UK STATISTICS AUTHORITY

Minutes
Tuesday 29 September 2020
Via Videoconference

Present
UK Statistics Authority
Sir David Norgrove (Chair)
Ms Sian Jones (Deputy Chair)
Ms Sam Beckett
Ms Helen Boaden
Professor Sir Ian Diamond
Mr Richard Dobbs
Professor David Hand
Professor Jonathan Haskel
Mr Ed Humpherson
Ms Nora Nanayakkara
Professor Sir David Spiegelhalter
Professor Anne Trefethen

Also in attendance
Mr Jonathan Athow
Mr Nick Bateson
Mr Iain Bell
Mr Owen Brace
Mr Robert Bumpstead
Mr Douglas Cameron (Secretariat)
Mr Roger Halliday (for item 1)
Ms Frankie Kay (for item 12)
Ms Sally-Ann Jones (Secretariat)
Mr Will Laffan (for item 11)
Ms Liz McKeown (for item 13)
Ms Ellen Lynch (for item 1)
Dr Philip Wales (for item 11)
Ms Amy Williams (Secretariat)

Apologies
None

1. **Presentation from Scottish Chief Statistician, Roger Halliday**
1.1 Sir David welcomed Mr Roger Halliday, (Chief Statistician, Scottish Government) and Ms Ellen Lynch to the meeting, noting that in normal circumstances the meeting would have been held in Edinburgh.

1.2 Mr Halliday presented on the integration and collaboration to use data to save time, money and lives. The Board also heard from Ms Lynch on the Civil Service award winning cardiac arrest data linkage project.

1.3 The Board noted their thanks to Mr Halliday and Ms Lynch for an excellent presentation.

2. **Apologies**
2.1 There were no apologies received.

3. **Declarations of interest**
3.1 There were no new declarations of interest.

4. **Minutes and matters arising from previous meetings**
4.1 The minutes of the previous meeting held on 30 July 2020 were agreed.

5. **Report from the Authority Chair**
5.1 Non-executive directors had met prior to the Board. They had discussed the executive membership of the Board. The Statistics and Registration Service Act 2007 specified three executive members for the Board.

5.2 The Chair welcomed Ms Sam Beckett, Second Permanent Secretary and Deputy Chief Executive, to her first Board meeting since joining the Authority on 9 September. Sir David confirmed that Ms Beckett would be the third executive member of the Authority Board, along with the National Statistician and the Director General for Regulation.

5.3 Ms Frankie Kay was leaving the organisation to join the Irish Central Statistics Office as Chief Information Officer. Sir David noted thanks on behalf of the Board to Ms Kay for all of her work as the interim Director General for Data Capability.

5.4 The Chair reported on his recent activity since the Board last met. Sir David had met Mr Stian Westlake, Chief Executive of the Royal Statistical Society (RSS). Members of the Regulation Committee had discussed the approach by OSR to the review of statistical models used to award exam grades. Prof. Sir Ian Diamond and Mr Humpherson had given evidence to the Public and Constitutional Affairs Committee on 22 September for the Data Transparency and Accountability: COVID-19 inquiry.

6. **Report from the Director General for Regulation [SA(20)53]**
6.1 Mr Humpherson provided an update on regulation activity since the last meeting.

6.2 Mr Humpherson highlighted the report by OSR on the performance of the statistical system during the pandemic. The aim of the report was to provide assurance to the Board on the performance of the statistical system and highlight the continued issues to address.

6.3 Board members welcomed the report, which recognised the impressive work across the statistical system led by ONS in response to the pandemic. Members went on to highlight the need to develop the lessons learned and bring to the fore the areas for improvement across the statistical system, such as greater coherence and communication of statistics. With regard to international benchmarking, it was noted that the ONS had received plaudits from the international community on their work throughout the pandemic, which had been an opportunity to share insights.

7. **Report from the Chief Executive [SA(20)54]**

7.1 Sir Ian provided the Board with an overview of activity and issues for September, highlighting the following:

   i. the collaboration with colleagues across government regarding a Programme of National Core Studies, with ONS leading workstreams on community surveillance and data connectivity;
   ii. the expansion of the COVID-19 Infection Survey was on track to meet its target;
   iii. the Spending Review 2020 bid had been submitted to HM Treasury on 24 September; and
   iv. the Integrated Data Platform continued to be a key area of focus. A more substantive update was scheduled later in the meeting.

7.2 Sir Ian had attended the RSS Annual Conference on 8 September as a keynote speaker. The event was an opportunity to showcase the work of the ONS, the Government Statistical Service and the Analysis Function. In response to the pandemic the ONS had produced a number of new statistical outputs, including faster economic indicators, the Opinions and Lifestyle Survey and Business Impact of COVID-19 survey, which demonstrated the ONS's ability to produce timely and quality statistics. Sir Ian had also opened the Economic Statistics Centre of Excellence Annual Conference.

7.3 Sir Ian informed the meeting that Ms Beckett would be leading a review of the organisation support functions to align with the spending review. The Board heard from Ms Beckett, a summary of her career and experience. Sir Ian noted his thanks to Ms Kay for all of her work.

7.4 Board members discussed the report and highlighted the importance of coherent and accurate labour market statistics, which was an area of focus for Mr Athow.

