

UK STATISTICS AUTHORITY

Minutes

**Thursday 30 May 2024
London Office**

Hybrid Meeting

Members Present

Sir Robert Chote (Chair)
Dr Jacob Abboud
Professor Sir John Aston
Professor Sir Ian Diamond
Nora Nanayakkara
Sian Jones
Professor Dame Carol Propper
Penny Young

Other Attendees

Pete Benton (for items 9 and 10)
Sally Jones
Rob Kent-Smith
Simon Sandford-Taylor (for item 11)
Tom Taylor
Ross Tivey (for item 8)
Jason Zawadzki (for items 9 and 11)

Apologies

Ed Humpherson
Alison Pritchard
Professor Sir David Spiegelhalter

1. Apologies

- 1.1 Apologies were noted from Professor Sir David Spiegelhalter, Ed Humpherson and Alison Pritchard.

2. Declarations of Interest

- 2.1 Sir Robert Chote informed the meeting that he would be taking up the position as the next President of Trinity College Oxford, with effect from 1 September 2025. It was noted that the role posed no conflict, and had been held by previous Chairs of the Authority Board.

3. Minutes and matters arising from previous meetings

- 3.1 The minutes of the previous meeting held on 25 April were agreed.

4. Report from the Authority Chair [SA(24)21]

- 4.1 Non-Executive Directors (NEDs) had met before the meeting. They had discussed topics including the Transformed Labour Force Survey (TLFS) and Labour Force Survey (LFS), and the NED recruitment.
- 4.2 The Chair paid warm tribute to Sian Jones, as this was her last meeting with her term ending on 1 July 2024. Sian had been a highly valued member of the Board as a Non-Executive Director and led the Board as Interim Chair ahead of Sir Robert Chote's appointment. As part of the NED programme of activities Sian had met with business areas across the organisation on a range of topic areas, including Census 2021, legacy transformation, Integrated Data Service and the Future of Population and Migration Statistics. Sian was also a member of the Audit and Risk Assurance Committee. Sian had provided excellent support for the organisation, always providing the right level of oversight, scrutiny and challenge. Professor Sir Ian Diamond paid tribute to Sian on behalf of ONS, noting that it had also been his privilege to work alongside her on the Board.
- 4.3 The Chair reported on his recent activities since the Board last met.
- i. on 21 May Sir Robert had met the new Chair of Public Administration and Constitutional Affairs Committee (PACAC), Dame Jackie Doyle-Price MP; and
 - ii. on 22 May Sir Robert, alongside Professor Denise Lievesley, had attended a meeting at the Royal Statistical Society on the Lievesley Review. Sir Robert and Professor Lievesley had also attended a meeting of stakeholders chaired by Sir Charlie Bean to discuss the review.
- 4.4 Following the announcement of the General Election and the commencement of the pre-election period, the timeline for the NED recruitment had been paused, and the Authority's annual scrutiny session before PACAC on 4 June had been postponed. The response to PACAC's report on Transforming the UK's Evidence Base, published on 24 May, had also been delayed due to the pre-election period.
- 4.5 Sir Robert would be writing publicly to the leaders of UK political parties reminding them of their responsibilities to use statistics appropriately and transparently during the general election campaign.

5. Report from the Chief Executive [SA(24)22]

- 5.1 Sir Ian provided the Board with an overview of activity and issues since the last meeting highlighting the following:
- i. the implementation of election planning being led by the National Statistician's Private Office;
 - ii. the year-end pre audit financial position, which was forecast to be a small under expenditure. Sir Ian noted thanks to Tom Taylor, Director of Finance, Planning and Performance, and the finance team;

- iii. on 14 May Sir Ian had presented at an Awayday at the Darlington Economic Campus, alongside Beth Russell (HM Treasury), Pauline Crellin (Department for Business and Trade) and Mike Keoghan;
 - iv. media coverage regarding comments made by ONS's Chief Economist in relation to the publication of the Gross Domestic Product first quarterly estimate on 10 May;
 - v. the publication of a range of statistical outputs including inflation statistics on 22 May, and migration statistics on 23 May;
 - vi. an article by the Financial Times claiming that a fifth of the workforce had left ONS in the last year, according to data obtained by a Freedom of Information (Fol) request. Sir Ian clarified that the majority had been in administrative roles in support of the Census 2021;
 - vii. industrial action was ongoing with Public and Commercial Service Union (PCS) members taking part in action short of a strike in relation to hybrid working;
 - viii. the report by the PACAC - Transforming the UK's Evidence Base published on 24 May, highlighted the need to resolve the longstanding issues around data sharing and aligned to the work by ONS to transform the future of population and migration statistics, and the recommendation in the Lievesley Review. The report commended the Office for Statistics Regulation (OSR) for its work on intelligent transparency and recommended that it publish an annual report card on departments' compliance with its guidance. It also highlighted a mismatch between the ambitious vision of the Analysis Function and the limited funding made available to deliver the vision;
 - ix. Sir Ian and Sir Robert had met colleagues at No 10 and the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities regarding coherence of UK wide data;
- 5.2 Members discussed the update highlighting the low response rate for the Wealth and Asset Survey and associated quality risks. It was noted that this was in part linked to the dual running of the TLFS and LFS. Sir Ian confirmed that the Senior Leadership Team were currently working through the impact of any further period of extended dual running of the TLFS/LFS, which at this point, had not been agreed.
- 5.3 With regard to the publication of the Future of Population and Migration Statistics Recommendation it was noted that the publication date was subject to further engagement with stakeholders and Ministers. The pre-election period would also inform the publication date.
- 5.4 The Board noted the update. It was agreed that a paper on the Business Survey Strategy would be scheduled for a future meeting.
- 6. Report from the Director General of Regulation [SA(24)23]**
- 6.1 Rob Kent-Smith provided an update on regulation activity since the last meeting, highlighting that following the announcement of the General Election OSR had issued letters to Permanent Secretaries regarding intelligent transparency in the use of statistics, and the need to ensure equality of access to data particularly during the pre-election period.
- 6.2 OSR had published an election page, which included a series of topic based statements designed to support the public when hearing statistics used in public debate. Resourcing plans were in place to deal with any increased activity. The volume of casework had not yet increased as a result of the election. Casework topics since the last meeting included the budget for social care, casualty statistics produced by the Gaza Ministry of Health and the reference by the ONS Chief Economist as part of the GDP release on 10 May.
- 6.3 Following the publication of PACAC's Report Transforming the UK's Evidence Base, OSR were considering the recommendation that they publish an annual report card on departments' compliance with OSR's guidance on Intelligence Transparency.

7. Report from the Chair of the Audit and Risk Assurance Committee

- 7.1 The Chair reported on the work of the Audit and Risk Assurance Committee which had last met on 16 May.
- 7.2 The Committee had considered:
- i. the pre audit financial position at year end 2023/24 with a small under expenditure;
 - ii. the breach of Cabinet Office controls regarding the contract for the Crime Survey for England and Wales;
 - iii. an update on the strategic risk profile with a focus on risks outside of risk appetite;
 - iv. legacy and website transformation plans to mitigate risks;
 - v. delivery of the full Internal Audit Plan 2023/24 and discussion of the Internal Audit Contract Management Report; and
 - vi. the Annual Fraud Report 2023/24;
- 7.3 Board members discussed the Cabinet Office breach of commercial controls regarding the contract for the Crime Survey. It was noted that the Cabinet Office had withheld its approval on the basis it would not approve retrospective business cases. The ONS Executive Committee had taken a risk based decision in October 2023 based on value for money, balancing the regulatory position with the contract to ensure the delivery of the Crime Survey from April 2024. The Comptroller and Auditor General would make the final decision on whether the breach would lead to a regularity qualification.

