

UK STATISTICS AUTHORITY

Minutes

**Meeting of Friday 23 July 2010
Board Room, Newport**

Present

UK Statistics Authority

Sir Michael Scholar (Chair)

Lord Rowe-Beddoe (Deputy Chair, ONS)

Professor Sir Roger Jowell (Deputy Chair, Official Statistics)

Mr Richard Alldritt

Dr Colette Bowe

Mr Partha Dasgupta

Ms Jil Matheson

Professor Steve Nickell

Mr Stephen Penneck (to item 10)

Professor David Rhind

Sir Jon Shortridge

Secretariat

Mr Robert Bumpstead

Mr Mervyn Stevens

Other Attendees

Mr Glen Watson (Office for National Statistics) for item 8

Mr Richard Laux (Monitoring and Assessment) for items 9 to 11

Apologies

Ms Moira Gibb

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1. Apologies

Apologies were received from Ms Moira Gibb.

2. Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

3. Minutes and Matters arising from the Previous Meeting

3.1 The minutes of the previous meeting held on 25 June 2010 were accepted as a true and fair account.

3.2 The Chair reported that, following the discussion at the last meeting of the Authority, he had written to the Minister for the Cabinet Office, Rt. Hon. Francis Maude MP on 28 June regarding the release of statistics about public sector employment by the Cabinet Office on 18 June.

3.3 The Chair also reported that he had replied on 14 July to a letter from Rt. Hon Alan Johnson MP regarding violent crime statistics.

4. Reports from Authority Committee Chairs

Audit Committee

4.1 Professor Rhind reported on the meeting of the Audit Committee held on 25 June 2010. The Committee had welcomed the new Head of Internal Audit, Ms Lisa Winstone to her first meeting and received the Annual Report for 2009/10 of the out-going Head of Internal Audit.

4.2 The Committee had considered the National Audit Office (NAO) Audit Progress Report on the Authority's Resource Accounts for 2009/10. The Committee had also reviewed the draft Resource Accounts for 2009/10 and had recommended that the Accounting Officer should sign these, as submitted, in due course.

Assessment Committee

4.3 Professor Sir Roger Jowell reported on the meeting of the Assessment Committee held on 1 July 2010. Nine draft Assessment Reports had been discussed and these would be considered by the Authority later in the meeting.

4.4 The Committee had also considered a paper which made proposals for greater involvement of users and reflecting user views in the assessment process. It was agreed that the Authority should endorse a statement on this issue.

Committee for Official Statistics

4.5 Professor Sir Roger Jowell reported on the meeting of the Committee for Official Statistics held on 13 July 2010. The meeting had received the first of a series of reports from Government Statistical Service theme groups, on that occasion on agriculture statistics.

4.6 The meeting considered a paper from the Head of Assessment on the future development of Monitoring Reports and discussed the policies of the coalition Government that had implications for official statistics.

Office for National Statistics Board (ONS)

4.7 Lord Rowe-Beddoe reported on the meeting of the ONS Board held earlier that day. The Board had received a report from the Director General of ONS and had considered a new corporate scorecard and Information Technology (IT) issues. The meeting had also received an update from the Chief Finance Officer on the National Audit Office audit of the Authority's Resource Accounts for 2009/10.

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- 4.8 The meeting had considered budget proposals for submission to HM Treasury for the Spending Review 2010 (SR10).

5. Authority's Resource Accounts 2009/10

- 5.1 Ms Matheson advised that the National Audit Office had recommended that the Comptroller and Auditor General (C&AG) give a qualified opinion on the Authority's Resource Accounts for 2009/10. This was the result of the payment of £251,000 in excess of the Net Cash Requirement for the year approved by Parliament and this had been deemed to be irregular expenditure. An internal audit and an external review had been commissioned and a number of actions had been undertaken to ensure that a similar event did not recur. These included raising awareness of the implications of a breach of the Net Cash Requirement, additional supervisory controls, and improved documentation of the process. The aim was to lay the Resource Accounts before Parliament and the devolved legislatures before the summer Parliamentary recess.
- 5.2 The Authority's Annual Report would be presented to Parliament and the devolved legislatures in September.
- 5.3 The Authority noted these developments.

6. Blue Book 2010

- 6.1 Mr Penneck reported on the circumstances that led to the delay of the publication of the Blue Book and quarterly National Accounts from 30 June to 12 July. This exceptional postponement was needed in order to resolve some quality concerns. ONS was considering the reasons for the delay and any lessons to be learned, and would report to a later meeting.
- 6.2 The meeting noted developments and action being taken.

