

UK STATISTICS AUTHORITY

Minutes

Thursday 28 June 2018
Boardroom, London

Present

UK Statistics Authority

Sir David Norgrove (Chair)

Professor Sir Adrian Smith (Deputy Chair)

Mr Jonathan Athow

Professor David Hand

Professor Jonathan Haskel

Ms Sian Jones

Dr David Levy

Ms Nora Nanayakkara

Mr John Pullinger

Prof Anne Trefethen

Also in attendance

Mr Iain Bell

Mr Owen Brace

Mr Robert Bumpstead

Mr Adrian Chesson (for item 8)

Mr Garnett Compton (for item 10)

Ms Mary Gregory

Ms Vanessa Holden

Ms Frankie Kay (for item 10)

Apologies

Sir Ian Diamond

Mr Ed Humpherson

Ms Heather Savory

1. Apologies

1.1 Apologies were received from Sir Ian, Mr Humpherson and Ms Savory.

2. Declarations of interest

2.1 There were no new declarations of interest.

3. Minutes and matters arising from previous meetings

3.1 The minutes of the previous meeting held on 6 June 2018 were agreed.

4. Report from the Authority Chair

4.1 The Chair introduced Professor Trefethen and welcomed her to the Board. He reported that Sir Adrian had been reappointed to the Board for a further two years, and that two independent non-executive members would join the Authority's Audit and Risk Assurance Committee on 1 July 2018.

4.2 Sir David also provided an update on his recent activity, highlighting:

- i. his appearance before the Lords Economic Affairs Committee on 12 June, at which he and Mr Athow answered questions on the Retail Prices Index (RPI);
- ii. a recent visit to the Titchfield site, during which he had met with members of staff working on the 2021 Census for England and Wales; and
- iii. correspondence with the Rt Hon Tom Brake MP, who had asked the Authority to comment on statements regarding a 'Brexit dividend.'

5. Reports from Committee Chairs

5.1 Sir Adrian reported on the work of the Regulation Committee, updating Board members on the Committee's discussions on construction statistics, data linkage, house price statistics, the public value of justice data, and classification decisions.

5.2 Ms Nanayakkara reported on the work of the Audit and Risk Assurance Committee. The Committee had reviewed and refreshed its Terms of Reference, and finalised its Annual Report.

6. Report from the Director General for Regulation

6.1 Ms Gregory provided an update on regulation activity since the last Board meeting.

6.2 She highlighted work underway on the International Passenger Survey (IPS) and related statistics. The Office for Statistics Regulation (OSR) were examining recent statements made by the Office for National Statistics (ONS) regarding delays in publishing IPS data. Once that piece of work had concluded, the team intended to examine how producers integrate, and then communicate, improvements made to data collection and analysis.

6.3 Board members also discussed the OSR's plans to undertake a systemic review of data linkage. Members considered the progress that had been made in accessing administrative sources of data to date, and agreed to monitor the issue closely.

7. Report from the Chief Executive

7.1 Mr Pullinger introduced a paper which provided an overview of activity and issues for May and June. Discussion focussed on:

- i. recent engagement with stakeholders on the RPI;
- ii. changes that would be introduced to the National Accounts within Blue Book 2019;
- iii. progress in accessing PAYE data; and
- iv. National Accounts classification decisions, and the framework underpinning those decisions.

7.2 Members also noted the success of the recent Economic Statistics Centre of Excellence conference held in London on 16-17 May, and congratulated the organising team.

8. Trade Statistics

8.1 Mr Athow and Mr Chesson introduced a paper on developments to the UK's trade statistics. Board members noted improvements which had already been made, including the introduction of more granular breakdowns of goods data, by region and industry. They also heard about forthcoming developments to services data, and ongoing analysis of trade asymmetries.

8.2 The Board welcomed the update.

9. 2021 Census

9.1 Mr Bell updated members on work to finalise the content of the 2021 Census, and discussed a draft Census White Paper for the Board's consideration. In doing so, Mr Bell highlighted:

- i. that research on ethnicity response options had concluded;
- ii. the proposed approach to voluntary questions;
- iii. plans to ensure the confidentiality of Census data; and
- iv. the Census Equality Impact Assessment.

9.2 The Board considered carefully the approach to making specific questions voluntary. Mr Bell advised the Board that: the approach recommended had the legal impact of making the question voluntary; while there were other methods of reaching the same legal status of voluntary, some would require primary legislation; and, there was no possibility of securing time in the Parliamentary timetable for this. Other options with similar effect did not require such legislation, and these were agreed.

9.3 The Board discussed the possibility the public mood might evolve between the conclusion of public acceptability testing and the conduct of the Census, and recommended that this possibility be explicitly captured.

9.4 The Board agreed that the research conducted by ONS had been done appropriately and effectively, and that the research supported the recommendations on Census content within the draft White Paper. The Board agreed the White Paper, subject to changes reflecting Board comments and discussion. The Board agreed that final sign-offs would be provided by the Chair on their behalf.

9.5 Ms Kay updated members on the Census Programme's key milestones, risks and assurance.

9.6 It was confirmed that the Authority's Audit and Risk Assurance Committee would be provided with an opportunity to define the Terms of Reference for reviews and audits of the Census Programme, and consider the outcomes of such reviews.

9.7 Board members thanked the Census team for their work.

10. Communications Strategy

10.1 Mr Brace sought the views of Board members on a draft communications strategy for discussion. Board members suggested that it would be helpful for the strategy to include further detail on the relationship between the Authority, ONS and OSR communications strategies. Members also sought detail on how the communications team planned to monitor and report on relationships with key stakeholders.

10.2 It was agreed that the Board would consider a fuller paper on communications for all of the Authority's functions later in the year.

11. EU Exit Update

11.1 Mr Bumpstead updated Board members on the Authority's relationship with the European Statistical System, and on plans to prepare the statistical system for different scenarios.

11.2 Board members welcomed the update.

12. Self-review of effectiveness

12.1 Sir David invited members to discuss the Board's recent review of self-effectiveness.

12.2 Board members agreed on a set of high-level principles, and recommended that the Audit and Risk Assurance Committee consider current financial delegations in further detail.

13. Forward Agenda

13.1 Mr Bumpstead introduced a draft forward agenda for members' comment, highlighting dependencies between the upcoming spending review, the annual business planning cycle, and the development of a new strategy.

