CONSULTATION ON THE DESIGN OF THE SCOTTISH HOUSEHOLD SURVEY (SHS) FOR 2017 AND BEYOND – ANALYSIS OF RESPONSES

The Scottish Government
Riaghaltas na h-Alba

Consultation on the Design of the Scottish Household Survey (SHS) for 2017 and beyond – Analysis of Responses

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Executive Summary

Background

As part of Scotland's Spending Plans and Budget for 2016/17, the Scottish Government is required to make savings on the Scottish Household Survey (SHS) 2017. Savings of the level sought cannot be achieved without significant changes to the design of the SHS.

The Scottish Government sought users and stakeholders' views on two alternative options over the period 15 March to 19 April 2016. The two options were:

- Option A Biennial topics, i.e. halving the number of topics covered by the survey every year and collecting data on each topic every second year, with a small reduction in sample size (from 10,700 to 10,100).
- Option B Reduction of the overall survey sample size by around a third, from 10,700 to 7,450, with a small reduction in topics covered by the survey.

Ninety nine respondents from a range of different sectors responded to the SHS consultation. Local government and the third sector formed the largest share of respondents (nearly 70 per cent). The share of responses across sectors were as follows:

- Central government lead analysts - 15 per cent
- Local government - 34 per cent
- Other public sector including NHS and Parliament - 13 per cent
- Third sector (including HE/FE) - 35 per cent
- Other (including students) - 2 per cent

Use of the SHS

Respondents from all sectors reported a wide range of use of SHS data for a variety of purposes. This included to:

- Develop and inform policy and strategies (around one in three respondents)
- Monitor and benchmark performance of strategies, policies and programmes or service delivery (around one in three respondents)
- Planning services and targeting spending, including identifying need (around one in five respondents)
- Equalities analysis
- Research

The SHS is used as a major source of data in five formal outcome and performance monitoring frameworks used by public and third sector respondents, as well as in individual local authority (LA) Single Outcome Agreements (SOAs) and Partnership Improvement Plans (PIPs).

The formal frameworks included the:

- National Performance Framework - ten SHS indicators, nearly one in five;
- Local Government Benchmarking Framework (LGBF) - eight indicators from the SHS;
- Child Poverty Measurement Framework - ten SHS indicators, over a quarter of the total number;
- Housing and Regeneration Outcome Indicators – 15 SHS indicators, half of the total;
- Active Scotland Outcomes Framework – 10 SHS indicators, over half the total.

The SHS also forms a significant input into other major analytical outputs that are used across sectors, including the National Records of Scotland's household projections and NHS Health Scotland/ ScotPHO public health community profiles. The former are used by local authorities to determine need and allocate housing budgets, whilst the ScotPHO profiles are used to understand and monitor public health, including inequalities.

In terms of topic use, each topic from the survey was used to some degree by all of the sectors. The most used topics were the key characteristics and health and disability sections of the household and random adult surveys which were used by around half of respondents. Recycling and climate change questions were the least used questions, but were still used by over 20 per cent of respondents.

Over half of respondents noted that there were no alternative data sources to the SHS. The topics listed as having no alternative sources included the travel diary, fuel poverty and energy efficiency, cultural attendance and participation, discrimination and harassment, amongst others.

The Convention of Scottish Local Authorities (COSLA), the Society of Local Authority Chief Executives (SOLACE), the Local Government Benchmarking Framework Board, the Improvement Service, and the Accounts Commission, plus several local authorities themselves, felt strongly there was no reliable alternative to the SHS in terms of providing consistent comparative data across local authorities, particularly when it came to the satisfaction with services data for the Local Government Benchmarking Framework (LGBF). The statutory nature of the latter was noted.

Of those that noted alternative data sources, most stated that none of the alternatives fully met their needs in the same way as the SHS. For example, UK sources did not have a high enough sample size to meet the demand for sub-Scotland level analysis such as equalities. The Census was cited as an alternative but data quickly becomes out of date due to its ten year cycle. Some respondents identified alternatives that were actually based on SHS data such as the National Records of Scotland's (NRS) household projections.

Locally collected data, such as citizen panels, user surveys or local house condition surveys, were mentioned by around four in ten local government responses.

Views on options for 2017

46 per cent of respondents preferred option A (biennial topics), whilst 39 per cent preferred option B (cut in sample size). 15 per cent decided not to select a preference; 9 per cent of all respondents specifically stated they did not prefer either option, whilst 6 per cent did not answer the question.

There were some differences between sectors in option preferences with local government respondents that expressed an option preference being split equally between option A and option B, 35 per cent each (21 per cent stated neither option and 9 per cent did not answer). 53 per cent of central government respondents preferred option B, compared to 40 per cent for option A. The position was reversed for the third sector with 57 per cent preferring option A and 34 per cent option B.

Option A

The main reason for those that preferred option A was the maintenance of the high sample size and therefore 'robustness' of the data, with this seen to be more important than data on an annual basis.

Respondents wanted to maintain a high sample size due to the need to maintain the current precision around national and local authority level estimates and ability to measure rarely occurring characteristics in a robust way (e.g. volunteering) and to undertake specific sub-group analysis such as equalities analysis.

Other reasons for preferring option A included: no loss of topic or question coverage; simpler to analyse performance and identify change over time, especially for local authority level data compared to option B, and there's a slow change in some figures over time anyway.

In terms of the impact of option A respondents highlighted the impact on performance monitoring frameworks, particularly on the NPF, the LGBF and SOAs. Several local government respondents felt very strongly about the loss of annual data for the LGBF in particular. However, a few local government respondents felt more sanguine and noted that option A was a reversion back to the situation pre 2012 when local authority data was only available on a biennial basis.

Other issues noted with option A included a negative impact on the ability to assess and evaluate the impact of particular policies. This was due to the lack of a corresponding baseline and first year for measuring any change.

Several respondents also raised issues with having to combine non-consecutive years' worth of data and the lower sample size achieved over a 2 year period compared to option B (10,100 household sample size compared to 15,000 under option B). This was particularly an issue for national level equalities analysis, the data that is being considered as a successor to the SG's housing SCORE data for social housing tenants, and adaptations to support independent living and transport modelling and planning. The latter two would require the pooling of 3 years' worth of data over a six year non-consecutive time period.

Split topics and the loss of functionality to explore relationships and outcomes across all variables was also noted. As a result of this, NHS Health Scotland noted reduced capacity to examine inequalities in the social determinants of health.

Option B

The main reasons respondents preferred option B was the retention of data collection and availability of data on an annual basis for the majority of topics. This was felt to be of particular benefit to the NPF. Another reason was that option B would provide a larger sample size, and hence higher level of precision, over a two year period than option A.

Other reasons that option B was preferred included:

- maintaining the full functionality of the survey (in terms of cross-tabulations and ability to analyse relationships and outcomes),
- there would be an increase in the sample size for 'one third sample size' questions.

Some of those who preferred option B also noted that measuring and detecting change over time would be less complex than option A where there would be gap years. They noted the loss in precision in comparing annual estimates, but argued that trends and real change are best assessed over a number of years without any gap years in the data.

In terms of the negative impacts of option B, around four in ten local government respondents either noted limitations with the current sample size or that it was already too small, and that option B would only exacerbate this. Reference was made to Improvement Service analysis on the LGBF satisfaction with services indicators. This showed that 3 year rolling averages would be needed to deliver the 'required level of precision' at a local level and for the general population rather than service users.

Nevertheless, a few local government respondents noted that the larger two year sample size (compared to option A) and that the increase in *reported* precision offered by two year rolling averages was useful. It was recognised by these respondents that such averages would make it easier to identify differences between local authorities, but would make it more difficult to identify change in the short term within an local authority.

In terms of the loss of interview time under option B, several third sector respondents worried about the loss of questions on their topics of interest, whilst several respondents spread across different sectors noted that they may need to commission alternative data source if their questions of interest were dropped from the SHS.

Several respondents expressed a general concern about the possible impact on sub-group breakdowns on an annual basis (without considering pooling a 2 year sample). There were mixed views on the impact of option B on equalities analysis which in turn influenced option preferences.

Equalities analysis under options A and B

The Scottish Government equalities analysis team had a slight preference for option A as this would mean more precise annual counts of equality groups. However, the Equalities and Human Rights Commission (EHRC) and NHS Health Scotland preferred option B for equalities analysis, as did Sport Scotland for the equalities analysis of the Active Scotland Framework. This was due to the ability to pool two consecutive years' worth of data, which would allow finer equalities breakdowns, and/or a greater level of precision compared to option A.

Implementation of option A

The majority of people did not state their preferences for biennial topic coverage in 2017 vs. 2018 should option A be implemented, despite being asked. Some respondents took the opportunity to specify topics they would like to see asked in both years, whilst others noted that it would be important to maximise the opportunities for key cross tabulations by carefully considering which topics should go together in odd and even years.

Implementation of option B

On option B and how to achieve the reduction in topic coverage, 30 per cent preferred the option of introducing more biennial topics and questions, closely followed by the option of reducing the breadth of larger topics (just over a quarter). Cutting topics and introducing more one third sample questions were the least popular options for respondents to this question (6 per cent and 11 per cent respectively). Close to a third of all respondents did not answer this question.

Under option B, over half of all respondents preferred a two year rolling average basis for the production and publication of local authority estimates every year. 29 per cent of respondents did not answer the question, whilst 17 per cent preferred a two year basis every two years.

Looking ahead

In terms of any further reductions that might be required, a reduction in topic coverage was the preferred way to achieve savings (22 per cent), closely followed by a reduction in the frequency of data collection (18 per cent) and 'other' (19 per cent) most of whom preferred a combination of options. A reduction in sample size was the least popular option. However, it should be noted that 30 per cent of respondents did not provide a preferred way to achieve savings. A number of these noted that further reductions would erode user confidence in the survey.

Respondents were asked what the impact would be of further reductions if the SHS sample, frequency of results or topic coverage were reduced. Many respondents answered in a generic manner given the lack of detail on specific reductions. The biggest concern was a loss in precision in the SHS (around one in five) if the SHS sample size was reduced further. This in turn would reduce the use, value and confidence in the SHS which could (and in some cases would) force users to stop using the SHS altogether and seek out alternative sources.

Other comments on the consultation and/or the SHS

Letters from the LGBF Board, Accounts Commission, COSLA and SOLACE (preference for neither option), together with some responses from individual local authorities, expressed concern about the scope of the consultation in terms of its focus on options A and B. Many respondents called for a 'pause' in order to carry out a 'fundamental' review of the SHS in the context of the wider SG survey landscape.

In terms of other comments on the consultation and/or the SHS, the third sector called for a larger and more robust survey, whilst local government mainly wanted to prevent any further reductions to the sample size of the survey. Several of the latter respondents also noted limitations in the current local authority sample sizes.

1. INTRODUCTION AND CONSULTATION PROCESS

Introduction and background to the consultation

This report provides a summary of responses to the Scottish Government's consultation on the SHS. As part of Scotland's Spending Plans and Budget for 2016/17, the Scottish Government requires to make savings on the Scottish Household Survey (SHS) 2017. Savings of the level sought cannot be achieved without significant changes to the design of the SHS. Therefore, the Scottish Government sought users and stakeholders' views on two alternative options:

Option A — Biennial topics, i.e. halving the number of topics covered by the survey every year and collecting data on each topic every second year, with a small reduction in sample size (from 10,700 to 10,100).

Option B — Reduction of the overall survey sample size by around a third, from 10,700 to 7,450, with a small reduction in topics covered by the survey.

Both options would realise the same level of cost savings. The consultation document stated that responses would be used to inform the design of the survey for both SHS 2017 and SHS 2018-2021 (subject to sign off of procurement by Scottish Ministers).

The consultation was launched on 15th March and closed on 19th April (5 week consultation period) through a publication on the Scottish Government's website. Further background on the SHS, the main impacts of the options, and alternative options considered are given in the consultation document. The questions asked in the consultation are listed in Annex A.

For ease of reference, Table 1-1 provides an overview of the main characteristics of both options.

Table 1-1 – Options A and B overview

Options	Principles	National sample size and frequency	Local sample size and frequency
Option A **Biennial Topics** Collect half of the topics in odd year (2017), half of the topics in even year Key household and random adult 'protected' questions (including Scottish Survey Core	Maintain sample size at over 10,000 households for full sample topics. 'One third sample topics' maintain one third of full sample size (i.e. 3,350) Reduce frequency of data collection for most topics	Largely unchanged sample size and precision albeit every other year for most topics Difficulties in combining two years' worth of data for detailed sub-group analysis due to combining non-consecutive years	LA data published annually albeit every other year for most topics Key household and random adult data published annually Largely unchanged sample size for LAs Same issue of

Questions (SSCQ) unchanged on an annual basis	Retain all topic coverage, albeit every two years for most topics	(a particular issue for 'one third sample' topics')	combining non-consecutive years for some sub-group analysis
Option B **Reduce sample size by around one third (to 7,450)** All topics have 7,450 sample size except current 'one third sample' questions which slightly increase their sample size to 3,700 (from current 3,550)	Reduce sample size for full sample topics 'One third sample topics' maintain similar sample size (i.e. 3,700) Maintain frequency of data collection Small reduction in topic coverage - around 4 minutes - or equivalent reduction in frequency or sample size to achieve the same time-savings	Reduced annual sample size and precision of results If necessary combine data from 2 years to have sufficient sample sizes for detailed sub-group analysis	Reduced sample size for local authorities means publication of annual data no longer possible. LA data published annually but on two year rolling average basis Two year rolling averages at improved precision than current annual estimates

Consultation length and mode

Responses were gathered through the Scottish Government's website (Citizen Space platform), although respondents had the option of responding by email and/or by sending in hard copy responses. These responses were then loaded on to the Citizen Space platform. Full responses (where people gave permission to publish) can be accessed here.

Promotion of the consultation

The consultation was widely promoted in order to alert as many interested parties as possible. A combination of:

- direct emails to lead analysts and all known users of SHS data;
- issuing a ScotStat notice;
- contacting local authority Chief Executives and Community Planning Partnership Managers by letter; and
- 'tweeting' via the ScotStat Twitter account were used.

In total, 273 different organisations were contacted directly and 2,287 individuals were contacted either directly or via ScotStat[1] (see Table 1-2).

[1] Some ScotStat users have signed up for more than one type of mailing list, so the ScotStat total includes some individuals twice. What we can say is that 1,748 ScotStat e-mails were sent out.

Table 1-2 – Total number of organisations and individuals contacted by each method

	Organisations	Individuals
Direct e-mail or letter	**273**	**539**
Central Government	6	56
Local government	38	123
Other pub sector (inc. NHS and Parliament)	50	70
Third sector (inc. Higher/further education)	144	246
Private sector	18	17
Other	17	27
ScotStat e-mail	**-**	**1,748**
Total	**273**	**2,287**

Responses and respondents

Ninety-nine responses were received to the consultation. The vast majority of these were directly through Citizen Space, the Scottish Government's consultation portal. Eighteen responses were received by email using the format for the consultation questions supplied in Annex B of the consultation documents. These responses were entered on to the Citizen Space system in line with standard SG guidance.