7. Spending Review 2010 [SA(10)42]

- 7.1 Ms Matheson reported that a letter had been received from HM Treasury confirming that the Authority's budget for 2011/12 and the years to 2014/15 would be part of the Government's expenditure considerations in the Spending Review 2010 (SR10). The outcome of SR10 would be announced in the autumn. Work was in hand to provide HM Treasury with the implications of differing budget scenarios by the end of July.
- 7.2 The Authority considered the budgetary implications and scenarios. It was agreed that the Chair should write a covering letter for the Authority's SR10 submission to the Chief Secretary to the Treasury.

8. Census 2011

- 8.1 Mr Watson reported on progress with the Census 2011. The review by Cabinet Office officials had been completed and a report had been given to the Minister for the Cabinet Office, Rt. Hon. Francis Maude MP. An official announcement by the Government on the future of the Census was expected before the Parliamentary Summer recess.
- 8.2 Census marketing and publicity had been delayed because this fell within the new Government's expenditure restrictions. A business case had been submitted to the Cabinet Office's Efficiency and Reform Group and a decision was expected shortly.

9. Use of Management Information in Relation to Official Statistics [SA(10)43]

- 9.1 Mr Alldritt presented a paper which included the Authority's policy statement of 22 July 2009 regarding management information, research data, and the use of statistics in

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policy documents.

- 9.2 After discussion, the Authority confirmed its position with regard to management information but agreed that the policy statement could be further improved and clarified. The National Statistician would provide further advice to the Government Statistical Service (GSS) on this issue.

10. Second Consultation on the Official Statistics Order 2010

- 10.1 Mr Bumpstead introduced a paper which set out the Cabinet Office's second consultation with the Authority about a third *Official Statistics Order*. The Authority had considered an earlier draft of the Order at the meeting on 22 January 2010 but this had not received subsequent Parliamentary approval because of lack of legislative time before the dissolution of Parliament. The revised draft Order, which would revoke and replace the existing *Order*, reflected recent proposals of the new Government with regard to some non-Crown bodies.

- 10.2 The Authority noted the draft *Order* and draft Explanatory Memorandum and agreed it was content for the *Order* to proceed.

11. Draft Assessment Reports 48 to 56 inclusive [SA(10)45, 46, 47, 48, 49, 50, 51, 52, 53]

- 11.1 Mr Alldritt presented the following nine draft Assessment Reports which had all been considered at the meeting of the Assessment Committee on 1 July 2010:

- i. Assessment Report 48: Statistics on Achievement and Attainment in England;
- ii. Assessment Report 49: School Statistics for Wales;
- iii. Assessment Report 50: School Statistics for Scotland;
- iv. Assessment Report 51: School Statistics for Northern Ireland;
- v. Assessment Report 52: Statistics on the Criminal Justice System;
- vi. Assessment Report 53: Statistics on Fuel Poverty;
- vii. Assessment Report 54: Transport Statistics Compendium Publication;
- viii. Assessment Report 55: Statistics on NHS Waiting Times in Scotland, and;
- ix. Assessment Report 56: Statistics on E-commerce and Information Technology Activity.

- 11.2 Following discussion, all nine Assessment Reports were approved for publication subject to agreed amendments.

12. Any Other Business

There was no other business.

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Agenda

Friday, 23 July, 2010

Board Room, Statistics House, Newport, 11:15 - 15:00

Chair: Sir Michael Scholar

Apologies: Ms Moira Gibb

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| 1 | Minutes and matters arising from previous meeting Declarations of interest | Meeting of 250610 |
| 2 | Reports from Authority Committee Chairs: <ul style="list-style-type: none">● Audit Committee● Assessment Committee● Committee for Official Statistics● ONS Board | Oral Reports Professor David Rhind Professor Sir Roger Jowell Professor Sir Roger Jowell Lord Rowe-Beddoe |
| 3 | Authority's Resource Accounts 2009/10 | Oral Report Ms Jil Matheson |
| 4 | Blue Book 2010 | Oral Report Mr Stephen Penneck |
| 5 | Spending Review 2010 | SA(10)42 Mr Stephen Penneck |
| 6 | Census 2011 | Oral Report Mr Glen Watson |
| 7 | Use of Management Information in Relation to Official Statistics | SA(10)43 Mr Richard Alldritt |
| 8 | Second Consultation on the Official Statistics Order 2010 | SA(10)44 Secretariat |
| . | Draft Assessment Reports (AR) | Mr Richard Alldritt Mr Richard Laux |
| 9 | AR48: Statistics on Achievement and Attainment in England AR49: School Statistics for Wales AR50: School Statistics for Scotland AR51: School Statistics for Northern Ireland | SA(10)45 SA(10)46 SA(10)47 SA(10)48 |
| 10 | AR52: Statistics on the Criminal Justice System | SA(10)49 |
| 11 | AR53: Statistics on Fuel Poverty | SA(10)50 |