13.2 Members agreed the Board would consider strategic issues carefully over the coming months.

14. Any other business

14.1 There was no other business. The Authority Board would next meet on Thursday 26 July 2018 at 9:15 in London.

UK STATISTICS AUTHORITY

Agenda

28 June 2018, 9:15 to 14:00

Boardroom, London

Chair: Sir David Norgrove

Apologies: Mr Ed Humpherson, Ms Heather Savory, Sir Ian Diamond

9:15 – 9:45: Non-Executive Session

1 9:45-9:50 5 mins	Minutes and matters arising from previous meetings <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Declarations of interest	Meeting of 6 June 2018
2 09:50-10:00 10 mins	Report from the Authority Chair	Oral report Sir David Norgrove
3 10:00-10:15 15 mins	Reports from Committee Chairs <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Regulation Committee• Audit and Risk Assurance Committee	Oral reports Sir Adrian Smith Ms Nora Nanayakkara
4 10:15-10:30 15 mins	Report from the Director General for Regulation	SA(18)29 Ms Mary Gregory
5 10:30-10:50 20 mins	Report from the Chief Executive	SA(18)30 Mr John Pullinger
6 10:50-11:05 15 mins	Trade statistics	SA(18)31 Mr Jonathan Athow
7 11:05-12:05 60 mins	2021 Census	Discussion Mr Iain Bell
8 12:05-12:25 20 mins	Communications Strategy	SA(18)32 Mr Owen Brace
9 12:25-12:40 15 mins	EU Exit Update	Oral Update Mr Will Laffan

12:40 – 13:10: Lunch

10 13:10-13:30 20 mins	Self-review of effectiveness	Discussion Sir David Norgrove
11 13:30-13:50 20 mins	Forward agenda	SA(18)33 Mr Rob Bumpstead
12 13:55-14:00 5 mins	Any other business	

Next meeting: 26 July 2018, London, 09:15 to 14:00

Report from the Director General for Regulation

Purpose

1. This paper provides an update on regulation activity since the last Board meeting.

Recommendation

2. Members of the Board are invited to note the activities and proposed actions.

Discussion

3. I am not able to attend this Board meeting, because I am speaking in two sessions at the Eurostat conference on official statistics in Poland. I will be talking about the new Code of Practice. My deputy Mary Gregory will attend the Board meeting on my behalf.
4. Key activities since the last Board meeting include the activities below.
5. **Data linkage:** We have prepared a plan for the role OSR can play to support the case for greater data linkage. In essence, we want to advocate linkage because linked datasets are key to creating more valuable statistics eg on outcomes in the justice sector; on city regions; and for health and care data more broadly. We have attached this plan of action for the Board – both for Non Executive Directors and also for ONS Executive Directors with whom we have a strong shared interest in driving the data sharing and linkage agenda.
6. We are also preparing a short set of guidance materials to help statistical producers apply the data governance practices within the new Code.
7. I see the data linkage agenda as being one of the most important areas for OSR work: I want OSR to act as a champion and advocate, and to support the efforts of ONS and the GSS more widely to create greater data linkage.
8. **Accident and Emergency Statistics:** Following our repeated interventions, NHS England have revised the published figures for A and E waiting times in England. We had raised concerns in January, and again in May, that the figures could have been affected by guidance given privately by NHS Improvement to Trusts. This advice focused on how Trusts should record activities in their statistical returns. The revised figures showed there had indeed been some impact from this advice, but it did not have a material impact on the figures at a national level. It is good that NHS England have been able to provide this reassurance, and we think the work done by the Head of Profession in NHS England to make the case for re-publication has been very good.

We are now working on a broader statement summarising our expectations for Accident and Emergency statistics across the UK.
9. **International Passenger Survey:** We announced a short review of the communication and transparency around delays in ONS statistical publications on travel and tourism, and on migration. Both delays are related to the transfer from paper-based to tablet-based data collection, although the impacts are different in the two cases.
10. **ONS progress:** We commended ONS for progress it has been making in a couple of areas: on statistics for City Regions (where it has produced much more timely data) and on Regional Gross Value Added statistics. ONS has also implemented good changes to the approach to construction statistics.
11. **Trade:** We continue to have discussions with ONS about the asymmetries between the UK's trade figures and those of its trading partners. ONS has been a leading global voice in raising and analysing this issue. Jonathan Athow will make a presentation on these issues to the September Regulation Committee.

12. **Innovation in education:** There have been a number of innovations in the statistics produced on education in all parts of the UK, including the creation of the Longitudinal Educational Outcomes database for England and better use of data platforms and visualisations from several producers across the UK. We published a series of blogs highlighting developments – both to celebrate good practice, but also to draw attention to these developments for statisticians working in other areas.
13. **Annual Summary of casework:** We provided our annual summary of casework to the Regulation Committee’s June meeting. It is at **Annex B**. The Committee thought this summary could be published, subject to Board comments. We would welcome the Board’s comments and advice on publishing this review.
14. **Pre-release access to Scottish economic statistics:** The Scottish Parliament’s Economy Committee wrote to the Scottish Government challenging the practice of providing Ministerial pre-release access to their economic statistics. The Committee’s letter drew on our evidence to them last November.
15. The main challenges continue to be:
 - i. ensuring that our regulatory stance on data governance and data ethics is impactful and supports the case for more linked datasets within an appropriate data governance context; and
 - ii. recruitment – we have not been as successful as we would have liked in recruiting researcher level staff. This is impacting on our ability to deliver our work programme and we have done some reprogramming of work as part of our programme review. This reprogramming involves deferring some of our systemic reviews and compliance checks to later in the year.
16. The dashboard summary of regulatory activities is at **Annex A**.

Ed Humpherson, Director General for Regulation, 21 June 2018

List of Annexes

Annex A	Regulatory Activities
Annex B	Annual Review of Casework
Annex C	Data Linkage Paper

Annex A Regulatory Activities May 2018

Economy	Business, industry, energy and trade	Health and social care	Labour Market
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> We published our assessment report on ONS's Regional Gross Value Added (RGVA) (Balanced) stats, and are currently seeking approval for confirmation of designation for Income and Production measures of RGVA. Responded to Member of the Scottish Parliament's request for information about the Scottish Government's stats on their Scottish Oil and Gas industry. Advised the Authority's Chairman on: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Figures used by BofE Governor at Treasury Select Committee on potential impacts of Brexit for families (that in 2018 they are about £900 poorer on average per annum than the MPC forecast they would be before the EU Referendum). Enquiry on "Brexit Dividend", concluded it is not a UKSA issue. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Construction Output and Prices statistics: ONS presented a recently published paper to the June Regulatory Committee. Paper covered the resolution of the revisions bias detected by the Bank of England and the re-modelled new orders data. We will monitor feedback and revisions to the series. UK Trade: Jonathan Athow will be at the next regulation committee to discuss trade. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Assessments: Undertaking assessments of ONS's cancer survival & avoidable mortality statistics, and NRS's avoidable mortality statistics. Systemic review: Monitoring English Health Statistics Steering Group (EHSSG), and meeting with Chairs to receive updates. Additionally, the DG continues to meet with Chairs and Chief Executives of producer organisations. Published plans for systemic review on Adult Social Care. Casework: Engaging with PHE and NHS Digital to explore impact on the NS of the <u>failure of the Breast Cancer screening programme</u>. Welcome NHS England publication of revisions to A&E performance statistics. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Income/Earnings: Had a very constructive meeting with stakeholders from ONS, HMRC and DWP in early June following up systemic review. Casework: Published letter in response to DWP statements on Universal Credit, sent private letters about working age welfare bill and disabled people in employment. Other activities: Published letters on de-designation of Northern Ireland Claimant Count statistics, and improvements to DWP benefit sanctions statistics. Monitoring the discontinuity issue on disabled people.
Crime and Justice	Housing, planning and local services	Children, education and skills	Culture and identity
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Crime: Monitoring reporting of crime statistics and quality of police recorded crime in England and Wales. Compliance: Compliance check of Northern Ireland Crime Survey underway; 1st of 3 staged checks on the 2018-19 survey cycle. Justice: Public statement on systemic review of justice statistics presented to 6 June Regulation Committee. Plan to publish in July. Casework: Private response on MoJ's description of ad hoc statistics on prison officer recruitment. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Assessments: Designation letter on NI Housing Conditions Survey published 29th May. Welsh Housing Conditions Survey user interviews started. Compliance Checks: Talking with ONS about Household Projections in England. Published letter to MHCLG on series of compliance checks and received positive response. Systemic reviews: Continued dialogue with ONS about GSS work to improve housing statistics. Action plan published by ONS late May. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Innovation Systemic Review: Three articles published, with a fourth scheduled for June; ongoing discussions about sharing learning further. Skills Systemic Review: Producer conversations ongoing, project scope has been formally launched with outline plan published. Children and Young People System Review: Initial research ongoing, with preliminary user engagement planned to shape scope of project. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Assessments: Regulation Committee agreed to pause Community Life Survey assessment. Assessment of DCMS Economic Estimates is now at the stage of starting to analyse user feedback.
Security, defence and intl relations	Travel, transport and tourism	Population	Agriculture and environment
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No significant activity. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Casework: Published plans for compliance check on communications and transparency around International Passenger Survey (IPS). Compliance Check: National Travel Survey and Search and Rescue Helicopter CCs near completion. Engaged new DfT HoP about timing of planned checks for Road safety statistics. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Systemic review: Monitoring migration roundtable actions by producers. Compliance checks: Investigating IPS issues alongside travel and tourism issues. Compliance checks: HO immigration statistics check underway. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No significant activity.

