

Response to the Consultation on the Scottish Household Survey from the James Hutton Institute

Consultation Questions

Section A Use of SHS

1. **What are the main social survey topics you use in the SHS?** Please tick all that apply. Please distinguish between the topics in your following answers.

HOUSEHOLD INTERVIEW

- Household composition & characteristics of all occupants
- Employment status of the highest income householder
- Household income from employment and other sources
- Health/disability
- Driving Transport – Cars, fuel spend, and bicycles
- Accommodation - Type of property, tenure, housing aspirations
- SHCS social survey – Heating patterns, repairs, adaptations
- SHCS social survey – Household energy efficiency measures and renewables
- Internet access
- Recycling
- Savings and household finances, including housing costs (mortgage and rent)
- Children in the household (childcare, schools, and travel to school)

RANDOM ADULT INTERVIEW

- Key adult characteristics
- Health/disability and caring responsibilities
- Accommodation/housing experiences
- Neighbourhoods and community safety (including perception of local crime rate and local police performance, harassment and discrimination)
- Education - Qualifications
- Employment/economic activity
- Transport – Travel Diary
- Transport – Use of private/public transport, congestion
- Perceptions of local government and services
- Participation in sports activities
- Participation in cultural activities
- Environment – Access to the outdoors, green space, land use
- Environment – Climate change
- Internet access and use
- Volunteering

- Other – please specify

2. What do you use the SHS for?

We are particularly interested in how analysis of SHS data is used for informing, monitoring and evaluating policy and practice decisions, including examples of where analysis has influenced decision making.

Please be as specific as possible in your answers.

The SHS data are widely used in the research (descriptive analysis and statistical modelling) of the James Hutton Institute (www.hutton.ac.uk) on the following topics:

- *Drivers of socio-economic differences between individuals and households across rural and urban areas, in particular using the Scottish Government 6-fold urban-rural classification. Both spatial and temporal dynamics are considered.*
- *Differences in the travel behaviour of individuals across rural and urban areas, in particular using the Scottish Government 6-fold urban-rural classification. Both spatial and temporal dynamics are considered.*
- *Differences in individual well-being across rural and urban areas, in particular using the Scottish Government 6-fold urban-rural classification. Both spatial and temporal dynamics are considered.*
- *Access to, and use of, greenspace areas between groups of the population and between rural and urban areas. Both spatial and temporal dynamics are considered.*

We work closely with the Scottish Government's Rural and Environment Science and Analytical Services Division (RESAS) and other national and local stakeholders involved in rural and regional development. Such work includes the Scottish Government Strategic Research Programme (2016-21), commissioned by RESAS. Data from the SHS are essential inputs to that research and the interpretation of findings about rural economies, particularly remote rural areas, provided to Scottish Government and its stakeholders in policy and practice.

3. Are there any alternative sources of evidence available for the topics and/or questions you use in the SHS?

i. Please tick

Yes

No

ii. Please list alternative sources of evidence for each topic

Section B Views on options for 2017

- 4. What would be the impact of SHS option A for your organisation's use of the SHS?** Please distinguish between the different topics you use when answering.

The main advantage of Option A would be that it still allows for disaggregated spatial analyses which are the core of our research, and the interest of our principal stakeholders and sponsors of the research. The main negative impacts would be limitations on the study of year-on-year changes on some topics (i.e. those to be covered biennially).

- 5. What would be the impact of SHS option B for your organisation's use of the SHS?** Please distinguish between the different topics you use when answering.

Option B would have a major negative impact on the potential for research which focused specifically on different types of rural areas, and probably that on small towns. This would limit our ability to provide evidence-based recommendations to our main stakeholders, including the Scottish Government. The SHS is the only survey in the UK that samples individuals and households from remote rural areas in Scotland. Other UK surveys (e.g. BHPS/UKHLS) have a limited coverage of such areas of Scotland with a main sample which does not cover the regions north of the Caledonian Canal, including the Highlands and Islands.

- 6. Do you prefer option A or option B?**

- i. Please tick

Option A

Option B

- ii. What is the reason for your option preference?

We would prefer Option A. The negative impacts of Option B would be significant due to the likely implications for restricting detailed spatial disaggregation between types of rural area and small towns due to the very small sample sizes proposed. Option A would still allow for such disaggregated spatial analyses which are the core of our research and interest of our main stakeholders, including Scottish Government.

- 7. Under option A (biennial) half of the topics would be asked in 2017 (odd year) and half in 2018 (even year) (assuming this is the model adopted for 2018 - 2021). Do you have any views on what topics should be asked in 2017 and 2018?**

We have no specific preference for which topics are included in the survey in the odd or even years.

8. Under option B (reduction in sample size), a small reduction in full sample topic coverage of around 4 minutes (around 7% of questions) is necessary to maintain current 'one third sample questions' at around their present sample size.