Eight responses were received as letters, so called 'free text' responses. These responses did not directly answer the questions posed in the consultation. These were uploaded to Citizen Space as letters and are published as such on the system. Details of how these responses were treated for analysis purposes is described below.

Table 1-3 – Respondents to the consultation by sector – numbers and percentage of total number of organisations contacted

Sector	Responses	Share of responses
Central Government	15	15%
Local government	34	34%
Other public sector including NHS and Parliament	13	13%
Third sector (including HE/FE)	35	35%
Other (including students)	2	2%
Total	99	100 %

As shown in table 1-3, local government and the third sector (including HE/FE) formed the greatest share of consultation responses with 34 per cent and 35 per cent, respectively. In all, 24 out of 32 local authorities (LAs) responded to the consultation. It should be noted that there were three local authorities (LAs) where more than one response was received, mostly from different parts of the council. Aberdeen City, Perth & Kinross and East Dunbartonshire councils submitted two

separate responses, whilst South Lanarkshire Council submitted a response, as did South Lanarkshire Leisure and Culture, a separate organisation. Similarly, Clydeplan, the operating name for the Glasgow and Clyde Valley Strategic Development Planning Authority Joint Committee submitted a response[2].

Analysis of responses

Eight letter or 'free text' responses were closely reviewed and sections of their responses which related to particular questions were analysed with the main body of responses to these questions, primarily questions 2 to 6 and question 13. However, these 'free text' responses did not address the other questions in the consultation and this is the reason for the lower overall response rate to these questions.

The 'free text' responses also gave rise to a particular issue with question 6(i) on option preferences. Citizen Space and the proforma in the consultation document had asked people to state a preference between option A and B. However, some of the 'free text' responses stated that they did not like either option which led to the creation of another category of 'neither option'. Chapter 3 describes in more detail how these and other responses which did not directly answer question 6(i) were handled.

It should also be noted that questions asked in the consultation were a mix of closed (quantitative) and open (qualitative) responses. Responses were analysed on a question by question basis, split across the analytical team. Qualitative responses were analysed for themes and sub-themes and were coded by sector in order to identify any sectoral response patterns.

It is not advisable to calculate exact numbers of people with a particular view based on responses to qualitative questions, especially when responses have been analysed on a question by question basis. Nevertheless, where there has been sufficient confidence to indicate an approximate number of responses, these are expressed as 'around one in X number of respondents', with the denominator based on the number of respondents to that particular question.

[2] ClydePlan comprises the eight LAs of East Dunbartonshire, East Renfrewshire, Glasgow City, Inverclyde, North Lanarkshire, Renfrewshire, South Lanarkshire and West Dunbartonshire Councils who work together on strategic development planning matters.

2. USE OF THE SHS

The opening questions in the consultation asked about use of the SHS. Three questions asked about the topics used in the SHS, what people use the SHS survey for, and whether there are any alternative sources of data. The findings are reported in this chapter.

Topic use

Question one asked 'What are the main social survey topics you use in the SHS?' 89 out of 99 respondents to the consultation (90 per cent) answered this question[3].

Each topic from the household and random adult section of the survey is used to some degree by all of the sectors. The topics are used most by local government (48 per cent and 45 per cent for the household and random adult sections of the survey respectively) followed by the third sector (28 per cent and 31 per cent respectively). Compared to their share of consultation responses this indicates a heavier use by local government.

Figure 2-1 shows use of different topics in the household survey by sector. It should be noted that Figure 2-1 (and Figure 2.2) is based on 89 respondents rather than all 99 respondents in order to reflect the usage of the SHS topics more accurately.

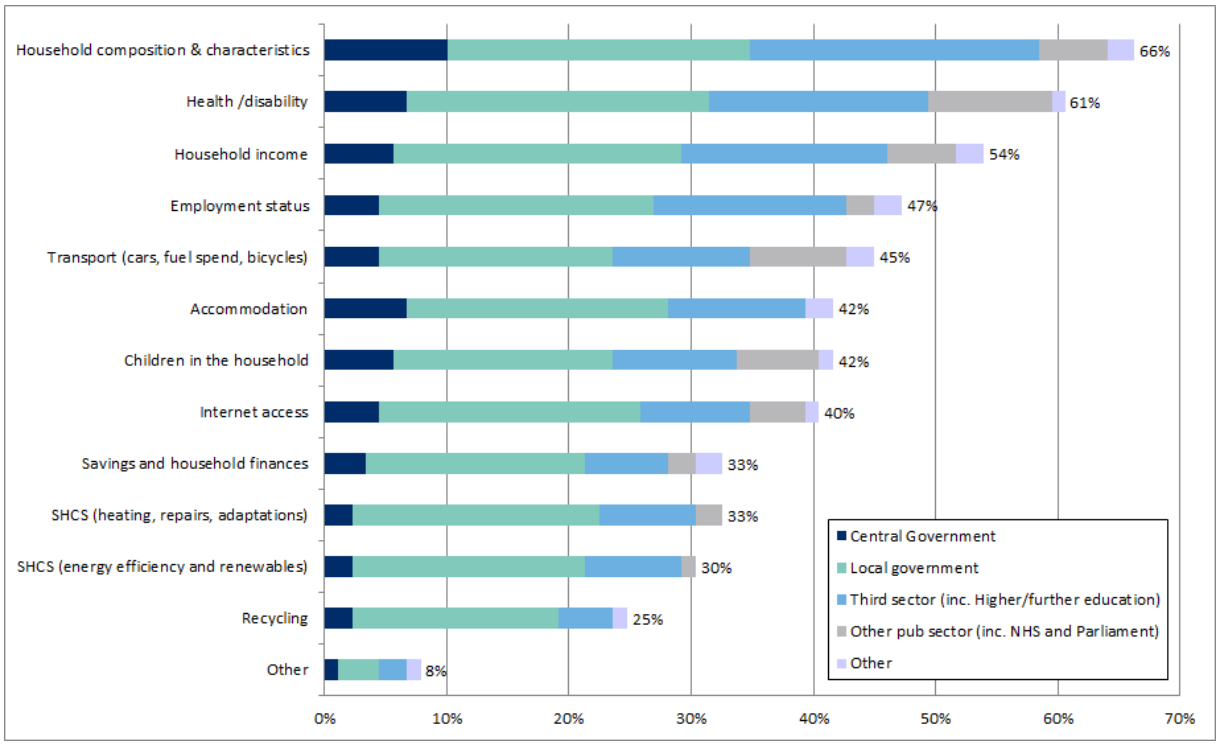
Amongst the most used topics were household composition and characteristics (66 per cent of those who responded to this question) and health/disability (61 per cent), followed by household income (54 per cent), employment status (47 per cent), and transport – cars, fuel spend, and bicycles (45 per cent). The least used topics (comparatively) were recycling (25 per cent) and the SHCS social survey - energy efficiency and renewables (30 per cent).

Seven respondents (eight per cent) stated they used other topics as well. However, none of them listed any additional topics to those covered above, except a few which noted topics covered in the random adult part of the survey.

Breaking down by sector, distinctive trends appear. Local government showed a higher and more balanced usage of the SHS household topics compared to other sectors. All topics were used by 58 to 85 per cent of the local government respondents to this question, with the pattern of use largely following that in Figure 2-1. The most used topic was household composition and characteristics, and health/disability (both 85 per cent), followed by household income (eight per cent) and employment status (77 per cent).

[3] 10 respondents did not select any topic from the social survey.

Figure 2-1 – Household survey – use of different topics in the household survey by sector



The pattern of use of topics within the third sector was more varied. The most used topic was household composition and characteristics (64 per cent of all third-sector respondents to this question), followed by health/disability (48 per cent), household income (45 per cent), and employment status (42 per cent). The topics least used by the third sector were recycling (12 per cent), savings and household finances (18 per cent), SHCS (energy efficiency and renewables) and SHCS (heating, repairs & adaptations) (both 21 per cent).

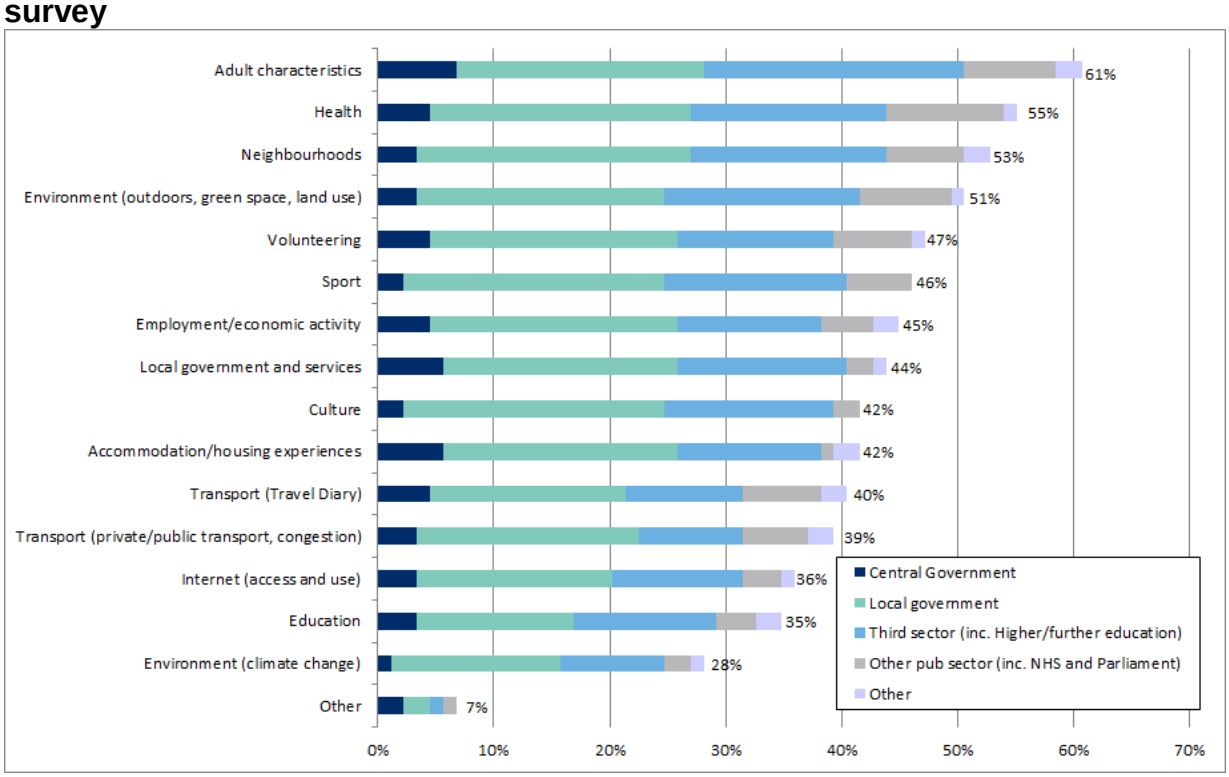
Figure 2-2 shows use of different topics in the random adult survey by sector.

The most used topics were key adult characteristics (61 per cent) and health/disability and caring responsibilities (55 per cent), followed by neighbourhoods and community safety (53 per cent), environment – access to the outdoors, green space, and land use (51 per cent), and volunteering (47 per cent). Among the least used topics (comparatively) were environment (climate change) (28 per cent) and education (35 per cent).

Breaking down by sector, the pattern is similar to that for the household part of the survey. The third sector showed a greater variability in the usage of topics, while use by the local government was higher and a lot less varied.

The topics most used by local government were neighbourhoods (81 per cent of local government respondents that answered this question) followed by culture, sport, and health (all used by 77 per cent).

Figure 2-2 – Random adult survey – use of different topics in the random adult survey



The topics used most by the third sector were adult characteristics (61 per cent) followed by environment (outdoors, green space, land use), health, and neighbourhoods (all used by 45 per cent of third sector respondents to this question). The least used topics by the third sector were environment (climate change) and transport (private/public transport, congestion) (both 24 per cent) and transport (travel diary) (27 per cent).

Six respondents (seven per cent) stated they used other topics as well, however, none of these were truly additional topics but rather subsets of topics listed above.

What organisations use the SHS for

Question two asked 'What do you use the SHS for?' In particular how analysis of the data has been used to inform, monitor and evaluate policy and practice decisions, and asked for examples of where it has influenced decision making.

Eighty-nine out of 99 (90 per cent) responded to this open question. Excluding the eight letter responses received, 89 out of 92 (97 per cent) responded to this question.

Respondents from all sectors reported a wide use of SHS data for a variety of purposes. These have been grouped into the following categories and are outlined in more detail below:

- Develop and inform policy and strategies (around one in three respondents)

- Monitor and benchmark performance of strategies, policies and programmes or service delivery (around one in three respondents)
- Planning services and targeting spending, including identifying need (around one in five respondents)
- Equalities analysis
- Research

In order to bring this section to life, a number of diverse examples from each sector have been chosen in order to illustrate how SHS data is used, including where there is information on how the survey has been used for decision making. These are shown in Box 2-1 at the end of this chapter.

Inform policies and strategies

Around one in three respondents specifically mentioned using SHS data to inform policies, development work and strategies. In line with the pattern of responses to the consultation, local authorities and the third sector were the most frequent users of SHS data to create and inform new and existing policies and strategies, alongside other public sector users and the Scottish Government.

Several respondents noted that the SHS was used to inform policy but did not mention any specific uses or areas of use, for example Edinburgh City Council which noted that the SHS is widely used across its departments and Orkney Council which stated they '…view SHS data as critical when developing policies'. Those respondents who did cite areas of use to inform policies and strategies mentioned the following specific areas:

- Sport participation / physical activity (Scottish Government, local authorities, other public sector, and third sector)
- Volunteering (Scottish Government, local authorities, other public sector, and third sector)
- Access to the outdoors and greenspace (Scottish Government, local authorities, other public sector, and third sector)
- Transport - active travel (Transport Scotland, various local authority and third sector strategies)
- Transport – National Concessionary Travel Scheme (Transport Scotland)
- Housing – housing quality, including disrepair, overcrowding, adaptations required (Scottish Government, various local authority policies and strategies)
- Housing – social housing (Scottish Government)
- Fuel poverty and energy efficiency (Scottish Government, other public sector, and local authorities involved in designing and delivering strategies, policies and programmes)
- Child poverty (third sector and local authorities)
- Cultural participation (Scottish Government, other public sector and third sector policies and programmes)
- Building safer communities /neighbourhood improvements/ community engagement (Scottish Government, local authorities)

- Equalities including racial equality and LGBT equality issues (all types of respondents)

A number of responses recognised not only the importance of the SHS in enabling the examination of individual topics to inform policy, but the value that arises from the cross-cutting nature of the survey and time series data. COSLA noted that:

'The SHS enables an understanding of how different policies interplay and affect the lived experience of real people: its overwhelming benefit is in taking a citizen-centred approach to the experience of life in Scotland which allows essential links to be made between policy areas by recognising that policies do not impact on people in isolation.'