Annex B Annual Review of Casework

This document has been published on the UK Statistics Authority website.

The document is available at:

<https://www.statisticsauthority.gov.uk/wp-content/uploads/2018/09/Annual-Review-of-UKSA-Casework-2017-to-2018.pdf>

Annex C Data Linkage Review

This document has been published on the UK Statistics Authority website.

The document is available at:

<https://www.statisticsauthority.gov.uk/publication/systemic-review-outline-data-linkage/>

Chief Executive's Report, June 2018

Purpose

1. This report provides the Board with an overview of activity and issues for May and June 2018.

Summary

2. We are at a stage in the strategy where our transformation is resulting in a strong flow of new insights designed to help in decision making. This is positive but not always straight forward to manage, especially when improvements result in changes to existing figures. Key areas include: trade, migration, prices, the economy, construction, student loans, health and age related statistics.
3. In addition, we have concluded much of our research into Census questions ahead of the publication of the White Paper and are moving ahead with Census and Data Collection Transformation, including procurement.

Review of recent activities

4. Important statistical developments in recent weeks include the following:
 - i. Publication of much richer trade data and in depth working with partner countries on trade asymmetries. There has been excellent joint working between departments, especially the Department for International Trade, Department for Exiting the EU, HMRC, ONS and NISRA.
 - ii. Alongside the statistics released on 24 May, we provided an explanation of the reasons for the delay to the headline migration statistics and an update to our workplan on putting administrative data at the heart of migration and population statistics. The next major date of note is 16 July, when we will reinstate the International Passenger Survey (IPS) series, and publish analysis of work, family and other visas (replicating the work done last year on students). This release marks a key milestone in our strategy for providing our best estimate of trends in migration based on all sources.
 - iii. Two important events considering the future of inflation statistics. Sir David Norgrove and Jonathan Athow appeared in front of the Lords Economic Affairs committee on 12 June, and the day after I spoke at a meeting organised by the Royal Statistical Society.
 - iv. In May the Economic Statistics Centre of Excellence (ESCoE) held their inaugural conference, which was jointly hosted by ONS and the Bank of England. The two days saw an international audience engaging with eminent academics discussing ways to address the issues surrounding the modern economy. Jonathan Haskel and I also spoke at an event organised by the Foundation for Science and Technology which asked the question 'Is the rate of change of GDP the best way to measure economic growth?'
 - v. ONS have been working to improve construction statistics. This programme has developed a new approach which we believe is now robust. Jonathan Athow presented progress and plans to address remaining issues to the Regulation Committee in May.

- vi. In February the Treasury Select Committee published a report into the student loan system, raising a number of issues, including how student loans are treated in the Public Sector Finances. In light of the interest from Parliament and elsewhere, ONS has launched a review of the treatment of student loans, including examining international practices for valuing and recording them.
 - vii. Colleagues in ONS and DHSC have recently agreed a plan to enhance the use of evidence in the health and care sector.
 - viii. The first meeting of the Titchfield City Group on ageing and age-disaggregated data, with attendance from 40 National Statistical Institutes (NSIs) from around the globe. Work is being scoped for the next five years with workshops led by NSIs from Ghana, Japan, Mexico, and UK, partnering with HelpAge International, World Health Organisation and the London School of Economics. The focus on assessing current evidence, including development of a baseline tool for assessment; a conceptual and analytical framework for comprehensive information on older adults (linking to Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)); standardisation and harmonisation guidelines, and; platform for sharing good practice.
5. Key developments on the Census have been:
- i. Since the last Board meeting our research on ethnicity has concluded. A research summary which gives an explanation of the results of our qualitative research has been made, along with information on the proposals for the outstanding areas of Census content: number of rooms, sexual orientation, gender identity, ethnicity, and national identity.
 - ii. Our procurements continue to progress. Three major procurements (and the largest necessary for service integration – contact centre, questionnaire management and the census field force/people service provider) are now in the evaluation phase and are on track for their award dates. The overall performance report shows one red milestone on procurement relating to Field Force Supplies. This was due to a change in approach which has no impact on award dates. Service integration work is not impacted by this.
 - iii. The Minister for the Constitution, Chloe Smith MP, responded on our behalf during an adjournment debate on Cornish National Identity and the 2021 Census. The Minister spoke about the importance of the Census and the work being completed by ONS to make sure it fulfils this need, particularly the stakeholder engagement with Cornwall Council and parliamentarians.
 - iv. Iain Bell and I held a briefing session with Permanent Secretaries from across Government on our plans for the 2021 Census. Iain Bell and I will also speak at the All Party Parliamentary Group (APPG) for Statistics on 26 June, as part of Evidence Week in Parliament.
6. As discussed with the Board, progress is good but it has not all been plain sailing. Recent activities, performance and risks being managed during this period include:
- i. Investors in People have awarded us with silver accreditation, and described our approach to learning and our focus on understanding external context as strengths. The main areas for improvement were empowering middle managers to make decisions, re-engaging with people who feel undervalued, and broadening opportunities for further job satisfaction.
 - ii. The draft annual report and accounts was submitted to the Audit and Risk Assurance Committee together with the external audit management report. We have remained within all control totals and have received a clean audit report. We remain on course to lay our final accounts before Parliament on 5 July.

