

UK STATISTICS AUTHORITY

Minutes

Thursday, 31 July 2014
Boardroom, London

Present

UK Statistics Authority

Sir Andrew Dilnot (Chair)
Professor Sir Adrian Smith
Dame Colette Bowe
Ms Carolyn Fairbairn (from item 6 to item 9)
Dame Moira Gibb
Professor David Hand
Mr Ed Humpherson
Dr David Levy
Mr John Pullinger

Secretariat

Mr Robert Bumpstead
Mr Joe Cuddeford

Apologies

Professor David Rhind
Mr Glen Watson

Other Attendees

Ms Vanessa Holden (for item 7)
Mr Guy Goodwin (for item 8)
Ms Laura Dewis (for item 8)
Mr Pete Benton (for item 11)

1. Apologies

- 1.1 Apologies were received from Professor Rhind and Mr Watson.

2. Declarations of Interest

- 2.1 Dame Colette Bowe declared that she had been invited to join the Board of the Department of Transport as a non-executive director.

3. Minutes and matters arising from previous meetings

- 3.1 The minutes of the previous meeting held on 5 June 2014 were agreed. The meeting reviewed progress with actions.
- 3.2 The Chair welcomed Mr Pullinger to his first meeting as Chief Executive and National Statistician.

4. Authority Chair's Report

- 4.1 The Chair reported on his recent activities, which included:
- i. a meeting with Sir Andrew Green, Chair of MigrationWatch, about ONS migration statistics;
 - ii. a meeting with Jonathan Athow, Director of Knowledge, Analysis and Information at HM Revenue and Customs; and
 - iii. a keynote address to an event organised by the Authority in Edinburgh about health statistics.
- 4.2 The meeting considered the range of Authority reviews which were either planned, currently in train, or had recently reported. It was agreed that it was important to ensure both regulatory and management reviews were well planned and sequenced.
- 4.3 Members of the Board discussed recent developments with regards to the measurement of private rental inflation in the Consumer Price Index including owner occupiers' housing costs (CPIH). Evaluation of the quality of data from the Valuation Office Agency was ongoing.

5. Reports from Authority Committee Chairs

Audit and Risk Assurance Committee

- 5.1 Professor Hand reported on the meeting of the Audit and Risk Assurance Committee held on 26 June. The Committee had:
- i. considered the accounting judgements relevant to the valuation of in-house generated software;
 - ii. reviewed the findings of the audit completion report for 2013/14, and noted that the external auditors would be recommending that the Comptroller and Auditor General give an unqualified audit opinion on the Authority's financial statements; and
 - iii. approved the Authority's Annual Report and Accounts for 2013/14, subject to agreed amendments.
- 5.2 The meeting heard that Dame Colette would succeed Mr Partha Dasgupta as Chair of the Audit and Risk Assurance Committee. Having taken on the role of Chair of the Administrative Data Research Network Board, Professor Hand would step down from the Audit and Risk Assurance Committee.

Committee for Official Statistics

- 5.3 Dame Colette reported on the meeting of the Committee for Official Statistics, held on 17 July. The Committee had considered:
- i. a draft Monitoring Review about the audit of administrative data, which had since been published as a draft for consultation;
 - ii. an analysis of statistical issues raised with the Authority since 2008; and
 - iii. the UK's position with respect to the European Statistical System.

Assessment Committee

- 5.4 Dame Colette reported on the meeting of the Assessment Committee, held on 17 July. Among other items, the Committee had considered a draft Assessment Report about statistics on police recorded crime in Scotland, and had concluded that the Authority could not confer the National Statistics designation on these statistics.

ONS Board

- 5.5 Professor Smith reported on the meeting of the ONS Board held on 22 July. The ONS Board had:
- i. heard of the appointment of Mr Nick Vaughan, previously Deputy Director of the Economic Assessment team at HM Treasury, to the role of Director of National Accounts and Economic Statistics at ONS;
 - ii. considered ongoing issues with the provision by the Department for Work and Pensions of information about recipients of Universal Credit, which ONS required to produce claimant count statistics;
 - iii. noted the Authority's 2014/15 financial position as at 31 May 2014; and
 - iv. discussed workforce planning in ONS and the need for significant changes in workforce and specialist capability.

6. Chief Executive's Report [SA(14)25]

- 6.1 Mr Pullinger provided the Authority Board with a report from his first month in post. The report comprised an analysis of the current situation and proposed future areas of focus and change.
- 6.2 The Board endorsed the report and expressed full support for Mr Pullinger's proposals. It was agreed that the three areas of focus – economy, business and finance; population and public policy; and capability – were the right ones. The following comments were made in discussion.
- i. There was a balance between managing immediate risks and longer term transformative changes. The pace of change could be rapid at the top level of the organisation, but could be more gradual and evolutionary at other levels.
 - ii. If resources allowed, then producing a compendium of statistics timed to inform the public ahead of the General Election could be a useful counterpart to the Authority's other activities during the campaign.
 - iii. A stronger presence in London, as recommended by the Barker review of National Accounts, could also help instil a sense of ONS, the Authority, and the GSS as a coherent whole rather than distinct bodies.
- 6.3 The Chair confirmed that the Chief Executive's ambit did not extend to the regulatory function, and that the Head of Assessment reported directly to the Authority Chair. It was suggested that the independence and significance of the Authority's regulatory function

could be more clearly communicated if the name of the name of the Assessment Committee were to change to 'Regulation Committee' and the Head of Assessment's job title were to become 'Director General of Regulation'.

- 6.4 It was agreed that Mr Pullinger would engage with senior leaders across ONS and the GSS over the summer and would then begin implementation from the middle of September.

7. ONS Website: Task Finish Group [SA(14)27]

- 7.1 Mr Bumpstead and Ms Fairbairn introduced initial findings from the Board's Task and Finish Group on the ONS website. The Authority Board had agreed in June 2014 to establish a Task and Finish Group to conduct a short review of the ONS website, analysing the successes and shortcomings of website developments. The meeting heard that the group had reviewed five separate, but overlapping website development programmes since 2006. Visits to the ONS website had dropped sharply following the launch of a new site in 2011. While there had been some successes, ONS web development programmes had commonly overrun, run over budget, had elements de-scoped or only partially delivered the expected benefits.
- 7.2 The Board discussed the findings of the Task and Finish Group in the context of considerations for a new ONS website, in particular focussing on issues of governance, accountability, progress reporting, external assurance, capability and communication.

8. ONS Website: Options for a new ONS Website [SA(14)28]

- 8.1 Mr Goodwin and Ms Dewis introduced a paper which covered options relating to the new ONS website.
- 8.2 The Board agreed that the Chief Executive would oversee the technical aspects of the work and the Board would provide strategic oversight, challenge, and would seek assurance that appropriate technical expertise had been involved. The Board might wish to seek independent technical assurance of its own. It was agreed that the pace of delivery was critical.

9. Head of Assessment's Report [SA(14)26]

- 9.1 Mr Humpherson provided a report on the Authority's regulatory activities, with reference to two issues: scrutiny issues that might arise in the run up to the General Election; and a new policy on the temporary suspension of National Statistics designations. Mr Humpherson reported that the Assessment function had been vastly productive over the years, with over 1,000 statistics assessed and designated as National Statistics. Mr Humpherson wished to move from productivity to impact, from publication of reports to engagement, and to see the National Statistics label, and the Code of Practice for Official Statistics, cherished by producers.
- 9.2 The meeting considered potential scrutiny issues that might arise in the run up to the General Election. The following comments were made in the discussion.
 - i. Scrutiny issues, and the proposed compendium of statistics to support debate around the General Election, should be considered together. The possible list of themes that might arise in political debate could also be seen as potential chapter headings for the compendium. The compendium could be used as a benchmark or baseline to then challenge misuse.