8. Lievesley Review – Authority Response [SA(24)24]

- 8.1 Tom Taylor and Ross Tivey introduced a paper which provided the Board with the draft response to the Lievesley Review of the UK Statistics Authority. Following the announcement of the general election the response would be published in July after the pre-election period.
- 8.2 Board members discussed the draft response. The following points were made in discussion:
- i. the response to recommendation two in relation to a Director General (DG) for Methodology should emphasise that resolving methodology questions was core to ONS's role with ONS continuing to draw on international experts as methodology advisors. The Authority Board reiterated that Sir Ian as Chief Executive of the UK Statistics Authority is responsible for decisions relating to the senior leadership team;
 - ii. the need to include further detail at the start reflecting that ONS and OSR would in time provide additional detail on the implementation of recommendations as work progressed; and
 - iii. with regard to the Statistical Assembly there was support for the proposed way forward with Sarah Moore working in collaboration with the Royal Statistical Society. It was noted that the Assembly would have an advisory role and would not replace the Authority Board as the formal decision making body. The National Statistician's Expert User Advisory Group would assist the Board by distilling the outcomes of the Assembly into a short report for the Board. It was agreed that following the first Assembly consideration would be given to the effectiveness of this approach.
- 8.3 The Board noted the draft response. It was agreed that the final draft response would be circulated to the Board ahead of publication.

9. ARIES Programme and Transformed Labour Force Survey [SA(24)25]

- 9.1 Jason Zawadzki and Pete Benton introduced a paper which provided an update on the Ambitious, Radical and Inclusive Economic Statistics (ARIES) programme.
- 9.2 The Board heard that over the last quarter there had been improvements in the delivery confidence assessments for Public Sector Transformation, Legacy Ingres reduction and Business Statistics transformation. A number of key milestones had

been met with the publication of used car and rents data into headline consumer price statistics; publication of Research and Development expenditure by the UK Government in April; and new local authority level estimates of education output for inclusion in Regional Accounts.

- 9.3 Board members discussed progress update in relation to the non TLFS/LFS aspects of the programme in the first instance. Members highlighted that the management information provided showed some slippage. It was clarified that while there had been some slippage the delays were minor and would not impact on the delivery of key milestones.
- 9.4 Sir Ian and Pete Benton updated the Board on progress and challenges regarding the TLFS/LFS. Additional information had been provided as part of the Chief Executive's Report on this topic, including the May 2024 Monetary Policy Report, additional feedback from the Bank of England (BoE) to Mike Keoghan and a summary of the work undertaken by Professors Chambers and Brown to date to review the methodology underpinning the TLFS.
- 9.5 Sir Ian provided the background to the work on the transformation of the LFS. The original plan had been to modernise labour force statistics as the LFS had grown organically over a number of years. The plan at that point was the use of administrative data alongside a modern online labour force survey. As a result of the pandemic the vision had slightly moved away from the original concept. With regard to dual running, the expectation at that point was that two quarters would be sufficient.
- 9.6 Sir Ian subsequently commissioned an external review to provide strong methodological input with Pete Benton working with colleagues in Economic Statistics Group. It was noted that in parallel to the external review feedback from the BoE was received. Sir Ian noted that that latest results (unpublished at the time of the meeting) were promising and that the recent meeting with the BoE had been positive. A decision had not yet been reached by the Executive on the period of dual running for the TLFS/LFS.
- 9.7 Pete Benton reported on the status of the transition from the LFS to the TLFS highlighting that further data was needed to provide the evidence base to ensure a smooth transition to the TLFS. A systematic assessment of ONS's readiness was being undertaken to manage the transition, which would bring together the review by Professors Chambers and Brown, working in partnership with expert users including the BoE and HM Treasury.
- 9.8 The Board heard that the external review by Professors Chamber and Brown had noted that the original concept of the TLFS remained sensible. They advised a minimum of four quarters stable parallel running was needed to model any differences in seasonal behaviour. It was noted that the whole suite of labour market outputs, such as quarterly flows, had not yet been produced.
- 9.9 Board members discussed the progress of the TLFS/LFS and noted thanks to Sir Ian for providing the additional information. The following points were made in discussion:
 - i. the value and importance of the external review by Professors Chambers and Brown in providing assurance both internally and for the Board;
 - ii. given the need to be able to make a robust assessment of the differences between the TLFS and LFS a significant period of dual running appeared to be the most likely option going forward. This aligned with the view by Professors Chambers and Brown and also the view of the BoE, a key stakeholder of labour market statistics. In addition there was a reputational risk as the LFS had lost its National Statistics status;
 - iii. with regard to OSR's regulatory role it was noted that OSR were in discussion with ONS regarding the transformation of the TLFS/LFS to ensure that they were

receiving the right levels of assurance throughout, which included timing for accreditation;

- iv. the frequency of reporting progress of delivery of the TLFS, which had up until this point formed part of the quarterly ARIES programme update;
 - v. given the LFS may be in operation for an extended period of time, the weighting of the LFS was important. ONS would need to communicate clearly with users and key stakeholders in addressing their concerns;
 - vi. Board members would need to understand how ONS were performing against agreed quality criteria as agreed by the Programme Board;
 - vii. clarity of communication with users going forward would be critical to ensure they were aware in advance of progress and any delays. It would be important for users and stakeholders to understand what would be available from administrative data and what would be lost; and
 - viii. the financial implication of any further period of dual running was currently being calculated including the opportunity to make any savings.
- 9.10 The Board noted the update. It was agreed that the TLFS/LFS would be a standing agenda item going forward. Future reporting needed to be with candour, setting out plans, challenges, risks to delivery, and how they were being mitigated. The Board noted that there had been challenges in reaching this point, which had not been apparent in previous reporting. As part of future reporting to the Board a summary of how the organisation reached this point would be provided as part of lessons learned.

10. Integrated Data Service [SA(24)26]

- 10.1 Pete Benton introduced a paper which provided update on the progress of delivery of the Integrated Data Service. Pete Benton had taken on the role as Senior Responsible Owner.
- 10.2 The Board heard that as the programme entered its final year before transitioning to live service the need to significantly grow the service and speed up the process for data provision, linkage and analysis were the key areas of focus. The programme's senior leadership team had agreed key factors that defined the success of the programme: high value linked datasets available for analysis; rapid and effective access for analysts; streamlined accreditation process; a mature reference data management framework; barriers to data sharing unblocked; strong privacy protection; appropriate security for linked data; and strong user confidence and satisfaction
- 10.3 Board members discussed the update. The following points were considered in discussion:
- i. the need to realise the vision of the IDS, growing the service and increasing the number of users at pace;
 - ii. clarity on the definition of complete for the programme after which the service would continue to expand;
 - iii. delivery progress of the transition of the Secure Research Service into the IDS; and
 - iv. addressing the barriers to data sharing across government, as highlighted by the Lievesley Review, including the issue of data owners not wanting to lose control of the narrative of their data.
- 10.4 The Board noted the update. Future reporting would include a refreshed dashboard setting out the delivery and maturity of the programme against the key success factors.