- iii. There was a major error in Producer Price Indices in May which increased the output producer prices annual rate by 0.3 percentage points, on average, for December 2017 to April 2018. Corrected figures were published in full in the scheduled Producer Prices release on 13 June. Previous Producer Prices releases are unaffected by this error.
- iv. There is an increasing risk profile around Blue Book 19 (BB19), relating to resource pressure, delivery confidence and communication of changes to stakeholders. These challenges are also reflected in a range of 'Amber' business plan deliverables linked to BB19. The risks associated with BB19 are being managed by the Blue Book project board.
- v. There are several 'red' and 'amber' deliverables related to the acquisition of data from HMRC and DWP. The expected delivery of Pay as You Earn (PAYE) Real-Time Information (RTI) data has slipped from April 2018 to an expected date towards the end of September 2018, with data available to teams in early 2019. This makes the use of RTI to transform statistics to the current timescale very unlikely. In the interim, we are exploring whether PAYE data already held by ONS could be used as a provisional solution.
- vi. Finally, I will be able to report to the Board on the annual Excellence Awards; a celebration of the important work taken place throughout the year.

Future look

- 7. July is always a busy month and this year will be no exception. We will be publishing our annual accounts and preparing a strategic forward look for discussion with the Board. This will help us discuss scenarios for the forthcoming spending round which will take us beyond our current strategy periods, including the future after the 2021 Census.

John Pullinger, 21 June 2018

Improving the UK's Trade Statistics

Purpose

1. This paper provides an overview of trade statistics and an update on improvements.

Recommendations

2. Members of the Authority Board are invited to:
 - i. note the progress that has been made to develop and improve our UK Trade Statistics to meet user needs following the EU referendum; and
 - ii. note and comment upon the ongoing and future developments and improvements to UK Trade Statistics.

Background

3. Following the EU referendum, there has been a step change in the demand for trade statistics. In particular, the level of detail requested has been significantly higher than we could meet. We therefore announced a refreshed 'trade development plan' in January 2017 to deliver the additional detail requested. This paper describes how we are progressing against that plan.
4. Before the referendum, our trade statistics were only a medium priority. We had plans to improve them, but the bulk of our resources were devoted to improving GDP, inflation and labour market statistics. Broadly speaking our users were happy with the scope of our statistics. (There were quality issues that led to the removal of the National Statistic status for UK Trade statistics.)
5. The result of the referendum and the prospect of the UK having its own trade policy completely changed the picture. We had to move quickly to meet the needs identified. We did not have sufficient budget within trade so had to divert finances from elsewhere. More recently, the Department for International Trade and the Cabinet Office have given us additional resources. Nonetheless, the challenges of creating a new trade project in the months after the referendum should not be understated.
6. We would also like to thank GSS colleagues in HM Revenue and Customs, who provide the data underpinning our trade in goods estimates. Their support and advice has been invaluable.

Discussion

Trade statistics: past, present and future

7. It is worth breaking down our trade statistics into four phases:
 - i. the position in January 2017 before the current trade improvement plan began;
 - ii. the current position having implemented significant system developments, introduced strong improvements to quality assurance and analysis processes, doubled the quarterly international trade in services survey sample size and optimised the sample by geography, and delivered more granular trade statistics;
 - iii. where we will be by December 2018, when significant further aspects of the trade improvement plan will have been implemented; and
 - iv. possible future developments.

Trade statistics in January 2017

8. UK trade statistics were available broken down between goods and services, and for each there was information available on products (e.g. transport equipment or business

services) and geography (e.g. service exports to the US and goods exports to Germany). But there were limitations:

- i. the number of product groups were limited, meaning there was not much detail on a quarterly or monthly basis and whilst more was published annually this still was not detailed enough; and
- ii. we did not publish UK Trade by products and geography, so you could not find out how much transport equipment we exported to Germany, we just had total exports to Germany or total exports of transport equipment. Figure 1 at **Annex A** describes the offering. Internationally, our offering was not that unusual, and in some cases relatively advanced. For example, only 40 countries provide exports of services by geography.

9. Starting from this point, we can forward on to the first changes we have made.

Current position (summer 2018)

10. The most important changes are shown in Figure 2 at Annex A, with the new products highlighted. Notably, in April 2018 we published experimental trade in goods by geography and product, with 125 separate product categories (e.g. transport goods are now broken down into cars, etc.). This is particularly important for the Department for International Trade as trade agreements are negotiated by product by country.
11. An interactive version of this new data can be found [here](#).
12. Also, of high importance, this summer's trade outputs will be produced from new trade in goods and services systems for the first time, harnessing the source data from HMRC in much better ways e.g. using the country by commodity detail, capitalising on new quality assurance tools and benefitting from more transparent systems and improved processes.
13. In July we will publish, for the first time, analysis of Northern Ireland (NI) trade using experimental trade in goods statistics by geography, product and firm characteristics. This project utilises previously unavailable data from HMRC to give very rich industry by product by destination analysis. Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency (NISRA) identified that Northern Ireland needs to be able to identify those sectors which are most vulnerable to new UK trade deals or are best placed to exploit trade opportunities relative to the rest of the UK as failure to exploit this may result in potentially unanticipated impacts or missed opportunities. As a response ONS has been assigned to lead the work, in collaboration with HMRC and NISRA, linking HMRC data with the Northern Ireland Business Register, with high match rates now being achieved. In this effort, we harness the HMRC data e.g. using the country by commodity detail and linking it to the NI Business register so that we can conduct analysis by firm characteristics such as industry, size and ownership to identify potential risks and opportunities. This new time series dataset for Northern Ireland also enables us to estimate the extent of supply-chain dependencies by, for example, coding the HMRC data set into final, intermediate, capital and consumption goods by origin and destination using the UN Broad Economic Activity classification system.
14. Delivery of more granular trade in services will follow the same pattern as trade in goods with initial data on product and geography due for later in 2018. Developments within these data will primarily stem from the main services collected through our International Trade in Services survey. Following the referendum and the increased need for services statistics we quickly doubled the quarterly sample size of this survey from the first quarter of 2017. We also optimised this survey by geography, meaning that we now have a higher quality source dataset for approximately half of trade in services. This covers most service types except for travel, transport and most of the financial services. Unlike for goods there is no large, wide ranging administrative source for trade in services and we must rely on surveys and other sources.

15. Crucially, by the end of summer 2018, users will have more granular trade in goods and services statistics, for more countries, updated on a more regular basis, and all on a consistent balance of payments basis, meeting many of the high priority needs agreed with them following the EU referendum.
16. The main difference by the end of 2018, as shown in Figure 3 at Annex A, will be having both trade in goods and services by industry. This is important for understanding how trade policy will affect different sectors of the economy. Importantly, this breakdown by industry does not automatically follow from the types of products: for example, manufacturing industries exported £14 billion of services in 2016. Through strong collaborative work with HMRC, including sharing of micro-data, we are progressing towards the publication of detail in trade statistics i.e. trade by industry, that has never been possible in the UK previously.
17. We will also further develop our trade in services statistics. New data sources and potential improvements to services outside of the International trade in services survey are a focus for developments through 2018. As new and improved data sources and methods are identified and used we expect to deliver further information and granularity by service type and geography.
18. By the end of 2018, we will have probably world leading trade statistics.

The future?