Several respondents commented on future use and the need for the SHS to able to gather new data at national and local level on the following: Community Empowerment (Scotland) Act; public service reform (prevention, people, partnership and place); democratic renewal; social care integration.

Monitoring and benchmarking performance of strategies, policies and programme delivery and own or others' organisational performance

Around one in three respondents mentioned that they used SHS data for monitoring and benchmarking. This ranged from formal outcomes frameworks such as the National Performance Framework (NPF), to organisational performance indicators, to more informal use for monitoring and evaluating the performance of individual strategies, policies or programme delivery.

Formal Outcome and Performance Monitoring Frameworks and Requirements

Asides from the NPF, there are a large number of formal monitoring frameworks, at both national and local level, that the SHS provides a significant amount of data for. These frameworks draw from data across the household and random adult surveys. Table 2-1 below shows the main frameworks, the percentage of indicators that come from SHS data, and the level of data (national, local authority, equalities breakdowns) that are covered in the frameworks themselves or in regular reporting add-ons.

Table 2-1 – Formal Outcome and Performance Monitoring Frameworks and Requirements

	Percentage of Indicators from the SHS	Level of Data – National, local authority, equalities	Topics covered
National Performance Framework (NPF)	Nearly one in five (10 of 55 indicators)	National and equalities	Traffic congestion; smoking; public service quality; public service responsiveness; internet use; neighbourhood rating; cultural engagement; Scotland's outdoors; green space; public or active transport

Local Government Benchmarking Framework (LGBF)	8 indicators	LA data	Satisfaction with seven diverse local government services: Schools; libraries; parks; museums; leisure facilities; refuse collection; street cleaning. (Social care to be covered by Scottish Health Care and Experience Survey going forward).
Child Poverty Measurement Framework	Over a quarter (10 of the 35 indicators)	National. But demand for local level data from some LAs	Managing financially well; having a bank account; satisfaction with local schools; influence decisions; condition of house; drug misuse; neighbourhoods as a good place to live; satisfaction with public transport; green space; internet use
Housing and Regeneration Outcome Indicators	Half (15 out of 30 full indicators plus feeds into another indicator)	National	Indicators cover topics within 'A well - functioning housing system'; 'High quality, sustainable homes'; 'Homes that meet people's needs'; 'Sustainable communities'.
Active Scotland Outcomes Framework	Over half (10 out of 19 indicators)	National and local authority data Equalities analysis	Participation in sport; access to outdoors & green space; active volunteering; satisfaction with leisure services. Several indicators are Commonwealth Games Legacy indicators which the Scottish Government is committed to tracking until at least 2018.
Single Outcomes Agreements	Varies by LA	LA and sometimes equalities	Various
Partnership Improvement Plans (PIPs)	Varies by LA	LA	Various

A number of local government representatives noted the use of SHS indicators in the LGBF, including the statutory nature of the satisfaction with services indicators, which the Accounts Commission requires local authorities to complete and report on as part of their duty of delivering Best Value and Public Performance Reporting (PPR). It was pointed out by COSLA, the LGBF Board, Glasgow City Council and the Accounts Commission that the SHS is the only source which allows consistent comparisons across all 32 local authorities without having to consider any differences in methodology, the time of year of the survey, etc. Therefore, the view was there is no viable alternative data source for these indicators. Glasgow City Council further noted that:

'The SHS, through its role in the LGBF is contributing in a very substantial way to the process of service review and reform in local government and we need to be able to build on the progress made to date.'

It was clear from consultation responses that other frameworks, including the Child Poverty Measurement Framework and the Active Scotland Outcomes Framework, report annually and are used by third sector as well as a range of public sector respondents. Furthermore, it was also noted that the SHS had contributed to other monitoring frameworks such as the Low Carbon Scotland Behaviours Framework

Strategy, policy and organisational performance monitoring

Monitoring and evaluating strategies and policies

A number of respondents from across different sectors provided general or specific examples of how SHS data has been used to monitor and/or evaluate the impact of other policies and/or strategies, or of important developments in policy areas that required a response from government. These included:

- Private rented sector (PRS) - monitoring changes in tenure and the growth of the PRS, including of PRS households with children (Scottish Government)
- Digital participation dashboard – an SG dashboard is being produced in order to make more detailed data from headline internet access to confidence in usage more easily available (Scottish Government)
- State of Scotland's Greenspace reports - informing and monitoring impact of policy and practice changes at national and regional levels (third sector)
- Building safer communities - Neighbourhood rating is one of the Building Safer Community Programme's outcome measures for promoting community assets. The Community Safety Unit uses a variety of measures from the neighbourhood and communities topic to monitor the impact of their policies (Scottish Government and local authorities)
- Local/regional transport strategies including active travel (Scottish Government and local authorities)
- Volunteering - to understand the diversity and demographics of volunteering, and whether volunteering strategies are working (third sector and Scottish Government)
- Land use (Scottish Government Land Use Strategy – Community Inclusion in Land Use Decision Making)
- Recycling (Scottish Government and one local authority)

In this context, the Scottish Volunteering Forum noted that local authorities were '…dramatically reducing business intelligence and data gathering exercises – so we tend to rely more on Scottish Government data.'

Organisational Performance Monitoring

It was noted that Creative Scotland used SHS data for a number of their corporate performance indicators and that Historic Scotland were about to follow suit. In a similar vein, a number of public sector and third sector respondents (e.g. Volunteer Centre Edinburgh) noted that they use local authority data to monitor the performance of and/or work with local authorities. Beyond LGBF satisfaction with local services requirements, a number of local authorities themselves noted that they used different SHS indicators to benchmark themselves against other local authorities and national level data.

Planning services and targeting spending

Around one in five respondents noted that they use SHS data to plan services and/or target spending. This often included identifying need in order to target the effective spending of large budgets. Specific examples included:

- Transport Scotland - Travel Diary data used as the main input into regional and local transport models in order to target and justify major infrastructure spend.
- SportScotland Facilities Planning Model - used by Sport Scotland, local authorities and Leisure Trusts in their planning and spending decisions for sports facilities across Scotland. English sport participation data could be used as a substitute but not desirable.
- Housing needs and demand assessments - several local authorities stated that they used SHS data as one of the main evidence sources, another local authority that they used it as a checking tool.
- Adaptations to housing to support independent living – Scottish Government and local authorities encouraged to use SHS data to inform housing needs.
- Energy efficiency and fuel poverty interventions – targeting and allocating spending by need.
- Internet access – identifying housing tenures with the lowest levels of access and targeting funds to improve access.
- Cultural bodies including museums and galleries, and library and information services - local government has a statutory duty to ensure that there are adequate facilities for recreational sporting, cultural and social activities for residents of their areas, and to ensure that there is adequate provision of library services. Bodies used SHS data to target spend, as well as formulate policy and look at the impact of service provision.

Equalities analysis

All sector respondents, but particularly the third sector, highlighted the importance of and the use of SHS data for equalities analysis. This included helping to take forward policies that advance equality, and/or monitoring if and how certain groups (e.g. ethnic minorities, lesbian, gay, bisexual and trans (LGBT) people) suffer discrimination. Specific areas that used SHS data for equalities analysis spanned culture and heritage, transport, safer communities, sport and physical activity, greenspace and the outdoors, public health, child poverty, housing and energy efficiency, local decision making and volunteering.

The Scottish Government's Communities Analysis Division (equalities analysis unit) noted that the SHS formed 'an important part of the equality evidence base and helps us meet our corporate and legal responsibilities on equality'. This included Equality Impact Assessments (EQIAs), which are needed for government wide policy development, and understanding how equality groups are progressing within the NPF indicators.

The Equality and Human Rights Commission (EHRC) also noted the importance of equalities data for their statutory review of equality and human rights, produced every three years and encompassing different aspects of life in Britain and Scotland.

At least nine indicators were drawn from SHS data, including housing/accommodation, neighbourhood issues and decision making, and harassment and discrimination.

Research

Nearly all sectors mentioned use of the SHS for research purposes. Again, this spanned a range of different areas and covered research commissioned directly by The Scottish Government, Transport Scotland and other public sector organisations, including:

- Income/poverty/social exclusion
- Transport and climate change, including models for LAs
- Transport – land use and transport planning
- Health and health inequalities, including physical activity in adolescents and children. NHS Health Scotland/ScotPHO cited a wide use of SHS data for different research outputs including data on income inequality, smoking, community safety, financial management/financial inclusion, greenspace, neighbourhood safety and satisfaction, volunteering, etc.
- Rural issues including travel behaviour of individuals across rural and urban areas, differences in wellbeing, access to, and use of, greenspace
- Culture

Other uses of the SHS

A wide range of other uses of the SHS were cited by respondents, not only from the Scottish Government, but particularly from other public sector and third sector respondents. This included:

- Ministerial briefing/First Minister's Questions
- Member of Scottish Parliament briefing
- Communications and marketing work
- Delivery agencies responding to Scottish Government queries
- Campaigning and/or holding government to account
- Data to inform and support third sector funding bids
- As a key source of input data for other major analytical outputs that are used by all the different sectors that responded to this consultation. This included:
  - NRS household projections
  - ScotPHO Online Profiles Tool (OPT) - public health community profiles (at local authority level or above)
  - To calibrate Home Analytics Scotland

Finally, several respondents noted that they were interested in making greater use of SHS data and asked for more equalities breakdowns particularly for ethnicity, and to combine SHS data with other large scale surveys through the SSCQ in order to deliver improved local authority level and sub local authority level data.

Box 2-1 – Uses of the SHS

Scottish Government - internet use - targeting scarce resources at those most in need

Analysis of internet use by tenure allowed the Office of the Chief Economic Adviser and the Digital Participation team to identify a substantial gap in internet access by tenure, enabling the Scottish Government to focus scarce resources on those at greatest disadvantage.

By breaking down the internet access figures a considerable gap between access in the social rented sector and that in the owner occupied and private rented sectors was identified. It was previously assumed that given the poor physical quality of some private rented stock, access to the internet would be at its lowest amongst this sector. In fact, the SHS showed internet access is highest amongst private rented tenants.

Understanding where people were most likely to be offline and being able to target activity on the social rented sector in particular was key to developing innovative and focussed approaches to the provision of affordable broadband, training and support to develop people's skills and confidence to go online. These interventions have so far contributed to a 19 per cent increase in the number of social housing tenants on line. The digital policy team said that 'being able to track and demonstrate improvement at national and local level is a vital part of understanding which interventions are effective.'

Transport Scotland - Travel Diary - informing transport policy and undertaking due diligence on £billion investment decisions

The SHS is the only source of journey specific travel data for the various transport and land-use models developed for Scotland at both a national and a regional level. These models are needed to undertake economic appraisals, and make decisions on, major transport investments. The nature of calibration of the models requires geographical segmentation across the whole of Scotland which makes the sample size a very important component. Models using Travel Diary data have been used to examine and undertake due diligence on a variety of major transport infrastructure schemes, including the M74 Completion, Airdrie to Bathgate Railway, new Queensferry Crossing, Borders Rail, and Aberdeen Western Peripheral Route (AWPR). Transport Scotland's future work programme includes the A9 Perth to Inverness Dualling, A96 Aberdeen to Inverness Dualling and a number of other major rail improvement projects. SHS based models are currently in the process of informing decisions around the necessary infrastructure that will be associated with Strategic and Local Development Plans around the country as well as various City Deals.

Uses of the SHS - National Records of Scotland household estimates and projections - £ million housing and infrastructure planning and targeting, used by local authorities and the Scottish Government

The National Records of Scotland (NRS) uses information from SHS questions on household composition, age and gender in order to produce their household projections. A number of consultation responses, including COSLA, noted that these estimates and projections are vital in understanding the housing needs of the Scottish population and building the right kind of homes where they are needed (e.g. single person or family group). The household projections are used at the core of many local authorities' housing plans, and form the basis of the Housing Need and Demand Assessment system developed by the Centre for Housing Market Analysis in the Scottish Government. Household estimates are also incorporated into other statistics used elsewhere in the Scottish Government, including economic statistics. Most recently the household estimates and projections, and wider SHCS physical survey data, are also being used to inform the Scottish Energy Efficiency Programmes for Scotland (SEEP).

Uses of the SHS – Sport Participation and Active Scotland Framework - Sport Scotland, Scottish Government, Local Authorities and various third sector sport organisations

The SHS is a key resource in monitoring the impact of a range of Active Scotland work streams and measuring Scotland's progress in increasing population activity levels through the Active Scotland Outcomes Framework and associated NPF indicators ('increase physical activity' and 'increase people's use of Scotland's outdoors'). Each of the Active Scotland outcomes has a number of indicators associated with it, with over half of the indicators in the Framework (10 out of 19) coming from the SHS. In order to monitor delivery it was important that the data sources chosen provided national and local level data that was comparable across local authorities, and was of sufficient scale and detail to enable analysis by protected equality groups.

As well as sports participation, the Framework includes SHS data on perceptions of leisure services, greenspace accessibility and active volunteering. Given limited financial and legislative levers, the Active Scotland Framework is seen by the Scottish Government as an important asset for reaching consensus on proposed activities, and for holding government and the organisations that it funds to account. Some local authorities themselves, and associated Sport Trusts, also use SHS data to monitor their own areas' sports participation and population physical activity levels, as well as to develop services and target them to areas of need. The figures are also widely used across Scottish Governing Bodies of sport.

SHS sport participation data is also a key part of SportScotland's Facility Planning Model which allows for different scenarios to be run, thus helping to consider what the effect of changes to sports facilities might be. The model is used to inform decisions SportScotland make as a capital funder of sports facilities, principally through their Sports Facilities Fund. Local authorities and leisure trusts also use the model to inform their strategic planning and spending on sports facilities.

Alternative evidence sources

Question three asked respondents whether there are any alternative sources of evidence available for the topics and/or questions that they use in the SHS. The question was split into two parts. Question 3(i) was a quantitative question where respondents were asked to respond 'yes' or 'no' to the main question. Question 3(ii) then asked respondents to list the alternative sources of evidence for each topic Eighty nine out of 99 respondents (90 per cent) directly answered this question.

Over half of respondents noted that there was no alternative data sources to the SHS, whilst nearly half of respondents reported that there were alternative data sources. However, most of these respondents noted that none of the alternatives fully met their needs in the same way as the SHS.