11. Legacy Transformation including Website Plan [SA(24)27]

- 11.1 Simon Sandford-Taylor introduced a paper, which set out the plans in place to mitigate the risks around legacy and website transformation, as a result of a cross organisational approach and support. At its meeting on 16 May the Audit and Risk Assurance Committee had discussed and been assured by these plans.

11.2 Board members discussed the approach being taken, specifically the work on the website to date, which had seen a reduction in the number of errors, and the longer term transformation.

11.3 The Board noted the update.

12. Any Other Business

12.1 The Board would next meet on Thursday 27 June.

UK STATISTICS AUTHORITY

Agenda

Thursday 30 May, 11.15-14.00
London Boardroom, Hybrid Meeting

Chair: Sir Robert Chote

Apologies: Ed Humpherson, Sarah Moore, Alison Pritchard, Professor Sir David Spiegelhalter

Attendees: Pete Benton (for items 7 and 8), Simon Sandford-Taylor (for item 9), Rob Kent-Smith, Ross Tivey (for item 6), Jason Zawadzki (for items 7 and 9),

NED Session: 10.30-11.15

1 11.15-11.20 5 mins	Minutes and matters arising from previous meeting Declarations of interest	Meeting of 25 April 2024
2 11.20-11.30 10 mins	Report from the Authority Chair	SA(24)21 Sir Robert Chote
3 11.30-12.00 30 mins	Report from the Chief Executive	SA(24)22 Prof. Sir Ian Diamond
4 12.00-12.10 10 mins	Report from the Director General for Regulation	SA(24)23 Rob Kent-Smith
5 12.10-12.20 10 mins	Report from Committee Chair <ul style="list-style-type: none">Audit and Risk Assurance Committee	Oral update Dr Jacob Abboud
12.20-12.25 5 mins	Break	
6 12.25-12.50 25 mins	Lievesley Review – Authority Response	SA(24)24 Tom Taylor Ross Tivey
7 12.50-13.15 25 mins	ARIES	SA(24)25 Jason Zawadzki Pete Benton
8 13.15-13.35 20 mins	Integrated Data Service	SA(24)26 Pete Benton
9 13.35-13.55 20 mins	Legacy Transformation including Website Plan	SA(24)27 Simon Sandford-Taylor Jason Zawadzki
10 13.55-14.00 5 mins	Any Other Business	

Next meeting: 27 June 2024, London Boardroom

Chair's Report, May 2024

Purpose

1. This paper provides the Authority Board with an overview of the Chair's activity in late April and May.

Review of recent activities

2. On 29 April, I met with Andy Garrett and Sarah Cumbers, Royal Statistical Society (RSS) President and CEO respectively, to discuss the Lievesley report and priorities for the coming year, including how we will be responding to the upcoming general election. We discussed plans for the statistical assembly, which the Authority and RSS are partnering on, particularly how to extract the most value from the views expressed and translate these into priorities for the system.
3. On the assembly, I met this month with Sarah Moore, Director of Communications, to refine plans further. Sir Ian, Sarah and I met with Professor David Hand, Chair of the National Statistician's Expert User Advisory Committee, on 10 May to discuss high-level plans and obtain his input into the proposal, particularly how his Committee can play a role in the assembly. A draft proposal is included in Board papers this month for discussion.
4. On 22 May, I attended a discussion meeting at the RSS on the topic of the Lievesley report, where Professor Lievesley introduced the report and I provided a verbal contribution in response, alongside Rebecca Riley, Director of the Economic Statistics Centre of Excellence (ESCoE) and Phylis McFarlane, Better Statistics CIC. Other attendees who contributed to the discussion included Professor David Hand, Paul Allin, and Professor Sheila Bird. Participants are now invited to provide further written contributions ahead of a short RSS report summarising the discussion to be published over the summer. Professor Lievesley and I also joined a meeting of stakeholders chaired by Sir Charlie Bean to discuss her report on 21 May.
5. On 9 May, I chaired the sift panel for our NED recruitment campaign. We received a high volume of applications from which we have produced a shortlist. The shortlist was submitted to Ministers in May. At time of writing, we await confirmation from the Cabinet Office of how the general election called for 4 July will affect the recruitment timeline.
6. On 16 May, John Aston and I received a briefing on the Transformed Labour Force Survey (TLFS) from the National Statistician, Pete Benton, Mike Keoghan, Alex Lambert and Philippa Bonay. We discussed progress to date, including the analysis that Pete is conducting to help compare the LFS and TLFS, and the conversations underway with stakeholders to inform the period of dual running. An ARIES update is included in papers for the May meeting.
7. On 21 May, I had an introductory meeting with Dame Jackie Doyle-Price MP, the new Chair of the Public Administration and Constitutional Affairs Committee (PACAC). The Authority's annual scrutiny session, scheduled for 4 June, has now been postponed.
8. I also held my regular catchups with the National Statistician, Director General for Regulation, Deputy Chair, and the Chairs of the Regulation and Audit and Risk Assurance Committees.

Casework and correspondence

9. On 1 May, I responded to Andrew Gwynne MP on social care funding.

10. On 3 May, I responded to Sir Michael Ellis MP and Andrew Percy MP, and to Jonathan Turner, Executive Director of UK Lawyers for Israel, on concerns about parliamentarians' use of statistics on the Gaza conflict.

Sir Robert Chote, Chair, 23 May 2024

Chief Executive's Report, May 2024

Purpose

1. This provides the Authority Board with an overview of activity for May 2024.

Summary

2. Our **economic statistics** releases continued to receive higher media and stakeholder attention this month, especially May's Gross Domestic Product (GDP) figures and the ongoing recovery work on the Labour Force Survey (LFS). We have also published **new shipping data** for the first time from the Data Science Campus, providing novel insight into disruption in the Red Sea.
3. Having been approved at April Board, the recommendation on the **Future of Population and Migration Statistics** (FPMS) is now readying for publication as we continue to engage with a variety of stakeholders. I also had an interview with **Professor Alice Sullivan** as part of her review into sex and gender data. We are also finalising our draft response to the **Lievesley Review**, including a proposal for the **Statistical Assembly**.