SA Agenda 230710

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| 12 | AR54: Transport Statistics Compendium Publication | SA(10)51 |
| 13 | AR55: Statistics on NHS Waiting Times in Scotland | SA(10)52 |
| 14 | AR56: Statistics on E-commerce and Information Technology Activity | SA(10)53 |
| 15 | Any other business | |

Next Meeting: Friday, 24 September, 2010
Statistics House, London, 11:15 - 15:00

UK STATISTICS AUTHORITY

SA(10)42

Spending Review 2010

Purpose

1. This note provides information about the Spending Review 2010 (SR10) as it affects the Office for National Statistics (ONS) and the UK Statistics Authority.

Recommendations

2. Members of the Authority are invited to advise on the content and themes to take in the submission which the Authority must make to Treasury by the end of the month.

Discussion

3. The Accounting Officer and ONS Director-General met with Treasury officials on Friday, 2 July. The Authority's position in respect of its existing settlement and the 2010 Spending Review were clarified.
4. The Statistics Authority and ONS are included in SR10 and will have a budget determined by Treasury for the period 2011/12 to 2015/16. The final year of the Authority's existing five year settlement in 2011/12 is therefore void. Ministerial commitments given in the last Parliament to providing the Authority with a settlement outside of the regular spending review process, and in future via a funding formula, also fall.
5. However, Treasury have agreed that the work programme is a matter for the Authority Board. Ministers will not seek to determine how the Authority spends its money, but instead will separate themselves from this.
6. As a consequence the Authority was not required to submit a detailed submission by 16 July about its spending plans, as was the case with other departments. Instead, the Chair has been asked to write to Treasury by the end of July indicating in broad terms what spending reductions in two possible envelopes would mean in practice.
7. The next steps will be to agree a final submission to be sent from the Chair to the Treasury by the end of the month.

Secretariat, UK Statistics Authority, July 2010

UK STATISTICS AUTHORITY

SA(10)43

Use of Management Information in Relation to Official Statistics

Purpose

1. This note covers the Authority's current policy statement of 22 July 2009 (**Annex A**) regarding management information, research data, and the use of statistics in policy documents.

Recommendations

2. Members of the Authority are invited to consider whether and how this policy, particularly paragraphs 2 to 8 and paragraphs 17 to 22, should be developed in the light of the Government's transparency agenda and the intention to publish numerical information which was previously not in the public domain.

Discussion

3. At the meeting on 17 July 2009 the Authority approved a statement for publication on the circumstances under which it might comment in relation to Official Statistics. The agreed statement (Annex A) reflected comments made by the Government Statistical Service (GSS) task force on the use of management information in Official Statistics and the resultant guidance issued by the National Statistician to the GSS.
4. At its last meeting the Authority considered the quality and character of the release of statistics about public sector employment by the Cabinet Office. It was agreed that the numbers in the release were Official Statistics and that the Chair would write to the Minister for the Cabinet Office about these figures. The Chair's letter of 28 June 2010 to the Minister for the Cabinet Office is at **Annex B**.

Secretariat, UK Statistics Authority, July 2010

List of Annexes

- Annex A Authority Statement: Management information, research data and the use of statistics in policy documents**
- Annex B Letter from the Authority Chair to the Minister for the Cabinet Office, 28 June 2010.**

Annex A Authority Statement: Management information, research data and the use of statistics in policy documents

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

To see this document go to:

<http://www.statisticsauthority.gov.uk/news/statement---management-information--research-data--and-the-use-of-statistics-in-policy-documents--22-july-2009.pdf>

**Annex B Letter from the Authority Chair to the minister for the Cabinet Office,
28 June 2010**

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

To see this document go to:

<http://www.statisticsauthority.gov.uk/reports---correspondence/correspondence/letter-from-sir-michael-scholar-to-rt-hon-francis-maude-mp-28062010.pdf>

UK STATISTICS AUTHORITY

SA(10)44

Second Consultation on the Official Statistics Order 2010

Purpose

1. This paper covers the Cabinet Office's second consultation with the UK Statistics Authority about a third *Official Statistics Order*.

Timing

2. The Cabinet Office intend to lay the draft *Order* and Explanatory Memorandum in late October to early November. It is intended that it should come into force very shortly after the final debate on the *Order*.

