

**UK STATISTICS AUTHORITY**

**Minutes**

**Meeting of Friday 24 September 2010  
Board Room, London**

**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

Mr Partha Dasgupta

Ms Moira Gibb

Ms Jil Matheson

Professor Steve Nickell

Mr Stephen Penneck (to item 13)

Professor David Rhind

Sir Jon Shortridge

**Secretariat**

Mr Robert Bumpstead

Mr Mervyn Stevens

**Other Attendees**

Ms Pam Davies (Office for National Statistics) for item 9

Mr Richard Laux (Monitoring and Assessment) for items 6.2 to 14

**Apologies**

Dr Colette Bowe

## Minutes of the UK Statistics Authority Meeting 24 September 2010

### 1. Apologies

Apologies were received from Dr Colette Bowe.

### 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 23 July 2010 were accepted as a true and fair account.

3.2 There were no matters arising.

### 4. Reports from Authority Committee Chairs

#### Audit Committee

4.1 Professor Rhind reported on the meeting of the Audit Committee held on 7 September 2010. The Committee had received a report from the ONS Census Director on how risks associated with the 2011 Census were being managed. The meeting had discussed six Internal Audit reports and had endorsed a three-year strategy and approved a plan for internal audit work for the remainder of the business year.

4.2 The Committee had considered the report of the Comptroller and Auditor General (C&AG) on the Authority's Resource Accounts for 2009/10 and a National Audit Office (NAO) report on the Authority's compliance with HM Treasury requirements under the Whole of Government Accounts (WGA) programme.

#### Office for National Statistics Board (ONS)

4.3 Lord Rowe-Beddoe reported on the meeting of the ONS Board held on 10 September 2010. The Board had received a report from the Director General of ONS and had considered Information Technology (IT) and finance issues. The meeting had also considered a report on the development of a portfolio management approach to change management in ONS.

4.4 The meeting also discussed the circumstances around the qualification by the Comptroller and Auditor General (C&AG) of the Authority's Resource Accounts for 2009/10 and agreed a plan of improvements to ensure that this situation did not recur.

### 5. Census 2011

5.1 Ms Matheson reported that a business case had been made to the Cabinet Office for an exemption to the Government's current expenditure restrictions for costs associated with promoting the Census 2011. The matter had been considered by the Government's Efficiency Reform Group and a decision would be made shortly.

5.2 Meetings were being held between the National Statistician and the Chief Executives of the three principal contractors at which operational issues were being discussed.

### 6. Responding to Cuts in Departmental Statistical Work [SA(10)54]

6.1 Ms Matheson reported on the current situation with regard to the Authority's budget under the Spending Review 2010 (SR10). It was expected that when discussions with HM Treasury officials were concluded that the Chair would have a meeting with the Chief Secretary to the Treasury.

6.2 Mr Alldritt introduced a Monitoring Brief which made proposals on how, as part of its statutory obligation to promote and safeguard the production and publication of official statistics that serve the public good, the Authority might monitor and respond to cuts in

## Minutes of the UK Statistics Authority Meeting 24 September 2010

statistical work. It was proposed that the Monitoring and Assessment team should follow up each significant cut in statistical output with a short report in order that the Authority could take a view and report to Parliament as necessary on specific cuts and the effect to the overall coherence of official statistics. The work would focus in particular on whether the impact on users had been fully and openly taken into consideration.

- 6.3 The meeting also considered an initial report from the National Statistician on emerging proposals from government departments to cease production of official statistics. Where a government department intended to cease production of an official statistic there was an obligation on the department to publicise this development on the statistics publication hub website.
- 6.4 The meeting welcomed the Monitoring Brief and noted the report from the National Statistician on emerging cuts in statistical outputs. It was agreed that the Committee for Official Statistics (COS) would have a role in monitoring cuts in statistical outputs and that it should advise further on how the Authority should monitor and respond to the effects of such cuts.