- ii. The Authority held a strong position on the importance of parliamentary constituency-level data. It was not felt that this needed separate re-statement.
 - iii. The existing pre-release access arrangements would continue during the period, but the Authority would continue to argue against pre-release access. The leaders' television debates might provide a further opportunity to argue this case.
- 9.3 It was agreed that the Authority should adhere to the same protocols it followed during the previous General Election period. Pre-announced official statistics should be published as planned. Reports that had not been pre-announced would not be published, i.e. Assessment Reports and Monitoring Reviews. However, the Authority would continue to make interventions regarding the misuse of statistics in public debate during the election period.
- 9.4 The meeting considered the proposed new policy on temporary suspension of National Statistics status. It was confirmed that temporary de-designation would occur if the breach was clear, material, and isolated. The process by which a producer might voluntarily request de-designation, for example if they identified an error of breach in practice, should be more clearly set out for producers. Voluntary de-designation in appropriate cases should be welcomed.
- 10. Delivering the Authority's Strategy [SA(14)29]**
- 10.1 Mr Cuddeford provided a summary on progress with delivering the Authority Strategy. A new set of deliverables had been defined in consultation with staff across the organisation. Progress with these deliverables had been considered at a meeting of the Chief Executive, ONS Director General and Head of Assessment, where a set of senior executive assessments of overall performance had been agreed. The Board had also provided an indication of the relative priority of the strategic objectives.
- 10.2 The Board noted the progress made. The meeting also heard that options for further integrating the separate Authority, ONS and GSS strategies were being considered and proposals would be brought to the October meeting. This would involve synthesis and re-presentation rather than the creation of new strategic objectives. It was suggested that an integrated strategy could also allow the overall strategic themes to cascade directly into individual performance objectives.
- 11. Beyond 2011 programme update [SA(14)30]**
- 11.1 Mr Benton introduced a paper which provided an update on the planning underway in the Beyond 2011 programme to implement the National Statistician's recommendation on the future of the census and population statistics, and described the proposed approval process for the business case that will be submitted to HM Treasury in October 2014.
- 11.2 The Board considered the progress made to date, the proposed shape of the programme and the process for developing the business case for submission to HM Treasury. The meeting discussed potential risks to delivery and the need for the programme to be integrated with other related initiatives to ensure benefits were maximised.
- 12. Data Sharing Legislation [SA(14)31]**
- 12.1 Mr Bumpstead introduced a paper about developments with Cabinet Office proposals for the research and statistics strand of potential new data sharing legislation.

12.2 The meeting considered the close strategic alignment of the proposed legislation with the Authority's objective to increase data sharing and the use of administrative data in order to reduce costs, improve efficiency and increase the richness of statistical information. It was agreed that the Authority should continue to play a leading role in the debate about data sharing legislation.

13. Any Other business

13.1 There was no other business. The Authority Board would meet next on 2 October 2014 at 12:00 in London.

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Agenda

Thursday, 31 July 2014
Board Room, London, 12:00 – 16:00

Chair: Sir Andrew Dilnot
Apologies: Mr Glen Watson and Professor David Rhind

1	Minutes and matters arising from previous meetings <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Declarations of interest 	Meeting of 050614
2	Authority Chair's Report	Oral report Sir Andrew Dilnot
3	Reports from Authority Chair and Committee Chairs: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Remuneration Committee • Audit and Risk Assurance Committee • Committee for Official Statistics and Assessment Committee • ONS Board • ADRN Board 	Oral reports Sir Andrew Dilnot Professor David Hand Dame Colette Bowe Professor Sir Adrian Smith Professor David Hand
4	Chief Executive's Report	SA(14)25 Mr John Pullinger
5	Head of Assessment's Report <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • General Election 2015 • Temporary dedesignation 	SA(14)26 Mr Ed Humpherson
6	ONS Website: Task Finish Group	SA(14)27 Ms Carolyn Fairbairn and Mr Robert Bumpstead
7	ONS Website: Options for a new ONS Website	SA(14)28 Mr Guy Goodwin and Ms Laura Dewis
8	Delivering the Authority's Strategy	SA(14)29 Mr Joe Cuddeford
9	Beyond 2011 programme update	SA(14)30 Mr Pete Benton
10	Data Sharing Legislation	SA(14)31 Mr Robert Bumpstead
11	Any other business	

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SA(14)25

Chief Executive's Report**Purpose**

1. This paper provides a report from my first month in post and seeks advice on my next steps.

Recommendations

2. Members of the Authority Board are invited to:
 - i. consider the analysis of the current situation and future areas of focus set out in the attached paper;
 - ii. discuss the idea that we publish a statistical report timed to inform the public ahead of the general election; and
 - iii. discuss the composition of a new executive group.

Discussion

3. I said on my first day in post that I would spend my first month listening. The attached paper at **Annex A** describes what I have heard and also outlines some thoughts on "what next?"
4. My intention is to engage senior leaders across ONS and the rest of the GSS seeking their inputs over the next few weeks. I will also share the paper with staff to validate its content and be ready to take on board further suggestions.
5. I plan to start implementation from the middle of September. I would hope to be able to report substantive progress to the Board at the next meeting on 2 October.
6. In the meantime, I would welcome the Board's views on my analysis and suggested future areas of focus. I would in particular be grateful for a discussion of the idea in the paper that we publish a statistical report timed to inform the general election and for the Board's thoughts on the suggested make up of a new senior executive team.

John Pullinger, National Statistician and Chief Executive, 23 July 2014

List of Annexes

Annex A A month spent listening - What next?

Annex A A month spent listening - What next?

1. When I took up my position on 1 July I said I would start by listening. I have met large numbers of staff at all levels, in big groups, in teams and individually. I have joined meetings of GSS Heads of Profession and ONS Deputy Directors and spoken at events such as the GSS Methodology Symposium and the government Heads of Analysis Conference. I have been enthused and impressed by the many professional and dedicated people I have met.
2. I have also sought to spend time during my first few weeks hearing what our customers want from us. I have met several Permanent Secretary colleagues, politicians, partners in sister analytical organisations, journalists and many more. What we do matters to them.
3. What I am hearing is strongly consistent with what I heard from each Statistics Authority Board member ahead of my first day in the office.
4. On the up side, there is a strong will for us to succeed both inside and outside. Across the GSS there are many examples of excellence. We have committed staff who deliver an enormous quantity of high quality work often in highly demanding circumstances. There is an eagerness to learn and improve linked to a desire to be open to external influences, including to improve quality assurance. Recent reviews have been received positively and there are some good examples of strongly positive feedback from customers that provide a benchmark for wider aspirations. Within ONS, following the success of the 2011 census, several senior staff have graduated from the Major Projects Leadership Academy, demonstrating the desire to enhance our ability to realise benefits from programmes. Senior leaders report that we are on an improving trend and are positive about the future.
5. At the same time I have heard many voices expressing concern about the risks we face. Many people within ONS feel that they are running to stand still. We have an ambitious programme and tight resources. There is a feeling that we are skating on thin ice. Decision-making and delivery is still seen as too slow and cumbersome, people are risk averse - decisions get sucked upwards for fear of making a mistake. Some programmes are struggling to deliver promised benefits. There is a long way to go before we can really say we are customer focused. Statisticians across government are in high demand but are not always well placed to make an impact at the strategic level in departments.
6. There are also too many silos, within ONS, between ONS and the GSS, between statisticians and others in the analytical community. Most strikingly the Authority is almost universally referred to as something separate, even where it is not acting in a regulatory capacity, and hence seen as "them" rather than part of "us".
7. Looking in the round, however, I conclude that we can now declare the first period of the life of the Authority a success. A clear identity has been established which has built trust in statistics. The regulatory function is accepted and respected and there are signs that the National Statistics designation is starting to be taken more seriously. After a choppy period, those delivering National Statistics in ONS and many other bodies are keen to move forward. There has been a very positive response to my unifying message that our collective job is to help Britain make better decisions. The timing for us in moving to a new phase in our development could not be better given the opportunity provided by the data revolution and the appetite that exists within the decision-making community for evidence and analysis.

