

National:

The government's chief scientific adviser, professor John Beddington, said sticking with "business as usual" management of land was not an option in the face of pressures such as climate change and population increases over the next 50 years.

Press Association, guardian.co.uk (26.2.10), *Britain's green spaces under threat from water shortages and house prices*, www.guardian.co.uk/environment/2010/feb/26/uk-land-management, Guardian News and Media Limited 2010.

Key points from the latest release by the Department for Communities and Local Government (CLG) are: There were an estimated 22,564,000 dwellings in England as at 31 March 2009, an increase of 0.74% on the previous year. There were an estimated 22,398,000 dwellings in England as at 31 March 2008, an increase of 0.93% from 2007.

Department for Communities and Local Government (CLG) (26.2.10), *Dwelling Stock estimates, England, 2009*, www.communities.gov.uk/documents/statistics/pdf/1484641.pdf, Crown Copyright.

Key points from the latest release are: annual housing supply in England reached 166,570 net additional dwellings in 2008-09. This is a 20% decrease on the 207,370 net additional homes supplied in the previous year, and the lowest annual level of net housing supply since 2003-04. Eight out of the nine English regions experienced a decrease in the number of net additional dwellings supplied in the 2008-09 financial year. The North East saw the largest annual decrease (43%), followed by the North West (37%). London was the only region to experience an annual increase in net housing supply (3%).

Department for Communities and Local Government (CLG) (25.2.10), *Net supply of housing: 2008-09, England*, www.communities.gov.uk/documents/statistics/pdf/1484364.pdf, Crown Copyright.

A £17m government initiative to trial different low-carbon housing technologies in projects across the UK has been launched. Eighty-seven different projects will each receive £150,000 and two years to demonstrate success in cutting CO2 emissions.

Alok Jha, guardian.co.uk (25.2.10), *UK to test low-carbon technologies in 87 social housing units*, www.guardian.co.uk/environment/2010/feb/25/low-carbon-housing-technologies-uk-trial, Guardian News and Media Limited 2010.

UK house prices fell for the first time in 10 months in February as icy weather put off house hunters, the Nationwide building society has said. Average property prices dropped by 1% compared with January, with the average home worth £161,320.

A separate Land Registry survey of house prices in England and Wales found that prices rose strongly by 2.1% in January 2009.

BBC News (26.2.10), *UK house prices 'lose momentum', says Nationwide*, <http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/business/8537618.stm>, BBC @ MMX

This updated plan sets out how the Government is taking forward and implementing the recommendations of the Taylor Review of Rural Economy and Affordable Housing.

Department for Communities and Local Government (CLG) (19.2.10), *Government response to the Matthew Taylor Review: Updated implementation plan*, www.communities.gov.uk/publications/planningandbuilding/taylorimplementationplanupdate, Crown Copyright.

The Office of Fair Trading (OFT) have published a study on the market for home buying and selling services in the UK which includes: competition on price and quality between service providers, principally estate agents; the prospects for entry by new business models, including Internet-based models; the existing regulatory framework and whether it provides the right balance between protecting consumers who are buying or selling a home and ensuring that the market remains open to competition and innovation; the relationships between estate agents and other service providers such as mortgage brokers, surveyors, solicitors and other professional advisors.

Office of Fair Trading (OFT) (18.1.10), *Home buying and selling*, www.offt.gov.uk/advice_and_resources/resource_base/market-studies/current/buyingandselling, Crown Copyright.

Statistics have been released for new build housing starts and completions in the UK for the period October to December 2009. There were 21,880 seasonally adjusted house building starts in England. Housing completions in England were down by 3% to an estimated 28,200 (seasonally adjusted) compared to the previous quarter and down by 12% compared with the December quarter 2008. Private enterprise housing completions (seasonally adjusted) were 3% lower than the previous quarter and 10% lower than in the December quarter 2008. Annual housing completions in England totalled 118,000 in the 12 months to December 2009, down by 17% compared with the 12 months to December 2008. The average energy efficiency, SAP rating, of new homes in England was 79.2 and in Wales 78.8.

Department for Communities and Local Government (CLG) (18.2.10), *House Building: December Quarter 2009, England*, www.communities.gov.uk/documents/statistics/pdf/14735021.pdf, Crown Copyright.