### **7. The Inter-dependence of Statistical Work in Government [SA(10)55]**

- 7.1 Mr Alldritt introduced a draft Monitoring Brief which demonstrated through specific examples the inter-dependence of statistical work in government. The paper proposed that, where government departments planned to make substantial changes to statistical work, the implications for other bodies should be taken into consideration. It was also proposed that the Authority and the National Statistician should be consulted prior to any significant changes to statistical production.
- 7.2 The Authority noted the replies from the Minister for the Cabinet Office, Rt. Hon. Francis Maude MP to letters from the Chair and Professor David Hand, President of the Royal Statistical Society (RSS) in which the Minister suggested it was for each government department to decide on its statistical priorities as part of business planning process.
- 7.3 The meeting agreed that the Monitoring Brief reflected the Authority's views on these matters and that, after some further development of the draft, the Head of Assessment in consultation with the National Statistician should determine how the Monitoring Brief should best be brought to the attention of producers and others as a priority. It was also agreed that the Chair should reply to the Francis Maude's letter to him of 27 July 2010 and include the Monitoring Brief with his reply.

### **8. Retail and Consumer Price Indices: Overview of Issues [SA(10)56]**

- 8.1 Mr Bumpstead introduced an overview of recent developments with regard to the Retail Price Index (RPI) and Consumer Price Index (CPI). The President of the Royal Statistical Society (RSS), Professor David Hand had written to the Chair on 25 August setting out some issues that the RSS wanted the Authority to consider with regard to the RPI and CPI.
- 8.2 The meeting noted the letter from Professor Hand and that the Chair would be replying shortly.

### **9. Consumer Prices Advisory Committee (CPAC) Annual Report [SA(10)57]**

- 9.1 Ms Davies introduced a report from the Consumer Prices Advisory Committee (CPAC) on its work over the previous year. This included the development work to incorporate Owner Occupier Housing (OOH) costs into an expanded Consumer Price Index (CPI). The Authority agreed that this should be a high priority for ONS. The report also

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recommended changes to the method used to measure seasonal items in the CPI and RPI and made proposals for the forward work programme for CPAC.

- 9.2 In endorsing the recommendations in the CPAC report, the Authority noted the reasons behind the maintenance and development of these two measures of inflation (CPI and RPI), and agreed that CPAC should make arrangements for the publication of its report and should take other steps to improve its transparency.

### **10. Monitoring Brief: Retail and Consumer Price Indices [SA(10)58]**

- 10.1 Mr Laux presented a draft Monitoring Brief on the communication of measures of inflation. The Authority had agreed that the Monitoring and Assessment team should produce a draft Monitoring Brief alongside the Assessment Report on the Retail Price Index (RPI) and Consumer Price Index (CPI). The draft Assessment Report would be considered by the Assessment Committee at its next meeting on 29 September 2010.

- 10.2 The meeting noted the draft Monitoring Brief and agreed that a further draft should be submitted to the Authority in due course, together with the draft Assessment Report.

### **11. Use of Management Information in Relation to Official Statistics [SA(10)59]**

- 11.1 Mr Alldritt introduced a revised draft policy statement for Authority comment on management information, research data and the use of statistics in policy documents. At the last meeting the Authority confirmed its position with regard to management information but agreed that its policy statement could be further improved and clarified and that the National Statistician should provide further advice to the Government Statistical Service (GSS) on this issue.

- 11.2 The Authority agreed that, subject to further amendments, the revised policy statement should be published on the Authority's website. The meeting also noted that the draft guidance from the National Statistician required development and would be considered at a meeting of Heads of Profession on 28 September, prior to her approval of the guidance.

### **12. Consultation on a Draft Edition 2.0 Code of Practice for Official Statistics [SA(10)60]**

- 12.1 Mr Laux presented a draft Edition 2.0 Code of Practice and made proposals for a public consultation.

- 12.2 In noting that this was still work in progress, the Authority considered whether this was an appropriate time to carry out a consultation exercise and publish a revised Code of Practice and decided to consider this again later.

### **13. Evolution of Monitoring [SA(10)61]**

- 13.1 Mr Laux presented a paper which summarised the monitoring work carried out by the Authority to date and made proposals for the future development of this work. It was proposed that, in order to release scarce resources for other work, the number of Monitoring Reports in production at any one time should be limited to one review. This would be supplemented by the production of Monitoring Briefs, which would be substantially shorter publications and based more on in-house research, and three or four of these could be in progress at the same time.

