

31st March 2023

DATA: Nationwide reported UK house prices fell 3.1% in year to March

Following the 0.8% monthly fall, they reported this was the seventh fall in a row with seasonally adjusted prices down 4.6% since August (non-seasonally adjusted down 6.1%).

DATA: Bank of England reported another rise in effective mortgage rates

The data for February showed the average rate on new lending was 4.26% and the average rate on outstanding balances was 2.65% (3.89% and 2.55% last month respectively).

DATA: Bank of England reported a monthly increase in mortgage approvals

The number of mortgage approvals for house purchase was 10% higher in February than the previous month but was still 34% below the pre-pandemic average.

DATA: DLUHC published Q4 2022 planning applications in England release

The data shows the number of applications for planning permission in Q4 last year was 13% lower than the same period in 2021 while the total number of homes granted permission in 2022 was 287,000 – 9% lower than in 2021.

DATA: ONS published 2021 Census data on dwellings

See Chart of the Week for more.

DATA: Scottish Government published quarterly housing supply data

The release shows housebuilding completions increased 10% in the year to September 2022 though starts fell 12% over the same period.

DATA(PDF): Zoopla reported on the UK private rental market

They report “Rental inflation has slowed to 11.1%, from a high of 12.3% in mid-2022” but the stock of homes available for rent is 33% lower than the five year average.

DATA: Building Societies Association published Q1 property tracker

They report “Housing market sentiment improves but remains negative”. Their survey showed 18% of people thought it was a good time to buy a property in March but 43% disagreed. This slightly improved the net figure to -24% from -33% in December.

POLICY: Humza Yousaf selected as First Minister of Scotland

POLICY: BoE FPC warns on risks in market-based finance

While confident “UK banks are resilient and are strong enough to support households and businesses”, they warn “There remain vulnerabilities in market-based finance” and “There is an urgent need to increase resilience”. There are several that could affect housing.

REPORT: Registers of Scotland on the location of property owners

The report found that at the end of 2022, the location of land and property title ownership addresses were “93.4% Scotland, 5.0% UK outwith Scotland, 1.4% outwith UK, 0.2% Government and Crown”. The release provides more detail on the type of property and location of the owners’ addresses at the time of purchase.

REPORT: SMF reported on the barriers to energy efficiency uptake

They report “Cost may be the biggest barrier to installing energy efficiency measures, but poor awareness and tenure type are also significant”.

REPORT(PDF): HBF reported on SME housebuilders

The survey shows 92% of respondents are “unhappy with the Government’s current approach on housing” and 93% thought securing and processing planning permission was a major barrier to growth but only half (52%) though the availability of land was a major issue.

REPORT(PDF): Sigma Capital published research on private renters

The survey of all renters rather than Sigma’s looks at who is renting, what does an ideal renter’s property look like and what makes a good landlord or agent.

BLOG: James Gleeson looked at the number of empty homes

He suggests the rate of vacant homes in England may be higher than indicated by council tax data, but many aren’t available to house people due to several different reasons.

CORPORATE: Belvoir Group published preliminary results

They report “Whilst we have seen a bounce-back in our mortgage activity for the year to date, up around 20% on Q4 2022, with house transactions taking up to five months to complete from agreeing a purchase, the increased market activity so far in Q1 will take until H2 to flow through to our financial performance”.

CORPORATE: Bellway published interim results

They report “In the six weeks since the 1 February, the overall weekly reservation rate was 192 (2022 - 291) and the private reservation rate was 135 per week (2022 - 239)”. They also state “If the reservation rates since the start of calendar year are sustained through the spring, Bellway is well-placed to deliver volume output of around 11,000 homes in the current financial year (31 July 2022 - 11,198 homes)”.

Chart of the Week

This week, the ONS published data on the number of dwellings. This is useful data as it is used to check the DLUHC dwelling estimates and make adjustments to the net supply data.

At a headline level, the DLUHC estimates weren’t that far off – not surprising given the renewed focus on housing supply over the last decade. The 2021 Census reported 24.93 million dwellings while DLUHC had estimated 24.87 million, a difference of just 54,000. When comparing the data at a local authority level, there are the usual variations that will need further investigation. For example, the Census figure for Nottingham was 5% lower than the DLUHC estimate while the figure for Tower Hamlets was 4% higher. However, there was one clear outlier: East Lindsey in the East Midlands ([map](#)). Here, as the chart below shows, the Census figure was 28% higher than the DLUHC estimate and 36% higher than the 2011 Census figure. For comparison, that’s the equivalent to net supply across England of over 800,000 homes per year!

It is not exactly clear why the number of dwellings in East Lindsey has increased this much but the latest Census release offers some clues. The increase appears to reflect a substantial increase in the number of unoccupied caravans, other mobile, or temporary structures. A quick look at [Google maps](#) around the lower super output areas with high concentrations suggest it is static holiday caravans that are responsible. However, it is not clear if the massive increase in caravans reflects an actual increase in number, an undercount in earlier data, or some sort of classification issue: perhaps the homes were previously owned by a business and not classified as residential dwellings but have been sold off to individuals over the last decade and now fall within the Census classification.

Number of Dwellings in East Lindsey

Source: DLUHC, Census