How should this be achieved?

- i. By cutting topics completely
- ii. **By reducing breadth of larger topics**
- iii. By introducing more biennial topics and questions
- iv. By introducing more one third sample questions

9. In order to contribute to the 4 minute reduction, which of the topics which you use do you think could be:

- i. Cut completely and/or **reduced in breadth**
- ii. Go biennial
- iii. Move from full to one third sample

Please be as specific as possible in your answers.

Reductions to the breath of questions could be made to:

HOUSEHOLD INTERVIEW

- *Children in the household (childcare, schools, and travel to school)*

RANDOM ADULT INTERVIEW

- *Internet access and use*

10. Under option B (cut in sample size), would you prefer local authority data to be published on a:

- i. Please tick.

Two year rolling average basis every year

Two year basis every two years

(i.e. 2017 and 2018 data would be published in 2019, 2019 and 2020 data would be published in 2021)

- ii. What is the reason for your preference?

The option of a two year basis, every two years, is preferable from the point of view of studying changes over time, which is very difficult to do under the alternative approach of a rolling average basis every year.

Section C Looking Ahead

11. Looking ahead to 2018 - 2021, the Scottish Government may need to make further reductions to the SHS.

a. If this is necessary, would you prefer any further changes to the SHS to be based on:

- i.** A reduction in the overall SHS sample size
- ii.** A reduction in the frequency of SHS data collection
- iii.** **A reduction in SHS topic coverage**
- iv.** Other – please state

b. Please explain why.

The choice of this option assumes that any proposal to exclude topics from the SHS would be supported by an assessment of the level of usage of each topics in the SHS. Hence, consideration of the topics to omit in future would focus on those which are either used least often, or the consequences of their omission would have the least adverse impact.

12. What would be the impact on the work of your organisation if there were to be a further:

- i.** Reduction in the overall SHS sample size

Reducing the sample size would have adverse impacts on the robustness of the analysis of current and planned research of the James Hutton Institute regarding differences between rural areas and small towns, at the level of the local authority. In turn, this would constrain the potential for supplying an evidence base suitable for informing policy focusing on regional and rural development issues. Examples of topics which are or would be studied at this level are: inequalities, poverty, income disparities, labour market dynamics, accessibility to services (health, public transport, education, etc.), travel behaviour, and environmental factors.

- ii.** Reduction in the frequency of SHS data collection

Reducing the frequency of SHS data collection would adversely impact on the ability to detect changes which take place over short timescales. This would be limit the scope for testing the effectiveness of the impact or uptake of policy and/or practice interventions over short-term periods (e.g. in the year following intervention).

- iii.** Reduction in SHS topic coverage

Reducing the coverage of topics of the SHS would lead to a discontinuity in the analysis of topics subsequently excluded from the survey. The significance would depend on the exact topics which were excluded from the SHS.

Section D Any other comments and information about your organisation

13. Do you have any other comments about the SHS or this consultation?

Yes. One major limitation of the SHS (besides not being longitudinal) is that it does not provide any workplace-based geographic indicators, only residence based. For example, this limits research into understanding differences in earnings between individuals which, currently, can only be done on the basis of information about place

of residence. An option for consideration in the 2017 SHS is to include a question about the postcode of the individual's workplace.

14. What sector do you work in?

- | | |
|---|--------------------------|
| Central government | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Local government | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Parliament | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| NHS | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Other public sector (e.g. NDPB) | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Higher/further education (excluding students) | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Third sector (Voluntary and charity) | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Private sector | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Student | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Journalists / media | <input type="checkbox"/> |

Other (please specify)

An independent research organisation, one of the Scottish Government's Main Research Providers.

15. What is the main topic area(s) that your organisation as a whole focuses on?

- | | |
|----------------------|-------------------------------------|
| Health | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Housing | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Environment | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| Transport | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Income and wealth | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| Communities | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| Sport | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Culture | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Young People | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Equalities | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| Other – please state | |

- *Sustainable Development*
- *Crop and Food science*

Please also make sure that you complete the separate Respondent Information Form in Annex D.

Respondent Information Form

Consultation on the Design of the SHS



Please Note this form **must** be returned with your response.

Are you responding as an individual or an organization?

- Individual
 Organisation

Full name or organisation's name

The James Hutton Institute

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The Scottish Government would like your permission to publish your consultation response. Please indicate your publishing preference:

- Publish response with name
 Publish response only (anonymous)
 Do not publish response

We will share your response internally with other Scottish Government policy teams who may be addressing the issues you discuss. They may wish to contact you again in the future, but we require your permission to do so. Are you content for Scottish Government to contact you again in relation to this consultation exercise?

- Yes
 No