8. **Report from the Chair of the Audit and Risk Assurance Committee**

8.1 Ms Nanayakkara reported on the work of the Audit and Risk Assurance Committee, which had met on 17 September 2020.

8.2 The Committee had received an update on the plans to address the identified assurance gaps for statistical quality. The Committee had welcomed the programme of rolling assurance, but the gaps would not be addressed until the proposed approach was embedded. The Committee would continue to remain engaged in this area, with a further update scheduled in November.

8.3 Ms Nanayakkara highlighted that significant progress had been made by People, Business and Services (PBS) on the PBS Programme Plan and commended the progress made on the Census and Data Collection Transformation Programme.

8.4 The Committee had also considered the financial position and the progress made to strengthen the oversight of governance and risk across the organisation.

9. **Strategic Business Plan update [SA(20)55]**

9.1 Mr Bateson introduced a paper which provided a review of progress in relation to implementation and delivery of the plan.

9.2 The Board noted the report.

10. **RPI**

10.1 Mr Athow provided an update on the Authority-HM Treasury consultation regarding the future of the Retail Prices Index (RPI) that had concluded on 21 August. The timing for an announcement on the outcome of the consultation was not yet confirmed.

11. **EU Exit – Economic Statistics [SA(20)56]**

11.1 Mr Wales and Mr Laffan introduced a paper which set out proposals for the domestic functions and governance of economic statistics.

11.2 The European Statistical System (ESS) performed several functions to support UK economic statistics during the UK's EU membership, which had continued during the transition period. On leaving the ESS the UK statistical system would need to assume the functions which Eurostat had provided.

11.3 Board members discussed the proposal for a scalable framework to assume the responsibilities from 2021 as needed.

11.4 The Board agreed further work needed to be undertaken on this issue including the area of classifications.

11.5 The Board would revisit this issue when the terms of the EU transition deal were clearer; and to assure itself that the framework was fit for purpose.

12. **Integrated Data Platform [SA(20)57]**

12.1 Ms Kay introduced a paper which provided a progress update on progress of the Integrated Data Platform.

12.2 The Board heard that the outline business case for the vision of the IDP had been agreed by HMT. Plans were in place for the development of the full business case by March 2021 and high-level key performance indicators had been developed. The delivery of the Analytical Lighthouse Projects with engagement across government remained a key focus.

12.3 Board members noted the update and highlighted the need to develop outcome-based metrics on the performance of the IDP.

13. **Inclusive Data Taskforce [SA(20)58]**

13.1 Ms McKeown introduced a paper which provided an overview of the Inclusive Data Taskforce. The National Statistician had proposed an Inclusive data Taskforce to improve the inclusivity of data collection, analysis and dissemination and deliver the ambitions set out in the strategy.

13.2 The Board heard about the areas of focus for the taskforce: improving the approach to collection, analysis and reporting of equalities data; effective use of administrative, census and survey data; identifying and addressing critical data gaps; and building on learning from ONS' and others' experience. The first meeting of the taskforce would consider the current state of UK equalities data including potential opportunities to explore.

13.3 The Board welcomed the update and would remain engaged as the work progressed.

14. **Census and Data Collection Transformation Programme (CDCTP) [SA(20)59]**

14.1 Mr Bell introduced a paper which provided an update on the programme, focusing on preparations for Census and progress of work within the wider transformation.

14.2 Mr Bell reported that 195 community engagement managers had been successfully recruited. With regard to the acquisition of administrative data from the Department of Work and Pensions, work was ongoing to mitigate the delay to the data and would remain a key area of focus.

14.3 The Board noted the update.

15. Any other business

15.1 The Authority Board would meet next on 29 October by videoconference.

UK STATISTICS AUTHORITY

Agenda

29 September 2020, 10:30 to 13:30, via videoconference

Chair: Sir David Norgrove
Apologies: None
Attendees: Mr Roger Halliday (for item 1), Mr Will Laffan (for item 9), Ms Ellen Lynch (for item 1), Ms Liz McKeown (for item 11) and Dr Phil Wales (for item 9)

NED Session: 10:30-11:00

1 11.00-11.20 20 mins	Presentation from Scottish Chief Statistician, Roger Halliday	Oral report Mr Roger Halliday Ms Ellen Lynch
2 11:20-11:25 5 mins	Minutes and matters arising from previous meetings • Declarations of interest	Meeting of 30 July 2020
3 11.25-11.35 10 mins	Report from the Authority Chair	Oral report Sir David Norgrove
4 11.35-11.45 10 mins	Report from the Director-General for Regulation	SA(20)53 Mr Ed Humpherson
5 11.45-12.00 15 mins	Report from the Chief Executive	SA(20)54 Prof. Sir Ian Diamond
6 12.00-12.05 5 mins	Report from Committee Chair • Audit and Risk Assurance Committee	Oral report Ms Nora Nanayakkara
7 12.05-12.15 10 mins	Strategic Business Plan update	SA(20)55 Mr Nick Bateson
8 12.15-12.30 15 mins	RPI	Oral update Mr Jonathan Athow
9 12.30-12.45 15 mins	EU Exit – Economic Statistics	SA(20)56 Dr Phil Wales Mr Will Laffan
10 12.45-13.00 15 mins	Integrated Data Platform	SA(20)57 Ms Frankie Kay
11 13.00-13.15 15 mins	Inclusive Data Taskforce	SA(20)58 Ms Liz McKeown
12 13.15-13.25 10 mins	Census and Data Collection Transformation Programme	SA(20)59 Mr Iain Bell
13 13.25-13.30 5 mins	Any Other Business	