Review of recent activities

4. As a **UK General Election** has now been called, the organisation is now implementing its election planning. This is being coordinated through the National Statistician's Private Office. We are proactively reviewing our planned publications during the pre-election period, sharing guidance with all colleagues and reviewing our public engagements.
5. On portfolio, the **recommended portfolio status** for April remains amber, with the delivery confidence for FPMS improving from red to amber, and all other programmes remaining the same. The portfolio benefits indicator improved this month reflecting the overall increase in benefits projected for ARIES, and a clearer picture on benefits for IDP.
6. Our **economic releases** continue to receive high media and stakeholder attention, including May's GDP. Our May Economic Forum enabled us to engage 330 stakeholders, covering the state of the economy, transformation updates and deep dives into the geographical mobility of young people across English towns and cities, and recent trends in UK trade volumes and balances. The Financial Times covered the Bank of England's comments on the labour force survey following the Monetary Policy report, quoting our statement that steps have been taken to boost the response rate, which were already leading to a "notable" improvement, although they would "take some time to feed through completely". We secured positive pieces about our survey response improvement work through an interview with Bloomberg, which was further picked up by Fortune.
7. Following the Authority Board's endorsement of the National Statistician Recommendation on FPMS, documents are being finalised. The publication date is to be determined, subject to further engagement (including ministerial) and ongoing engagement with our stakeholders. The pre-election period will also shape our publication options and dates. Our series of four **academic sessions** as part of pre recommendation engagement activity were well-received.
8. The suite of **migration** publications, published on 23 May, includes provisional year end December 2023 UK long term international migration, British Nationals and research update, international students update and understanding international migration statistics (FAQ). A [user technical report](#) was also published on 3 May.

9. The **Pandemic Preparedness Toolkit** team, together with Julie Stanborough and Theo Joloza (International Development Team), visited Pathfinder Partner Malawi. Successful meetings were held with the National Statistical Office of Malawi, potential in-country delivery partners, as well as colleagues from Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office, NHS England, UK Health Security Agency and Department of Health and Social Care who are working in Malawi on health development projects, ensuring a One HMG approach to this work. Planning for the final Pathfinder Partner visit to Argentina, in collaboration with the International Relations Team, is progressing well. This is scheduled for the week commencing 20 May.
10. This month we also published **estimates of veteran suicides** for 2021 for the first time. This was the result of a long running project with Office for Veteran Affairs (OVA) and Ministry of Defence (MoD). We received extremely positive feedback from OVA on this release as well as extensive media coverage.
11. Statistics published by the **Data Science Campus** on [ship crossings through critical maritime passages](#), received media coverage in the Times, Independent, and Sky News. Alongside the significant public interest, these statistics support ONS economic priorities by shedding light on trade disruption, and were developed to meet the needs of Department for Business and Trade, Department for Transport and the Cabinet Office.
12. Mike Keoghan and David Freeman attended a private session at the House of Lords Economic Advisory Committee answering questions relating to economic inactivity and labour market statistics more generally. The session was well received by the Lords.
13. Over 100 ONS staff based in the **Darlington Economic Campus** attended a hugely successful awayday on 14 May. With presentations from myself, Beth Russell (HMT), Pauline Crellin (Department for Business and Trade) and Mike Keoghan, those attending heard about the aims of the campus, the importance of ONS having a large presence there and the longer-term vision. Those present discussed what ONS could uniquely contribute to the campus to help diversity, collaboration and knowledge transfer. The buzz in the room of people building networks and sharing ideas was very special.
14. Late April saw the publication of the latest **Crime in England and Wales** statistics, covering the period to December 2023. This release also saw a change in the narrative following previous criticism at the time of the last release for the use of the phrase "**Total Crime**". At the same we launched a review into the review of Crime Statistics primarily to ensure that we are meeting user expectations in how we describe the data.
15. April also saw the publication of the **Household Satellite Account** for the first time since 2016, which was made possible by the development of the ONS Time Use Survey. In early May saw the release of the latest data on **Time Use**, which despite being data only received positive pick up from the media.
16. On 16 April, Jay Lindop presented at an event hosted by the **All-Party Parliamentary Group (APPG) for Social Science and Policy** on UK migration data. The event was well attended by both MPs and Lords. Following the success of this, the Parliamentary Unit will be looking for more opportunities to engage with APPGs which are a great way to less formally engage with parliamentarians on topics where we can provide insight.
17. The first Secure Research Service (SRS) project application has been triaged to begin on **IDS**, following a feasibility assessment. A further progress update on the IDS more generally is provided in the separate Board paper.
18. In April, seven members of the **Digital and Data Test Academy** successfully completed the International Software Testing Qualification Foundation Level course. This globally recognised certification has equipped the team with essential skills in software testing, including fundamental concepts, methodologies, and best practices relevant to various software delivery approaches like Agile and DevOps. This accomplishment not only

enhances ONS' in-house software testing capability but also opens up opportunities for advanced certifications in the future.

19. On 25 April, Emma Rourke and I met **Prof Alice Sullivan** as part of her review of data, statistics and research on sex and gender. The Review is expected to report by 31 August 2024 to the Deputy Prime Minister and the Science Secretary, though this is likely now to be impacted by the General Election. The Chair and the Director General for Regulation have separately met Prof Sullivan on behalf of the Authority and OSR.
20. Business Surveys Directorate met colleagues from the **Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS)** to discuss their Business Surveys Transformation Programme and how their approach to using surveys, admin data, technology and regression techniques have been used to improve the quality of their statistics, reduce burden and improve the respondent experience. Follow up meetings will be held with ABS to discuss in more detail.
21. Internationally, we welcomed H.E. Dr Fahad Aldossari the National Statistician of **Saudi Arabia** and his delegation to our London offices where he met with myself and other departmental heads. We discussed census review work and reviewed the existing Memorandum of Understanding. The meeting was very productive and will lead to further collaboration as we increase our work in the region.
22. A team of four from the ONS visited the **General Authority for Statistics in Riyadh** last month, working on a review of the Saudi 2022 census. They focused specifically on quality issues relating to census design, collection, analysis and dissemination.
23. A delegation from the ONS attended the **United Nations Economic Commission for Europe's Group of Experts on National Accounts (GENA)** meeting in Geneva from 23 - 25 April. UK presentations covered a range of topics, including natural capital accounts and beyond GDP. The meeting also included discussion and updates on the upcoming 2025 System of National Accounts.
24. Victoria Obudulu, Head of Profession for Statistics at the UK Health Security Agency, has been appointed as the first **Deputy Head of the GSS by the National Statistician**. Victoria will assist the National Statistician in promoting the GSS, support Heads of Profession to undertake their responsibilities as appropriate and assure the standing of the statistics profession.
25. Finally, the **Public Confidence in Official Statistics 2023** survey, conducted independently by the National Centre for Social Research (NatCen), was published this month and found that survey respondents' trust in the ONS remained very high even while the reputation of other state institutions slipped back since 2021. 87 per cent of respondees who expressed a view said they tend to trust the ONS, or trust it a great deal; and 85 per cent similarly said they trusted the statistics it produces. While this is a slight drop of 2 percentage points for each of these measures compared to 2021, these are confirmed by NatCen as not statistically significant and continue the established trend of high levels of trust in the ONS overall amongst the public.

Professor Sir Ian Diamond, National Statistician, May 2024

Update from the Director General for Regulation

Purpose

1. This paper provides members of the UK Statistics Authority Board (the Board) with an overview of Office for Statistics Regulation (OSR) activities.