19. An area for future development is around 'mode of supply' for trade in services. This concept looks at how a service is delivered: remotely over the internet (mode 1), by a person visiting the exporting country (e.g. overseas students coming to the UK) (mode 2), establishing a subsidiary overseas (mode 3) or by sending people abroad (mode 4). Currently, information on mode of supply is partial, and making further progress will be challenging: no country has exhaustive information on mode of supply.
20. Additionally, we are reviewing and improving our balance of payments adjustments, which are required to adjust trade in goods data collected on an overseas trade statistics (OTS) basis (essentially a physical movement of goods) by HMRC onto a change of economic ownership basis required under ESA 2010 and BPM6. Some goods will cross the UK's border (and hence be recorded on an OTS basis by HMRC), but will not have changed economic ownership (e.g. goods sent abroad for processing). Adjustments are made to account for this. Conversely, some goods will change economic ownership between a UK company and the rest of the world, but the goods will only physically move between other countries, not the UK (this is known as merchanting). Further adjustments are made to account for this. We are reviewing our data sources and methods for these adjustments and expect to deliver some improvements in the annual accounts in 2019.

What about asymmetries?

21. Trade asymmetries are the situation where one country records a different figure for the trade with a second country despite the fact that one country's imports is another country's exports. These are long-standing features of international trade statistics. We are now leading analysis of trade asymmetries in the international field, having presented our technique and results to the benefit of others at the Royal Statistical Society (RSS) and at the international working group on trade in goods and services at the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD).
22. We published a summary of UK asymmetries in July 2017, and have an ambitious work plan in place to better understand them, in a way that has rarely been attempted by other countries in the past. The first results of this more in-depth work, for which we focussed on our asymmetries with the US and Ireland, was published in January 2018. We have established strong collaborative relationships with the statistical agencies in these countries. We are undertaking further deep dives with other countries with whom we

have large asymmetries such as Germany, France and the Netherlands and intend to publish more results over the coming months.

23. We are now developing a better understanding of asymmetries, but the question is then what action to take? Our experience with the US is illustrative of the challenge. Most of the improvements identified are with the US statistics – for example, they have not fully implemented the latest international standards. In addition, even after the issues are identified they can be difficult to resolve. For example, the US includes the Crown Dependencies (including the Channel Islands and the Isle of Man) in UK imports/exports, and there is no simple way of separating out the Channel Islands within the US statistics (international guidance states that the Crown Dependencies should be excluded from the definition of the UK in balance of payments statistics).
24. In summary, we are working through the issues on asymmetries but we should not expect to solve these issues overnight.
25. The presence of asymmetries is nonetheless concerning. It raises the question of whether there is any systematic bias in our trade statistics. To address this concern, we engaged an academic – Thomas Baranga of Harvard University – to undertake an analysis of UK asymmetries. This involved a statistical analysis and reconciliation of UK and other countries' asymmetries for trade in goods. The results suggest UK asymmetries are well within the expected range, and importantly there is no particular evidence of bias. The exercise is currently being repeated for trade in services.

A wider trade analytical community

26. We have engaged wider expertise and resources to tackle some of the key trade questions and established a coordinated and complimentary trade analysis group working across the GSS. This wider community, coordinated by us, has notable achievements such as the delivery of more detailed regional trade in goods statistics by HMRC, experimental research into Trade in Value Added by the Economic Statistics Centre of Excellence (NIESR and the University of Sussex) and developments in fields such as digital trade.
27. Important progress is also being made at ONS to develop a new online GSS data portal for trade statistics, populated with trade data from multiple sources, including ONS trade statistics, with an interactive open user interface for users to access the data.

Conclusion

28. Board members are kindly requested to note the important improvements that have been made to UK trade statistics and how these ongoing developments are continuing to deliver better trade statistics for users, particularly important as the UK leaves the EU.

Jonathan Athow, Director General, Economic Statistics, 15 June 2018

List of Annexes

Annex A UK Trade Statistics outputs – Past, present and future

UK Trade statistics: January 2017

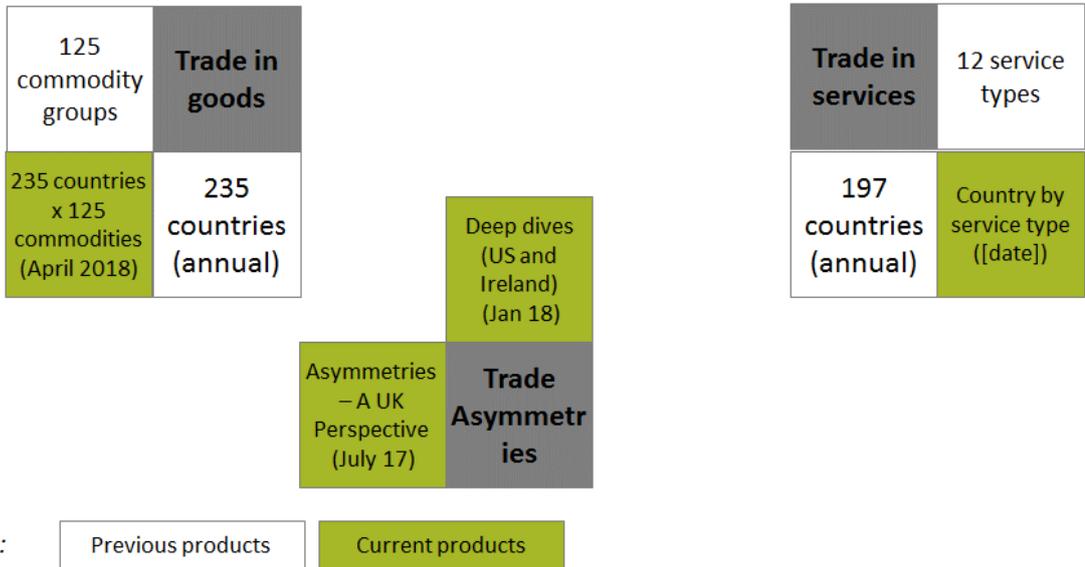
10 commodity groups	Trade in goods
	197 countries (annual)

Trade in services	12 service types
197 countries (annual)	