Next meeting: 29 October 2020, 09:15-12:15, via teleconference

Update from the Director General for Regulation

Purpose

1. This paper provides an update on regulation activity for the Regulation Committee.

Discussion

2. Key activities since the last Board meeting have been as follows:

    i.   We announced our review of the **statistical models used to award exam grades** this summer. We have set up an expert group whose members are the Chair, the National Statistician, David Spiegelhalter and David Hand; and we have kept the Regulation Committee informed about our scope, initial work and early findings. We published an update on this review on 16 September. We set out the scope on our website as follows:

    > Guided by the pillars of the Code - Trustworthiness, Quality and Value, we will initially be exploring the following two questions:

    - to what extent did the approach to developing and communicating the models support public confidence in the outputs? This will consider clarity of purpose, governance, transparency, communication, ethics and public acceptability of the algorithms as well as the role of the appeals process; and
    - to what extent were the algorithms developed appropriate for their intended purpose? This will include the model selection and limitations, quality of the data sources, quality assurance of outputs, innovation and collaboration during the model development and validity of claims around the algorithm.

    ii. We are finalising regulatory guidance on the recording of sex when collecting and reporting data, and the question of whether sex and gender risk becoming conflated. The draft guidance is currently with the Regulation Committee for comment.

    iii. In August, we published a blog on the need for a clearer understanding of how daily COVID19 deaths published by Public Health England relate to the ONS's weekly deaths statistics. Mary Gregory was interviewed by More or Less on this topic.

    iv. We published our review of mental health statistics on 17 September We recommended more use of data linkage to understand patterns of mental health treatment and care; and improvements to the quality of underlying datasets.

    v.   On 22 September, I gave evidence to the Public Administration and Constitutional Affairs Select Committee on the Government's use of data during the pandemic. Other speaking engagements included, on 8 September, presenting at the HMRC Executive Committee, which includes the Permanent Secretary, about the implementation of our review of statistical quality at HMRC; and at the Nuffield Trust on our work during the pandemic. Mary Gregory also led a session at the Economic Statistics Centre of Excellence conference on regional data.

Performance of the statistical system during the pandemic

3. At the July Board, we provided a short overview of the performance of the statistical system during the pandemic. We have now developed this into a fuller report.

4. The aim of the report is to provide assurance to the Board on the performance of the statistical system, while highlighting continued issues to address.

Challenges

5. Two challenges are on my mind as we enter the autumn season:

i. a small number of people are returning to work in the office while others continue to work from home. Maintaining cohesion and resilience will remain a priority; and

ii. balancing the need to look at a wide range of statistics with continuing to respond to emerging COVID-19 issues will be important.

Ed Humpherson, 22 September 2020

List of Annexes

Annex A   Regulatory dashboard

Regulatory Activities September 2020

Economy	Business, Trade and International Development	Population and Society	Children, Education and skills	Crime and Security
Assessments ▪ **ONS Productivity statistics** Planning assessment **Compliance Checks:** ▪ HMRC Personal Incomes Statistics from the Survey of Personal Incomes. ▪ Follow-up to Quality Review of HMRC statistics published earlier this year. ▪ ONS Regional Household Final Expenditure statistics ▪ ONS CPIH statistics particularly in the light of users' concerns with OOH and proposals in respect to RPI **Stakeholder Engagement-** ▪ Setting up the OSR session at the ESCoE economic measurement conference to take place on 17 September ▪ Meeting held with Scottish Government exchequer and statistical officials in respect to presentation of the Scottish budget	**Assessments:** ▪ **Business Demography** Report scheduled for review by Regulation Committee shortly. ▪ **UK Trade** Balanced Trade asymmetry dataset delayed until November – DiT aware and comfortable with the delay. **Compliance Checks:** Review of ONS Mergers and Acquisitions statistics nearing completion. Awaiting response from ONS on development of single platform for processing VAT data in the production of economic estimates.	**Assessments:** **Census** Letters to Census office on how they have responded to phase 1 assessment findings published on 11 Sept. Workshops with NRS on methods are planned for October. **Compliance Checks**: DWP NiNo allocation statistics: meeting to discuss outcomes of compliance check planned for later in September. **Systemic Reviews:** **Loneliness:** Drafting summary report.	**Exam Results Review:** Focused on the process of developing statistics models designed for awarding 2020 exam results and identifying the lessons learned. Currently activities include; documentation research, initial review sessions with all four regulators and discussions with key stakeholders. Project scoping and project initiation documents are available. Additional support is being provided by an Expert Oversight Group of technical experts which is meeting weekly with OSR. Project is working towards October final report date. Dedicated project webpage is providing regular external updates. **Systemic Reviews:** **Children and Young People** Following the publication of the blog on 23 July, we have various stakeholder meetings planned during September to discuss our approach and proposed framework	**Crime:** Published rapid review of the new ONS telephone-operated crime survey for E&W on 26 August. Statistics will be marked as Experimental. **Guidance on data about sex:** Catalysed by casework on statistics about sex in criminal justice statistics, OSR is preparing guidance for producers and users of statistics, setting out our expectations when collecting and reporting data about sex, in line with the Code. This will be shared with Regulation Committee soon. **Compliance Checks:** Starting a CC of HO statistics on Operation of police powers under the Terrorism Act 2000 in September. **Raising awareness of OSR and the Code**: Two presentations about OSR for MOD – one for producers about the Code and official stats production, and one for producers and policy on using statistics in briefings, with Ministers etc.
Health and Social Care	**Labour Market and Welfare**	**Agriculture, Energy and Environment**	**Housing, Planning and Local Services**	**Travel, Transport and Tourism**
Assessments: Prescription Cost Analysis (PCA) report for discussion at October Regulation Committee. **Submission**: Public Accounts Committee submission to debate on Digital Transformation in the NHS. **Casework**: Dealing with elevated levels of COVID-19 casework: statistics on test and trace programme, suicide registrations during lockdown and changes to UK daily deaths statistics. Public interventions can be viewed on our COVID-19 webpage and correspondence page. **Systemic Review**: Mental Health in England: Report published 17 September.	**Assessment**: Writing the assessment report for DWP's Quarterly Benefit Statistics. **Income and earnings**: Met with leads from ONS, DWP and HMRC to discuss resuming the work on I&E and new priorities that have emerged from Covid in relation to I&E. **Systemic Review**: We have received a lot of interest in our upcoming systemic review on poverty, following our casework interventions. We will be presenting our proposed plan to the End Child Poverty Coalition in late September.	**Compliance checks:** Waste statistics across the UK underway, expecting to publish September. **Systemic Review:** Plan to begin scoping systemic review of climate change statistics with a position statement as intended outcome. **Casework:** Two recent queries both in respect to climate change/greenhouse gases and misuse of government data.	**Casework:** Responded privately to complaints about new Scottish Fire and Rescue official statistics and public statements on planning applications for large developments in England. **Compliance Checks:** Reviewing Scottish House Condition Survey and English Housing Survey.	**Assessment:** Assessment of the Office for Rail and Road's Estimates of Station Usage statistics underway. Draft report to be shared with ORR. **Compliance checks:** Follow up of requirements from compliance check of ONS' travel and tourism statistics.