- 13.2 The Authority agreed the broad strategy for future monitoring work and that further proposals for priorities for Monitoring Briefs should be considered at a future meeting.

### **14. Draft Assessment Report 57: English Housing Survey [SA(10)62]**

- 14.1 Mr Laux introduced a draft of Assessment Report 57: English Housing Survey. This

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had been considered by the members of the Assessment Committee since the last meeting.

14.2 Following discussion, the Assessment Report was approved for publication subject to agreed amendments.

### **15. Any other business**

15.1 The meeting noted a letter dated 26 August 2010 from Jim Mather MSP, Minister for Enterprise, Energy and Tourism in the Scottish Government regarding the Pre-release Access to Official Statistics (Scotland) Order 2008.

15.2 Mr Bumpstead reported that the Authority had submitted written evidence to a recent Treasury Select Committee (TSC) hearing on the governance arrangements for the Office for Budgetary Responsibility (OBR) and the Authority's contribution had been acknowledged in the subsequent TSC report.

15.3 There was no other business.

# UK STATISTICS AUTHORITY

## *Agenda*

**Friday, 24 September, 2010**

**Board Room, Statistics House, London, 11:15 - 15:00**

**Chair: Sir Michael Scholar**

**Apologies:**

1	Minutes and matters arising from previous meeting Declarations of interest	Meeting of 230710
2	Reports from Authority Committee Chairs: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● Audit Committee</li><li>● ONS Board</li></ul>	Oral Reports Professor David Rhind Lord Rowe-Beddoe
3	Census 2011	Oral Report Ms Jil Matheson
4	Responding to Cuts in Departmental Statistical Work	SA(10)54 Ms Jil Matheson Mr Richard Alldritt
5	The Inter-dependence of Statistical Work in Government	SA(10)55 Mr Richard Alldritt
6	Retail and Consumer Price Indices	SA(10)56, 57,58
6.1	● Overview of Issues	Secretariat
6.2	● CPAC Annual Report	Mr Dennis Roberts
6.3	● Monitoring Brief	Mr Richard Alldritt
7	Use of Management Information in Relation to Official Statistics	SA(10)59 Ms Jil Matheson Mr Richard Alldritt
8	Consultation on a Draft Edition 2.0 Code of Practice for Official Statistics	SA(10)60 Mr Richard Alldritt
9	Evolution of Monitoring	SA(10)61 Mr Richard Laux
10	Draft Assessment Report 57: English Housing Survey	SA(10)62 Mr Richard Laux
11	Any other business	

**Next Meeting: Friday, 22 October, 2010**  
**Statistics House, London, 11:15 - 15:00**

**UK STATISTICS AUTHORITY**

SA(10)54

***Responding to Cuts in Departmental Statistical Work***

**Purpose**

1. This note covers a Monitoring Brief from the Head of Assessment at **Annex A** on how the Authority might monitor and respond to cuts in statistical work. It also covers a paper from the National Statistician's Office at **Annex B** on emerging proposals from government departments for cuts in statistical outputs.

**Recommendations**

2. Members of the Authority are invited to:
  - i. agree the proposals from the Head of Assessment on how the Authority might monitor and respond to cuts; and
  - ii. note and comment on the paper from the National Statistician's Office on the emerging proposals from government departments for cuts in statistical outputs.

**Discussion**

3. The National Statistician, as the Authority's Principal Accounting Officer, will give an oral report at the meeting on the current situation with regard to the Authority's budget under the Government's Spending Review 2010.

**Secretariat, UK Statistics Authority, September 2010**

**List of Annexes**

- |                |  |
|----------------|--|
| <b>Annex A</b> | <b>Monitoring Brief from the Head of Assessment</b>  |
| <b>Annex B</b> | <b>Plans to Cease Production of Official Statistics - Report from the National Statistician's Office</b> |

**Annex A Monitoring Brief from the Head of Assessment**

This document will be published on the UK Statistics Authority website in due course.