Respondents were then asked to list the alternative sources of evidence. For this part of the question, respondents who had answered 'Yes' or 'No' to the previous question both provided comments and these are included below.

The eight responses received by letter (not proforma) did not directly answer question 3(i) and 3(ii). However, some of these respondents noted their views on the lack of alternative local authority level data for many topics in the SHS. These views are incorporated below.

'No' alternative sources of evidence
Those who answered 'no' to question 3(i) either informed us that the SHS is the sole source for this data, left the second part of this question blank, or highlighted areas where some of their evidence needs are met by sources other than the SHS.

Topics specifically identified by respondents as only being available in the SHS are listed below[4]:

- Volunteering;
- Housing aspirations;
- Discrimination;
- Harassment;
- Community belonging;
- Fuel poverty;
- Household energy efficiency measures and renewables;
- Cultural attendance and participation;
- Internet access;
- Public transport use and passenger perceptions;
- Walking;
- Travel diary; and
- Sexual orientation[5].

[4] This only lists topics that respondents have mentioned in answering question 3ii and so it should not be treated as an exhaustive list. Particularly as a question on 'what topics are only available in the SHS?' was not directly asked and potentially respondents may not be aware of alternative sources.
[5] The question on sexual orientation is a SSCQ question so data is also collected in the Scottish Crime and Justice Survey and the Scottish Health Survey

Several third sector organisations were particularly concerned about the volunteering data collected through the SHS. For example, the SCVO noted that 'the Scottish Household Survey is the only source of data of this kind on volunteering in Scotland...'

'Yes' alternative sources of evidence

Those who answered 'yes' to the lead in question 3(i), provided more detailed information on alternative sources. Overall, many respondents noted that the alternatives that they listed did not have as large a sample as the SHS. For example, a number of UK wide sources were cited, however, respondents stated that it was hard to get sub-Scotland level data from them. The longevity of the time series data for many topics (e.g. smoking) was also highlighted as a strong point of the SHS.

Another theme that came across in this section, and perhaps more so in the 'looking ahead' section, was the amount of analysis that looked at sub-Scotland level geographies and sub-populations such as equalities. The SHS sample size enabled this kind of analysis to be carried out and comparisons to be made between different areas, whereas respondents found it difficult to identify or use other sources of evidence for this type of work.

Main alternative sources

Of the alternatives suggested, just over a quarter of respondents to question 3(ii) cited Scotland's Census 2011 and around two in ten cited the Scottish Health Survey (SHeS). A few respondents cited the Labour Force Survey, and the Scottish Crime and Justice survey. The majority of responses highlighting these alternatives were from local government or central Government.

Several respondents did highlight concerns about the accuracy and relevance of census data given that it only happens every ten years, with its greatest level of usefulness being in the immediate years following the Census. Likewise, a number of respondents pointed out the smaller sample size of SHeS meant local authority and health board level data was not available on an annual basis and that currently smoking data from the SHS is the data behind national indicator on smoking.

Locally collected data

Locally collected data such as citizen panels, user surveys or local house condition surveys were also identified as alternatives. This was particularly the case for local government responses where around four in ten responses from this sector mentioned local data collection sources. However, the response from Scottish Borders Council noted that 'there are no consistent alternatives to sources of data provided by the SHS, which provide a solid, valid comparison across Scotland. It would be difficult to replicate this type of comparison if undertaken locally.'

A similar point was also made by a number of other local government respondents, most frequently around satisfaction with services data for the Local Government Benchmarking Framework, but also by COSLA in relation to the Child Poverty

Strategy and other statutory areas such as housing and equalities, as well as non-statutory areas such as volunteering.

A number of responses indicated that they obtained data from their own data collections, however, one Scottish Natural Heritage noted that 'it's important to note that the other sources of data used … are complementary rather than alternative sources of data… [Following a review] Our chosen model was to use the SHS for the delivery of headline data … and to commission … Scotland's People and Nature Survey (SPANS) to provide the additional data needed to interpret and understand the headline trends reported [in] the SHS.'

Alternative sources that use SHS Data

Some respondents identified alternative sources that are actually fully or partially based on data from the SHS. For example, ScotPHO profiles, Scottish Neighbourhood Statistics (SNS), and household projections (from NRS).

3. VIEWS ON OPTIONS FOR 2017

Preferences for Options A and B

Questions four and five asked 'what would be the impact of option A and B, respectively, on their organisations' use of the SHS. This was followed by question 6(i) which asked people to state their option preference, and to explain the reason for their option preference in 6(ii). When reviewing the responses it became evident that the most useful way of reporting on these questions was to report on 6(i) and (ii) first, before reporting on the impact of the two different options.

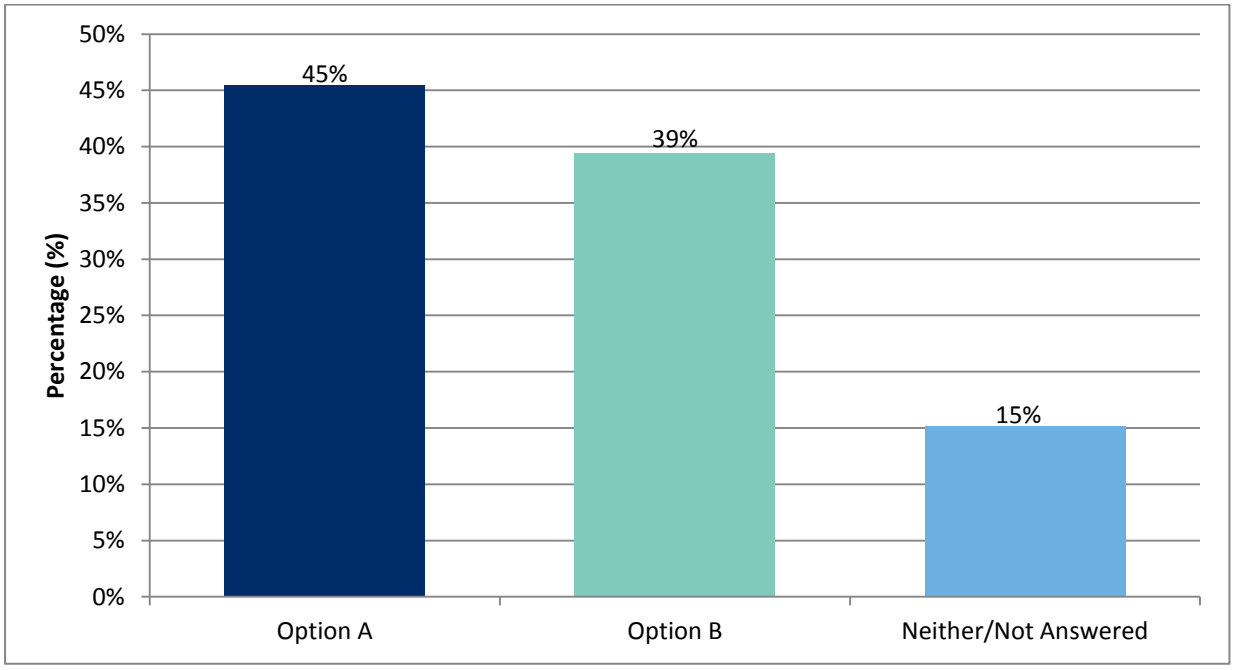
93 out of 99 respondents (94 per cent) answered questions 4 and 5, whilst the same number of respondents answered question 6(i) on whether they preferred option A or B. This includes assignment of preference, or otherwise, from open text responses.[6]

94 out of 99 respondents (95 per cent) answered question 6(ii) on the reasons for their option preference, or lack thereof.

Figure 3-1 shows option preferences. 46 per cent of respondents preferred option A (biennial topics), whilst 39 per cent preferred option B (cut in sample size). 15 per cent decided not to select a preference; 9 per cent of all respondents specifically stated they did not prefer either option, whilst 6 per cent did not answer the question.

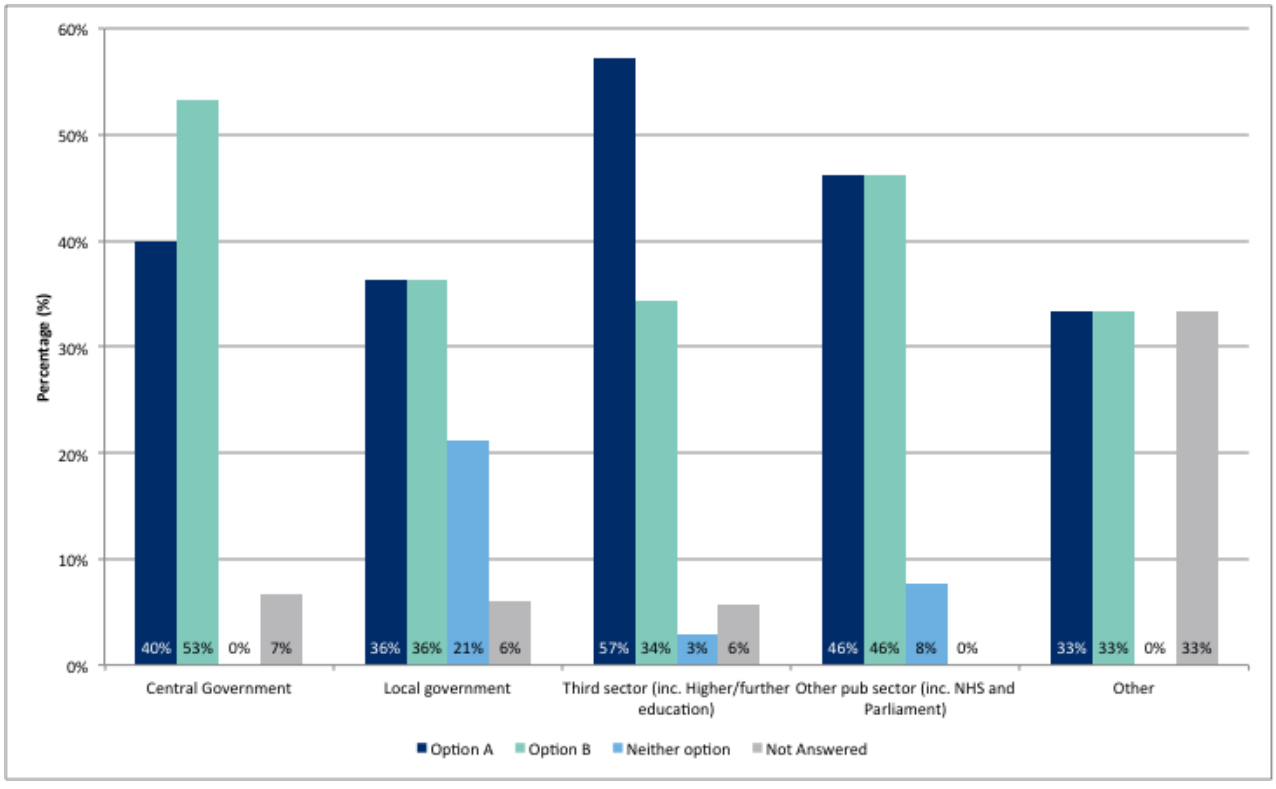
[6] 17 respondents either did not answer question 6i in the proforma or submitted a 'free text' response (e.g. letter). These responses were carefully reviewed by the analysis team to see if the 'option preferences' should be re-categorised as 'neither option', a specific option preference, or should stay as did not answer. This review was based on the content of their responses to questions four, five and 6(ii) where the standard proforma was used, or the whole of their response, where a 'free text' response was received. Reassigning was only undertaken when two team members agreed that their views could be clearly elicited from their response. This resulted in nine responses being categorised as 'neither option', two responses being preferences for option A, and six responses remaining as 'not answered'. These are reflected in Figure 3-1. It was noted that from responses to question four, five and 6(ii) that one respondent had clearly marked their preference incorrectly and so this was changed from option A to B. For another response, the research team got in touch with the respondent to clarify their preference and this was also changed from option A to B.

Figure 3-1 – Option preferences



However, there was a different pattern of option preferences across the different sectors, as can be seen in Figure 3-2.

Figure 3-2 – Option preferences by sector



Fifty-three per cent of central government respondents (i.e. eight respondents mostly Scottish Government lead analysts responding after consulting with their policy colleagues) preferred option B compared to 40 per cent for option A (six respondents) with seven per cent (one respondent) not answering.

- For those local government respondents that expressed a preference, 35 per cent preferred option A and 35 per cent option B (12 respondents in each category), whilst 21 per cent stated neither option (seven respondents) and 9 per cent did not answer (three respondents).
- There was a similar split response for option A versus option B amongst other public sector respondents; 46 per cent for each option (six respondents each), with eight per cent stating neither option (one respondent).
- Fifty-seven per cent of the third sector (20 respondents) preferred option A, followed by 34 per cent for option B (12 respondents), 3 per cent for neither option (one respondent) and six per cent (two respondents) that did not answer.

It was largely local government respondents who either chose 'neither option' or not to answer at all. The main reason was that respondents had concerns about both options. However, one of the 'not answered' respondents noted that both options had pros and cons depending on the question of interest, i.e. there was no clear winner, whilst another noted that they would be happy with either option.

Reasons for option A preferences

The main reason why option A was preferred was because it maintains the higher sample size and 'robustness' of the data, with this seen to be more important than obtaining data on an annual basis.

Respondents wanted to maintain a high sample size for a number of reasons. This included precision around national level estimates and the ability to measure rarely occurring characteristics in a robust way (e.g. volunteering) and to undertake specific types of sub-group analysis such as equalities analysis.

A high sample size would also maintain provision of local authority estimates on an annual basis and this reason was cited not only by local authorities themselves, but some third sector respondents who make use of local authority data.

As outlined in chapter two, several local government representatives and local authorities themselves cited the importance of annual local authority data for the LGBF. However, in noting an option A preference Dundee City Council stated that '*…*there is other data in the LGBF which similarly can't be obtained each year so it would not be a significant deterioration in the overall value of the LGBF.'

Whilst Glasgow City Council requested that the SHS team work with the Improvement Service in order to minimise the impact of changes to the SHS on the LGBF, their Chief Executive expressed a preference for option A in order to maintain the 'rigour and quality of the survey, even where this results in a delay in receiving the results.' A smaller local authority, opted for option A as well in order to maintain the overall sample size, even though they already have concerns about their current small sample size.

Other reasons for preferring option A (in magnitude of citation) included:

- There is no loss of topic/question coverage (as compared to option B) and/or the respondent was worried they would lose 'their questions' (e.g. volunteering) under option B. Third sector respondents were more likely to cite this reason than other sectors.
- Simpler to analyse performance and identify change over time, especially for local authority level data, compared to option B.
- There's a slow change in some figures over time anyway rather than year on year change.
- Less negative impact than option B, including from an equalities analysis perspective and the impact on local authority results.
- Efficiency gains to SG lead analyst teams from biennial reporting of SHS data.
- The most useful questions are the core questions and they are protected under this option.