UK STATISTICS AUTHORITY

SA(20)54

Chief Executive's Report, September 2020

Purpose

1. This report provides the Board with an overview of activity for September.

Summary

2. I have spent recent weeks meeting with Senior Officials across Government, providing decision makers with timely analysis to help inform Her Majesty's government response to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Review of recent activities

3. Important developments in recent weeks include the following:

    i. Sam Beckett has joined the organisation as the new Second Permanent Secretary;
    ii. I have continued to attend the Scientific Advisory Group in Emergencies (SAGE) as it continues to provide advice on the COVID-19 pandemic;
    iii. I have collaborated with colleagues across government to help the coordination of a programme of National Core Studies, notably through leading workstreams on Community Surveillance and Data Connectivity;
    iv. I was able to showcase the work of the ONS, the GSS and the Analysis Function at the Royal Statistical Society Annual Conference and the National Quality Board;
    v. I opened the Economic Statistics Centre of Excellence Annual Conference, highlighting the importance of our collaborative relationship with the organisation and its members;
    vi. on 12 September I spoke to the BBC Radio 4 Today programme about the COVID-19 Infection Survey and the need to continue monitoring the spread of the infection; and
    vii. I have given evidence to the Public Administration and Constitutional Affairs Committee on the government's use of data in response to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Future look

4. Alison Pritchard will join the organisation on 5 October to fulfil the role of Deputy National Statistician, Data Capability.

5. COVID-19 Infection Study fieldwork will start in Scotland in late September, with a first outputs expected in November.

Professor Sir Ian Diamond, 22 September 2020

UK STATISTICS AUTHORITY

ONS Strategic Business Plan - Update

Purpose

1. Following publication of the five-year Authority 'Statistics for the public good' strategy and the ONS Strategic Business Plan (SBP). in July 2020 this paper provides a review of progress in relation to implementation and delivery of the plan.

Recommendations

2. Members of the Board are invited to read this paper alongside the associated papers on the Comprehensive Spending Review (CSR) and the Integrated Performance Report (IPR).

3. Members of the Board are invited to note:

   i.   progress made to implementing the SBP, and further work still required;
   ii. the intention to review the SBP in Autumn following the CSR outcome; and
   iii. alignment of the SBP to the proposed CSR submission.

Background

4. In July 2020, the new Authority strategy "Statistics for the Public Good" was published alongside the Strategic Business Plans (SBP) for the Office for National Statistics (ONS) and Office for Statistics Regulation (OSR).

5. The ONS SBP was developed using a different approach to previous years, with a focus on integrated planning that reflected a 'One-ONS' approach to delivery of agreed strategic priorities. Business area Accountability Frameworks (including Accountability Framework Objectives [AFOs]) were developed and mapped according to the agreed 12 strategic objectives, providing clear accountabilities, and demonstrating how everyone's work in ONS contributes to business priorities.

6. Development and finalisation of the SBP took place during the nation's response to the COVID-19 pandemic, and at a time of significant change for ONS. It was acknowledged that a review of the SBP may be required once the business transitioned out of this response.