8. In five years time I would expect that decision-makers across the spectrum, including individuals and businesses as well as government, would value National Statistics as being helpful to them. Those responsible for the biggest decisions in public life would give the highest ratings. Arguments about statistics would be much rarer and would systematically be countered by the creation of an information base, equally available to all, that is accepted and used without question. As we demonstrate that we are creating such public and economic value we will be better placed to draw in the human and financial resources necessary to invest and innovate. At the same time we will have created an excellent place to work where people feel they are well led and able to make a special contribution to the public good.
9. To make such an ambition a reality, I see two areas of primary focus for service delivery and a third to ensure that we invest – so that what we do now has maximum impact and we become stronger for the future.
10. The first area of focus is to inform decisions about the economy, business and finance. In the short term we must manage the risks around getting the numbers out and accepted. The major revisions to the national accounts due over the next few months will test us. The work involves colleagues from many parts of the GSS and beyond, not just ONS. Everyone needs to get behind those people at the sharp end who have been working flat out for a long time and need to be cheered to the finish. My assessment is that we are on track but there is still a lot to do.
11. As we approach the general election the spotlight on the economic numbers will continue to increase. Over the medium term we have a major development programme to consider. Kate Barker's review has been well received and will require a lot of work to implement. Paul Johnson's review comes next. We should move quickly to draw in those who can support us, including by following up Kate Barker's recommendation that ONS establishes a small team, possibly based in London where there is a wider labour market, to complement the core expertise already in the organisation.
12. Beyond that, we need to get ahead of the game so that we can be on the wavelength of those who make decisions, inside and outside government, and more involved in discussions at the earliest stage and at the highest levels, so that we can mobilise and deliver what is needed to inform decisions when it is needed.
13. The second area of focus is population and public policy. Following the Government's response on the future of the Census, we need to use the next few months to get on the front foot to deliver on the promise and, much more widely than that, make the case for joining up administrative and other data for statistical and research purposes. There are big legal, ethical and public acceptability questions to be tackled. There is an opportunity here that could result in radical benefits for public policy decisions but success is by no means guaranteed. This is work to be done over the next nine months.
14. Beyond that, there is a systematic imperative to join up the supply side of the evidence business – ONS, GSS, the wider analytical community across government. We should also embrace UK academia and the international community who have skills that could help us. This should be matched by work on the demand side – especially working with the policy profession in government, politicians and the media – to help them develop the skills to make best use of statistical evidence. The outcome should be a much more rapid response

to public policy issues where there is either a gap in the evidence base or the numbers being used are contested.

15. To realise the benefits we need to follow through on a radical rethink of our data collection and data gathering strategy. This opportunity could transform the value that the National Statistics system adds as a key node in the decision-making network. Existing work on electronic data collection must be a priority because it could realise a return that could be harnessed to deliver services in support of public policy goals.
16. The third area of focus is about investment. There is an immediate need to upgrade our communications capability. This requires us to be much more adept at understanding how information is consumed in the political process. The review undertaken by Simon Crine provides a good start but I think we should go further if we are to have the impact we need – including a more rigorous approach inside ONS to managing key accounts and other external interactions to get meaningful customer insight that can drive internal decisions. And we should ensure that our communications give due prominence to our regulatory voice.
17. Linked with this we must make material improvements to our presence on the web with a completely fresh approach, joining together ONS digital and technology teams and giving them the mandate, resources and accountability to make things happen. We can help ourselves by drawing in expertise from elsewhere, notably from the Government Digital Service.
18. Beyond that, capability questions relate to people and money. Development of human capability can only be addressed at the system level looking across the whole analytical community in government. We should be seeking to develop a diverse, talented and flexible workforce ready to meet rapidly changing needs. We could have a position at the heart of Civil Service Reform, working with the Cabinet Office and others in thinking through the implications of the data revolution on policy making and service delivery.
19. On finance we are stretched and the Spending Review is already upon us. It is essential that we can demonstrate that we are making efficiencies and are getting a dividend from innovation. The work that has already been started on Statistical Futures should be directed towards making the case for evidence. It should examine the decisions facing the country, assess the current capability to provide the evidence base that would inform those decisions and make clear the size of the gap. As part of this we should look at the current business model for funding which may not be adequate for matching supply and demand in an efficient way.
20. Finally, as well as assessing the areas where I need to focus, I have been exploring with Ed Humpherson how we develop the Authority's complementary roles of delivery and regulation. There is a positive symbiosis already built around the Authority's "public good" mission. I am confident that we will work well together whilst respecting our distinct statutory functions.
21. My job in leading the delivery side of the business is to provide the statistical evidence base required by decision-makers. Ed's role as regulator is to draw attention to those times when claims are being made that are not supported by the statistics and also to give the National Statistics brand to those claims which can be relied upon (and withhold it when they

cannot). With the guidance of the Authority Board, these properly distinct roles can act systematically to strengthen the statistical system.

22. The five year horizon is for significant change but in the months ahead we must focus on ensuring that essential statistics are released on schedule and accepted by our customers. A major shock to the system now could be counterproductive. I do not propose to launch a new change programme. Instead I intend to build on the plans already put in place by the Authority, by ONS and by the GSS, notably:
 - i. To showcase examples of where statistical and analytical work is already assisting decision-taking to demonstrate what success looks like. I also intend to explore how we can rapidly respond when an issue arises where the information base is contested or absent. In particular, we should consider publishing a statistical report timed to inform the public ahead of the general election. This will be a natural counterpart to prompt responses by the Authority to cases of misuse of statistics during this period.
 - ii. Systematically to remove barriers to performance and cooperation. What staff are crying out for most is the tools to do their jobs. We have large numbers of excellent people. We need to help and encourage them to perform well and provide opportunities for learning and development so that they can shine. This is especially important for the great majority of staff who work on regular "business as usual" activities. Across the GSS there is much more that could be achieved by bringing people together and drawing in the widest pool of expertise. As well as the GSS Heads of Profession group, I intend to work closely with the Departmental Directors of Analysis Network, which I will chair, to draw all the analytical professionals together.
 - iii. To build our leadership capability. Whilst overall levels of staff engagement in ONS have recovered to the level of the civil service average, we are way off what the best organisations achieve in terms of leading and managing change. In addition, there is currently no-one other than me with a top level executive leadership function across the whole of the statistical system. Given the job we have to do there is a clear need to bolster our leadership.
 - iv. To simplify and align accountability so that individuals are responsible for delivery and are clear what is expected of them. Everyone should be able to see where they fit into the jigsaw and how they can help others to succeed as one team working to a common end.
23. The Authority has already taken major decisions to simplify accountability. The Committee for Official Statistics and ONS Board have been disbanded leaving the Authority Board as the clear single accountable body. My task, with Glen Watson and the rest of the senior ONS team, is to follow through to achieve top-line executive accountabilities that cascade through the system. Given the analysis in this paper the top level accountabilities are:
 - i. the economy, including relationships with the Treasury, Bank of England, OBR and others with an interest in statistics measured in quantities of money;
 - ii. population and public policy, including the future of the census and relationships with all government departments and others with an interest in statistics measured in quantities other than money;
 - iii. capability and innovation, including digital leadership and developing the skills base;
 - iv. finance; and
 - v. communications.