Option A organisational impact

Question four asks 'what the impact would be of option A on an organisations' use of the SHS.' These responses can be broadly characterised on a spectrum of negative to neutral comments.

It should be noted that considerably more respondents cited negative impacts in their responses than neutral responses and these responses are reported first in the section below. In the section below views are reported from all respondents, i.e. regardless of whether they preferred option A or B.

Negative comments on option A

Loss of annual data and impact on performance monitoring

The loss of annual data for policy and performance monitoring purposes was raised by a number of respondents, most commonly local government and third sector respondents. This included the issue of biennial data gaps in formal frameworks such as the NPF, the LGBF and SOAs, making it more difficult to identify changes and assess trends over time. The Carnegie Trust noted the statutory nature of the national outcomes the 'lack of annual data would significantly reduce the impact of this overview of Scotland's Progress' (individual respondent from the Carnegie Trust).

A number of local government representative bodies (COSLA, LGBF Board, the Improvement Service, and SOLACE) plus the Accounts Commission and some local authorities themselves, had strong views about the loss of annual data and its impact on the LGBF. The LGBF Board/Improvement Service felt that 'technically option A (and option B) would both render the SHS almost entirely unusable for the Local Government Benchmarking Framework', a view echoed by SOLACE and a few local authorities. It was stated that the omission of satisfaction data every second year from the LGBF would be a significant gap both for councils and for local citizens, and would make it more difficult for councils to monitor trends over time. The Accounts

Commission felt that biennial data would not be positive in terms of public confidence in local authority performance data.

Impact on ability to assess and evaluate policies

Some respondents felt that the two year wait and gap for data on most topics would have an impact on the ability to assess and evaluate the impact of particular policies, due to the lack of a corresponding baseline and (first) impact year. This would particularly impact on specific events, such as cultural and sporting events like the Commonwealth Games, as well as fast moving policy areas (e.g. internet access) or issues that might shift quickly due to a sudden change in external circumstances, e.g. hate crime[7].

The Child Poverty Action Group also felt that the lack of annual data under option A would '…make it increasingly difficult to establish causal links between policy interventions and changes in the experiences and perceptions of low income families. Where the impact of a policy cannot be seen for up to two years after its introduction the process of holding local or national government to account becomes more difficult.' It was further noted that the absence of annual data could also impact on local and national accountability in relation to Children's Services Planning under the Children and Young People Act which requires local authorities to establish how the delivery of their services will increase child wellbeing. The general lack of local authority level data on child poverty was also noted.

A few respondents noted that option A would introduce a delay in the opportunity to take action on change. NHS Health Scotland noted there would be reduced capacity for monitoring long term trends and 'early warnings' of change at national level.

Combining non-consecutive years' worth of data and with a lower two year sample size than option B

Several different respondents raised issues with having to combine non-consecutive years' worth of data and the lower sample size achieved over a two year period under option A compared to option B (10,100 household sample size under option A, compared to 15,000 under option B).

Some users of the SHS already have to combine two or more years' worth of data in order to get a sufficient sample size, particularly but not exclusively at local authority level. This includes some types of national level equalities analysis including sport participation data, and for the data that is being considered as a successor to the Scottish Government's housing SCORE data for social tenants. Areas which already have to combine three years of data include: transport modelling and planning, and adaptations to support independent living. One of Transport Scotland's respondents noted that 'to assume that behaviour remains constant (enough) over this period is pushing right to the limits of credulity'.

[7] The SHS measures harassment and discrimination as it has a larger sample size than the Scottish Crime and Justice Survey.

Split topics and the loss of functionality to explore relationships

The third sector, particularly Universities, were most likely to note a 'significant loss of functionality' (Professor Nick Bailey, University of Glasgow) arising from a biennial design. This would restrict the ability to undertake research and analysis to explore relationships and outcomes. As a specific example, NHS Health Scotland noted reduced capacity to examine inequalities in the social determinants of health.

In terms of other negative comments, a few respondents noted that they would be less likely to use this 'out of date' data, another that the impact could be ameliorated by bringing forward the publication date, and one further respondent that biennial data would be a concern to MSPs. At least one local authority (North Lanarkshire) noted that they would need to use their residents' survey and/or Citizens' Panel to fill the gaps in the biennial data 'against a backdrop of diminishing internal resources for this purposes.'

Neutral comments on option A

Around one in ten consultation respondents noted that there would be little or minimal impact on their organisations from option A. The reasons were as follows:

- Option A ensures consistency of questions and sample size
- As long as odd and even year questions are sensibly allocated for the purpose of cross tabulations
- Data is several years out of date when published anyway
- Most of their questions of interest are already biennial (i.e. culture, land use) or are protected as part of the SSCQ (e.g. smoking)
- Option A is a reversion back to the previous situation when local authority data was only available on a biennial basis
- Data does not change much from one year to the next (e.g. volunteering, sport and physical participation)
- Housing aspirations questions – as long as they can run in 2017
- Recycling questions – as long as they have key variables such as dwelling type included in the same year

A few responses noted that biennial data was fine for their purposes as data was not subject to wild swings between years. This was mentioned by two third sector organisations with an interest in the volunteering data, and by one local authority (Angus council) which stated that: *'*The impact would be mainly on our Public Performance Reporting (PPR) and specifically on the LGBF indicators and to a lesser extent SOA and housing reporting. As noted in response to Q3 we use a range of other information in policy-making, service planning and performance monitoring. For this reason the impact of changes to SHS will be limited.'

Reason for option B preferences

The main reason respondents preferred option B was the retention of data collection and availability on an annual basis for the majority of topics at national and local level. This included the ability to update the national indicators within the NPF on an

annual basis, and so that local authorities could undertake their own monitoring, benchmarking and reporting.

Several respondents noted that option B not only provides annual data, it also provides a larger sample size every second year than option A (15,000 household sample size compared to 10,000).

As well as offering a greater precision for all estimates over a two year period, it was noted that this would be better for particular areas and types of analysis where small sample sizes were already an issue. This included the Travel Diary and transport analysis, housing analysis at local authority level, and many types of equality analysis carried out by the Scottish Government, NHS Health Scotland, EHRC and other public and third sector organisations. In particular, option B would avoid the pooling of three years' of local transport data over a six year period which is needed under option A to carry out transport modelling for investment decisions.

Other reasons that option B was preferred (in order of magnitude):

- It would maintain full functionality in terms of the ability to make annual comparisons and cross-analyse/explore relationships as topics are all covered in the same year.
- There would be an increase in (previously) 'one third sample size' questions such as recycling and land use.
- Measuring change over time would be less complex than option A where there would be gap years. Indeed, it was noted that the loss in precision in comparing single years' worth of data was bearable as the best approach to identifying real change was to look over a (consecutive) number of years.
- The increased precision of a two year rolling average at local authority level and/or that such an average was more appropriate to measure change in long term outcomes at local authority level (latter mentioned by at least two local authorities).
- Consistency in content would be more important than the overall sample size
- Assuming a straight one third reduction in sample size across local authorities, option B preserved the greatest flexibility and number of options for dealing with small sub-samples.

Option B organisational impact

Question five asked 'what the impact would be of option B on their organisations' use of the SHS'. The responses can be broadly characterised on a spectrum of negative to neutral comments and even a few positive comments. It should be noted that considerably more respondents cited negative impacts in their responses than neutral responses. Views are reported from all respondents, i.e. regardless of whether they preferred option A or B.

Negative comments

The most frequently made negative comments related to the reduction in the sample size (either at national level, local level or both) and the associated reduction in the 'robustness' and/or precision of the survey. Asides from the reduced ability to detect

'real' (i.e. statistically significant) change from one year to the next for all data, many varied impacts were noted from the overall sample size decrease including:

The impact on local authority data.

Around four in ten local government respondents either noted limitations with the current local authority sample size or that the current sample size was already too small for some local authorities, with many noting that the proposed reduction under option B would only exacerbate this. Several respondents quoted or referred to analysis undertaken by the Improvement Service on the LGBF satisfaction with services indicator. This stated that three year rolling averages would be needed to deliver the 'required level of precision' at a local level and even then that these satisfaction rates would be based on the general population and not service users[8].

One of the smaller local authorities, East Ayrshire, highlighted that with a current annual base size of 250, the base size for some data breakdowns were already regarded as being too unreliable for publication, whilst some other local authorities highlighted the general difficulty with option B in making comparisons over time. Alongside some other small local authorities, East Ayrshire was worried that a reduction of their sample size under option B would make their local authority data unusable at a sub-group level. Several other local authorities expressed their worries that option B would make them less likely to use local authority data from the SHS and/or make it redundant due to the lower sample size.

The decline in sample size at local authority level would also impact on the Scottish Government and other public sector and third sector respondents that use local authority data as part of their monitoring frameworks or processes. This includes local authority data within the Active Scotland Framework and Scottish Natural Heritage's monitoring of strategies and policies; both stated they would need to move away from annual estimate based reporting in some way, e.g. to biennial reporting.

Impact on other sub-group breakdowns including other geographies (e.g. rural/urban) and demographic sub-groups

Several respondents expressed a general concern about the possible impact on other sub-group data. This included other geographic area statistics such as urban/rural breakdowns[9] and the ability to explore health behaviours and outcomes for children and young people. Annual active travel estimates outside the large cities (Edinburgh and Glasgow) would also be impacted, as would cultural participation estimates by area and population type.

The Child Poverty Action Group, which expressed concerns about both the options, was concerned that reducing the sample size would have a negative effect on the extent to which the impact of policy changes on children could be understood.

[8] Note: LGBF indicators are currently based on the general adult population

[9] For information, Rural Scotland Key Facts published by the Scottish Government, contains a 6 fold rural/urban breakdown for the condition of dwellings and 3 fold rural/urban breakdown of SHCS fuel poverty data.

Nevertheless, NHS Health Scotland (who preferred option B) noted that they would still be able to produce their ScotPHO Community Health Profiles under option B (provided at local authority, Health Board and/or intermediate zone geography[10]) as they would be able to pool two years' worth of data.

Impact on rarely occurring characteristics

A few respondents (but not all with interests in this data) mentioned that the reduced sample size would impact negatively on the precision of national level data for volunteering. Furthermore, it was noted that national estimates of harassment and discrimination, routinely broken down by age and gender, might have to move to biennial reporting.

Impact on equalities analysis

Several respondents noted the negative impact of option B on equalities analysis, particularly third sector respondents. For example, Stonewall noted that it was already concerned about the current SHS sample size for monitoring LGBT people and that if the sample size was reduced they would have to move to biennial reporting. Whilst recognising that combining two years' worth of data would mitigate against the reduction, they still preferred option A on balance. This contrasts with response from the EHRC and NHS Health Scotland who preferred option B due to the ability to pool two consecutive years' worth of data, thus enabling a finer level of sub-group analysis (e.g. in monitoring inequalities between places and sub-groups of the population) and achieving a higher level of precision over two years compared to option A. SportScotland took a similar view regarding the ability to combine consecutive years' worth of data for equalities analysis of the Active Scotland Framework (and separately for their Facilities Planning Model). Whilst recognising that combining two years' worth of data under option B would have a higher sample size, then the Scottish Government's equalities analytical team had 'slight preference for option A as the higher sample size would mean more precise annual counts of equality groups'.

This contrasts with responses from the EHRC and NHS Health Scotland who preferred option B due to the ability to pool two *consecutive* years' worth of data, thus enabling a finer level of sub-group analysis (e.g. in monitoring inequalities between places and sub-groups of the population) and achieving a higher level of precision over two years compared to option A. SportScotland took a similar view regarding the ability to combine consecutive years' worth of data for equalities analysis of the Active Scotland Framework (and separately for their Facilities Planning Model).

Other more specific impacts included:

- NRS would probably not use the SHS data as the basis of their household projections
- One public sector respondent said they might switch to biennial reporting anyway under option B due to the lower sample size.

[10] Intermediate zone geographies contain an average of 4,000 household residents and are used to disseminate statistics that are not suitable for release at data zone level.

Other negative comments on option B included:

- Several third sector respondents were worried about the loss of questions on their topics of interest, including volunteering, greenspace, and sport and physical activity.
- A few respondents, spread across sectors, did not know what the impact would be on policy development as the consultation did not specify what questions would be lost under option B. These respondents noted that they may need to buy alternative data sources to replace the lost data.
- In a similar vein, a few local authorities noted that they would need to use alternative data sources, including commission their own survey, which would reduce the value of the SHS.

Neutral to positive comments on option B

A number of neutral to positive comments were raised by a range of respondents. Some responses below echoed the reasons why some respondents preferred option B. These were as follows:

- Relative consistency with previous years including majority of topic coverage.
- The annual sample size is still large enough for major sub-groups and larger local authorities. One respondent (central Government) noted that option B could still provide annual estimates for the large and medium sized local authorities.
- Ability to combine current years of data and achieve a larger sample size than option A in order to get viable sample sizes for detailed sub-group analysis and/or to improve the precision of larger sub-group estimates.
- A few local authorities noted that the larger local authority (two year) sample size (compared to option A) and the increase in reported precision offered by the two year rolling averages was useful. This was particularly the case for active travel where there are small sample sizes.

In particular, it was recognised by these respondents that such averages would make it easier to identify differences between local authorities, although it would make it more difficult to identify change in the short term. Nevertheless, Aberdeenshire Council noted that two year rolling averages still show change over time and that the 'smoothing of estimates may also engender a more strategic, long term outlook as significant year-on-year fluctuations would be less discernible.'

- Some of the concerns around falling response rates seen in other surveys would be partly alleviated by a reduction in the sample size as some of the problems with response rates are in part due to a lack of capacity to do with the volume of fieldwork being demanded in Scotland.

Several respondents, spread across sectors, noted that option B would have little impact, because:

- There would be an increase in their 'one third sample size' questions (recycling, internet, SHCS data)

- They have worked with smaller samples and/or confidence intervals are wider but still OK for analysis
- All the data is still available annually
- LA data was previously only available every two years so (only) reverting back
- A full range of data sources were used in policy making, service planning and performance monitoring (Angus council)
- If the current streaming of physical and SHCS household questions together is maintained.

Option A biennial topics - preferences for coverage of topics in 2017 and 2018

In the consultation document, it was noted that under option A (biennial) half of the topics would be asked in 2017 (odd year) and half in 2018 (even year). Question seven asked respondents for their views on what topics should be asked in 2017 and which should be asked in 2018.

Twenty seven out of 99 (27 per cent) respondents provided a comment on question seven other than no opinion. However, only 18 respondents (18 per cent) stated any preference for odd/even years, with some providing multiple suggestions. Some respondents suggested ways of splitting the survey, but did not state a preference for which questions appeared in which years and some used the opportunity to identify variables that they think should either be protected or become core questions as part of the SSCQ.