Discussion

2. Our main areas of focus since the last Board meeting have been:
 - i. Ongoing work
 - **Public Administration and Constitutional Affairs Committee (PACAC):** The team and I have been preparing ahead of the Authority scrutiny session on 4 June. Following the announcement this session has now been cancelled.
 - **OSR Audit:** We are preparing for an Internal Audit on the consistency of judgements across casework and assessments. Earlier this month we met with the Audit team to discuss the direction and scope of the audit.
 - **Gender Identity:** We expect to share our final report on our review of Census Gender Identity with Regulation Committee in June.
 - **Code Refresh:** We have completed six internal task and finish groups looking more deeply into areas raised during the Code review. We are preparing material for testing with stakeholders with several options for the future presentation of the Code and planning the external testing. We will shortly run sessions with the Regulation Committee and the OSR team.
 - **State of the Statistical System:** We have shared our report with the Regulation Committee and plan to publish in early June.
 - **Business Enterprise Research and Development (BERD) Assessment:** Following the temporary suspension of accredited official statistics status of the sub-national and sectoral BERD data we commenced a quality focused assessment as part of our spotlight on quality programme. We have shared our reports (one for the Office for National Statistics (ONS), one for the Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency (NISRA) with Regulation Committee members for comment ahead of planned publication in early June.
 - **Ensuring Confidence in Public Sector classifications review:** We plan to share the draft report for public sector classifications with the Regulation Committee in June. We found good support for the roles of various teams and committees in forming classification decisions. We expect to make recommendations around capability, international collaboration, clarity of publishing decisions, and implementation of decisions in published statistics.
 - ii. Published work:
 - **Higher Education Graduate Outcomes Data and Statistics:** We published our [assessment](#) finding that these statistics adhere to the Code of Practice closely and confirmed that they can be confirmed as accredited official statistics. It is rare for OSR to accredit official statistics without first providing producers with requirements.
 - **Annual Business Survey Statistics:** We reviewed the action taken by ONS to address the five requirements outlined in our [assessment report](#) and confirmed that the statistics continue to comply with the Code.
 - **Scottish Health Survey Statistics (SHeS):** We recently carried out a [compliance check](#) of the SHeS. These statistics were designated as National Statistics in 2010 and they will continue to be accredited as accredited official statistics.

- **Police Recorded Crime (PRC):** We have now published our [report](#) on the quality of PRC statistics, recognising the significant progress police forces have made in improving crime recording. We call for further action from the Home Office and the ONS to address the remaining challenges and gaps in oversight and communication of data quality.
- **UK General Election:** Following the Prime Ministers announcement last week that a General Election will be held on 4 June we have sent letters to Permanent Secretaries and have prepared a letter for the Authority Chair to send to Party Leaders reminding them of the need for Intelligent transparency when communicating statistics, data and wider analysis and sharing pre-election guidance. We will continue to promote and safeguard the use of statistics in public debate during the pre-election period and will publicly highlight cases where campaigning parties have made statements that draw on statistics and data that are not published or that are presented in a misleading way. We have published our [election page](#) bringing together our pre-election guidance, interventions policy, “what to look out for” statements in areas we think may be debated in the run up to the election, and any other support and guidance we can point to.
- **The use of official statistics in UK public policy:** We have published a [literature review](#) on the role official statistics can play in policy making and the factors that can facilitate or act as a barrier to this. Our [cover article](#) lists actions producers of statistics and policy-makers can take to support the role of official statistics in public policy. The review is part of OSR’s wider research programme and complements ongoing research on how members of the public use official statistics.

Casework

3. Since the last Board meeting, we have received 17 cases on topics including crime, homicide, covid, migration, small boats and waiting lists. We have closed 18 cases including two public interventions on budget increases for social care and conflict fatalities.
4. Sir Robert Chote wrote to [Andrew Gwynne MP](#) responding to his concern with the Chancellors’ claim that he increased the budget on social care by nearly 40 per cent in his first Autumn statement. The letter advised that, in an ideal world, the Chancellor would have been clearer about exactly what budget he was referring to, and the time periods he was comparing, but that such clarity was less easy to achieve in an off-the-cuff response to an interview question.
5. Sir Robert also wrote to [Sir Michael Ellis MP and Andrew Percy MP](#) responding to their concerns of the UK government and the oppositions use of casualty statistics produced by the Gaza Ministry of Health related to the Israel-Hamas conflict. The letter said that this concern was beyond our remit but that we would encourage Parliamentarians to be clear on the source of any estimates they use in the public domain and to recognise the limitations attached to them.

Wider reach

6. **Blogs:** Elise Rohan and I published a blog on [the role of statistics in elections](#). This blog sits on our new Election 2024 page. We published a blog alongside the Police Recorded Crime report to help [understanding of the complexities of crime statistics](#). Our Head of Research published a blog on [how the findings from the 2023 Public Confidence in Official Statistics Survey are relevant to OSR](#). OSR worked closely with the UK Statistics Authority team responsible for the PCOS survey this year, to ensure that the findings have been presented fairly, recognising the good news but seeking to avoid overstating the assurance that can be taken from the results.

7. **External events:** Since the last Board meeting, I attended a Better Statistics Inflation seminar, giving the keynote speech discussing current regulatory issues in prices and our work on economic statistics. I also attended the Economic Statistics Centre of Excellence conference sitting on a panel about our report on revisions to GDP. I also attended another seminar in the Information paradox series, which focused on initiatives to equip government and society to view data science products with a critical eye.

Issues on my mind

8. **Strengthening OSR independence:** In response to the Lievesley review we are continuing to take every opportunity to reinforce our independence. We have ensured that our separate status is included in presentations to both new and regular audiences. We have also highlighted that, as Director General for OSR, I report directly to the Chair of the UK Statistics Authority.

Ed Humpherson, Director General for Regulation, OSR, 22 May 2024

Children, Education and Skills

Published our assessment of the Graduate Outcomes statistics produced by Jisc. Undertaking a compliance check on the Higher Education Student Statistics, also produced by Jisc - will be completed in the summer due to delays to the statistics publication.

Crime and Security

Published report on the quality of the police recorded crime statistics for England and Wales, with accompanying blog post. Finalising compliance review letter about Home Office's stop and search statistics.

Economy, Business and Trade

Finalising draft Spotlight on Quality assessments for Business Enterprise Research and Development statistics with ONS and NISRA. Conducting compliance check on Insolvency services statistics, finalising the SoQ framework for publication, following peer review.

Health and Social Care

Published compliance review letter about statistics from the Scottish Health Survey; finalising compliance review letter about statistics from the Winter Coronavirus Infection Study; drafting article about the use of statistics to support work across the UK to improve Health Inequalities.

Housing, Planning and Local Services

Started assessment of ONS Price Index of Private Rents

Labour Market and Welfare

Engaging with BEIS, Scottish Government and Welsh Government on amending the status of statistics derived from the LFS to be official statistics in development in line with the ONS approach to LFS derived statistics. Letters to be published May 2024.

Population and Society

Finalising draft assessment report for ONS's Admin Based Population Estimates, to discuss at June Regulation Committee.