Published Monitoring Briefs are available at:

<http://www.statisticsauthority.gov.uk/assessment/monitoring/monitoring-briefs/index.html>



**Annex B      Plans to Cease Production of Official Statistics - Report from the  
National Statistician's Office**

**Notification by Producers to the National Statistician of Plans to Cease National or  
Official Statistics**

1. The National Statistician published advice to Heads of Profession and Chief Statisticians (HoPs) on 10 August 2010 about the circumstances in which it is proposed, for an existing National or Official Statistic, to cease publication:
  - i. where a decision has been made in principle to stop publishing some statistics and the producer is seeking the views of users; and
  - ii. where on the instructions of the person responsible (usually the Minister in charge of the department), publication is to be ended immediately.
2. The National Statistician has asked HoPs to notify her in writing at the earliest opportunity if there is a risk that publication of statistics may cease.
3. The notification from HoPs is expected to include information about:
  - i. which statistics;
  - ii. the reason(s) for ending publication;
  - iii. the date on which it is proposed to end publication;
  - iv. a summary of the findings of the consultation with users along with an assessment of the impact of the end of publication on users and others;
  - v. details of other sources of statistics, whether official or otherwise, that may be used as alternatives; and
  - vi. whether the statistics are produced because of a legal obligation, whether domestic or international.
4. The National Statistician's Office (NSO) then informs the Monitoring and Assessment team. The NSO maintain a log of all notifications on a monthly and cumulative basis for use by the Authority in monitoring cessation of statistics due to reductions in resources.
5. The table overleaf summarises the cuts to official statistics that have been notified by HoPs to the National Statistician, as at 15 September 2010.
6. The list demonstrates that Government Statistical Service statisticians are actively reviewing the need for continued statistics with users in order to improve efficiency, as well as responding to reductions in resources in the current public sector financial climate.

Annex B - SA(10)54 - Responding to Cuts in Departmental Statistical Work

Date of Notification	Department	Title of Statistics	Description of Statistics	Date Statistics to Cease	Reasons for Cessation
10 August 2010	Department for Education	Schools Providing Access to Extended Services Statistics (Official Statistics)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Quarterly publication providing at a local authority level, the percentage of schools providing access to the full core offer of extended services.</li> <li>● Statistics were used to inform the previous government's national indicators which may not reflect current government policy.</li> <li>● The relevant administrative data are collected by the Training and Development Agency for Schools.</li> </ul>	October 2010	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Data collection will stop to achieve necessary savings.</li> <li>● The percentage of schools with extended services (98 per cent) is close to the previous government's target.</li> <li>● No legal obligation to publish these statistics.</li> </ul>
17 August 2010	Department for Education	Parental Experiences of Services Provided to Disabled Children Statistics (Official Statistics)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● The services for disabled children parental survey was established through the Aiming High for Disabled Children (AHDC) programme and measures parents' satisfaction with the local education, health, and care and family support services provided for their disabled child.</li> <li>● Was established to provide data for the previous government's Local Authority National Indicator Set (NI 54) and although funded by the Department for Education, it also forms a measure within the NHS National Operating Framework 'Vital Signs'.</li> </ul>	November 2010	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Ministerial decision that the survey that informs this publication should cease on cost grounds.</li> <li>● Unlike previous years, there will be no central follow-up with local authorities and therefore the impact of the survey could be limited.</li> <li>● Decision reflects the Coalition Government's commitment to reduce centrally imposed data burdens and to free up resources for front line services.</li> <li>● No legal obligation to publish these statistics.</li> </ul>

Annex B - SA(10)54 - Responding to Cuts in Departmental Statistical Work

Date of Notification	Department	Title of Statistics	Description of Statistics	Date Statistics to Cease	Reasons for Cessation
27 July 2010	Department for Communities and Local Government	The Place Survey (Outputs are Official Statistics)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Collects the views of people on a range of issues concerning the place they live.</li> <li>● Results used to measure progress on National Indicators in the Local Performance Framework.</li> </ul>	November 2010	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Department's own reduced need for the data.</li> <li>● The need to reduce costs and achieve savings.</li> <li>● Government's desire to localise activities when appropriate, and when required.</li> </ul>
6 September 2010	Welsh Assembly Government	i) Health Visitors, District Nurses & Other Community Nurses  ii) Community Psychiatric Nurses and Community Learning Disability Nurses  iii) NHS Day Care (Official Statistics)	i&ii) Used to monitor the advice and support given by health visitors, district nurses and other community nurses and by Community Psychiatric Nurses and Community Learning Disability Nurses by recording information on face-to-face contacts with patients.  iii) Used to monitor NHS day care facilities by recording information on first and total attendances for regular day attendees and patients using a bed by speciality.	October 2010	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● As a result of user consultation, internal reviews and from the earlier consultation on NHS data flows.</li> <li>● As Community health information has been made a priority area by the Welsh Assembly Information Requirements Board, alternative statistics will be developed.</li> </ul>