Of those that specified an odd/even year reference, the most frequent preferences were for sport and culture to be asked in 2017 (three and two responses respectively; see Table 3-1). The reason given for the sport questions to be asked in 2017 was to enable monitoring of potential impacts of the 2016 and 2018 major sporting events (e.g. the Olympics and Commonwealth games). Conversely, one of the preferences was for the sport questions to be asked in 2018. No reason was given for this was preference.

The preference for the culture questions to be asked in 2017 was so that the current biennial topic pattern is followed. Likewise, asking transport and volunteering questions in 2018 so that the current biennial pattern is maintained was also mentioned by respondents.

Other preferences for 2017 occurred only once, with one respondent stating a preference for local government services, neighbourhoods and communities, local environment and culture all being asked together in 2017.

A few other respondents stated a preference to group similar topics together without specifying a preference for a particular year. This included the following topics:

- Culture and natural environment
- Economic activity and finance
- Neighbourhoods and communities along with housing

Table 3-1 – Preferences for coverage of topics in 2017 and 2018

Year	Topic	Count	Reasoning
2017	Housing aspirations	1	To be able to combine the sample size with the new questions asked in 2016
	Culture	2	To allow to be combined with current biennial topic pattern.
	Employment/Income	1	None
	Environment	1	None
	Financial Inclusion	1	None
	Fuel poverty & heating	1	To maintain continuity of data
	Green space	1	To allow publishing State of Scotland's Green space report in 2018 (as is based on SHS data)
	Internet	1	To have time to explore options to deal with the loss of annual data
	Local government services, neighbourhoods and communities, local environment and culture	1	The implementation of Scotland's National Strategy for Public Libraries: Ambition and Opportunity (2015-2020) is being monitored over this timeframe and 2017/2019 will provide a valuable insight to the progress against the National Outcomes.
	Neighbourhood	1	None
	Resilience	1	The resilience questions were rested in 2016
	Sport	3	To monitor potential impact of sport events in 2016/2018
	Volunteering	1	None
2018	Sport	1	None
	Volunteering	1	To continue the pattern
In the same year (no year preference stated)	Culture and natural environment	1	None
	Econ. activity and finance	1	Group similar topics together
	Neighbourhoods and communities with housing	1	Group similar topics together

Option B – views on how to achieve savings needed in interview time

It was noted in the consultation that under option B (reduction in sample size), a small reduction in full sample topic coverage of around 4 minutes would be necessary in order to maintain the current one third sample questions at their present sample size. Question eight asked respondents to select how they preferred to achieve the needed reduction from the following four methods:

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

Seventy respondents out of 99 (71 per cent) provided a response to this question.

Nearly three in ten respondents (28 per cent) preferred the option of introducing more biennial topics and questions. This was closely followed by the option of reducing the breadth of larger topics (25 per cent). Cutting topics (6 per cent) and introducing more one third sample questions (11 per cent) were the least popular options. Close to three in ten (29 per cent) did not answer this question (see Figure 3-3).

Figure 3-3 Option B how to achieve savings in interview time

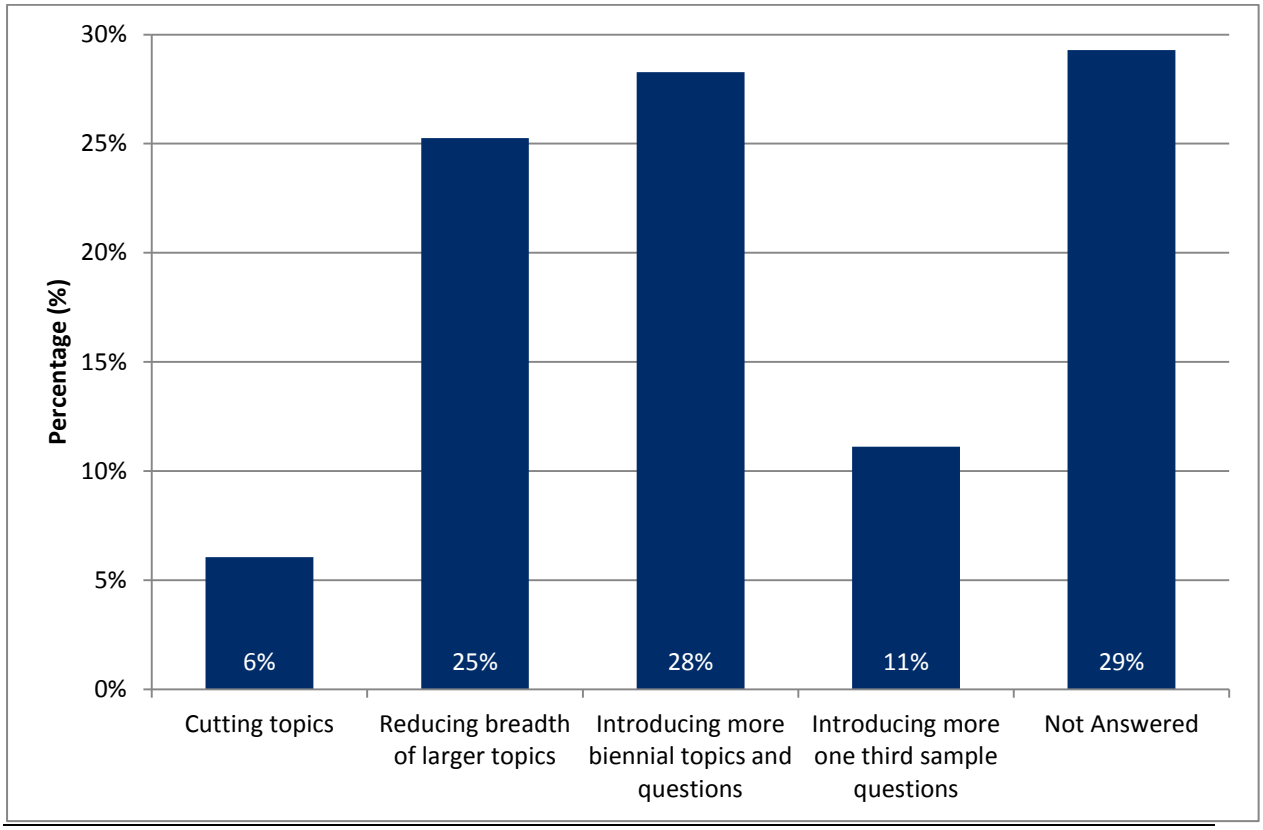


Figure 3-4 shows how respondents from different sectors responded to this question. Central government respondents favoured 'introducing more one third sample questions', followed by 'introducing more biennial topics and questions'; the other

public sector and third sectors preferred ‘introducing more biennial topics and questions’; and local government respondents favoured ‘reducing breadth of larger topics’, although nearly half of respondents from this sector did not respond to this question. Across all sectors, ‘cutting topics’ was the least popular option.

Figure 3-4 Option B how to achieve savings in interview time by sector

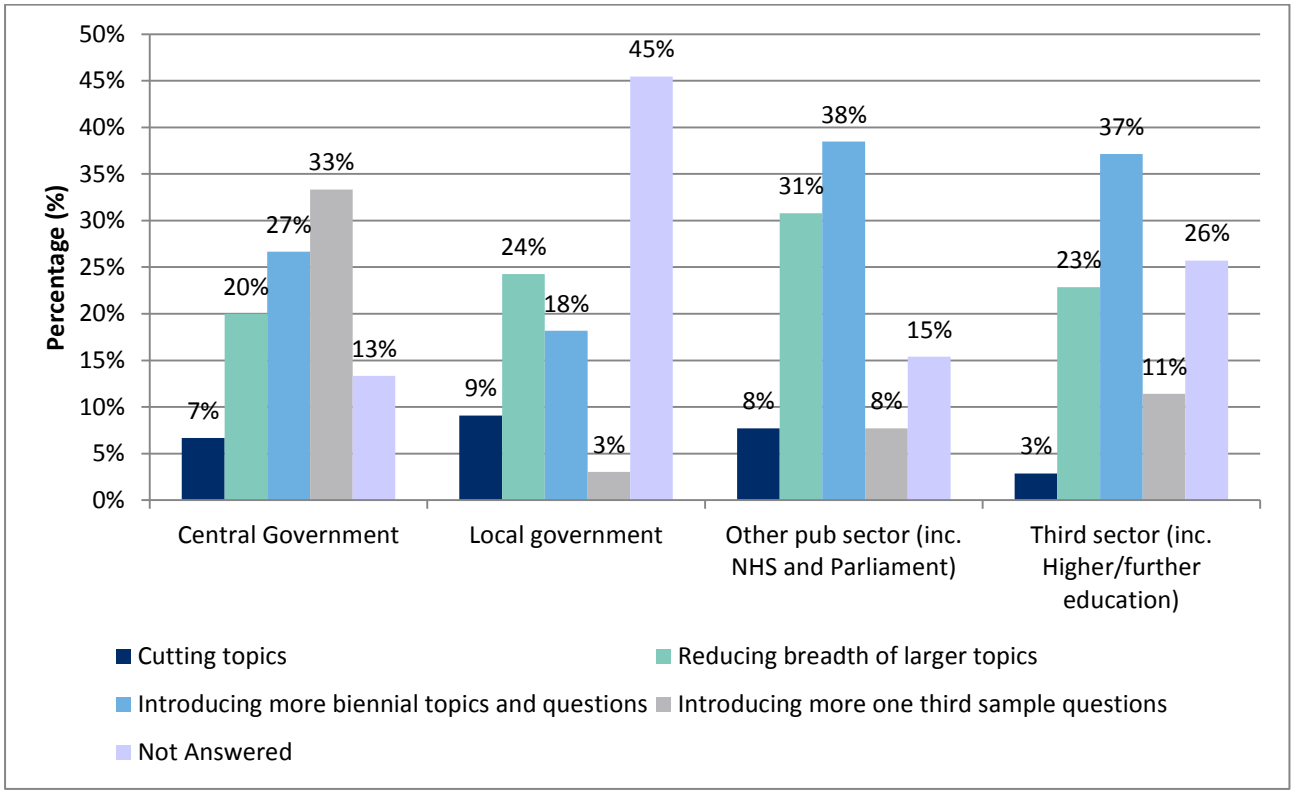
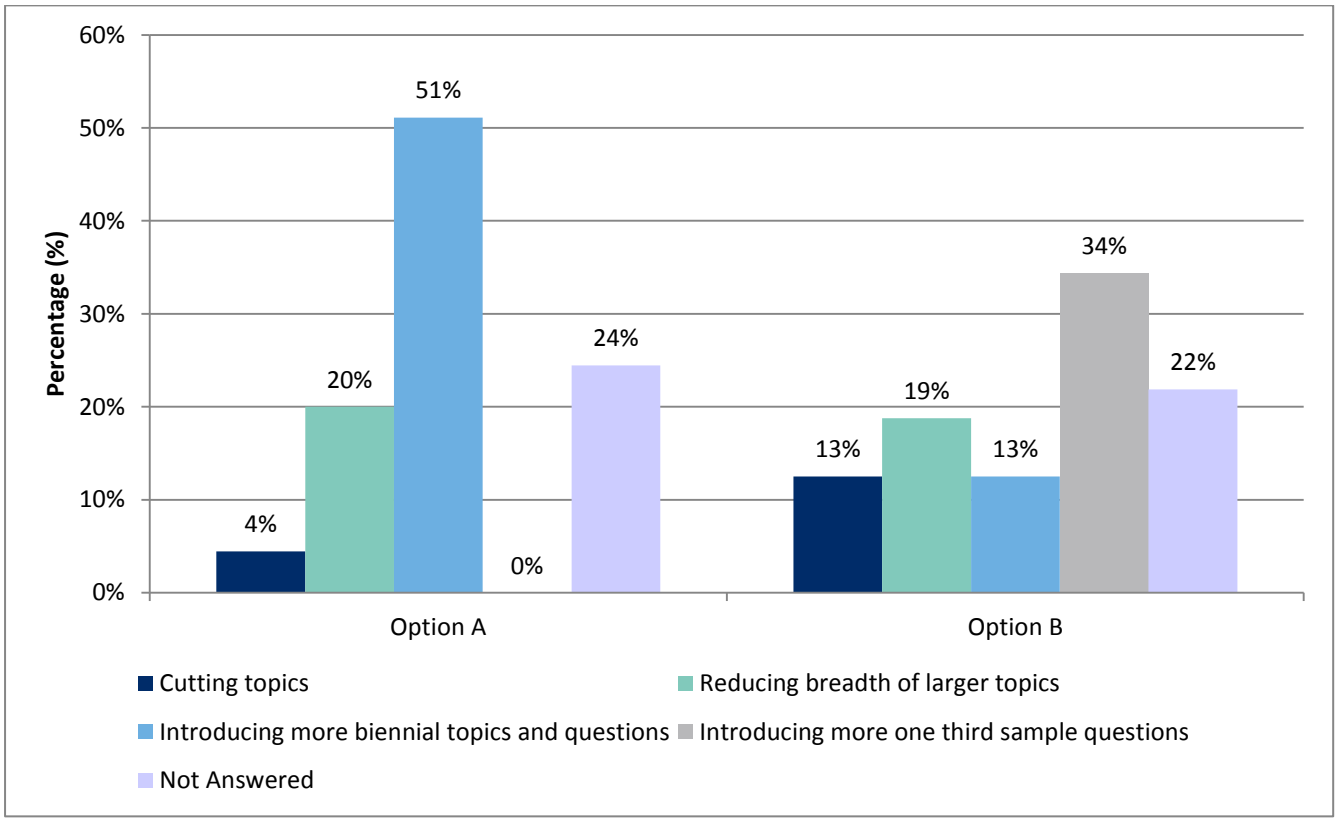


Figure 3-5 shows differing views on reducing topic coverage depending on whether option A or option B was preferred overall. Unsurprisingly, just over half (51 per cent) of those that preferred option A also preferred the option of introducing more biennial topics. However, only around one in ten (13 per cent) who had preferred option B preferred biennial topics to reduce topic coverage. The most popular option with respondents who preferred option B was the option of introducing more one third sample questions (just over a third; 34 per cent).However, none of those who selected option A selected this option to reduce topic coverage. Around one in five in each group preferred reducing the breadth of larger topics. The least popular option for those that preferred option A was to cut topics (4 per cent). The least popular option with respondents who preferred option B was introducing more biennial topics or questions and cutting topics (both 13 per cent). Around a quarter of respondents in each group did not answer this question (24 per cent for option A and 22 per cent for option B).

Figure 3-5 Option B how to achieve savings in interview time by whether chosen option A or option B[11]



Question nine asked an open question about respondents' views on the *topics that they used* that could be: i. Cut completely and/or reduced in breadth; ii. Go biennial; iii. Move from full to one third sample.