Transport, Environment and Climate Change

Completing short review of DfT's reported road casualty statistics

Casework (22 May 24)

Children, Education and Skills	Response to the National Education Union regarding the DfE's comparisons of Ofsted school ratings in recent statements, due to be published on 23/05.
Crime and Security	Preparing to respond to Jess Phillips MP on comments made by the Prime Minister and Home Secretary about falling crime rates.
Economy, Business and Trade	Preparing to respond to Sarah Olney MP on comments made by the Chancellor regarding the tax burden across the UK. Also planning to write to the Permanent Secretary of HM Treasury regarding its statement that the 'UK is set to increase defence spending to 2.5% of GDP by 2030 - an increase of £75 billion'.
Health and Social Care	Received letters from Karin Smyth MP and Daisy Cooper MP on the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care and Prime Minister's use of statistics on NHS waiting lists.
Housing, Planning and Local Services	We are anticipating a letter from Lord Bailey regarding the Mayor for London's comments on affordable housing in London, following coverage of the concerns raised in the Telegraph.
Labour Market and Welfare	Received a letter from Paul O'Kane MSP on statements made by the First Minister about child poverty in Scotland.
Population and Society	Received multiple concerns regarding costs of gambling harm and the problem gambling severity index.
Transport, Environment and Climate Change	Received multiple concerns regarding Sustrans Walking and Cycling index.

Delivery (April - May 2024)

Children, Education and Skills	Higher Education Student Statistics (Jisc)
Crime and Security	Police powers and procedures: Stop and search and arrests statistics (Home Office)
Health and Social Care	Winter Covid-19 Infection Study (UK Health Security Agency and Office for National Statistics)
Research	Literature Review: Official statistics and policy
Transport, Environment and Climate Change	Reported road casualty statistics (Department for Transport)

Published/Follow up (April - May 2024)

Crime and Security	Systemic Review of Police Recorded Crime statistics (Office for National Statistics and Home Office)
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Closed (April - May 2024)

Economy, Business and Trade	Annual Business Survey statistics
Children, Education and Skills	Higher Education Graduate Outcomes Data and Statistics
Health and Social Care	Scottish Health Survey statistics

Data and Methods

Working on an update to our review of data sharing and linkage across government, to be published in July 2024.

Insight

Second version of State of the Statistical System report shared with Regulation Committee for comment by Monday 20th May. Intention is to publish in June.

Policy and Standards

Working on the refresh of the Code of Practice and refresh of voluntary application. 2024 VA award received 7 entries with judging in early June.

Research

Publishing literature review about the role of official statistics for public policy on 21 May.

UK Statistics Authority response to the Independent Review of the UK Statistics Authority

Purpose

1. This paper provides the Board with the Authority's draft response to Professor Lievesley's independent review of the UK Statistics Authority.

Timing

2. The draft response previously shared with Board members was intended for publication in early June. Following the announcement of a general election, the Authority's response will be prepared for publication in July, after the conclusion of the pre-election period of sensitivity.
3. The nature of references in the enclosed draft to discussions with and commitments from the current government will depend on the outcome of the general election. A further draft response will be shared with Board members in July for final approval before publication.

Recommendations

4. Members of the Board are invited to:
 - i. comment on the proposed response to Professor Lievesley's Review which incorporates Board members' written comments received in advance; and
 - ii. comment on the proposals for updating the Board on progress against the implementation of agreed recommendations (paragraph 10).

Background

5. As part of the Government's programme of Public Bodies Reviews, an independent review of the Authority was announced in June 2023, chaired by Professor Denise Lievesley. The Review's terms of reference covered the Authority's:
 - i. *Efficacy*, and "whether the UKSA is producing statistics that respond to genuine user need";
 - ii. *Accountability* and the Authority's accountability arrangements with the Cabinet Office;
 - iii. *Governance*, including whether there is "any conflict between the production and regulation functions" of the Authority, and how the Authority supports the provision of UK-wide data; and
 - iv. *Efficiency*, whether the Authority's plan to deliver its spending reductions is feasible, and any opportunities for longer term efficiencies.
6. A public call for evidence closed in July 2023 and Professor Lievesley carried out engagement with the Authority and its stakeholders. Professor Lievesley attended an Authority Board meeting on 29 February 2024. The Review was published on 12 March¹, making 19 direct recommendations to the Government and Authority, plus numerous accompanying suggestions.
7. The Government's initial response to each recommendation was also published on 12 March. Detailed further Government responses to Recommendation 5 (UK-wide coherence) and Recommendation 6 (Data sharing) were due to be published later in the

¹ [Independent Review of the UK Statistics Authority 2023 – 2024](#), gov.uk, 12 March 2024

year. Engagement with Ministers on these recommendations will resume after the general election.

Discussion

8. The Review's findings speak highly of the overall quality of the UK's official statistical system and the dedication of those working within it. At the same time, the Review details some of the familiar major challenges to the system, notably around:
 - i. engagement and communication with users of statistics (Recommendations 1, 9, 10, 11, 12, 15, 18 and 19);
 - ii. sharing data across government (Recommendations 6 and 7);
 - iii. keeping technical capabilities up to date in a rapidly changing environment (Recommendations 2, 7, 13 and 14); and
 - iv. the coherence of data across the UK (Recommendation 5).
9. As noted in the Government's response to the Review, Professor Lievesley does not offer prescriptive solutions to these more general challenges but makes recommendations for further work to address them in collaboration with users and partners inside and outside of government.
10. Our response to the Review is presented as a 'one-Authority' response encompassing contributions from the Office for National Statistics, Office for Statistics Regulation (OSR) and Authority Board members. It sets out the Authority's broad intentions in addressing the recommendations and shows where work is already underway. It notes that further detail on the implementation of some recommendations will follow in due course (for example, the working arrangements for the Statistical Assembly, and the statement of operational separation by the OSR.)
11. Some of the recommendations made by the Review can be addressed quickly. Others will, and indeed already do, require the consideration of the Board over time. To ensure that the Authority's focus on implementing agreed recommendations from the Review is not diluted over time, we recommend that the Board receives quarterly written updates on overall progress. At a working level a detailed tracker will be maintained to drive progress through named action owners.

Conclusion

12. This paper asks the Board to review the proposed response to Professor Lievesley's review and to confirm the Board is happy with the proposed monitoring of actions for future reporting to the Board (paragraph 10).

Tom Taylor, Finance, Planning and Performance, Ross Tivey and Meera Parmar, Policy Liaison Unit, 23 May 2024

ARIES Programme Quarterly Delivery Report

Purpose

1. This paper provides members of the UK Statistics Authority Board (the Board) with a status update on the Ambitious, Radical and Inclusive Economic Statistics (ARIES) programme. Our last report to the Board was in February 2024.
2. Members of the Board are invited to consider:
 - i. the latest milestone status, programme delivery confidence assessment, key challenges, and associated management actions; and
 - ii. the progress in managing the transition from the Labour Force Survey (LFS) to the Transformed Labour Force Survey (TLFS).

Background

3. The ARIES programme brings together the four pillars of the Authority strategy, 'Statistics for the Public Good'; Ambitious, Radical, Inclusive, Sustainable, with the transformation aims of Economic, Social and Environmental Statistics Group
4. Our Full Business Case (FBC) was formally signed-off in July 2023. The Programme is committed to an annual business case review, with the 2024/25 FBC refresh having received Office for National Statistics (ONS) governance approval in April 2024 and HMT currently in review.