Recommendations

3. Members of the Authority are invited to consider and comment on the:
 - i. Cabinet Office note explaining the effect of the *Order* and the reasoning behind it, attached at **Annex A**;
 - ii. draft *Official Statistics Order 2010* at **Annex B**, and;
 - iii. the draft Explanatory Memorandum to the *Official Statistics Order* at **Annex C**.

Discussion

4. Under the terms of the *Statistics and Registration Service Act 2007*, statistics produced by any Crown body are Official Statistics, and are thus within the Authority's remit. Statistics produced by non-Crown bodies may only be considered Official Statistics if the producer body is approved as such by an *Order of Parliament*.
5. *UK Orders* are the responsibility of the Minister for the Cabinet Office (section 6, subsection 1b of the *Act*). The Cabinet Office is required to consult the Authority before making such an *Order* (section 6, subsection 3). This is the third such *Order* on which the Authority has been consulted.
6. Rather than amend the *2009 Order*, the Cabinet Office have decided to revoke it and replace it with an updated *Order*. The Authority considered an earlier draft of this *Order* at the meeting on 22 January 2010 and agreed it was content for the *Order* to proceed. The *Order* did not, however, receive subsequent Parliamentary approval because of lack of time before the dissolution of the Parliament. This revised draft *Order* reflects recent proposals of the new Government with regard to some non-Crown bodies.
7. The Explanatory Memorandum includes the Authority's response to this consultation (paragraph 8.1 of Annex C). A statement similar to that used last time is provisionally included, which says that the Authority is content for the Government to proceed with its proposals.

Secretariat, UK Statistics Authority, July 2010

List of Annexes

- Annex A** **Note from the Cabinet Office to the Authority about the *Order***
Annex B **Draft *Official Statistics Order 2010***
Annex C **Draft Explanatory Memorandum to the *Official Statistics Order 2010***

Annexes – Draft Official Statistics Order 2010

When this document is laid before the UK Parliament a copy will be uploaded on the Authority website.

To see published documents about Official Statistics Orders go to:

<http://www.statisticsauthority.gov.uk/national-statistician/producers-of-official-statistics/index.html>

***Assessment Report – Statistics on Achievement and Attainment for
Schools in England***

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

To see this document go to:

<http://www.statisticsauthority.gov.uk/assessment/assessment-reports/assessment-report-48---achievement-and-attainment-for-schools-in-england.pdf>

UK STATISTICS AUTHORITY

SA(10)46

Assessment Report – School Statistics for Wales

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

To see this document go to:

<http://www.statisticsauthority.gov.uk/assessment/assessment-reports/assessment-report-49---schools-for-wales.pdf>

UK STATISTICS AUTHORITY

SA(10)47

Assessment Report – School Statistics for Scotland

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

To see this document go to:

<http://www.statisticsauthority.gov.uk/assessment/assessment-reports/assessment-report-50---schools-for-scotland.pdf>

UK STATISTICS AUTHORITY

SA(10)48

Assessment Report – School Statistics for Northern Ireland

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

To see this document go to:

<http://www.statisticsauthority.gov.uk/assessment/assessment-reports/assessment-report-51---schools-for-northern-ireland.pdf>

UK STATISTICS AUTHORITY

SA(10)49

Assessment Report – Statistics on the Criminal Justice System

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

To see this document go to:

<http://www.statisticsauthority.gov.uk/assessment/assessment-reports/assessment-report-52---criminal-justice-system.pdf>

UK STATISTICS AUTHORITY

SA(10)50

Assessment Report – Statistics on Fuel Poverty

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

To see this document go to:

<http://www.statisticsauthority.gov.uk/assessment/assessment-reports/assessment-report-53---fuel-poverty.pdf>

UK STATISTICS AUTHORITY

SA(10)51

Assessment Report – Transport Statistics Compendium Publications

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

To see this document go to:

<http://www.statisticsauthority.gov.uk/assessment/assessment-reports/assessment-report-54---transport-statistics-compendium.pdf>

UK STATISTICS AUTHORITY

SA(10)52

Assessment Report – NHS Waiting Times in Scotland

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

To see this document go to:

<http://www.statisticsauthority.gov.uk/assessment/assessment-reports/assessment-report-55---nhs-waiting-times-in-scotland.pdf>

UK STATISTICS AUTHORITY

SA(10)53

***Assessment Report – Statistics on E-commerce and Information and
Communication Technology Activity***

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

To see this document go to:

<http://www.statisticsauthority.gov.uk/assessment/assessment-reports/assessment-report-56---e-commerce-and-information-and-communication-technology-activity.pdf>