Seventy one (72 per cent) of respondents provided a response to this question.

Around a third of respondents who answered this question highlighted ways in which specific topic areas or questions could be reduced. The remaining two thirds of respondents did not identify how reductions should be made and provided more generic responses e.g. variables where change is fairly slow. Some respondents also took the opportunity to argue their case for not making reductions in various ways, some of which were reductions to topics that the respondent themselves did not use.

Looking more closely at the responses that suggested specific ways to reduce the SHS questionnaire time, the most popular was to make topics biennial (around seven in ten).

Overall there were many conflicting responses in trying to identify specific topic areas for some kind of reduction or change. The majority of the suggestions were changes to peripheral questions that were subject to pre-filters (and so not asked of

[11] Those that said 'neither' option or did not answer question 6 (i) relating to Option A and Option B preferences are not shown in the chart due to the high percentage that did not answer question 8. This amounts to 17 responses in total.

everybody); to factual questions that would take up very little interview time in the first place; or to important cross tabulation variables.

Overall, the responses showed that there was no overarching view of the survey and, despite some well thought out responses, respondents found it difficult to come up with usable suggestions. One respondent summed this up with the following:

‘All topics provide value, reductions should be shared equally. Would prefer SHS to make specific recommendations, as there is unlikely to be comprehensive expertise in all question areas in any other organisation’ (Edinburgh City Council).

Some topic areas were identified as potential candidates for change. For example, a number of responses from local governments stated that data on local service satisfaction, local government perception and recycling is collected locally through citizen and user surveys. Likewise, a number of the questions relating to health which do not fall under the protective blanket of the SSCQ, are covered in the Scottish Health Survey (e.g. number of cigarettes smoked daily). The internet, transport and travel, culture and sport, housing and environment sections were mentioned in several responses.

Option B reporting of local authority level data

Question ten asked respondents their opinions on whether under option B (cut in sample size) how they would prefer local authority data to be published. The question was split into two parts. Question 10(i) was a quantitative question where respondents were asked to select which of the following two methods they preferred local authority data to be published:

i. Two year rolling average basis every year; or
ii. 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).

Question 10(ii) asked respondents to explain why they had selected the method they had in question 10(i).

Seventy out of 99 (71 per cent) respondents provide a response to question 10(i) and 71 (72 per cent) to question 10(ii).

Over half of all respondents (54 per cent) stated a preference for local authority level data on a two year rolling average basis every year (see Figure 3-6). Just under a fifth (17 per cent) of all respondents stated a preference for data releases every two years. However, nearly three tenths (29 per cent) of all respondents did not answer this question.

Figure 3-6 Preference for frequency of production of local authority data

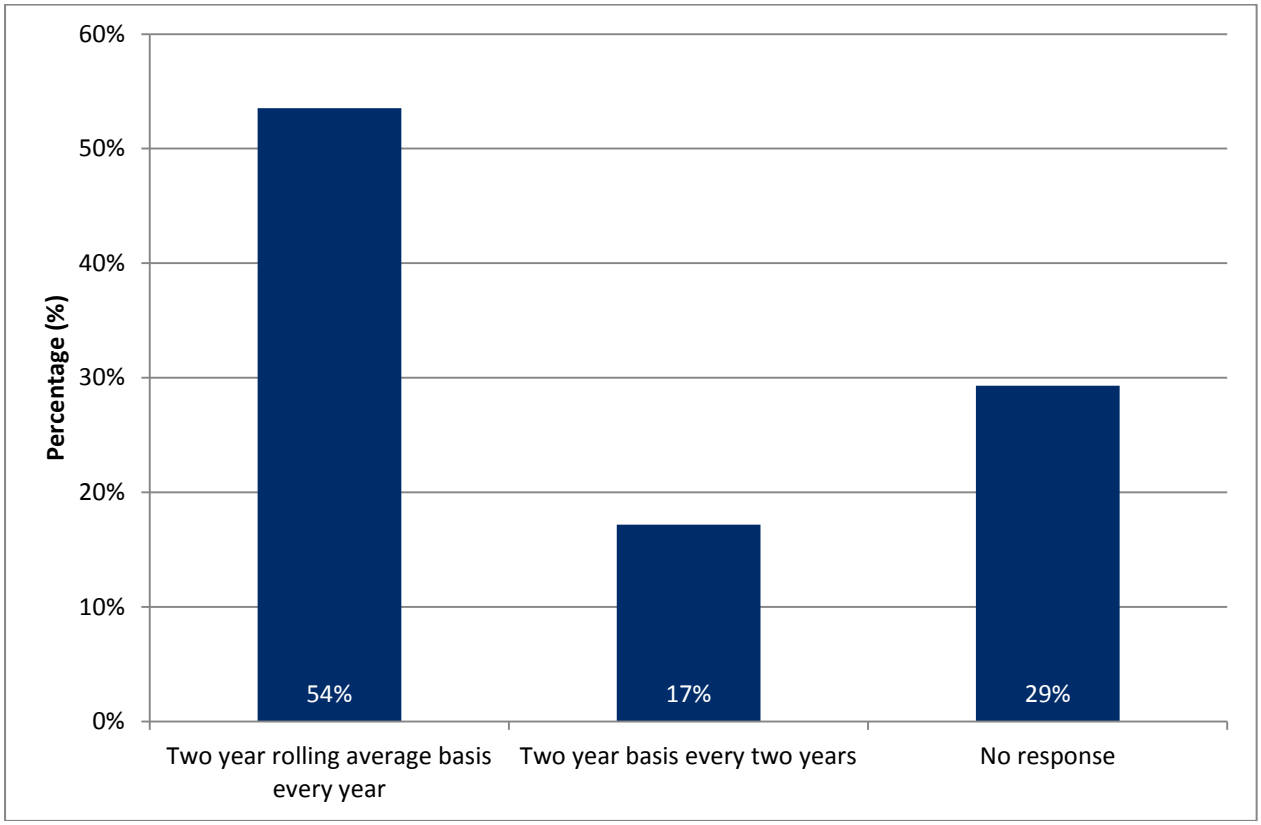
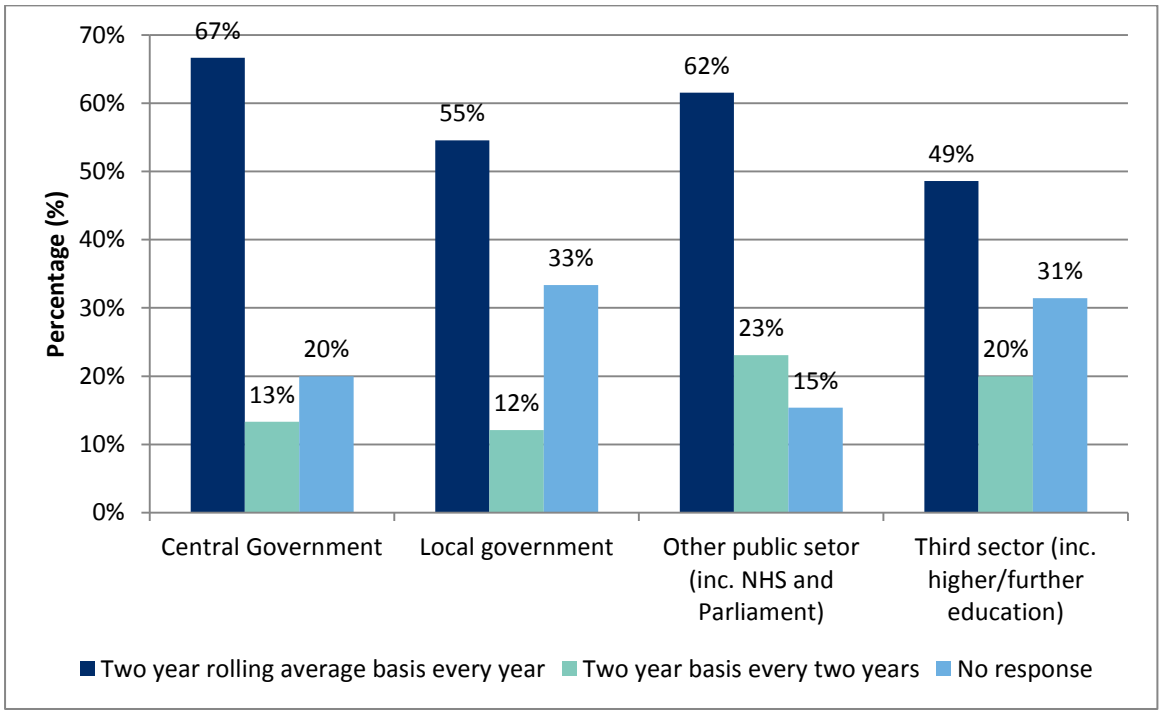


Figure 3-7 shows the preference for frequency of production of local authority data by sector. At least 49 per cent of responses from each sector (with the exception of 'other') preferred the option of annual reporting of local authority data. However, between to tenths and a third of respondents in each sector (excluding 'other') did not answer question 10(i).

Figure 3-7 Preference for frequency of production of local authority data by sector



The comments from those who preferred the option of getting data on a two year rolling average expressed a preference for up to date, annual data releases at local authority level expressed concern that releasing the data every two years would result in out of date information. This would result in short-term monitoring being no longer effective as a consequence. Although local authority level data releases from the SHS have only been available on an annual basis since 2012, a number of local government responses noted that annual reporting of local authority level data was now a statutory requirement.

The comments from the respondents who preferred a data release every two years expressed concerns about being able to identify change over time if a two year rolling average approach was taken. They preferred to wait for what they saw as more robust and accurate data which would enable small changes to be identifiable.

A third sector respondent queried whether getting both types of release was a possibility.

4. LOOKING AHEAD

Views on further reductions and how they should be achieved

Question 11 asked respondents their opinions on how further cost saving measures should be implemented in the future should they be deemed necessary. The question was split into two parts. Question 11(i) was a quantitative question where respondents were asked to select which of the following four options they preferred if future cost savings were needed:

i. a reduction in SHS sample size;
ii. a reduction in frequency of SHS data collection;
iii. a reduction in SHS topic coverage; or
iv. other – please explain.

Question 11(ii) asked respondents to explain why they had selected the option they had in question 11(i).

Sixty nine out of 99 (70 per cent) respondents provided a response to question 11(i). Sixty nine out of 99 (70 per cent) respondents also provided a response to question 11(ii), although respondents that answered 11(i) did not necessarily question 11(ii) (and vice versa).

Close to a third (30 per cent) of respondents did not select an option (see Figure 4-1). Around 20 per cent of respondents felt that the best option if further reductions were required was a reduction in SHS topic coverage. The least popular choice was a reduction in sample size (10 per cent of responses). A similar number of respondents selected a ‘reduction in data collection frequency’ and ‘other’ (18 per cent and 19 per cent respectively). A combination of the other options was the main reason given for selecting ‘other’ e.g. combination of sample size reduction and reduction in topic coverage.

Figure 4-1 – Preferences for options if further reductions to the SHS are required

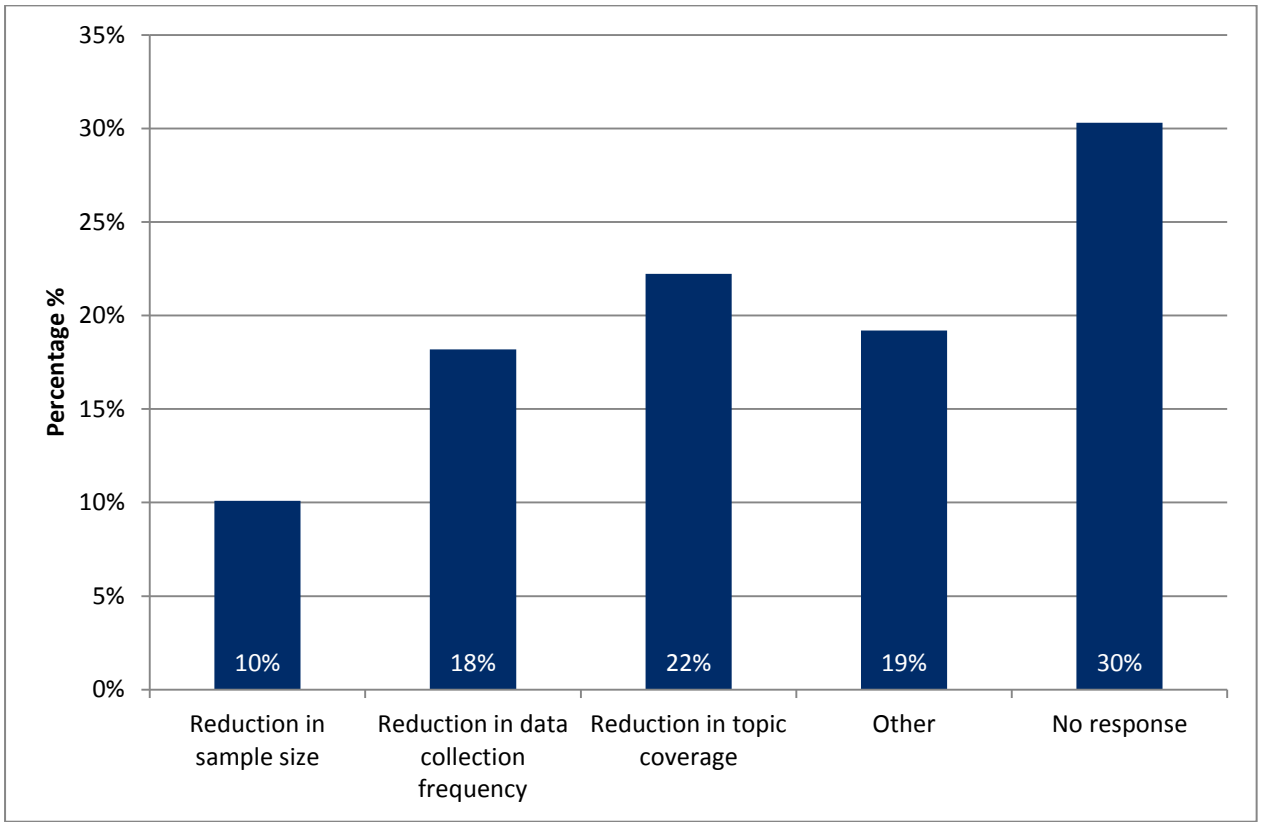
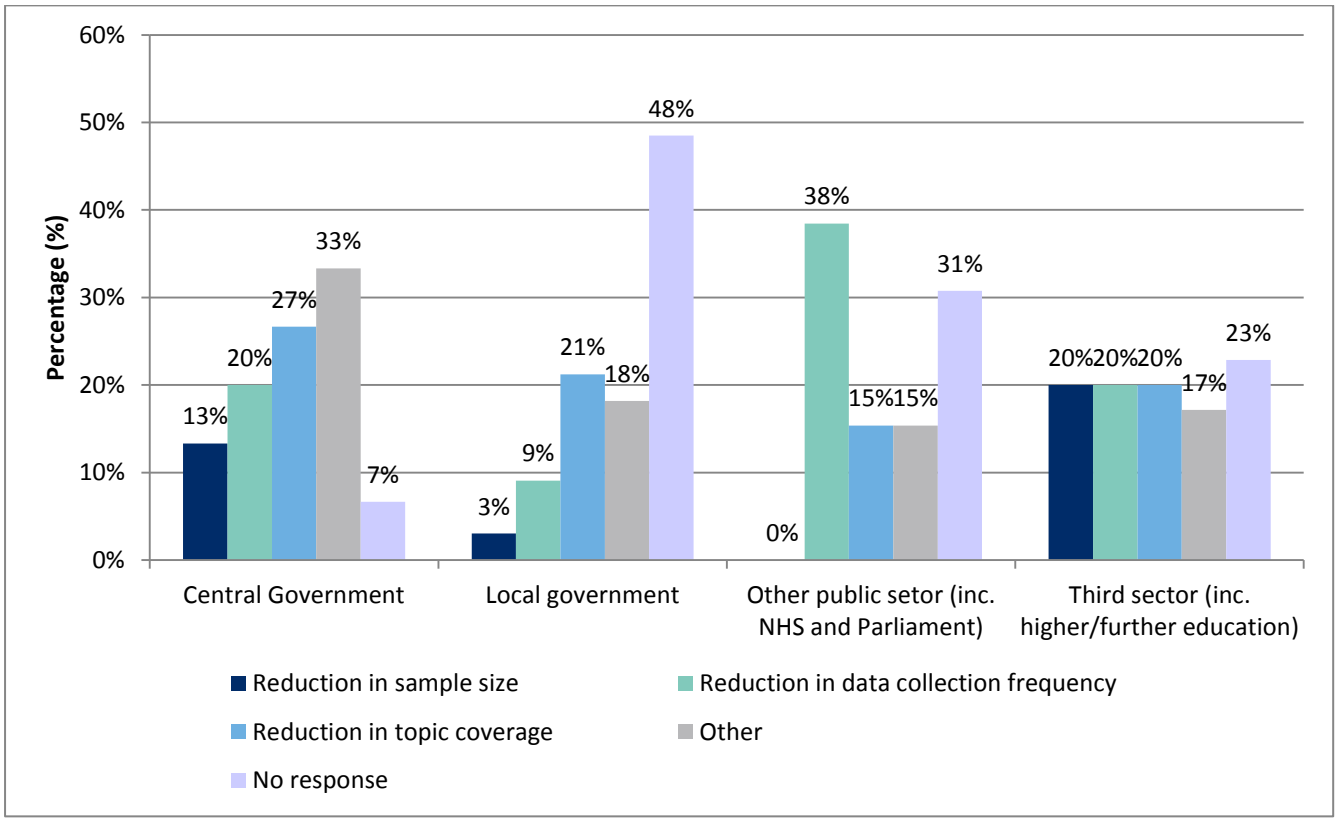