24. Individuals leading each of these functions would report direct to me, form the membership of a new Executive Group supported by a single secretariat function and act as a team to support me in the exercise of my responsibilities under legislation. The functional leaders would be responsible not just for delivery of ONS outputs but also for supporting me as National Statistician in providing "public good" across the whole system. This is a much wider than the existing ONS senior management responsibilities. I would also expect them to support me in developing our relationship with the Cabinet Office and Parliament and in providing leadership in the increasingly important international arena. One or more of the most senior staff at DG level would be designated as Deputy National Statistician. I would bring together the separate strategies published by the Authority, ONS and the GSS. I would expect that it should be possible with this structure to push decision-making much further down into ONS, join up activities across the GSS, generally speed things up and also make it much easier to hold people accountable for results.
25. The Authority Board has already agreed to the creation of a new senior executive team to be chaired by me. I would like to include a senior GSS leader from outside ONS on this Executive Group alongside the functional leaders inside ONS. This would be a potent symbol of common purpose. With this approach, ONS takes its place as the executive office of the Authority rather than being perceived as separate from it; the GSS, including ONS, works as an integrated whole rather than as distinct bodies; the statutory independence of the regulatory function is much clearer.
26. This paper sets out proposals. No decisions have yet been made. Following engagement with managers and staff over the next few weeks, I plan to review the contributions received and undertake an analysis of costs and benefits and an equality assessment before acting. I would then move to constitute the new Executive Group from mid-September. Once decisions are made they would be incorporated into budgets and plans for 2015-16 onwards.
27. I will report progress to the Authority Board on 2 October.

John Pullinger, National Statistician and Chief Executive, 23 July 2014

SA(14)26 – Head of Assessment's Report

UK STATISTICS AUTHORITY

SA(14)26

Head of Assessment's Report

The policy on temporary suspensions of National Statistics designations has been published on the Authority website at the link below

<http://www.statisticsauthority.gov.uk/assessment/assessment/guidance-about-assessment/index.html>

SA(14)27 – ONS Website: Task Finish Group

3

UK STATISTICS AUTHORITY

SA(14)27

ONS Website: Task Finish Group

A report of the findings from this Task and Finish Group will be published on the UK Statistics Authority website in due course.

UK STATISTICS AUTHORITY

SA(14)28

4

Options for a new ONS Website

Purpose

1. At the June 2014 Authority Board meeting, the Board requested that an extended discussion take place on the new ONS Website at the July 2014 Board meeting. This paper covers options relating to the new ONS website, in particular technology options and options around how we might best source the work.

Timing

2. A steer is needed from the Authority Board on this work on the alpha website which is due to start next month. We would welcome:
 - i. an initial steer on the options for investigation in the alpha phase (see Technology Options), focussing on what is important to members, whether we are missing options, or whether some should not be considered at all;
 - ii. a particular focus on the option to move to gov.uk. We welcome views on whether we should review our existing exemption from this 'single' website for government;
 - iii. advice on what to prioritise where we need to make trade-offs between cost, timescales, sustainability, resilience and scope; and
 - iv. advice on whether design decisions should prioritise the needs of one group of users over another (see **Annex D** for a description of the user groups we are designing for).

Recommendations

3. Our recommendations are:
 - i. to focus the alpha research on data driven website solutions as set out under technology options with the solution priorities and research questions;
 - ii. to prioritise sustainability and resilience over costs and timescales. The nature of the site makes the site up-time and the ability to constantly adapt and refresh the site at low cost critical to its long-term success. Adaptability will also enable us to react more easily to changes in the external environment (e.g. new third-party data publishing solutions being developed);
 - iii. to review detailed options, based on the alpha phase research, when we return to the Board towards the end of 2014 to inform our decision making as we move towards the beta and live 'build' phases of the programme; and
 - iv. to design for the 'middle ground' of user needs as embodied in the 'information forager' persona, leaning towards the 'expert analyst' persona when compromises have to be made.

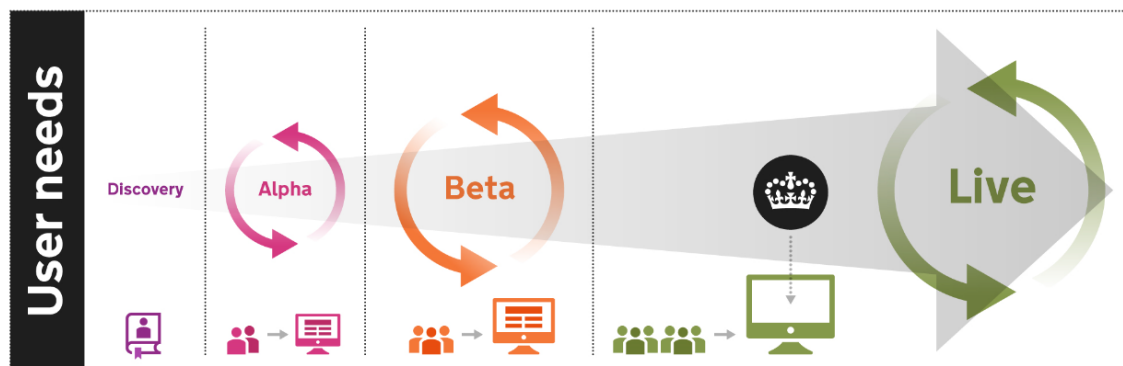
Background

4. Since May 2014, when the UK Statistics Authority signed off the work to externally assure programme management and technical capability with regard to the ONS website, ONS has:
 - i. established a limited and tightly controlled list of essential changes to the existing ONS website;
 - ii. worked towards the next release of functionality on the Web Data Access Application Programme Interface (API) and Data Explorer for 28 July 2014 (subject to a 'go / no-go' decision being made by the Senior Reporting Officer);

- iii. focussed on the business case and options for a new ONS website; and
- iv. taken soundings on the options from a number of non-executive directors, as diaries allowed.

Discussion

Approach to the alpha



5. The Government Digital Service (GDS) aligns all approvals (e.g. spend controls, service assessments) around the four phases of digital delivery - discovery, alpha, beta and live. The discovery and alpha phases are research phases and recent changes to the HM Treasury Green Book guidance now enables departments to spend up to £750,000 of their budgets on these phases to better understand the possible solutions before submitting full business cases. The recommended solution from the alpha phase is reviewed prior to approval to move into a beta phase. There is an expectation that the service will be continually and regularly improved throughout the live phase, until the service is retired.
6. It is critical to success to make certain decisions, such as the choice of technology, as late as possible - but no later - to take into account the fast pace of change in the digital publishing industry.
7. During the discovery phase we worked with the Open Data Institute to look at a gold standard, future proofed approach to data publishing. Using open standards we created a prototype that evidenced the benefits of publishing data 'in the web' (so users can search, link and drill down into data within the webpage and producers can provide explanations next to the data), as opposed to data 'on the web' (locked away in non web-native documents such as Excel, or images of charts).

Technology options

8. Broadly speaking, we can investigate the opportunities of data publishing, building on the work in the discovery phase to provide our data 'in the web', or we can continue to be document publishers, providing ONS data only in downloadable document formats 'on the web' such as Excel and CSV, as we do on the current ONS website. As these formats cannot be interpreted by web browsers or search engines, the user has to work harder to find the data and any links between related data. However, providing the data as we currently do will be the quickest way to a new website.
9. If we want to prioritise longer-term sustainability and meeting users' expectations of data publishers, we should investigate data publishing solutions. It is becoming standard practice for data to be provided online via an application programming interface (API), which connects web services to a data repository. One such example is FRED, a popular online database for Federal Reserve Economic Data (Bank of St. Louis). Many

other national statistics institutes and Organisation for Economic and Co-operation Development (OECD) are building their new web services in this way. Written in a way which allows machines to understand the meaning of the data, it becomes possible to display the data in flexible ways to serve varied and changing user needs.