Discussion

Overall programme status

5. The April ARIES Programme Board robustly debated the delivery confidence for the programme and assessed it as Amber.
6. Over the last quarter significant effort by the teams has resulted in the Delivery Confidence Assessments (DCAs) for Public Sector Transformation, Legacy Ingress Reduction and Business Statistics Transformation all improving and moving into 'strong shades of Green'.
7. Noteworthy deliveries in the last quarter include the following key outcome milestones:
 - i. publication of used cars in headline measures of Consumer Price Statistics and stabilisation of rail fares (Prices);
 - ii. publication of new Private Rental Indices incorporating new data sources and improved methods – GB (Prices);
 - iii. new local authority level estimates of education output delivered for inclusion in Regional Accounts and improved quarterly healthcare metrics delivered for inclusion in quarterly GDP (Public Sector); and
 - iv. publish data on Research and Development expenditure by the UK government (GovERD) on the transformed BERD (Business Statistics).
8. At the time of writing, there are 12 Level 0s remaining - 5 Green, 3 Amber/Green, 2 Amber (1 relating to Prices Transformation and 1 relating to FSAID) and 2 Amber/Red (both relating to Labour Market Transformation).
9. The programme's main area of concern relates to our readiness for the transition to the TLFS in labour market outputs in September 2024, as discussed below.

Status with the transition from the LFS to the TLFS

10. Our focus on the TLFS is on ensuring quality and timeliness of the statistics and ensuring a smooth transition for our stakeholders.

11. We are now coordinating work across the office to make a systematic assessment of our readiness to manage the transition, bringing together:
 - i. a detailed review by Professors Ray Chambers and James Brown of the survey design, response patterns and weighting methods;
 - ii. assessment of the quality of the key economic and social statistics outputs;
 - iii. assessment of the quality of key micro-datasets; and
 - iv. assessment of the key operational metrics.
12. We are working in partnership with expert users including the Bank of England and HMT on this analysis.
13. The first stocktake is in mid-May, with a further iteration by mid-June. Our evidence will continue to grow over time as successive quarters' data become available and our analysis matures.
14. The May stocktake will be based on one quarter's stable data, with an initial analysis of the second quarter's data feeding into the June stocktake. Assessment of the quality of key micro-datasets requires further data processing and will take place between July and December 2024, alongside a maturing assessment of seasonal trends.
15. The evidence from these stocktakes will form the basis for discussions with key stakeholders including the Bank of England, HMT and the Office for Budget Responsibility, together with ongoing discussions regarding the quality of current labour market statistics.

Conclusion

16. Considering the performance across all projects within ARIES, the programme is in a strong position at the start of this final year. We have had another good quarter of delivery against plan, with material business and user outcomes delivered across our transformations of Prices, Business Statistics and Public Sector. Legacy Ingres is currently on track following our change in strategy through quarter 4; however, we are keeping this project under a short interval of control given historical performance.

Jason Zawadzki, Director, Economic Statistics Change and Senior Responsible Officer for ARIES, ONS, 17 May 2024

Integrated Data Service – May 2024 Update

Purpose

1. This paper provides members of the UK Statistics Authority Board (the Board) with an update on the progress of the Integrated Data Programme (IDP), responsible for the delivery of the Integrated Data Service (IDS).

Recommendations

2. Members of the Board are invited to:
 - i. note the updated figures on data, projects and user growth on the IDS platform; and
 - ii. note the proposed actions to improve delivery confidence and provide feedback.

Background

3. Pete Benton has accepted the Senior Responsible Owner (SRO) role for IDS. Building on his experience delivering Census 2021, Pete is responsible for ensuring the programme's alignment with the overall vision, outcome and benefits set out in the business case, in particular ensuring a successful transition from programme to service.
4. Since the beginning of April, Nigel Green has temporarily joined the programme from the Infrastructure and Projects Authority to support Pete and Programme Director Jason Yaxley, providing Director General level responsibility for IDS delivery. Nigel's focus is on the programme governance and technology aspects of IDS.
5. As the programme enters its final year of funding before it transitions to live service there is now, more than ever, a need to significantly grow the IDS data catalogue and speed up the process for data provision, linkage and analysis.

Discussion

Data, Projects and User Growth

6. There are currently 121 datasets on the IDS, of which 40 have been migrated from the secure research service (SRS).
7. The data pipeline is bringing an additional 52 datasets by the end of June, including 10 more indexed datasets. This includes the National Energy Efficiency Data-Framework, a thematic data asset linking domestic gas and electricity consumption data with other data about domestic properties and households. Other data that IDS users will be able to access includes the Living Costs and Food Survey and Monthly Wage and Salary Survey.
8. This will take the IDS to c.156 datasets by the end of June.
9. A refreshed communication and engagement approach is driving prospective user growth, supported by a more accessible IDS User Hub and data catalogue. The engagement team has had highly positive discussions with HM Revenue and Customs (HMRC), NHS-England, Central Digital Data Office, Department for Education (DfE), Department for Science, Innovation and Technology (DSIT), Department for Levelling Up Housing and Communities (DLUHC), Ministry of Justice, the Bank of England and Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency around bringing users on to IDS and both growing and utilising the data on the platform.
10. The total number of analyses undertaken on IDS is now 22, with two new pieces of analysis going live so far this month, both of which utilise the Labour Force Survey. The IDS prospects team anticipates four more projects to come online by the end of May from a combination of central government, local authorities and academic institutions.

11. This increase in analyses will result in the number of cumulative users on IDS rising to over 150 within the next several weeks.
12. Prior to the SRS front door closing in September, every new project application is reviewed to assess the feasibility to start on IDS. With recent progress on the data transition and the development of a Stata solution, it has now been possible to triage the first SRS project application into IDS. The analysis, which uses Labour Force Survey and Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings data, is now going through Research Accreditation Panel approval and is anticipated to start in July.
13. Pilot invitations have been extended to existing SRS users to be involved in full replication projects, where we will see more targeted feedback on the differences between the two services, allowing the programme to focus on better supporting transitioning users as this process begins over the next year.
14. Finally, much progress has been made supporting departments and stakeholders to be 'IDS Ready' by having the necessary network security configurations in place. Of the 133 organisations currently configured to remotely connect to the SRS, 22 are now ready in addition to 2 non-SRS user organisations. This has seen a rapid increase in the last month from 14 to 24 organisations. 6 of these 24 organisations are from government – HM Treasury (HMT), Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills, DLUHC, Welsh Government, DFE and Department of Housing and Social Care.
15. A further 17 organisations, including HMRC, Home Office, and Bank of England, are also progressing security configuration installation. We have written to all remaining organisations with an SRS administrative order of consent agreement to encourage take-up and offer our support.