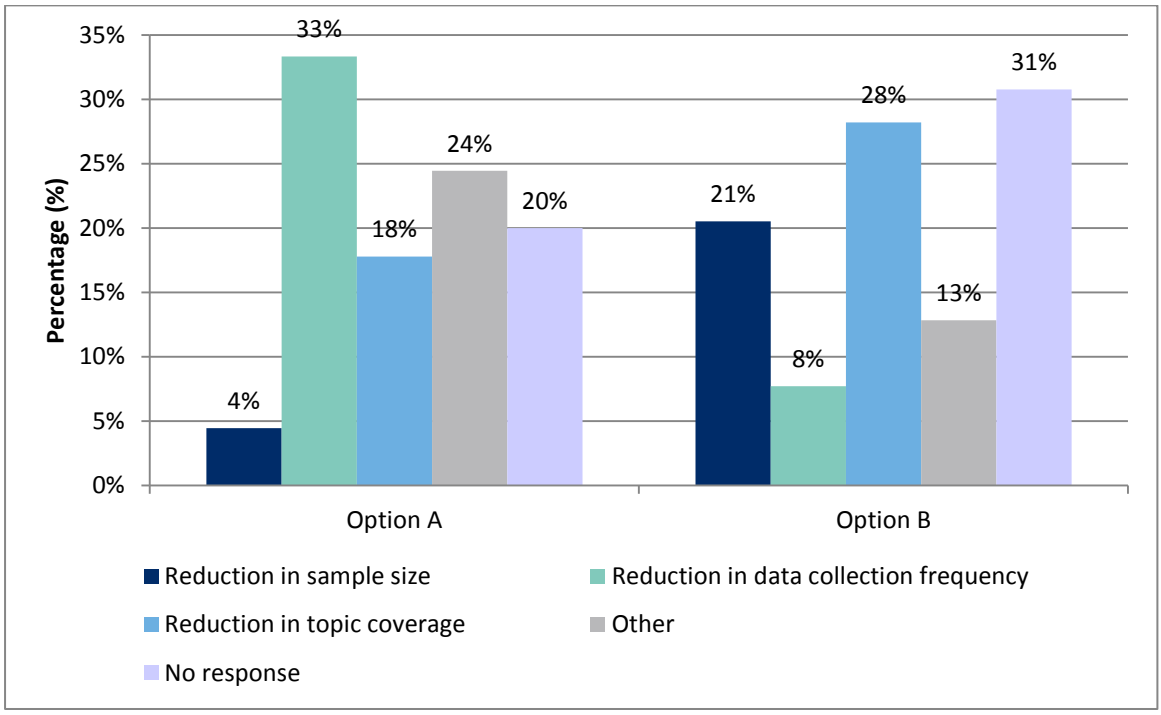
Figure 4-2 shows preferences for options if further reductions to the SHS are required by sector. With the exception of the third sector, all sectors said a reduction in sample size was the least preferred method of reducing the SHS further, excluding no responses which was the most common response from the local government sector. Central government and local government responses preferred a 'reduction in topic coverage' or 'other'. A reduction in data collection frequency was the clear favourite of other public sector responses, whereas there was no clear consensus amongst third sector respondents.

Figure 4-2 – Preferences for options if further reductions to the SHS are required by sector



A third of respondents who preferred option A (biennial topics) said a reduction in data collection frequency was their preferred method if further reductions were needed (see Figure 4-3), followed by 'other' at 24 per cent and reduction in topic coverage at 18 per cent. Nearly three in ten respondents who had selected option B said a reduction in topic coverage was their preferred method if further reductions were required, followed by a reduction in sample size (21 per cent). Reduction in data collection frequency was not popular amongst those who preferred option B, with only 8 per cent selecting this option.

Figure 4-3 – Preferences for options if further reductions to the SHS are required by preference for option A or B



Reasons given for selecting a reduction in topic coverage mainly revolved around concerns with the other options. A reduction in sample size was seen as adversely affecting data, particularly at smaller geography levels or data for smaller populations/sub-groups. A drop in the frequency of reporting was also viewed with concern as it would limit the usability of the SHS.

Just over half of those who did not select an option for question 11(i), i.e. the' no responses' did provide comments to question 11(ii). A number of these comments raised concerns that further reductions would erode user confidence in the survey.

Comments from those who selected the option to reduce the SHS sample size, indicated that they believed a reduction in sample size would not affect the way they use the survey; however, a reduction in the breadth of the survey would. One response suggested moving to a model similar to that currently used by the Scottish House Conditions Survey (SHCS) i.e. collect data over a three year period from a third of the total sample each year.

Those who selected a reduction in the frequency of SHS data collection saw this option as being the least different from the current situation in terms of sample size and the breadth of the survey.

Several responses to this question, the majority from local authorities, called for a further consultation if further reductions were necessary.

Impact of further reductions

Question 12 asked 'What would be the impact on the work of your organisation if there were to be a further reduction?' Respondents were asked to outline foreseeable impacts on their work if the SHS sample, frequency of results or topic coverage were reduced.

Eighty out of 99 respondents (80 per cent) provided a response to this question. Half of the non-responders were local government organisations. Although the consultation asked for views on how different types of reduction would affect respondent's work, many respondents answered in a generic manner rather than singling out which type of reduction would affect them and how.

The biggest concern raised by respondents to this question was a loss in precision in the SHS (a quarter of responses) if the SHS sample size was reduced. This in turn would reduce the use, value and confidence in the SHS which could (and in some cases would) force users to stop using the SHS altogether and seek out alternative sources. For example, one response stated:

'[The SHS] would cease to be a viable source of data. We would ultimately either have to look for alternative methodologies (for developing a local income model) or the Scottish Government would have to cease the commission and not pursue this strand of work.' - Anon

Respondents that currently use the SHS as a monitoring tool expressed concern that they may no longer be able to use the survey in this way. Several respondents expressed concerns on how changes would impact on smaller sub-group analysis that is currently carried out. A number of responses highlighted how reductions would affect work that is done on behalf Ministers. For example, an individual from the Carnegie Trust UK said:

'We would be concerned if the changes impacted on the Scottish Ministers requirement to publish an annual report on Scotland's progress. Reductions in frequency of collection and topic coverage could result in this outcome. This would have a direct impact on our ability to provide information for Parliament and civil society to hold the Scottish Government to account.'

Several respondents highlighted issues they would have in getting future funding:

'It may make comparisons with previous years more difficult and perhaps even impossible. This could impact on the service funding we get from our local authority and/or NHS partners as we may not be able to demonstrate adequately improved uptake of our services.' – West Lothian Leisure

Central Scotland Green Network said that they may need to 'ask Government to fund surveys to give us our results'. This could potentially negate any cost saving as a result of this consultation.

Three responses from central government respondents noted concerns about the impact of reducing sample size, frequency and topic coverage on the national indicators. For example:

‘As there are numerous National Indicators that are updated using data from the SHS reducing the frequency of collection would mean that several indicators would no longer be able to be updated on an annual basis, which would be problematic given the emphasis of Scotland Performs on short term change.’

A number of respondents noted that they were unable to answer the question without knowing exactly what the proposals for reductions would be.

Other comments about the SHS or the consultation

Question thirteen asked ‘Do you have any other comments about the SHS or this consultation?’

Thirty two out of 99 respondents to the consultation (including six of the free text responses) provided their views or comments on the consultation or the SHS.

The vast majority of the comments received came from local government (56 per cent) and third sector respondents (34 per cent). Whilst in general the third sector called for a larger and more robust survey, local government mainly wanted to prevent any further reductions to the sample size of the survey.

A number of organisations, including the LGBF Board, Accounts Commission, COSLA, SOLACE and some individual local authorities largely recognised that increased budget pressures required a review of the SHS, but thought that the consultation was limited in scope in terms of its focus on two specific options to reduce costs. Many of these respondents called for a pause in order to carry out a comprehensive or fundamental review of the SHS in the context of the wider SG survey landscape, i.e. a review and redesign that would bring into scope other national survey products too, and that involved relevant stakeholders, including policy and technical colleagues. South Lanarkshire Council called for a re-designed survey which is ‘clearer about the key uses to which it is put and its function as a survey mechanism for the public sector’.

The LGBF board cited four factors that supported a larger scale review, including:

- the current limitations in using SHS data at local level;
- the need to ensure the survey better reflects policy priorities such as prevention, outcomes and partnership approaches, locality and place, community empowerment/engagement and reducing inequalities;
- the need to examine opportunities to strengthen links and harmonise existing survey approaches across the public sector, as noted by the Outcomes Evidence and Performance Board;
- Safeguarding the future of the survey as there is a danger that we continue to cut away at the sample size until it diminishes beyond use.

Some of these points were echoed by the Accounts Commission who also added their concern about public confidence in the satisfaction indicators under both SHS options.

COSLA felt that the consultation did not prioritise the link between evidence and policy, that the proposals were driven by cost cutting rather than genuine consultation on what was the right thing to do, and that there was no thought to what would happen if further budget cuts came. They viewed the options as "…short sighted solutions which do nothing to safeguard the SHS". It was noted that the models adopted for 2017 and 2018 were linked in order to provide a useable sample and that any decision made now would dictate the process to be followed in 2018. It was also noted that a review should consider how any new powers for Scotland post the Smith Commission could or should be reflected in the survey.

Several local government respondents referred to a need to rethink data collection methods to either all or part of the survey, particularly if there are further pressures on costs to reduce sample sizes. This was frequently linked to comments about the limitations of current local authority sample sizes.

In order to increase the robustness and usability of the survey, the following suggestions were provided in responses to question 13:

- Around one in four respondents would avoid reducing the sample size any further, as this will leave the SHS useful only at Scotland level but not at local level.
- Around one in eight would like to increase the sample size as currently the SHS is of limited use to local authorities and/or could be of more use, including one respondent that wanted more regular national surveys that provided local authority data.
- Several respondents would like to expand the survey to allow for more questions to be added both to the SHS survey (e.g. informal volunteering, participation in sport and sport clubs) and/or SSCQ and for these questions to be stable over time.
- North Lanarkshire Council would welcome an opportunity to fund a boost to local survey samples to avoid potential costs of resourcing/procuring their own research, while two local authorities mentioned that they already undertake their own local survey.
- More topics disaggregated by ethnic group

Among other suggestions were to employ data-mining of private and public data sources for the fact-based questions on households to allow the SHS to focus on perceptions rather than facts.

A few respondents used question 13 to comment on the consultation itself, with mixed views on the consultation document in terms of the ease of understanding and the use of Citizen Space and/or the Word template that was provided as an alternative. Another respondent noted how helpful the SHS team had been to them in supporting their work.

Finally, the Child Poverty Action Group, which had concerns about both options, requested that the Scottish Government perform a Children's Rights and Wellbeing Impact Assessment in relation to the consultation. (This point was made in response to question 2 but has been reported in this section).

Annex A 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**.**

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.**

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.

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?**

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?**

8. **Under option B (reduction in sample size), a small reduction in full sample topic coverage of around 4 minutes (around 7 per cent 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 <u>which you use</u> 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.

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?

<u>Section C Looking Ahead</u>

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.

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
ii. Reduction in the frequency of SHS data collection
iii. Reduction in SHS topic coverage

<u>Section D Any other comments and information about your organisation</u>

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

14. What sector do you work in?

Central government ☐
Local government ☐
Parliament ☐
NHS ☐

Other public sector (e.g. NDPB) ☐
Higher/further education (excluding students) ☐
Third sector (Voluntary and charity) ☐
Private sector ☐
Student ☐
Journalists / media ☐
Other (please specify)

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

Health ☐
Housing ☐
Environment ☐
Transport ☐
Income and wealth ☐
Communities ☐
Sport ☐
Culture ☐
Young People ☐
Equalities ☐
Other – please state

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

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