10. Subject to the steer of the Board, the options we would like to investigate throughout the alpha phase include:
 - i. develop a Content Management System driven website (e.g. open-source Drupal);
 - ii. develop an Open Statistics platform driven website, based on the Web Data Access environment (the API and XML-SDMX format for structured datasets);
 - iii. develop an Open Statistics platform driven website, based on the Open Data Institute model (a lighter-weight API and CSV/JSON formats); and
 - iv. move to gov.uk.
11. A description of each option, including the strengths and weaknesses of each as currently understood, is provided in **Annex A**.
12. None of the options provided here prevent us from hosting statistics from across the Government Statistical Service (GSS), or incorporating functionality from other ONS websites. However it is not anticipated that either requirement would be in scope for this programme.
13. We welcome the views of the Board on whether the following are the essential criteria for the team to consider when evaluating possible solutions during the alpha phase:
 - i. improve the ability for users to find our statistics (site search, external search, navigation) in order to extend the reach of our work;
 - ii. improve the speed of 09:30am publishing;
 - iii. meet the Digital by Default Service Standard;
 - iv. build on Agile and Continuous Delivery principles to enable safe and regular deployment of code; and
 - v. meet the anticipated needs of an evolving digital product portfolio (e.g. new output formats).
14. The alpha will investigate the benefits and constraints of different options, to come to a recommendation on a final solution. We welcome the views of the Board on whether the following are the essential questions for the team to consider when evaluating possible solutions during the alpha phase.
 - i. As the ONS website is so fragile, speed is a major driver. Do we build a temporary site which improves the user experience in 12 months, and then build a more robust, sustainable solution in the following two years (subject to HM Treasury approval)? Are we willing to accept launching a simple system that evolves in public view? What are the trade-offs in cost, speed and scope?
 - ii. Can we improve how we structure our data quickly and cheaply enough to move to a future proofed data publishing model?
 - iii. Should we scale up and build on top of the Web Data Access API, or are there more sustainable options available to us that meet the majority of user needs?
 - iv. If we retain a Content Management System, will we be able to adopt continuous delivery processes which give us the assurance of being able to deploy code safely and regularly?
 - v. Is our short-term positioning with regard to being exempt from migrating to gov.uk changing at all? Do we want to revisit our current exemption and might GDS decide to challenge it post March 2015 when their current priorities should have delivered?

15. In parallel, we will be piloting a new centralised model of publishing within the ONS, which should open up more sustainable options for a future publishing system, if the pilots are successful.
16. At the end of the alpha phase we will make a recommendation based on what we have learnt. We are building a network of critical friends to provide challenge to us during this period and are currently in discussion with the Government Digital Service (GDS), the Digital Leaders Network (Digital Directors across government), Full Fact, House of Commons Library, Open Data Institute, The National Archives, the Bank of England, mySociety and the Statistical Network of Innovation in Dissemination (Digital Directors from National Statistical Institutes). We welcome suggestions from the Board on membership for this network.
17. An external GDS approved supplier, with experience of delivering digital transformation projects in government, will be working with us to bring broad industry experience. In addition, on our behalf, GDS is in discussion with Professor Helen Margetts, Director of the Oxford Internet Institute, to request her involvement at the ONS Digital Board.
18. The alpha work will be assessed using the GDS self-assessment framework to ensure compliance against the Digital by Default Service Standard, which sets out best practice in digital delivery.
19. The next Gateway Review of the Improving Dissemination programme is scheduled for February 2015. This will provide a review at early stages of the beta phase of delivery. This will ensure that once we transition from research, into build, that we have appropriate external assurance of our ability to deliver.

Sourcing a team

20. We have evaluated options for building the new site using a fully in-house team, a fully-outsourced team and a hybrid team of internal staff and external contractors. We have also evaluated the option of using contractors versus procuring a 'ready-made' team. In this evaluation we looked at cost, lead time, security issues, skills, best practice, methodologies, and scalability.
21. The assurance work highlighted that we do not have the expertise to build the alpha, at pace, using existing staff. We have started the process of procuring a 'ready made' team from an external supplier to undertake the technical development. This will allow us to move quickly and learn from others during the alpha phase. This 'agile delivery team' will be co-located with existing ONS Digital Publishing staff in Newport. ONS procurement staff have been trained in using the new GDS Digital Marketplace, which will enable us to ensure suppliers with the right experience. This recognises the need for significant change to the current ONS model to ensure effective delivery of digital services. In response to Professor Sir Adrian Smith's comments, we have provided information on some of the possible suppliers that might provide the external supplier service in **Annex E**. These companies are experienced in providing 'ready-made' teams, made up of the critical roles for technical delivery of digital services. These teams can be co-located with the business to ensure high levels of collaboration and shared ownership. The benefit of this approach is that teams:
 - i. are used to working together using highly collaborative Agile methodologies, avoiding the difficulties in working at pace while building cohesion across the team;
 - ii. are able to evidence highly relevant experience in delivering similar projects in organisations with similar challenges and constraints;

- iii. have broad industry experience from having worked across many organisations, bringing new insights and the breadth of skills necessary at the early research phase, where there is most need to work across different technologies; and
 - iv. have been approved to provide services via the Government Digital Service procurement vehicle.
22. The team will report to an internal Service Manager, with 17 years experience of delivering digital services inside and outside the Civil Service, who is the key decision maker for this phase of the development. The Service Manager will report via the Deputy Director of Digital Publishing to Senior Responsible Owner, Guy Goodwin.
23. Beyond the alpha, the options are fully in-house, fully out-sourced and a hybrid team. In our presentation to the Board in May 2014, we showed the following table:

Model	Cost	Quality	Agile	Security	Best practice	Lead time	Scalability
Outsource							
In-house							
Hybrid 1							
Hybrid 2							

24. The full business case at the end of 2014 will need to detail our procurement options and the preferred choice. The Government Digital by Default Service Standard expects departments to put in place a sustainable multidisciplinary team to design, build and operate the service.
25. As the ONS website is a core business function and will need constant iteration, it is considered best practice to have an in-house team, supplemented by third-parties where this is more cost effective (e.g. hosting). If there is good reason to deviate from this, we will need to explain the reasons for doing so in the full business case.
26. If an in-house team is considered the best option for ONS, over the time period of the alpha and beta we will need to prepare for new skills, technologies, approaches, team structures and governance in the way Digital and IT operates at ONS. This will include integrating continuous delivery into our processes and systems, as recommended by Thoughtworks, which aims to reduce the cost, time and risk of delivering incremental changes to users through building highly adaptive teams and systems. We welcome views on these longer-term options.

Conclusion

27. This paper has set out the technology options for investigation during the alpha phase build of a new ONS website and has requested a steer on whether the options are the right ones. We welcome views on what should be prioritised where we need to make trade-offs between user needs, cost, timescales, sustainability, resilience and scope.

Laura Dewis, Digital Publishing, ONS, 24 July 2014

List of Annexes

Annex A	Options for investigation in alpha phase
Annex B	Summary of the Improving Dissemination Outline Business Case
Annex C	Summary of schedule of costs of new website
Annex D	Description of personas
Annex E	Potential external suppliers for the alpha phase

Annex A Options for investigation in Alpha phase

Option 1: Content Management System driven website

One option available to ONS is to utilise an existing 'content management system (CMS)' and build the new website on this technology - excepting that there are advantages and limitations to this.

Using an open source CMS, for example Drupal, would allow ONS to accelerate the delivery of a new website albeit one that would not initially offer the breadth of functionality that would allow the future proofing of the site.