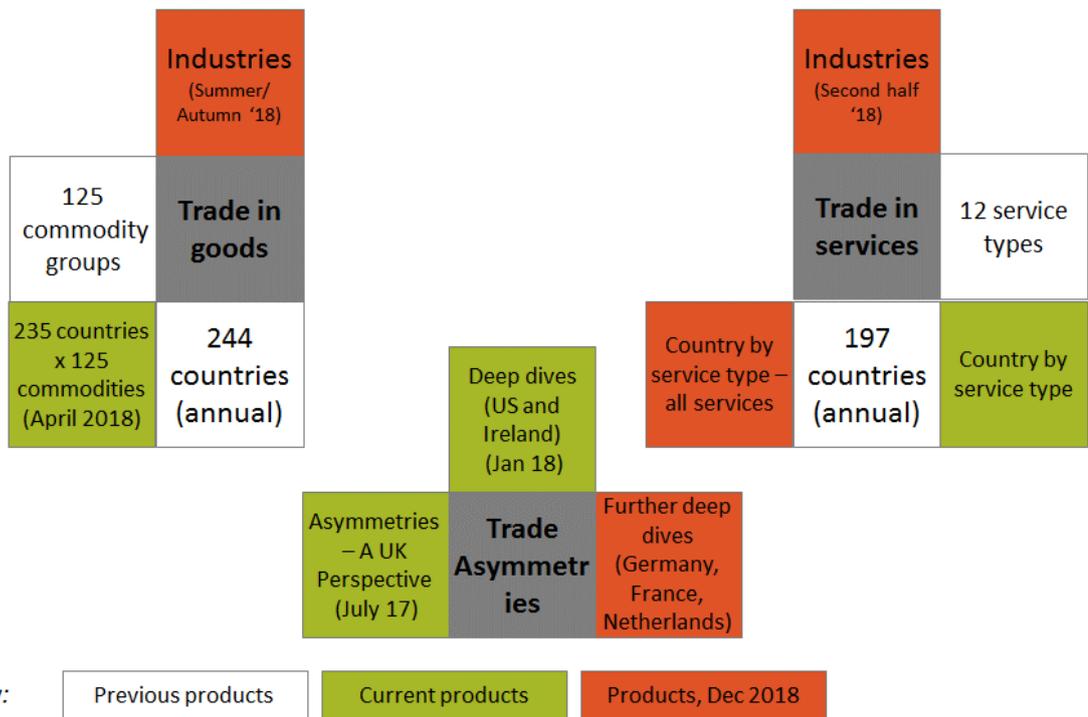
Key:

Previous products

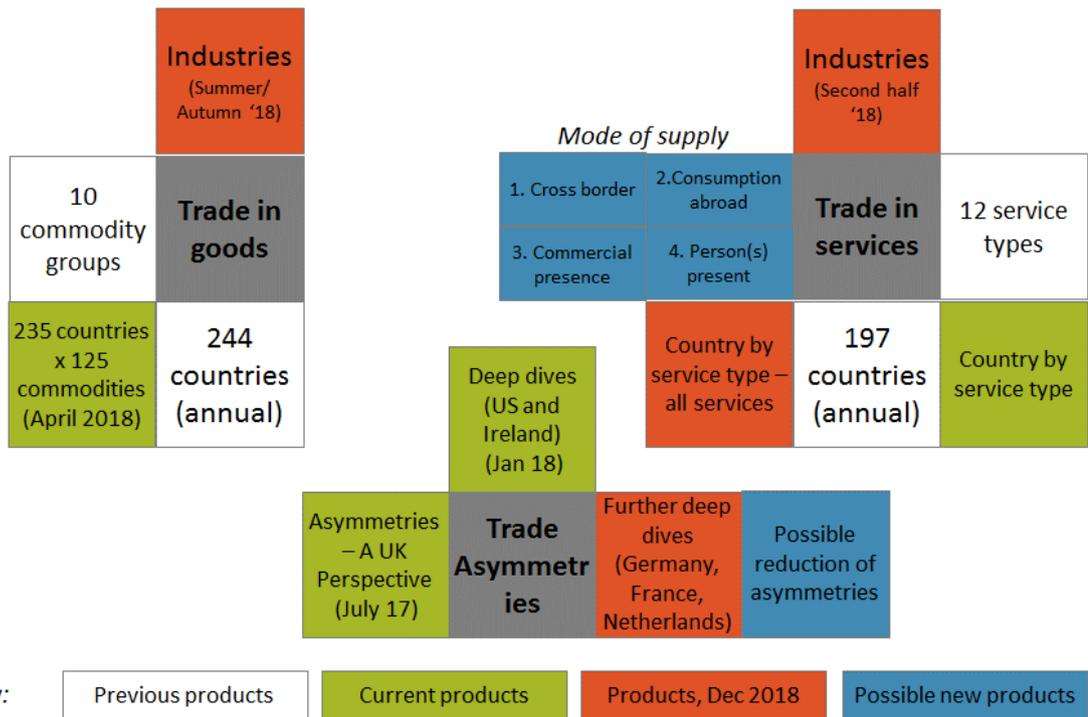
UK Trade statistics: summer 2018



UK Trade statistics: December 2018



UK Trade statistics: the future?



Communications Strategy and work plan

Purpose

1. This paper sets out the proposed Communications Strategy and work plan, as agreed with the Executive Group, to raise communications standards and coordination across the ONS and Authority. It aligns with the Better Statistics, Better Decisions Strategy and the 2018-21 Business Plan.

Recommendations

2. Members of the Board are asked to:
 - i. agree the Communications Strategy in **Annex A**;
 - ii. agree the role of Communications as set out in this paper; and
 - iii. agree the priority work strands and delivery for 2018/19 in **Annex B**.

Background

3. The deficiencies of Communications within ONS and the Authority were highlighted in the 2017 Review by Will Moy and Clare Cowan, the conclusions of which have informed the approach set out in this paper. This has echoed previous reviews and the ongoing experiences of senior teams and key stakeholders within ONS.
4. Following the Review, the Director of Communications and Policy was appointed at the end of February 2018, and the Digital Publishing team was moved into the new Directorate at the beginning of April. This role was created to bring strategic oversight to the organisation with access and influence at senior levels.
5. The Communications Strategy (**Annex A**) sets out the approach for ‘communications’ across the ONS and Authority, driven by the Communications and Publishing Functions at the centre.

Discussion

6. While the ambition remains that ONS is a communications exemplar across Government, there are significant challenges to overcome to raise the standards of communications and the quality of outputs, and deliver the strategy.

Strategic Purpose

7. The Government Communications Service (GCS) defines ‘Strategic Communications’ as building trust in an organisation and demonstrating competence by understanding, reaching and influencing audiences. However, ONS Communications has focused on the promotion of statistical products rather than positioning the organisation in the internal and external environments.
8. The Moy / Cowan Review identified the need for ONS to set clear goals and direction to enable an effective Communications Strategy. The Context of the Communications Strategy attempts to set out this position and, therefore, the Communications approach.
9. This strategy signals the shift from outputs to managing reputation and will enable communications to focus on the following priorities:
 - i. improve understanding of economic statistics;
 - ii. improve understanding of societal issues, including through a best in class Census; and
 - iii. demonstrate data capability for the public good.

10. Clarity on ONS's role is vital to ensure the Communications Strategy (internal and external), corporate narrative, planning and horizon-scanning are all focused and aligned.
11. A planning function has now been established within Communications to understand the internal and external environment. However, this is currently only considering week-by-week issues and further work is needed to effectively plan over 12 months and beyond.

Quality

12. There is inconsistency in quality, messages and strategy across communications channels. Until now, the central Communications Function has not 'owned' the organisation's strategy and has had limited responsibility. The Moy / Cowan Review response was to consolidate communications activity and create a post of Editor-in-Chief to achieve consistency on standards.
13. The ability to achieve quality and coherence is hindered by multiple ONS 'identities' and channel owners (eg Data Science Campus, Centres of Expertise, ESCoE). While there are good reasons for an element of independence, this has become the norm rather than the exception, and brings with it reputational risk.
14. Communications proposes to audit the existing channels and identities, agree opportunities to align and rationalise channels, coordinate all the central corporate channels out of the Communications and Publishing function, and support those approved channels with guidance, expectations and sign off on any contentious subjects or content. While the UKSA and GSS identities remain separate, we would look to align more into a 'family' of identities.
15. In effect, this would align activity and standards under the Director of Communications as 'Editor-in-Chief' and would enable the Editorial and Communications Group (ECG) to operate to its original scope – to plan and coordinate messages and activity across the organisation, and to improve quality across products, particularly with the work progressing on Bulletins.
16. In response to the Moy / Cowan Review recommendation to form a Centre of Expertise for communicating statistics across government, work has started with Directors of Communications and RSS to scope future requirements.