Discussion

7. Since publication, the ONS SBP has been embedded into ONS reporting structures as follows:

   i.   the terms of reference for the ONS Portfolio and Investment Committee (PIC) have been updated to incorporate oversight of the delivery against the SBP;
   ii. progress reporting against the 12 Strategic Objectives detailed in the SBP takes place on a monthly basis, with business areas reporting against the Accountability Framework to PIC, and PIC reporting performance highlights and issues to the National Statistics Executive Group (NSEG);
   iii. monthly updates on Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) detailed within the SBP are being provided to the relevant governance layers (PIC, NSEG and this Board);
   iv. challenge and oversight of the Strategic Objectives and Strategic Risks has been built into the revised governance structure within ONS, which will also oversee the corporate risks to the delivery of the SBP. Ongoing reporting on progress against the management of these risks and alignment to the risk appetite will be provided to the Audit and Risk Assurance Committee, assuring this Board on the delivery of the SBP;

v.   the enabling programmes detailed within the SBP have been incorporated into the ONS portfolio and are reported to PIC on a monthly basis;

vi.   a new dashboard has been developed that provides a clear summary of progress against each Strategic Objective and enables owners to quickly identify areas of under-performance (see associated paper on Business Plan Deliverables); and

vii.   the Quarterly Review process has been re-invigorated and aligned to delivery against the SBP. The first set of reviews held in August, identified positive delivery against the SBP, and also some areas requiring review. A review of AFOs would be commissioned in Autumn once the outcome from the CSR was clear, and the COVID-19 response has stabilised.

8.   It was anticipated that some areas of implementation would take longer to incorporate into business structures. Work is ongoing in the following areas:

i.   the timing of governance meetings is being reviewed to ensure that management information is timely and flow effectively through the governance layers;

ii.   where possible, existing metrics are being used to report against the new KPIs detailed in the SBP, however in some cases new metrics need to be identified and developed. A 'task and finish group' has recently been established to progress this with the aim of having the full suite of KPIs and associated metrics in place by the end of Q2 (with reporting by Q3), including any revised KPIs that are agreed through the CSR;

iii.   the identification of metrics, baselines and targets for the strategic benefits set out in the SBP is ongoing. Annual reporting against these benefits will provide the Board with assurance that the SBP is delivering the expected outcomes. Baselined data and targets are due to be ready for Board endorsement by Q3 in order to provide an annual update as planned in June 2021; and

iv.   following endorsement by this Board of the strategic risks, Director Generals' have taken ownership for each risk, and are currently finalising the mitigations and actions to ensure that these align to the agreed risk appetite.

9.   The work involved in development and delivery of the SBP has proved invaluable in developing the Authority response to the CSR. The detailed response is covered in a separate paper and aligns well to the Strategic Drivers set out in the SBP. Following confirmation of the CSR outcome, the activities outlined in the CSR response will be integrated into the business plan, including an updated approach to evaluation.

Nick Bateson, Director of Finance, Planning and Performance, 14 September 2020

UK STATISTICS AUTHORITY

EU Exit – Economic Statistics

SA(20)56

This paper will be published following the outcome of the UK-EU negotiations

UK STATISTICS AUTHORITY

Integrated Data Platform

Purpose

1. This paper provides a progress update on the Integrated Data Platform (IDP) for government, developed in partnership with the Chief Scientific Advisor (CSA) network, Government Digital Service (GDS) and the Analytical Function. It is an update on progress since the last paper provided in June.

Recommendations

2. Members of the Authority Board are invited to note the progress made to date.

Discussion

IDP Vision

3. A reminder of the vision for IDP, as set out in the Outline Business Case and approved by HM Treasury (HMT) is set out below.

   "Our vision is for an integrated data platform to support analysis of priority and complex data, building on existing capability, in response to the need for:

   - *on-demand analytical capability for government;*
   - *wider and deeper analysis to support priority cross-cutting policy areas;*
   - *a sustainable, scalable and future-proof data platform."*

4. We will create a safe, secure and trusted infrastructure for government data, enabling analysis to support economic growth, better public services, and improved lives of citizens. It is a step-change in enabling analysts to answer key policy questions in time for this analysis to be useful.

5. We will deliver this through a series of Analytical Lighthouse Projects (ALP's) to test and improve the business processes, technical infrastructure, methods and skills associated with cross-cutting linked data analysis, as well delivering innovative cross-cutting analysis. The ALP's will be undertaken by analysts from both within ONS and other government departments.

6. The programme will deliver a new data analysis capability and access to new data sources for the whole of the government analytical function as well as providing cross-cutting linked data for wider sectors (local authorities and academia) for analysis for the public good. Although delivered by ONS, this is a government-wide programme and to ensure involvement across the analytical function a Deputy Director has been recruited to lead the cross-government analytical work programme.

Key Performance Indicators (KPIs)

7. IDP will measure and monitor improvements to the analytical capability from linked data through a series of KPIs. Currently, the analysis of linked datasets drawn from across government can take many months (9–18 months typically) and are carried out on a project by project basis.

8. The lead time is often spent negotiating access to the data, and this limits the capability of analysts to create an evidence base for decision-making. For IDP to be successful it will reduce the lead time for cross-cutting analysis to a matter of weeks.

9. The high-level KPIs include:

i. the proportion of government analysts who have access to linked data (data drawn from more than one department);
ii. the number of datasets available on the IDP platform;
iii. the proportion of "priority" datasets which are available for cross-cutting linked analysis;
iv. the proportion of government analysts who have access to the IDP technical platform; and
v. the lead time between establishing a research question/analytical need and delivering cross-cutting analysis (this should reduce with each subsequent iteration).