**UK STATISTICS AUTHORITY**

SA(10)55

***Draft Monitoring Brief: The Inter-Dependence of Statistical Work in Government***

**Purpose**

1. This note covers a draft Monitoring Brief on the inter-dependence of statistical work in government, and, relevant correspondence involving the Chair, the Minister for the Cabinet Office and the President of the Royal Statistical Society (RSS).

**Recommendations**

2. Members of the Authority are invited to consider and comment on the draft Monitoring Brief at **Annex A**.

**Discussion**

3. The Chair wrote to the Prime Minister on 12 May 2010, setting out a range of proposals and specific actions to improve the trustworthiness of official statistics, one of which was that the Statistics Authority be consulted ahead of any significant changes to statistical expenditure plans or statistical outputs. Responding on behalf of the Prime Minister, on 27 July the Minister for the Cabinet Office stated that it is for each department to decide on how they manage their budgets, in accordance with departmental priorities.
4. The President of the RSS wrote to the Minister for the Cabinet Office on 13 May, urging that the Statistics Authority and the National Statistician should be given leading roles in any immediate spending reviews affecting statistical areas, and should be consulted before departments make major changes to statistics. The response from the Minister for the Cabinet Office of 16 August reiterated his view that it is for each department to decide on how they manage their budgets, in accordance with departmental priorities. All correspondence is attached at **Annex B**.
5. The Authority's position remains that to safeguard the coherence of the UK's decentralised and devolved statistical system, spending cuts and other changes should be carried out with a clear overview of the whole statistical system in mind. The draft Monitoring Brief at Annex A illustrates, through examples, the inter-dependence of statistical work in government. It argues that where departments are proposing substantial changes to statistical work, it is important that they consider the implications for other bodies, and it provides further evidence of the need for the Authority and the National Statistician to be consulted prior to significant changes to statistical production.

**Secretariat, UK Statistics Authority, July 2010**

**List of Annexes**

- Annex A** **Draft Monitoring Brief: The Inter-Dependence of Statistical Work in Government**
- Annex B** **Correspondence involving the Chair, the Minister for the Cabinet Office, and the President of the RSS**

**Annex A Monitoring Brief: The Inter-Dependence of Statistical Work in Government**

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

To see this document go to:

<http://www.statisticsauthority.gov.uk/assessment/monitoring/monitoring-briefs/monitoring-brief-5-2010---the-inter-dependence-of-statistical-work-in-government.pdf>

**SA(10)55 - Draft Monitoring Brief: The Inter-Dependence of Statistical  
Work in Government**

SA(10)55

**Annex B Correspondence involving the Chair, the Minister for the Cabinet  
Office, and the President of the RSS**

The Authority correspondence has been published on the UK Statistics Authority website at:

[http://www.statisticsauthority.gov.uk/reports---  
correspondence/correspondence/index.html](http://www.statisticsauthority.gov.uk/reports---correspondence/correspondence/index.html)

The Royal Statistical Society (RSS) correspondence has been published on the RSS website at:

<http://www.rss.org.uk>

**UK STATISTICS AUTHORITY**

SA(10)56

***Retail and Consumer Price Indices: Overview of Issues***

**Purpose**

1. This paper, which is the first of three papers for this meeting regarding the Retail Price Index (RPI) and the Consumer Price Index (CPI), gives an overview of recent developments with regard to the RPI and CPI.

**Recommendations**

2. Members of the Authority are invited to consider:
  - i. the letter to the Chair from Professor David Hand, President of the Royal Statistical Society (RSS) **(Annex A)**;
  - ii. the Annual Report of the Consumer Prices Advisory Committee (CPAC) **[SA(10)57]**; and
  - iii. the draft Monitoring Brief on Communicating Inflation **[SA(10)58]**.