Strengths:

- i. speed to initial deployment: a product like Drupal would offer a great deal of 'vanilla' functionality needed as standard so a new website could be stood up relatively quickly including improved search, navigation, accessibility, usability and search engine optimisation functionality;
- ii. sustainability: assuming a well established CMS product was selected then there are wider development communities that can be recruited from as well as opportunities to re-train existing developers with well tested conversion courses available;
- iii. cost: the leading CMS products are open source and well supported to the extent that competition maintains competitive pricing and there would, at least initially, be less need for custom development;
- iv. established technology: again selecting a well established CMS provides peace of mind as it is possible to observe current users of the technology. As an example Drupal is used for the White House website, extensively by the Australian government and also The Open University; and
- v. Foundation for the future: while this model would not initially provide a significant 'open data' driven solution in the manner of Option 2, it should provide a foundation that allows further development in that area. Any modern CMS will have significant data functionality built in and this could be extended to either integrate with third party solutions or to provide a solution of its own.

Weaknesses:

- i. technology lock-in: using a CMS ties you closely to a particular technology stack and you are at the mercy of another organisation's upgrade path and processes as well as support options. If a CMS becomes unpopular or simply ceases development you can become stranded on an earlier version with poor support (essentially where we are now);
- ii. difficulty running a fully automated test driven environment: there is an inherent difficulty in moving to a test-driven, continuous development environment if you are using a CMS. It is not uncommon but it is an additional layer of complexity;
- iii. less flexibility: alongside the benefits of using a CMS there is a built-in lack of flexibility. It is a fully fleshed out product and if you want to offer functions outside of those already existing it can be slow and difficult. Many major publishers have moved to either custom tools (GOV.UK, the Guardian) or more lightweight CMSs (New York Times, Boston Globe, National Public Radion, NPR); and
- iv. slower to move to a data-driven publishing model: An extension to the point above if it is our ambition to move to a much more data driven website then this model is likely to offer more short term wins but make this longer term ambition difficult. There will need to be considerable custom development work to extend the capabilities of a standard CMS to provide the level of data integration we are considering.

Option 2: Open statistics platform driven website

There is a strong case that any future ONS website should build on top of our data much more closely - using a data API that is also publicly available. This should considerably

improve the opportunities to reuse ONS data and also allow significantly more automation of our data publishing, allowing more time to be focused on analysis and content design rather than pure publishing.

There are two potential solutions that could provide this capability:

Option 2a: Web Data Access (WDA) project

WDA provides API access to 2011 Census data and has the capability to do the same for other ONS data types. A system has been developed that allows structured ONS data to be uploaded and provided in multiple machine-readable formats as well as made available via a user friendly 'data explorer'.

Strengths:

- i. already the repository for Census 2011 data: there is already a considerable amount of data available via the API which could allow for development of an initial Alpha proof of concept based on the Census;
- ii. built with ONS needs at forefront: from the outset of the WDA project ONS needs have been considered and this should allow for internal take up and interoperability with ONS processes and systems; and
- iii. awareness of product within business areas: considerable work has been undertaken to prepare business areas for the requirements and capabilities of WDA and planning is already underway in many divisions to be able to provide data in the required formats.

Weaknesses:

- i. expensive to maintain and develop further: to date the cost of developing the platform has been considerable and even support requires extensive input from developers. Moving forward there is likely to be a requirement for considerable development so this is a financial risk;
- ii. Considerable bespoke code so complex to support: while the platform does make use of a number of open source or commercially supported components there is also a great deal of bespoke code in place in mission critical areas. This adds a layer of complexity to any ongoing support;
- iii. Focused on Census datasets and less flexible for other types: the focus on Census datasets during the initial development has created a system that is less forgiving to anything that does not meet that specific model and requires data to be input in a very specific manner;
- iv. Concerns about scalability: the current API has issues when it comes to scaling so any move to develop on top of it would come with inherent risks; and
- v. Time to deliver critical mass of acceptable format datasets: due to the specific formats required by WDA there is a considerable cost (in the region of £1.5 million) and time (four years) before we are able to provide near 100 per cent data coverage.

Option 2b: Open Statistics Platform from the Open Data Institute (ODI)

Based on a piece of investigative work undertaken on the behalf of ONS the Open Data Institute have embarked on a development project to build an 'Open Statistics Platform'. This aims to provide an open source system for the publication of statistical data on the web which allows each element of the data to be referenced as HTML as well as in machine readable formats. The ODI is working with Full Fact and are supported by the Cabinet Office on this project.

Strengths:

- i. open source and developed openly: the software will be developed in a transparent manner under an open source licence that is likely to encourage other contributions from developers within the 'open data' community with an interest in statistics;

- ii. supported by leading open data and statistics organisations: the support of the Open Data Institute, Full Fact and the Cabinet Office will ensure that this is a high profile undertaking and it is likely to gain support from other high profile statistical producers - particularly in the charity sector;
- iii. built to provide '5 stars of open statistics' compliance: the proposal for a '5 stars of open statistics' came out of the recent Public Administration Select Committee inquiry into Open Data and Statistics and has received endorsement from UK Statistics Authority. This will be the first technical platform built with those requirements in mind; and
- iv. flexible platform allowing multiple dataset types: the system aims to be built to cope with data in multiple formats offering the capability to reach a critical mass of available data more quickly.

Weaknesses:

- i. not specific to ONS requirements: the platform would be aimed at a 'generic' statistical producer so while ONS could have some influence it would not be built specifically to our internal needs, which might make take up more difficult;
- ii. early days and no guarantee it will gain wider community support: despite the profile of the organisations involved there is no guarantee with open source projects that they will build a strong community or that ongoing financial support will be available; and
- iii. built on a non-standard technology stack: ODI intends to build on a similar technology stack to that used by GDS. While this is gaining popularity it remains somewhat unusual in larger 'enterprise' teams and recruiting staff with the relevant skills is not always straightforward.

Option 3: Move to GOV.UK

From the steer given by a number of ONS boards and committees, a vision is emerging for the creation of a 'destination site' for all official and national statistics, rather than transition the ONS website to GOV.UK. However, arms length bodies are now transitioning to GOV.UK, and the Digital Leaders Network is refusing exemptions from GOV.UK on the basis of independence. They are also questioning whether previous exemptions should be reviewed.

Strengths

- i. it is likely to be more cost effective than building our own site, as GOV.UK already has a publishing system and plans to improve its data publishing;
- ii. any data publishing solution offered by GDS is likely to be high quality, raising the bar for anything we deliver;
- iii. all other official statistics producers are on GOV.UK and the Publication Hub will move by this August, so users will get (and expect) a consistent user experience at GOV.UK;
- iv. there are potential benefits of ONS electronic data collection (EDC) being hosted by GOV.UK to improve respondent take-up and build on common services (eg single sign-on);
- v. the close working relationship with data.gov may be an advantage; and
- vi. the provision of statistics as a top level category on GOV.UK increases user expectation that all government statistics will be found here.

Weaknesses

- i. actual and/or perceived loss of independence could negatively impact our relationships with stakeholders eg devolved administrations;
- ii. GDS are fully focused on delivering their programme by March 2015 and are unlikely to take on the ONS web estate in the short to medium term;
- iii. GOV.UK could be impacted by the next General Election, causing potential disruption to any transition of the ONS website after March 2015;
- iv. ONS as the largest single body of producers of official statistics has a deep understanding of the needs of our specialist users and the technical and legal standards

- across the profession globally, whereas GOV.UK is mainly focused on citizen users and transactions; and
- v. GDS would expect us to amend our content to meet their guidelines and this could be challenging.