10. A baseline for the KPIs will be established for inclusion in the FBC. This will enable measurement of the trajectory of the programme as part of the commitment under the current Comprehensive Spending Review (CSR20) process.

IDP Delivery Plan

11. An integrated high level IDP Delivery plan has been drafted for the duration of the programme. Detailed integrated plans for the first 24 months have also been developed. Both plans will be presented to the IDP Delivery Board on 24 September for sign off.

12. The programme is operating as an agile programme, with the integrated plan based on a series of sprints (programme increments). Programme and dashboard reports to monitor progress against plan are being produced.

13. Key points to note within the integrated high-level plan are:

Next 12 months

i. high level technical design presented to Advisory Board – October 2020;
ii. results from initial Analytical Lighthouse Projects from ONS and other Government Departments (Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government, NHS Digital) published – November 2020;
iii. thin slice end-to-end proof of concept for IDP (business process, technical and skills) – December 2020;
iv. Full Business Case approved by HMT – May 2021; and
v. design complete for new technical platform & dissemination access for OGDs (replacement for gov.uk) - May 2021.

12 Months Plus

i. testing complete for new technical platform & dissemination functionality - July 2022;
ii. deployment of new technical platform & dissemination functionality (OGDs early adopters) – Sept 2022;
iii. scale up of new technical platform & dissemination functionality – December 2023;
iv. transition to new IDP solution – December 2024;
v. scale-up of full virtualised data sharing solution complete – December 2024;
vi. full IDP solution deployed – November 2025; and
vii. maintenance and in-service support complete – June 2026. Programme closed.

Analytical Lighthouse Projects

14. A scoring matrix has been established to quantify how each proposed ALP project will deliver IDP's benefits. The benefits include wider dataset access to improve policy development; cross government collaborative working; data integrity and confidentiality maintained; improving staff capabilities and shorter lead time in response to policy questions.

15. The scoring matrix will be used to allocate IDP funding for analysis to teams across government, ensuring that the programme remains a cross-government programme and fostering the right data-sharing culture.

16. Once ranked and categorised, the ALP set will then be reviewed by the ALP Governance Panel. The panel membership comprises cross government, industry and academic representatives. This is to ensure IDP truly is a user centric programme delivering value according to user-need.

17. Scope creep will be mitigated through the ALP/IDP governance structure against baseline by sprints and programme increments.

User Research

18. Initial discovery User Research has been completed with ONS & GDS Analytical Lighthouse Project Data Analysts & Data Scientists. The team have also reviewed and consolidated research from existing projects including Connected Open Government Statistics (COGS), Data Access Platform (DAP) and Secure Research Service (SRS).

19. The team are currently midway through a second discovery to gather insights from additional user types, including Central Government Data Analysts, Data Providers, Project Coordinators and non-ONS Data Scientists.

20. We have produced an As-Is Service Design Blueprint based on the current Data Access Platform service to provide a baseline against which the "to be" design is being developed. This will be tested with users across government to provide assurance that it will deliver the cross-government needs.

Key Appointments

21. Gesche Schmid, Head of Data Innovation, Defra joins us as IDP Programme Director on 1 October. Ben Humberstone is reverting to his substantive role as Head of Health Analysis and Life Events.

22. Tom Knight, Head of Analysis at Department for International Trade, joins on 1 October as Deputy Director for Cross Government Analytical Engagement.

23. Deborah Porter, Senior IT PM, HMRC joins us on 15 September as IDP Programme Manager.

24. Recruitment activities continue in order to meet the IDP resource plan requirements.

Conclusion

25. The IDP programme is fully operational and key staff have been recruited. Other Government Departments have been engaged and work on the design and user-research are progressing well. OBC funding has been approved by HMT; an integrated plan has been drafted; agile tools and techniques are being embedded; a prioritisation approach for Analytical Lighthouse Projects has been deployed; and, work has commenced on the drafting of the FBC.

26. Good progress continues to be made in joining up IDP with other data initiatives across government and ensuring alignment through the Government Data, Digital and Technology (DDAT) Steering Group (GDSG) and the ONS Spending Review submission.

Frankie Kay, SRO Integrated Data Platform, September 2020

UK STATISTICS AUTHORITY

Inclusive Data Task Force

Purpose
1. This paper provides the Board with an overview of the Inclusive Data Taskforce which will help us ensure we deliver a step change in the inclusivity of our outputs and data collection in line with our strategy.

Recommendations
2. Members of the Authority Board are invited to note that:

    i.   the National Statistician has commissioned an Inclusive Data Taskforce and appointed Dame Moira Gibb as its chair;
    ii. proposed areas of focus for the Taskforce have been developed and the intention is for it to be radical in addressing longstanding issues in this space; and
    iii. the Taskforce is expected to report with recommendations to the National Statistician early next year.

Background
3. The National Statistician proposed an Inclusive Data Taskforce to help deliver the step change in the inclusivity of our data collection, analysis and dissemination needed to deliver upon the ambitions set out in the Authority strategy, where inclusive is a core principle. Dame Moira Gibb has been invited, and agreed, to chair the Taskforce and invitation letters have also been sent to prospective Taskforce members with a breadth of experience with inclusive data issues. Our aim is for the first meeting of the Taskforce to take place in mid-October where we will wish to encourage the Taskforce to be radical in addressing some longstanding issues in relation to the UK's inclusive data holdings.