**Discussion**

3. Under the *Statistics and Registration Service Act 2007* the Authority has responsibilities for the governance, production and development of the RPI. At its meeting on 17 April 2009 the Authority agreed that a Prices Advisory Committee, chaired by the National Statistician, should be established to advise the National Statistician on methodology and improvements to this and other measures of inflation. CPAC met for the first time on 28 July 2009 and the Authority received a report on the first two meetings of CPAC at its meeting in October 2009 [SA(09)58]. A further report from CPAC is submitted for consideration at this meeting.
4. On 25 August the President of the RSS, Professor David Hand wrote to the Chair setting out some issues that the RSS would like the Authority to consider with regard to the RPI and CPI. This letter was published on the RSS website and attracted some media attention.
5. The Authority agreed that the Monitoring and Assessment team should produce a draft Monitoring Brief alongside the Assessment Report on RPI and CPI. The draft Monitoring Brief is also on the agenda of this meeting [SA(10)58]. A draft Assessment Report will be considered by the Assessment Committee at the meeting on 29 September.

**Secretariat, UK Statistics Authority, September 2010**

**List of Annexes**

**Annex A Letter from the President of the Royal Statistical Society**

**Annex A Letter from the President of the Royal Statistical Society**

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-david-hand-to-sir-michael-scholar-25082010.pdf>



**UK STATISTICS AUTHORITY**

SA(10)57

***Consumer Prices Advisory Committee  
2010 Annual Report to UK Statistics Authority***

The Consumer Prices Advisory Committee 2010 Annual Report will be published on the Office for National Statistics (ONS) website in due course at :

<http://www.statistics.gov.uk/default.asp>

***Draft Monitoring Brief on Communicating Inflation***

This document will be published on the UK Statistics Authority website in due course.

Published Monitoring Briefs are available at:

<http://www.statisticsauthority.gov.uk/assessment/monitoring/monitoring-briefs/index.html>

## UK STATISTICS AUTHORITY

SA(10)59

### *Use of Management Information in Relation to Official Statistics*

#### **Purpose**

1. This note covers a revised draft policy statement for Authority comment on management information, research data and the use of statistics in policy documents. It also covers related draft guidance from the National Statistician to the Government Statistical Service (GSS) on these issues.

#### **Recommendations**

2. Members of the Authority are invited to:
  - i. approve the statement for publication on the Authority's website (**Annex A**); and
  - ii. comment on the draft guidance from the National Statistician to the GSS (**Annex B**).

#### **Discussion**

3. At the meeting of 17 July 2009, the Authority approved a statement for publication on the circumstances under which it might comment in relation to official statistics and management information. The agreed statement was published on 22 July 2009. At that time the National Statistician issued guidance to the GSS on this topic.
4. At the meeting of 25 June 2010, the Authority considered a Cabinet Office release of statistics about public sector employment. 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 wrote to the Minister on 28 June 2010 and the Minister replied on 19 July 2010.
5. At its last meeting, the Authority considered whether and how its earlier policy statement of 22 July 2009 on these issues might be developed further. The National Statistician also planned to provide further guidance to the GSS on this issue. It should be noted that this guidance is still in development and will be considered at a meeting of Heads of Profession on 28 September 2010, prior to approval by the National Statistician.
6. The Chair wrote a further letter to the Minister on 6 August 2010. This letter and the earlier correspondence between the Chair and the Minister is attached at **Annex C**.

#### **Secretariat, UK Statistics Authority, September 2010**

#### **List of Annexes**

- Annex A** Revised Authority Statement - Management Information and Research Data as Official Statistics
- Annex B** Draft Guidance from the National Statistician to the GSS
- Annex C** Correspondence between the Chair and the Minister for the Cabinet Office

**Annex A Revised Authority Statement - Management Information and Research Data as Official Statistics**

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

To see this document go to:

<http://www.statisticsauthority.gov.uk/news/management-information-and-research-data-as-official-statistics.html>

**Annex B Guidance from the National Statistician to the Government Statistical Service**

This document will be published on the National Statistician's page on the UK Statistics Authority website in due course.

The National Statistician's page is available at:

<http://www.statisticsauthority.gov.uk/national-statistician/index.html>

**Annex C Correspondence between the Chair and the Minister for the Cabinet Office**

These documents have been published on the UK Statistics Authority website.