Capability and Structure

17. Communications are not currently delivered through a single designed body or structure. Teams have emerged across the organisation and the central function has evolved over time. As a result, there are single discipline teams focusing on single issues, duplication and shadow functions, and a lack of strategic direction.
18. The Communications Function will be restructured to align to the GCS Modern Communications Operating Model with clear specialisms and delivery in Strategic Communications, External Affairs and Partnerships, Internal Communications, Media and Campaigns, working to the same strategy as Digital Publishing.
19. There is also a significant requirement to build capability within the central Communications Function, but also in key disciplines used across the organisation, namely in media and social media, stakeholder engagement and internal communications.

Conclusion

20. While this paper outlines the steps to build towards a high-quality service, there are still fundamental communications tools and products missing, such as horizon scans, a strategic narrative, a core brief, and intelligence dashboards. This work is ongoing (**Annex B**) alongside efforts to build the capability within the team and organisation and implement this strategy.

Owen Brace, Communications, Policy and Publishing Directorate, ONS, 21 June 2018

List of Annexes

Annex A Communications Strategy

Annex B 2018/19 Delivery

Annex A Communications Strategy

Context

1. The ONS is transforming to provide a helpful, professional, innovative, capable and efficient service to society. Communications will manage the internal and external environment to support this transformation and the delivery of the Better Statistics, Better Decisions strategy.
2. Our job is not done when the statistics are released, we should not be satisfied until those who could benefit from the findings, are aware of them, understand them and can take action accordingly. We should produce information in a timely, fine grained and relevant way to help inform public debate and enable decision-makers to make better decisions.
3. To achieve our strategy, we need to be trusted, responsible, authoritative, and relevant to our key audiences. What we say and do as an organisation needs to be consistent and coordinated.

Objectives

4. Inform decision-making and the public debate on key issues (**Professional**)
 - i. Economics, population and public policy, and data capability
5. Build and maintain the reputation of the UKSA and ONS (**Efficient and Capable**)
 - i. A trusted, independent and impartial source of data and insight
 - ii. A valued organisation with which people are motivated to engage (Census, surveys, insight)
6. Communicate insight to meet the needs of our audiences (**Helpful and Innovative**)
 - i. Bespoke content and channels

Audiences

7. Historically, ONS has focused on existing users and influencers, but there is a need to target broader citizens to help inform public debate as well as demonstrating that we are a trusted and responsible organisation as we make greater use of administrative data. This broadens our audiences but requires tailored messages and channels to achieve effective communications.
8. ONS has distinct audiences to engage:
 - i. **Citizens** – supporting citizens to seek out and interpret data, demonstrating the value of ONS, and targeting those not currently using the ONS service through external channels and tailored content
 - ii. **Respondents** – survey respondents to ensure quality collection of information continues and as a substantial representation of the population
 - iii. **Expert analysts** – building advocacy and drawing insight from data
 - iv. **Influencers** – targeting decision-makers and influential representatives across government, think tanks and international stakeholders to engage in two-way relationships and support
 - v. **Partners** – organisations who work with ONS to deliver services, to build relationships and encourage advocacy
 - vi. **Colleagues** – within ONS, across the GSS and UKSA

Strategy

9. Communications will provide intelligence (perception, opportunities and threats) to the organisation on the internal and external environment to make informed decisions about its strategic direction.
10. It will align strategies and activities through horizon-scanning and planning to ensure consistency and coherence of message.
11. Communications and Publishing will prioritise quality, ensuring people get the information they need, when they need it, and how they need it.
12. Communications will deliver a professional and high-quality service as a key part of the Government Communications Service, creating a Centre of Expertise for the communications of statistics and insight across Government to build greater trust across the population.
13. Communications plans will have clear roles for the UKSA chair, National Statistician and Deputy National Statisticians to build profile and authority with stakeholders, media and our audiences.
14. It will enhance the UKSA and ONS reputation by identifying and responding to opportunities and risks to the delivery of the Better Statistics, Better Decisions strategy.
15. Proactive communications plans will be developed and implemented on key priorities:
 - i. Improve understanding of economic statistics
 - i. The modern economy
 - ii. Trade
 - iii. Devolved, regional and local economies
 - iv. Productivity and the supply of labour and capital
 - v. Prices and inflation
 - vi. Beyond GDP – broader measures of welfare and activity
 - ii. Improve understanding of specific societal issues
 - i. Deliver a best in class Census to engage communities across the country
Migration
 - ii. Crime
 - iii. Health issues
 - iv. Housing
 - v. Societal inequality
 - vi. Devolved, regional and local understanding
 - vii. Education system
 - iii. Demonstrate enhanced data capability for public benefit
 - i. Data Science Campus
 - ii. Secure Research Service
16. ONS is more than a producer of statistics, and communications needs to reflect this value. Communications will also ensure ONS shapes and responds to the news and political environment, engaging in debate where it can add value and when the debate is still ongoing.

Implementation

Intelligence

17. Gather and report intelligence to understand and respond to the internal and external environment, and demonstrate organisational impact.
18. Manage social listening across all platforms for all corporate channels, existing and future including Census, sharing insight across the organisation (tactically and strategically).
19. Monitor visibility of ONS content in external search engines.
20. Horizon scanning to ensure the organisation, and Communications, can influence and respond to the internal and external agenda.
21. Identify and inform on key insights (particularly audiences and channels) to support the Census and across ONS.
22. Lead the integrated Communications strategy, planning and evaluation activity across the organisation to achieve ONS strategic and annual goals.
23. Media monitoring and reporting, providing intelligence directly to senior managers and the organisation.
24. Central coordination of stakeholder intelligence, account management and strategic advice.

Reputation

25. Develop and manage ONS positioning and message platform.
26. Proactive media strategies (print, broadcast, online, social and consumer) based on ONS priorities and external threats and opportunities, positioning the ONS to deliver the organisational strategy.
27. Promoting ONS outputs and innovation, building the reputation within influential circles and across citizens, including clarifying responsibilities for promotion, to gain maximum benefit from organisation-wide efforts.
28. Reactive media handling, providing first-class responsive rebuttals and advice.
29. Development and delivery of stakeholder and partnerships strategy to support Census delivery and the wider ONS priorities.
30. Leadership to build key relationships (Full Fact, BBC, RSS) to amplify messages, build advocacy and understand user insight.
31. Promoting ONS outputs and innovation, building the reputation within influential circles and across citizens.
32. Utilise successful data visualisation tools and techniques to personalise content for a broad citizen audience, in a way which increases user engagement and understanding.