4. In order to help develop the scope of the Taskforce we held initial discussions within ONS and with statistical Heads of Professions and Departmental Directors of Analysis from across Government which helped us to identify four key areas of focus with some potential underlying questions in each area. These form part of the draft Terms of Reference of the Taskforce where it is envisaged that the Taskforce would provide recommendations to the National Statistician covering each of the following areas:

    i.   improving our approach to the collection, analysis and reporting of equalities data;
    ii. making the most effective use of administrative, census and survey data;
    iii. identifying and addressing critical data gaps; and
    iv. building on and learning from our own and others' experiences.

5. The Taskforce will be able to build upon the work already carried out by the ONS Centre for Equalities & Inclusion (CfE&I) who, along with staff members from the Central Policy Secretariat, will support the Taskforce.

Discussion
6. The Taskforce has the opportunity to be radical and address some longstanding issues in relation to the UK's inclusive data holdings. For example, how best to include non-private household populations and minority groups often missing or present in insufficient numbers in our data collection to enable robust analysis or geographical disaggregation; ways of improving consistency and harmonisation in survey and administrative data; how to ensure a human rights-based approach in our all our data collection, analysis and dissemination; tailoring data collection to include issues of relevance to more disadvantaged or marginalised groups; and how to take advantage of innovations and new techniques to ensure the inclusiveness of groups across key topics and geographies.

7. We plan to prepare a set of papers for the first meeting that will help the Taskforce to position itself to explore opportunities and develop recommendations that will make a step change in this area. This will include producing a paper providing the current state of UK equalities data which is explicit about the longstanding issues in this space and some potential opportunities for the Taskforce to explore in how to address them. We will also propose the Taskforce consider a public consultation to gather feedback from stakeholders on key issues and priorities – ensuring that the Taskforce itself is inclusive and welcomes input from all relevant stakeholders that wish to contribute.

8. It will be important that the Taskforce adds value to a crowded landscape in relation to equalities issues. To this end, we have invited prospective members who also sit on the Commission for Racial and Ethnic Disparities (CRED), the Deaton Review of Inequalities in the UK, the Social Metrics Commission, as well as others who advise the Devolved Administrations on equalities issues. We will also help to create links with others working in the UK equalities space more widely.

Conclusion

9. Although ONS and the GSS have worked to improve the inclusiveness of official statistics and the UK data infrastructure more widely, persistent gaps remain. Recently, the pandemic and other policy priorities such as the 'levelling up' agenda have highlighted a range of shortcomings in the inclusiveness of our data, analysis and dissemination. Additionally, wider international commitments, such as monitoring delivery of the Sustainable Development Goals reinforces the need to 'leave no one behind' in our data. This Taskforce can help ensure these data gaps are addressed swiftly and strategically to enable better public policy, debate and decisions, now and in the future.

10. A spending review bid for further funding for the Centre for Equalities and Inclusion aims to ensure that resources are available to implement the recommendations of the Taskforce.

Liz McKeown, Public Policy Analysis, September 2020

UK STATISTICS AUTHORITY

Census and Data Collection Transformation Programme

Purpose
1. This paper provides an update on the programme, focusing on the continuing preparations for Census and progress of work within the wider transformation.

Recommendations
2. Members of the Authority Board are invited to note:

    i.   the programme retains an amber rating. We have commenced the delivery of early operations with back office services now live, and we are confident of our ability to deliver a high-quality census in March 2021;

    ii. following updates to the design of the operation to accommodate COVID-19 scenarios, census preparations remain on track. The digital build is progressing well, and we are on course to start end to end testing at the end of September, as scheduled. Processing, as well as outputs and dissemination, development is also progressing on schedule. Our next COVID-19 readiness assessment checkpoint is on 30 September;

    iii. progress has been made with the acquisition of administrative data, in particular in the areas of council tax, vacant properties and utilities. Plans are in place for Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) and HM Revenue and Customs (HMRC) data. Activities are in train to ensure continued improved working arrangements with both. Close monitoring continues; and

    iv. in the wider transformation the growth and success of the online Labour Market Survey (LMS) and Opinions and Lifestyle Survey (OPN) is being capitalised upon with telephone and face to face capabilities now being developed. The continued development of the underpinning platforms for the Distributive Trades (DTrades) project is being exploited for financial statistics and trade and investment transformation.

Discussion

Programme update

3. The programme remains at Amber. Delivery remains on track with all teams continuing their excellent work despite the challenges presented by COVID-19. Our programme on a page shows our current position.

4. Following the Infrastructure and Projects Authority (IPA) Strategic Assessment (G0) Amber rating in July we are planning an independent operational readiness assessment of Census preparations in early November. We will be sharing the terms of reference for this with the Audit and Risk Assurance Committee (ARAC) during October.

Preparations for Census

Early Operations and Build

5. We have commenced the delivery of early operations with some back-office services now live, and we remain confident of our ability to deliver a high-quality census in March 2021. Along with the planned build work currently underway, we continue to refine the design of the field operation. This will ensure it can run successfully including during any COVID-19 localised lockdowns or, at worst, further national restrictions. Updates include:

    i.   enhancing our management information solutions to ingest infection rates and better predict potential localised restrictions;

ii. altering the HQ operation to be predominantly virtual; and

iii. updating the field design to ensure officers do not enter households to support household and communal establishment collections.

