sep 2011
A	←			→		
B		←			→	
C			←			→

What are the benefits of this approach?

- This approach removes any seasonal variations, as each period covers a full four quarters.
- Unlike the method of comparison with the same quarter in the previous year only (as is current practice), this alternative approach has the advantage that trends can be continuously monitored for improvement or deterioration throughout the year. This will be useful for the monitoring of progress towards targets.
- The method will allow consistent comparison with figures on waste management in England, produced by DEFRA.

What are the disadvantages of this approach?

This approach is slightly more complicated to explain than the current method of comparing with the same quarter the previous year, so it could cause confusion in users of the data. It would require careful explanation.