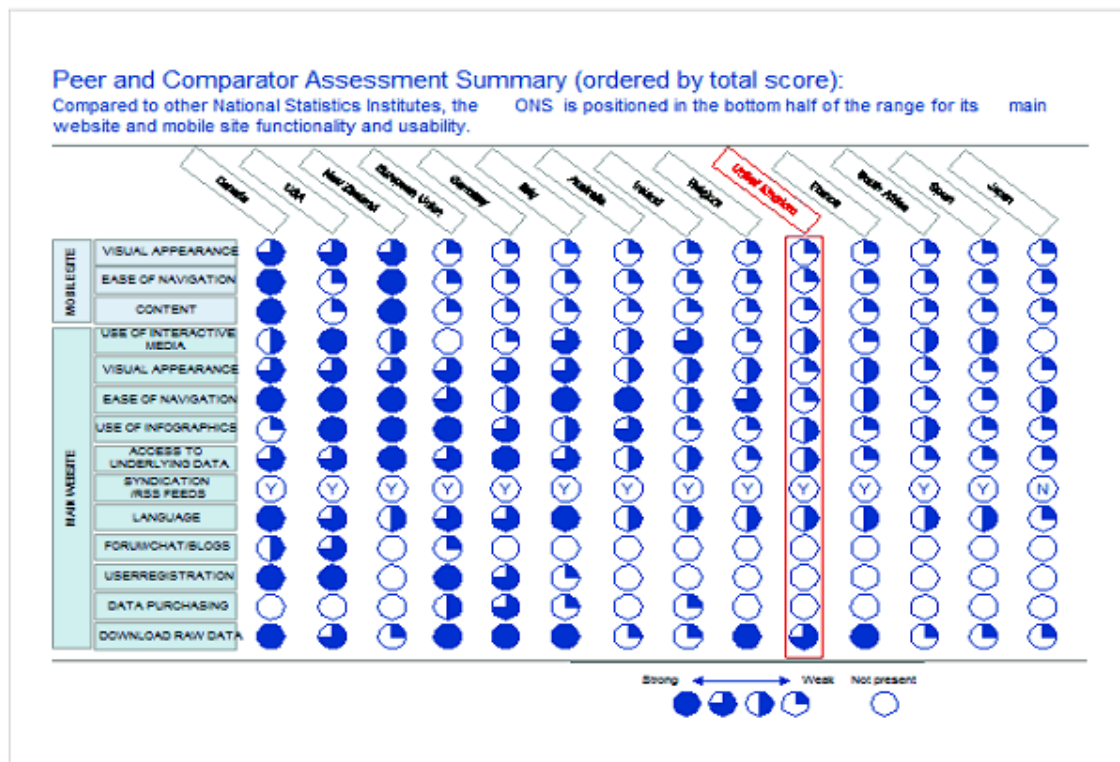
Annex B Summary of the Improving Dissemination Outline Business Case

1. HM Treasury (HMT) approved the initial Outline Business Case (OBC) for the Improving Dissemination Programme (IDP) on 25 October 2013. The OBC was revised and submitted to HMT in July 2014 following observations within the Gateway 0 review, a failed deployment in January 2014 and an external technical assurance review which indicated that there is a risk that further technical deployments to the existing platform may result in unacceptable performance and poor user experience. The programme has been restructured, extended by one year to include a new website platform and make more outputs from business areas available in an open format. This shows that a Net Present Value (NPV) of £12.5 million is achievable in financial year 2018/19 breaking even in 2016/17, which is an increase of £3.3 million against the original £9.2 million.
2. Strategically, IDP is ranked second with only Electronic Data Collection ranked above it, compared to other ONS projects and programmes, in terms of strategic contribution to ONS objectives. There is significant risk to the organisation should this work not proceed. In line with the Government's digital strategy "digital by default", the website is the dissemination channel for statistics within ONS. It is essential to ONS in order to meet our legal obligations to publish statistics under both UK and EU legislation.
3. The production of ONS statistics is enshrined in EU legislation, with the majority of ONS statistics required under EU legislation. Amongst others, there are EU regulations for gross national income/gross national product, excessive deficit procedure, European System of Accounts, prices, balance of payments, and purchasing power parities.
4. The dissemination as well as the production of ONS statistics is enshrined in the UK Statistics and Registration Service Act 2007. The Act states clearly the Board's objective to promote and safeguard the production and publication of official statistics including ensuring their accessibility (see section 2.3 of the IDP Revised OBC). In the Act:
 - i. Section 7.1 states that the Board is to have the objective of promoting and safeguarding the production and publication of official statistics that serve the public good;
 - ii. Section 7.5 states that in this part references to good practice in relation to official statistics includes ensuring their accessibility; and
 - iii. Section 19.1.b states that the UK Statistics Authority must publish the Retail Prices Index every month.
5. In addition, the UK Statistics and Registration Service Act 2007 states that National Statistics must be produced in compliance with the Code of Practice for Official Statistics. There are several principles in the Code of Practice relating to the accessibility of statistics including making them available on the internet and in a form that enables analysis and re-use.
6. Some of the obligations under the Code of Practice for Official Statistics that support the need for a website include:
 - i. Principle 2.8 "Release all regular statistical reports on the internet without charge to the user";
 - ii. Principle 4.2 "Ensure that official statistics are produced to a level of quality that meets users' needs ..."; and
 - iii. Principle 7.1 "Ensure that statistical services have the staff, financial and computing resources to produce, manage and disseminate official statistics to the standards of this Code".

7. It is recognised that a digital publishing capability requires a sustainable website hosting capability for effective and efficient dissemination of our statistics via digital channels. However a successful website is more than just a platform. A digital publications capability requires a dedicated team to maintain standards, consistency, manage search, develop new products to aid the communication of our statistics, and to guide the business on how to present statistics in the way our users expect. The problems encountered with our January 2014 deployment and subsequent external assurance has brought this to the forefront. We have extended the programme scope to develop an appropriate and sustainable website using an agile approach rather than the traditional waterfall approach. We will conduct a discovery phase, stand up and evaluate an Alpha build prototype before developing a Beta website which can be tested with users. This will give us greater clarity on the minimum viable solution required for efficient publishing of ONS statistics before transitioning into a live production. Estimates will be refined during the alpha build phase and will inform the IDP Full Business Case (FBC) submission to HM Treasury around Q3 2014/15.
8. Stage 1 of the programme is now complete with the Digital Publishing Division set up and managing the current platform as business as usual. The remaining incomplete activities planned to enhance the current website will now feed into the project to build a new website which forms part of Stage 2, along with the project to make non-census datasets available in an open format for 40 per cent of the outputs from business areas.

Business Needs

9. The ONS website, introduced in August 2011, does not meet the standards that the citizen user expects in terms of navigation and search. In order to extend the reach and use of ONS statistics, and to support the government's Digital by Default agenda, ONS products need to be presented in an engaging way enabling the citizen and non-expert user to be drawn into the world of statistics, making use of the content without significant analysis or specialist expertise.
10. ONS has received a considerable amount of public criticism in the media, and across government, with users of the website frustrated at not being able to find the information that they need or, if they do find something, they are often confused and not able to easily make use of our statistics to inform their decision making. IDP aims to ensure that:
 - i. ONS has a website which makes it easy for people to use our data with better and more accessible content, and products that meet user needs;
 - ii. official statistics achieve a greater impact on key UK decisions; and
 - iii. broader use of outputs is encouraged and facilitated.
11. An independent review, which positioned ONS against other national statistical institutes, clearly supports the need for change.

