

To:
Whom it may concern
Department for Communities and Local Government
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London
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Email address: StatShop@communities.gsi.gov.uk

From:
David Gibbens
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04 November 2010
By email

e-mail: david.gibbens@ehnetwork.org.uk

Dear Sir or Madam,

Re CLG Engagement strategy to meet the needs of statistics users

I am writing on behalf of the Empty Homes Network* in response to your recent paper titled as above.

The Empty Homes Network supports the aims of the User Engagement Strategy and the greater transparency and accessibility that it will bring. We have a number of small points to make about particular issues as follows:

Local Government Finance: CTB data

Your annexes are apparently organised with reference to internal departmental boundaries. On this basis, CTB data appears in the Annex on Local Government Finance. However, the CTB data is used extensively in Parliament and elsewhere in relation to the number of empty dwellings, second homes and dwellings with exemptions. So from this point of view the data is certainly housing data. Accordingly

- We recommend that in future CTB data is included in the list of “Housing and Homelessness Statistics” (appreciating that the dataset will then be referenced in two places).
- We request that you add these dwelling-related uses of CTB data to the draft list of “Uses” currently contained in Annex 1.

The Empty Homes Network publishes detailed analyses of the CTB data to plot trends from year to year on all the key items of data, relevant to empty homes, contained within the main CTB and supplementary CTB tables. These analyses can be used

- to inform public debate
- as a basis for benchmarking between local authorities.

I have not attached this spreadsheet analysis but am happy to send it to you on request.

PTO

* **About the Empty Homes Network:** We are a national network launched in 2001 as the *National Association of Empty Property Practitioners* with the support of the government and the Empty Homes Agency. Since 2002 we have been fully independent. Our main role is to support one another to make work in tackling empty homes as effective as possible by sharing best practice and information. Most of our members work for local authorities in private sector housing or housing enabling teams; we also have members belonging to housing associations, regeneration companies and private sector firms.

Housing and Homelessness: HSSA Data

The HSSA data contains figures on empty homes. We produce an analysis of these figures which ranks local authorities and regions according to the percentage of empty homes that are long-term empty. These figures can be used

- To inform public debate
- As a basis for benchmarking between local authorities
- To expose poor quality data (as the tables highlight figures which are clearly not plausible)

Again I have not attached this analysis but can send it on request.

We hope this information is of use to you.

Yours faithfully

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "David Gibbens". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long, sweeping underline.

David Gibbens
Empty Homes Network, Policy Lead