Under a new £53 million scheme for developers in house building, the Government will provide public land but take out the upfront costs and risks involved in site purchase and preparation. This document gives more information.

Jayne Lomas, Homes and Communities Agency (HCA) (12.2.10), *Public Land Initiative: Increasing housing delivery*, www.homesandcommunities.co.uk/public/documents/HCA%20PLI%202pp_accessible_1.pdf, Publication code: HCA0056, Housing and Communities Agency.

Property experts have warned that the downturn has changed the housing market so fundamentally that would-be homeowners will have to rent for longer, typically to age 38. This will also present an opportunity for buy-to-let investors.

Rebecca O'Connor, Times online (12.2.10), *'Generation Rent' warned to forget buying*, www.timesonline.co.uk/tol/money/property_and_mortgages/article7024205.ece, Copyright 2010 Times Newspapers Ltd.

The Council of Mortgage Lenders (CML) have said that the total number of repossessions in 2009 was 46,000, lower than its 48,000 forecast but still the highest since 1996. The number declined by 13% in the final three months of the year on the previous quarter, with 10,200 properties taken into possession – or 110 a day.

Rebecca O'Connor and Francesca Steele, Times online (12.2.10), *Housing repossessions hit 14-year high*, www.timesonline.co.uk/tol/money/property_and_mortgages/article7024213.ece, Copyright 2010 Times Newspapers Ltd.

The national and regional figures for mortgage and landlord possession for the fourth quarter of 2009 are available at:

www.justice.gov.uk/publications/mortgatelandlordpossession.htm

The number of mortgage possession claims issued in the courts dropped by 15% in the last three months of 2009 compared to the previous quarter, according to statistics published today.

The figure has gone from 23,705 down to 20,061. The decrease in claims comes against a backdrop of low interest rates and increased support for struggling borrowers from both mortgage lenders and the government. The figure published today is a 26% drop since the last quarter of 2008.

Ministry of Justice (11.2.10), *Repossession orders down as measures to help homeowners continue to make an impact*, www.justice.gov.uk/news/newsrelease110210a.htm, Crown copyright.

New figures from the Council of Mortgage Lenders show that home repossessions in the last three months of 2009 were down by 13% compared to the previous quarter, and 2% less than the same period in 2008.

The total repossessions for 2009 were 46,000 - 29,000 less than the 75,000 originally forecast. This is around half the rate of repossessions during the last recession, when over 75,000 households lost their home in 1991 alone. Housing minister John Healey said the Government would be keeping in place the system of support set up to help families in financial difficulties with their lenders.

Local Government Chronicle (11.2.10), *Home repossessions fall*, www.lgcplus.com/news/planning-and-housing/home-repossessions-fall/5011391.article, Copyright © 2002-2010 Emap Ltd.

Construction businesses have been warned of tough times ahead due to the high rate of insolvencies still being reported. Insolvency Service statistics show the number of building firms going bust in England and Wales was falling in 2009, with 90 administrations in the final three months of the year. This compared with 106 construction business failures in the third quarter and 111 failures in the second quarter. Overall, 2009 saw construction business failures reach 427, which was an 8.8% fall from the 468 failures seen at the end of 2008.

New Civil Engineer (NCE) (8.2.10), *Construction insolvency warning*, www.nce.co.uk/news/business/construction-insolvency-warning/5213925.article, Copyright © 2002-2009 Emap Ltd.

December 2009 house price figures are now available on the Land Registry house price index which captures changes in the value of residential properties.

Land Registry (29.1.10), *Land Registry: House price index*, www1.landregistry.gov.uk/houseprices/, Crown copyright.

Local:

Ashfield, Gedling, Broxtowe, City, Rushcliffe and Erewash councils are now consulting on their 'Aligned Core Strategies: Option for Consultation' which sets out an overall vision for Greater Nottingham; it contains strategic policies to prepare a new aligned and consistent land use planning strategy for Greater Nottingham. This will guide how the councils will deal with: sustainable growth, places for people, environment and delivery. They welcome views from residents, businesses and all interested parties. The report is now available on www.gngrowthpoint.com.

The Ashfield District Council Core Strategy Preferred Option Public Consultation is available on the Council's website at www.ashfield-dc.gov.uk/ldf.

The deadline for any comments to the councils is the 12th April 2010.