6. The build of our digital solutions continues at pace with around 88 per cent now completed. Build will continue through to September at which point full end to end and operational acceptance testing will commence. This includes significant progress to improve the management information on response rates, allowing us to flexibly redeploy resources and to direct the field in live operations. The latest detailed build metrics have been shared with ARAC.

7. The recruitment for the first two Census field staff roles is now ending. We received over 6,500 applications for our community engagement manager (CEM) and community advisor (CA) roles. As a result of the recent changes in the labour market, the quality of applications has increased. This gives us more optimism about achieving the necessary numbers and skills required as we start the next campaign in November.

8. The primary schools' campaign has also now gone live ([Lets Count](#)) in partnership with iChild. We have seen 296 schools register in the first two weeks (representing 2.3 per cent of schools in Wales and 1.4 per cent of those in England). Preparations for the secondary school campaign are in the final stages and we hope to launch it in September.

9. Our communication agency (M&C Saatchi) have been testing creative campaign approaches via focus groups and a final recommendation will be shared for approval this month. The creative theme will aim to positively engage the public, whilst supporting them to complete. Special consideration has been paid to KPG groups and delivery of comms in event of a COVID-19 lockdown scenario.

Processing, Outputs and Dissemination

10. Evaluation of the processing and outputs rehearsal is now complete. The success of the team's work gives assurance that, providing the data can be delivered within the assumed timescales, the platform can process it to meet our target of first release in a year.

11. Following the successful development of an 'alpha' prototype, the Programme Board has now agreed an incremental way for the Census Outputs and Dissemination and Digital Publishing teams to progress their build. This means building functionality to disseminate our Census outputs via the ONS website in a way that meets our users' needs. We will bring the Board a fuller update early in the new year.

Assurance

12. Our next COVID-19 readiness assessment checkpoint is on 30 September. This will review updates and progress as well as other preparations to assess their impact through the COVID-19 lens. We will share further details in our next update to the Board.

13. Additionally, as we build to our period of census collection main operations, which begin in February, we are keen to validate our capabilities and practice the likely interventions and tactics needed to run a smooth and effective field operation. Therefore, planning is underway to undertake a series of 'Mock Operations' to test and rehearse our operation and incident management between October and January.

14. On 15 September the Central Statistics Office (CSO) in Ireland announced they would be postponing their Census until 2022. This is a COVID-19 related decision and has been to ensure the safety of their staff and the public during their manual and face-to-face operation. We have engaged with the chief medical officers (CMO) for England, Wales and Northern Ireland and initial feedback from them has raised no safety concerns. We plan to work further with the CMOs to continue to validate our approach.

15. There is a remaining judicial review in relation to the Sikh Federation. Permission has been granted for this to be heard on 21 October. Preparations are underway and progressing well. The legal, policy and programme management office teams will report regularly on updates.

16. We continue our work on finalising the guidance, including for the sex question.

Acquisition of administrative data

17. Good progress continues in many areas and local authorities have restarted supply of data. We have now received council tax data from 170 local authorities and have signed agreements with 210.

18. DWP data remains challenging as they recover from their COVID-19 work and update their systems. A 'show and tell' is planned with them this month to progress an improved understanding of our ambition to produce high quality data and analysis, and to better understand how they feel their range of data sources can best support our work. To further mitigate delays to this data, the population and migration statistics transformation team have devised an alternative, more incremental, delivery approach. This has been endorsed by the Programme Board.

19. Work continues on HMRC supplies, with both self-assessment (SA) and PAYE Real Time Information due to arrive later this year / early next respectively. Supplies of the Migrant Worker Scan are already in place. This will allow us to meet our deadline to make the 20/21 full tax year data to be available in June 2021 to support Census, Admin-Based Population Estimates and Admin-Based Income Statistics.

Wider transformation

20. Transformed, online first social surveys continue to grow in scale and importance. The LMS comprises core labour market needs and Census Population Coverage Survey (PCS) requirements. The issued sample size has gradually increased to also meet the needs of the COVID-19 Infection Study (CIS) and the OPN which are all sub-sampled from consenting LMS households. In August we successfully launched a longer questionnaire (the LMS+) to meet a broader set of user needs. We are now sampling the equivalent of 1.3 million households per annum with response rates around 35 per cent. With Census development largely complete we are now planning the continued expansion of our transformed data collection capabilities to include the provision of telephone and face to face collection to the transformed social surveys and fully transition to the new model.

21. DTrades transforming short-term statistics for the retail, wholesale and motor trades sectors. As previously explained, this uses a combination of survey and administrative value-added tax (VAT) data utilising a new cloud-based Statistical Production Platform (SPP) and new Business Process Management (BPM) system. The project has delivered the alpha (prototyping and testing) and has now moved into Beta, the creation of a statistical pipeline in SPP, whilst also progressing enhancements across the alpha production pipeline. In parallel work is progressing on non-functional requirements. Building on these foundations work has begun to look to how the functionality created for RSI can be reused in statistical production pipelines for financial statistics and trade and investment transformation.

Iain Bell, Deputy National Statistician for Population and Public Policy
Nicola Tyson-Payne, Interim Director of Transformation, Population and Public Policy
15 September 2020