To see these documents go to:

Correspondence dated 28 June 2010

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

Correspondence dated 19 July 2010

<http://www.statisticsauthority.gov.uk/reports---correspondence/correspondence/letter-from-francis-maude-mp-to-sir-michael-scholar-190710.pdf>

Correspondence dated 6 August 2010

<http://www.statisticsauthority.gov.uk/reports---correspondence/correspondence/letter-from-sir-michael-scholar-to-rt-hon-francis-maude-mp-06082010.pdf>

**UK STATISTICS AUTHORITY**

SA(10)60

***Consultation on a Draft Edition 2.0 Code of Practice for Official Statistics***

A draft Code of Practice would be published on the Authority's website as part of any future public consultation exercise.

**UK STATISTICS AUTHORITY**

SA(10)61

***Evolution of Monitoring***

**Purpose**

1. This paper summarises the monitoring work undertaken so far by the Monitoring and Assessment team and proposes further developments. These proposals were endorsed in general terms by the Committee for Official Statistics at its meeting in July 2010 [SA(COS)(10)15].

**Timing**

2. Some aspects of the proposals are already being introduced but others are still to be decided, such as the topics to which priority should be given in the year ahead.

**Recommendations**

3. Members of the Authority are invited to agree that the Monitoring and Assessment team should:
  - normally plan to have one Monitoring Report in production at any given time (paragraph 12); and
  - complement Monitoring Reports with a series of Monitoring Briefs that are shorter and take less resource to produce (paragraphs 13 to 15).
4. Members of the Authority are also invited to comment on the suggested priorities for Monitoring Briefs.

**Discussion**

5. Monitoring has developed into a distinct strand of the Authority's scrutiny function, separate from assessment against the Code of Practice. It provides a means of establishing, and publicly reporting, Authority views on any matter of concern. The Statistics Act says at section 8, the 'Board may report any concerns it has about' quality, good practice or comprehensiveness of official statistics. We take this as the statutory basis for all monitoring work.
6. The Authority has two main series of products from its monitoring activities, Monitoring Reports and Monitoring and Assessment Notes (retitled Monitoring Briefs, from June 2010). In addition, the Authority maintains an 'issues log' on its website as a public record of matters which have been drawn to its attention. Part of the role of monitoring is to follow up some of these issues.
7. Monitoring Reports are substantive research exercises, each overseen by a project board including external experts in most cases, and are undertaken in close consultation with producers, users and relevant experts. They are designed to provide authoritative views, and usually recommendations, on particular topics based on extended exploration of the issues. To date, the Authority has published seven Monitoring Reports although some of these have focused on determining the Authority's own arrangements rather than specific statistical topics.
8. We had been working on a further Monitoring Report on environmental statistics but we are proposing that the main output should be a shorter Monitoring Brief. **Annex A** provides more information on the Monitoring Reports produced so far.
9. Monitoring Reports have proved effective as a vehicle for substantive comment. Some



## SA(10)61 - Evolution of Monitoring

examples are as follows.