Lievesley Review recommendations

16. As part of the Public Bodies Review Programme, Professor Denise Lievesley's review of the UK Statistics Authority set out two recommendations highly pertinent to the IDS. To summarise, these were firstly that the Centre of government must help departments to prioritise data sharing for statistical and research purposes and secondly, that the purpose, scope and requirements of IDS should be clearly communicated to address data owner concerns.
17. The programme's formal response to these recommendations sets out our strong agreement that overcoming the barriers to data sharing will require a strong drive from the centre of government. The IDS continues to be a key enabler of a number of government-wide strategies, including the National Data Strategy and Central Digital and Data Office (CDDO) Roadmap for Digital and Data. The success of IDS, as well as a Future Population and Migration Statistics System based on administrative data, is heavily dependent on departments overcoming the system-level barriers to sharing data identified in Professor Lievesley's Report.
18. With regards to the second recommendation, the IDS' Communications and Engagement Strategy has been refreshed to set out clear objectives to clarify the purpose of the IDS and its scope. Recent engagement includes the Bank of England, where the Bank are keen to get both their data and analysts onto the platform; with the data policy team at DSIT, who are keen to draw IDS further into their work; with No 10, who are looking to better value and utilise government data; and with CDDO looking at how we can collaborate more closely on data sharing.
19. The May meeting with HMT explored both current delivery of IDS and potential future funding. HMT remain focused on the need for IDS to show tangible outcomes over the next six months. They were reassured that the greater focus on key deliverables would not distract from the programme's ability to deliver for users and deliver its benefits

profile. HMT are keen to work with IDS on a potential follow-on programme, with initial discussions of a skeleton business case scheduled for late June.

Digital Economy Act Accreditation

20. In September 2024 the IDS is due to undergo its Annual Review of its Digital Economy Act (DEA) accreditation for Data Provision, following a 'Capable' assessment in 2023. Evidence supporting the controls being assessed will be gathered and submitted to the UK Statistics Authority assessors by 5 July 2024. Five security areas (out of 15) comprising 32 security controls, along with 15 (out of 29) data capability controls are in scope for this review.
21. The IDS submission for these controls will provide updated evidence on the areas where there have been substantial changes or additions to the service, as well as reporting on progress against the panel's 'suggested actions'. The former includes implementing a number of critical user and security features since last September, including low level and role-based access control to ensure data security, a front door to replace the current research accreditation service and the ability for users to ingest project specific data or code.
22. To reduce the level of risk in achieving DEA annual accreditation for Data Provision while simultaneously seeking accreditation for Data preparation, the IDP Delivery Board has de-coupled these two aspects of DEA accreditation. This allows the programme to focus on the Data Provision Annual Review as the highest priority.
23. The Programme is in the process of reconfirming its intentions to seek DEA preparation accreditation of the Reference Data Management Framework indexing capability in Google Cloud Platform in December as a 'processor', to ensure it aligns with wider Office for National Statistics (ONS) strategic plans for the migration of the Data Access Platform into Amazon Web Services.

New Programme Leadership and Early Days Assessment

24. As SRO, Pete Benton brings a wealth of ONS experience with large scale operations; associated programme delivery structures and the approaches to data linkage that are required to enable high quality, rapid analysis of complex datasets. Nigel Green brings 20 years' experience working in HMRC on major digital programmes. Together with Jason Yaxley the Programme Director, PWC our Strategic Delivery Partner, and in consultation with the wider programme leadership team, they have agreed the following key factors that define the success of the programme, and will drive our plans and decision making:
 - i. high value linked datasets available for analysis, covering a wide range of policy areas and domains;
 - ii. rapid and effective access for analysts, enabling timely and robust insights and evidence;
 - iii. simple and streamlined accreditation process, reducing the burden and complexity for data owners and users;
 - iv. a mature reference data management framework enabling accurate, rapid and consistent data linkage across different sources;
 - v. barriers to data sharing unblocked, through legal, process and technical solutions;
 - vi. strong privacy protection, with public support and trust in our use of data for public good;
 - vii. appropriate security for growing levels of linked data; and
 - viii. strong user confidence and satisfaction.
25. A rapid stocktake of the programme has been undertaken, resulting in a number of actions around service design, programme organisation, planning, IT architecture and governance to ensure the programme is able to meet these requirements.

26. This revised approach will be assessed by an Infrastructure and Projects Authority review in June to externally assure that the scope and plans are deliverable, following which formal endorsement to the changes in scope will be sought from HMT.

Pete Benton, SRO Integrated Data Programme, ONS, 14 May 20

UK STATISTICS AUTHORITY

AUTHORITY BOARD

SA(24)27

Update on Legacy and Website plans in relation to Strategic Risk 12

Purpose

1. This paper provides members of the Authority Board (the Board) with an update following an assessment of Strategic Risk (SR) 12 'Technological Resilience' provided to the Audit and Risk Assurance Committee (ARAC) in March 2024, that outlined the business risk and mitigations associated with the use of legacy technologies. It provides an update on the latest status and plans for the Office for National Statistics (ONS) website and wider legacy estate as requested from that session.

Recommendations

2. Members of the Board are invited to note the plans for ONS website and wider legacy reduction over the next 12 months.

Background

3. Following the paper submitted to ARAC in March 2024, a number of actions were agreed to keep SR12 within appetite for 2024/25 as follows:
 - i. all 2024/25 funding gaps addressed and confirmation that provisions will be made in the forthcoming Spending Review bid to continue the work required to keep SR12 within appetite;
 - ii. where missing, robust plans for the next 12 and 21 months to be constructed and presented to Executive Committee (ExCo) at a further review point, including confirmation of the necessary resources and capabilities being available to deliver these plans; and
 - iii. the plans will need to be scrutinised to ensure they address the challenges and avoid an increase in risk exposure and that they are achievable with the resource and skills available - these plans will then be monitored in terms of their delivery confidence as part of the SR12 risk control framework and governance through Portfolio and Investment Committee (PIC).
4. This paper outlines the resulting responses to those actions and summarises the latest plans for key legacy reduction initiatives in the next 12 months .
5. The points outlined in the discussion and conclusion sections of this document were discussed at the ARAC meeting in May where members recognised the work that had been done to reach this point and discussed the need for careful monitoring into the next financial year. They acknowledged the significant progress that has been made so far and noted the next steps that PIC will continue to monitor any ongoing risk as part of SR12.

Discussion

6. In response to action 3.i, it has been agreed that plans for 2024/25 need to fit within existing budget envelopes. In some cases, a funding pressure has been agreed (where applicable this is noted in the discussion section)
7. In response to action 3.ii, a detailed paper was submitted to ExCo in April 2024 that explored a range of options, including potential for delivery in a 12 to 21 month period.
8. It was clear that whilst it is not feasible to remove all legacy within the next 12 to 21 months (within current funding and resource constraints) there are now a number of

robust plans in place for the next 12 months that will help to mitigate the risks previously outlined.

9. The focus of these plans is the removal of targeted high-risk legacy within 2024/25 to maintain SR12 within appetite.
10. Work will need to continue in to 2025/26 with funding.

Conclusion

11. It is not feasible to remove all legacy within the next 12 to 21 months but DST and ESEG have put in realistic plans for achievable reductions this financial year, within budget and resource constraints.
12. We believe that the risk picture for SR12 for 2024/25 is improving with progress being made on website stability.
13. Plans for 2025/26 are less certain and are likely to see an increase in risk again if not managed carefully. Legacy reduction plans should be considered a perpetual approach to managing SR12.
14. Additional investment and resource will still be required for longer term legacy reduction beyond 2024/25 and will need to feature in any future SR bid and business planning activity for next year.

Simon Sandford-Taylor, Director, Digital Services and Technology, ONS, 8 May 2024