Internal engagement

33. Motivate colleagues, drive culture change and transformation, build engagement, and set and communicate the strategic narrative and vision for ONS.
34. Make effective use of internal channels to encourage two-way engagement and provide platforms for delivery against priorities.
35. Lead a network and community of best practice internal communications to improve engagement within directorates and across all channels and products.

Quality and consistency

36. Set standards and coordinate messages across all relevant channels to ensure these align with the ONS strategy.
37. Build communications capability across the ONS and UKSA, providing professional development and amplifying the main corporate channels.
38. Build a Centre of Excellence in communicating statistics and data across Government, central to the Government Communications Service.

Integrated marketing

39. Phased strategy, delivery and evaluation to support the Census Campaign (including rehearsal).
40. Brand management across ONS and UKSA identities, to include the Data Science Campus, Centres of Expertise, ESCoE, and to establish relationships with GSS activities.
41. Professionalise the look and feel of brand assets across our online and offline communications channels.
42. Develop short-term campaign websites and social media campaigns where we need to position the ONS as an authority or influence users to take action.

Distribution

43. Optimise the performance and resilience of the ONS website and publishing system to reduce any risk to reputation.
44. Streamline the ONS web estate (and beyond this, the GSS web estate) by retiring legacy dissemination services to improve usability of statistics.
45. Move from tactical to strategic content partnerships to syndicate ONS content to third-party channels, to reach users who do not access the ONS website.
46. Invest more in bespoke social content on third-party platforms (eg Twitter) for both statistical and non-statistical content.
47. Managing and developing engagement on all ONS channels – via corporate social channels and through the network of statisticians.

User Experience

48. Develop the thematic taxonomy and tagging to improve our ability to provide cross-cutting analysis and commentary.
49. Improve product formats (particularly bulletins, also maps, charts, key landing pages for topics), in line with a refreshed content strategy.
50. Build on search improvements to ensure users are able to use in-site search more effectively.

Data and measurement

51. Continue to invest in providing data via the ONS API so that third parties can utilise this more effectively to provide services to their customers.
52. Continue to understand user journeys around the ONS website, to enhance existing products and retire low-value products.
53. Provide data and metadata using global open standards to ensure ONS data is easier to find and compare with data from other organisations, and to ensure we prepare for changing expectations driven by technology adoption (eg voice activated search).

54. Invest in social analytics – measuring impact across all corporate channels, existing and future, including Census.

Structure

55. The Communications and Publishing Functions will align under the Modern Communications Operating Model and Government Digital Service:

- i. Strategic Communications
- ii. Media Relations
- iii. Internal Communications
- iv. External Affairs and Partnerships
- v. Campaigns and Marketing
- vi. Data Visualisation
- vii. Publishing & Editorial

Annex B 2018/19 Delivery

Communications and Publishing Service

1. Coordination, increased capability and strategic advice on **key stakeholder relationships** (*remedial plan agreed with Executive Team in June*)
2. **Planning function and horizon scans** to identify and manage the external environment (*short term planning set up in April; long term planning implemented by August*)
3. **Intelligence reports** to the organisation to judge effectiveness of communications and products, organisational impact and understand the external environment (*initial reports in August / September*)
4. **Central narrative and briefing** for consistency across all ONS communications and products (*work started, to have in place by beginning of August*)
5. **Internal narrative and strategy** around innovation, transformation and culture change (*currently replacing key vacancies, narrative in July, strategy in September*)
6. Rationalisation and clear objectives for **internal and external channels** (*audit initiated and aiming to complete by September; rationalising of channels by April 2019*)
7. **Strategic direction for our longer-term priorities**, such as Census and Data Collection, and use of administrative data (*July-September*)
8. Communicate statistics widely to priority audiences and continue to **improve the website** (*ongoing*)
9. **Connect ONS to its users** through the best channels (*ongoing*)
10. **Coordinate publishing insights** across government (GSS) to meet user need (*ongoing*)

Priority work

11. Proactive media, stakeholder and internal plans:
 - i. Leading up to and **supporting the Census White Paper** (*in place, June*)
 - ii. Setting the environment for **linking data sources** to answer public need (*July / August*)
 - iii. Demonstrating capability and increasing **improvements on measuring the economy** (*July / August*)
 - iv. Managing messages around key policies such as **migration and crime** (*June / July*)
 - v. **Build on central government relationships** in 2018/19 as part of our Public Sector Efficiency work programme (*ongoing*)
12. Communications testing and strategy for the **Census Rehearsal** (*April 2019*)
13. **Improve publishing formats**, particularly focusing on bulletins but also across the range of content (*pilot areas in July, ongoing workstream*)

Forward Agenda: Planning and strategy

Purpose

1. The Authority's current strategy will end in eighteen months. This paper offers a course for the development of a new strategy and highlighting dependencies with the upcoming spending review process.

Recommendations

2. Members of the Authority Board are invited to:
 - i. consider the issues likely to impact upon the Board's upcoming planning and strategy discussions; and
 - ii. consider and comment on the forward agenda at **Annex A**.

Background

3. In April 2018, the Board held an initial discussion on the development of a new strategy. Members asked to speak again on strategy at their June and July meetings.
4. There is one main issue Board members may wish to consider alongside the development of a new strategy, the potential 2019 Spending Review.
5. This paper provides some information on the timing of each, and proposes a forward agenda which would allow Board members to align the three processes. The forward agenda also incorporates the necessary annual business planning activity.

Discussion

2019 Spending Review

6. In this year's Spring Statement, the Chancellor confirmed the Government's intention to undertake a Spending Review in 2019 (SR19).
7. While the Government has not yet confirmed the term of the SR19, we do know that for at least some portion of our new strategy, we will be subject to the spending controls defined by the SR19.
8. The Board may therefore wish to consider thinking about our strategic ambitions and our SR19 ambitions in the round.
9. HM Treasury have not yet confirmed timelines for SR19 bids, but the Authority will most likely need to finalise its bid well before finalising its new strategy. The working assumption is that our bid will need to be submitted in Spring 2019.

Next steps

10. The forward agenda at **Annex A** proposes drawing these various streams together in the following way:
 - i. the Board uses its July 2018 meeting to;
 - review the strategic positioning of other National Statistical Institutes and domestic comparators;
 - undertake a PESTLE exercise;
 - review the outcome of a recent exercise across the GSS and ONS leadership on priorities; and
 - review high-level strategic aspirations for Economic Statistics, Data Capability, and Population and Public Policy.

- ii. the Board use its three following meetings (September, October, November 2019) to explore what might be possible and desirable in Economic Statistics, Data Capability, and Population and Public Policy respectively;
 - iii. these meetings inform ongoing discussion of the Authority's SR19 bid, and a near-final position paper for consideration at its December 2019 meeting;
 - iv. the Authority concludes its SR19 negotiations in Spring 2019;
 - v. the Board considers and approves a draft strategy in Autumn 2019.
11. This timetable is high-level, and feedback from Board members on whether there are additional elements they would like to build in would be welcome.
12. In particular, Board members may wish to consider how much external consultation they would like to build into the development of a new strategy.

Vanessa Holden, Central Policy Secretariat, 15 June 2018

List of Annexes

Annex A Forward agenda (planning and strategy)

Annex A Forward agenda (planning and strategy)