- i. The Migration Statistics Report put on record that, no matter what approach was taken, it could take decades before the shared aspiration for high quality migration statistics could be realised; it also emphasised the importance of maintaining a national address register beyond the 2011 Census. This helped to address a long running criticism from local authorities and others.
  - ii. The Pre-Release Access Report allowed the Authority to set out clearly its views on the rules that should govern pre-release access to official statistics.
  - iii. Overcoming Barriers to Trust in Crime Statistics opened up an important dialogue about the future of crime statistics and brigaded a wide range of opinion behind some specific recommendations.
  - iv. The Strengthening User Engagement Report provided an opportunity to explain the importance of effective user engagement as a precursor to realising the value of official statistics, and to make recommendations aimed at strengthening the user voice.
10. The project management arrangements for Monitoring Reports have contributed to their credibility and authority. However, the process of establishing a project board, commissioning research and carrying out extensive consultation requires substantial time and resources.
11. The Authority has published shorter Monitoring and Assessment Notes (superseded by Monitoring Briefs) in response to specific concerns or issues. These have provided a means to draw attention to, and take a more rapid look at, an issue. To date, the Authority has published ten such Notes or Briefs on its website. Further information on these is at **Annex B**. These documents have also helped to raise public awareness of the role of the Authority in offering an independent perspective on official statistics.
12. In the light of experience, we believe there is a case for adjusting the current balance between Monitoring Reports and Briefs. We propose that the Monitoring and Assessment team should continue to produce Monitoring Reports on appropriate topics, but in order to release some resources for other work, we would limit the number in active production to one at any specific time. This would free up capacity to produce Monitoring Briefs, substantially shorter than a typical Monitoring Report at perhaps five to ten pages in length and based more explicitly on in-house research and the Authority perspective. Over time, the Board may wish the Monitoring and Assessment team to devote proportionately more resource to Monitoring Briefs than to Assessment activity.
13. Draft Monitoring Briefs will typically be prepared by a member of the Monitoring and Assessment team with only a small, internal project board. However, some topics might lend themselves to development via 'round table' discussions on appropriate topics. Relevant experts, including both users and producers would be invited to a boardroom style discussion on a topic on the basis of a background paper (possibly a draft Monitoring Brief). The outputs would include both a note of the meeting and a revised paper or Brief. A Non-Executive Director would be invited to chair these discussions and others to attend if they wished.
14. While Monitoring Reports have been planned well ahead, Monitoring and Assessment Notes have tended to be produced at relatively short notice. At present, work is in hand or recently completed on the following topics, which it is planned to release as Monitoring Briefs:
- i. the Inter-Dependence of Statistical Work in Government (a draft of which is included in the agenda of this meeting [SA(10)55]);
  - ii. Coherence of Statistics about the Housing Market (a draft of which will be presented to

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- the October meeting of the Committee for Official Statistics);
- iii. Communicating Inflation (a draft of which is included in the agenda of this meeting [SA(10)58]);
  - iv. Environmental Statistics (which will explore some of the characteristics of statistics related to climate change); and
  - v. The Use Made of Official Statistics (which develops one strand from the “Findings from the First Fifty Assessment Reports”) into more specific suggestions and advice - a draft will be presented to the October meeting of the Committee for Official Statistics).
15. In addition, work in hand to respond to a request for further research on behalf of the Transport Select Committee might also be packaged in to a Monitoring Brief in due course (subject to consulting the Authority).
16. The Monitoring and Assessment team has developed a list of suggested topics for possible inclusion in a forward programme of Monitoring Briefs. It is organised under three headings:
- i. Code interpretation, and good practice;
  - ii. specific statistical issues; and
  - iii. quality issues.
17. In practice not all of the suggestions are necessarily suitable for publication, while others might more appropriately be taken forward by, or in partnership with, the National Statistician’s Office. But they give a flavour of the range of possible topics.
18. The following topics are suggested as Monitoring Briefs to be put in hand over the remainder of the financial year, subject to being replaced by any more urgent topics that arise:
- i. road casualty statistics, recent developments;
  - ii. sources of official statistics about health;
  - iii. exceptions made to the 24 hour maximum pre-release access period;
  - iv. comparability of official statistics for the four UK administrations;
  - v. summary of Assessments of transport statistics;
  - vi. availability of official statistics for Parliamentary Constituencies; and
  - vii. statistical aspects of publishing school-level examination results.

### **Monitoring and Assessment, UK Statistics Authority, September 2010**

#### **List of Annexes**

- Annex A            Monitoring Reports since April 2008**  
**Annex B            Monitoring and Assessment Notes/Briefs produced since April 2008**

**Annex A Monitoring Reports since April 2008**

These document have been published on the UK Statistics Authority website.

To see these document go to:

<http://www.statisticsauthority.gov.uk/reports---correspondence/reports/index.html>

**Annex B Monitoring and Assessment Notes/Briefs produced since April 2008**

These documents have been published on the UK Statistics Authority website.

To see these documents go to:

<http://www.statisticsauthority.gov.uk/assessment/monitoring/monitoring-briefs/index.html>

**UK STATISTICS AUTHORITY**

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***Assessment Report:  
English Housing Survey***

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

To see the document go to:

<http://www.statisticsauthority.gov.uk/assessment/monitoring-reports/index.html>