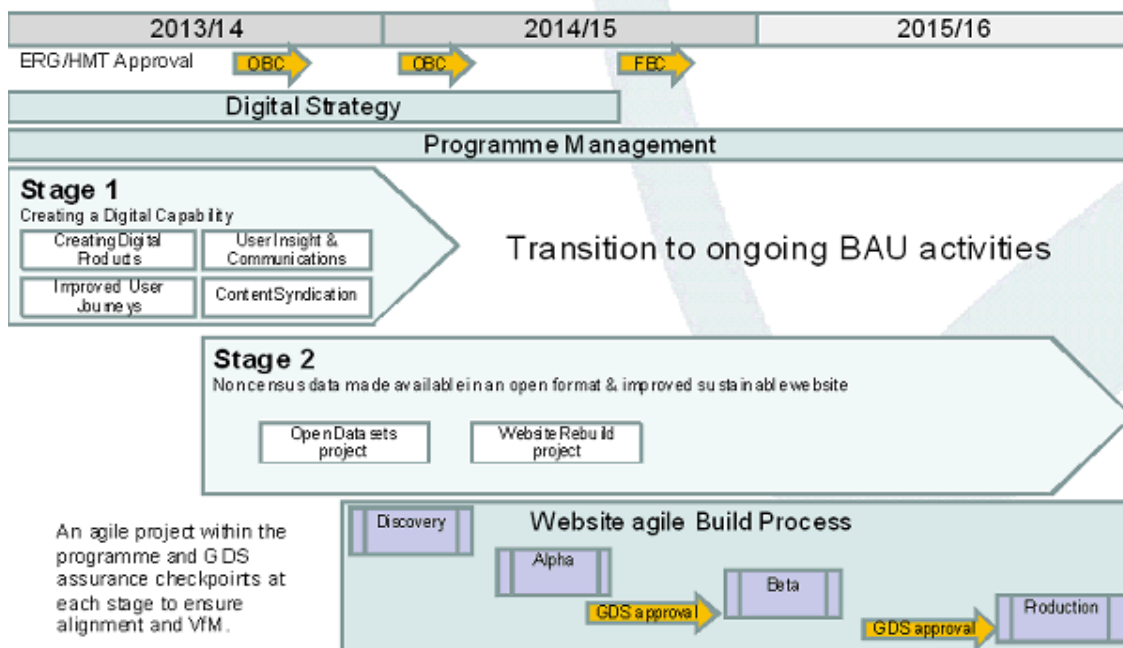


Benefits and Costs

12. The main benefits associated with the programme are classed as economic benefits, enabling businesses and the citizen user to save time and make more informed decisions. This is achieved through making more of our data available in an open format - via an Application Programme Interface (API) and enabling users to search for and understand our statistics and how they can be used.
13. The Improving Dissemination Programme has identified and quantified the main benefits expected to be realised following successful delivery. Lessons from previous, similar programmes/projects within ONS and other organisations have been used to inform the identification and agreement of key benefits.
14. There are very few cash savings related to this work. However, we would expect to see a reduction in the support and enhancement costs associated with the new website. A figure of £200,000 per annum has been included in the discounted cash flow at this stage, and this will be reviewed in the Full Business case.
15. To produce a Net Present Value calculation, the programme has determined economic values based on the three key areas:
 - Improve the ONS reputation and user perception of the ONS website and digital products (End Benefit 1)
 - (i) The improvements to the website as a result of the Digital Publishing Division will result in reduced time handling negative press;
 - Increased ONS efficiency through more focussed and standardised outputs leading to better outputs and decreased costs (End Benefit 2)

- (ii) The internal efficiencies gained within the publishing process will at least save time and could, over time, also result in a reduction to the number of full time equivalent staff engaged in publishing activities;
- Time saved by UK plc (stakeholders including commercial) accessing ONS statistics and reaching key decisions (End Benefit 3). This is the biggest benefit and includes:
 - (iii) Making more data available in an open format; financial savings calculated based on the value of observations as defined in the Census / WDA business cases;
 - (iv) Being able to locate, search and better understand statistics via the web; calculated by taking the average time saved in tests by external users and multiplying by the average wage;
 - (v) More users accessing the ONS statistics via the web; we have assumed a conservative value of a visit to our website (£5) taking into account the price of ONS printed material prior to 2011; and
 - (vi) The value of the benefits to UK plc will vary depending on take up. However, we expect to exceed £34.5 million over six years.
16. The programme scope and funding requirement has been increased to include a new website build that will take into account the aims within the emerging Digital Strategy over the next five years.
17. The planned enhancements to the existing website in Stage 1 of the programme have been suspended and will be incorporated into the new website build instead. The increased lifecycle costs are offset against increased benefits following further evaluation and therefore the revised OBC shows an increase from £9.2 million to £12.5 million to the NPV. We have minimised the cost of delivering this programme of work in every way possible by evaluating the options and prioritising expenditure on the things that will offer the best return on investment while still offering a sustainable and economic operating model for the longer term. The newly created Digital Publishing Division is now fully functional which marks the completion of Stage 1 of the programme. The team remain focused on delivering value for money from proposed solutions and are using an appropriate mix of in-house ICT development, web development and third parties to deliver cost effective solutions as part of business as usual.
18. The bulk of the programme development funding (around 60 per cent) supports the set up and running of a digital publishing capability with 26 new posts continuing beyond March 2014. We will make our non-census datasets available in an open format for around 40 per cent of the outputs from ONS business areas and fund a number of initiatives to make it easier for our users to find and understand our statistics. IDP will also develop a generic tool to aid migration of legacy system datasets via a standard template to the WDA platform.

IDP Delivery Approach for OBC / FBC



Annex C Summary of schedule of costs of new website1. Schedule

Milestone	Estimated delivery date
Review quotes from procurement exercise	w/c 28 July 2014
Establish the 'Alpha' team	End August 2014
Deliver the Alpha phase	End December 2014
Present findings from the Alpha phase and make the case to move into Beta, including completing a GDS Service Assessment and submitting a Final Business Case	January 2015

2. Cost

Deliverable	Estimated cost £
Technical team for Alpha delivery	600,000
Deliver Beta Release	640,000
Deliver Live Release	550,000
Contingency (allowing for uncertainties around infrastructure needs and secure hosting options)	400,000
Total	2,190,000

These costs have been approved by the Executive Leadership Team and in early discussions with HM Treasury (HMT), through the spend controls process. In estimating the costs of this work we are mindful of the costs of similar projects (eg the GOV.UK Beta cost £1.7 million), affordability (especially with the Spending Review in 2015/16), the guidance from HMT to keep costs to a minimum, and the Major Projects Authority thresholds (£10 million).

The costs of the Beta are broad estimates, provided for the purpose of the Improving Dissemination Programme outline business case. These estimates will be refined based on what we learn during the Alpha phase about which option to take forward. We will then submit a final business case to ONS internal committees, Government Digital Service and HMT.

Annex D Description of personas

1. User Personas are a highly effective way of capturing essential information about our target audience. They are detailed descriptions of 'typical' people who interact with our site. They can ensure that we develop and design in an appropriately user-centred way.
2. Our research found that:
 - i. more than 80 per cent of respondents were educated to degree level or above;
 - ii. 16 per cent used a tablet and 10 per cent a smartphone to access the ONS website;
 - iii. 75 per cent of respondents had visited to site more than ten times in the past year; and
 - iv. 20 per cent of participants post frequently to Facebook or Twitter, while 40-50 per cent check their accounts frequently.
3. From this research we identified three distinctive and robust persona types: 'Expert Analyst', 'Information Forager' and 'Inquiring Citizen', each with a unique set of goals, behaviours and motivators.
4. Expert Analysts download particular Excel spreadsheets into their own statistical models to create bespoke datasets. They know exactly what they want and can be frustrated by not being able to find it quickly on the ONS website. They need reliable, high quality data to feel confident in their own analyses.
5. Information Foragers look for data to make practical, strategic business decisions so want high level summaries, narratives and charts to keep up with the latest economic and population data. They do not know exactly what to search for, until they come to it. Using ONS data provides added value or advantage over competitors. Supermarkets use ONS data to inform their product ranges and pricing strategies.
6. Inquiring Citizens search for the unbiased 'truth' about topics raised by the media and political parties: immigration, house prices, inflation and cost of living to make informed decisions about their pensions and investments. They want simply worded, visually engaging summaries, charts and infographics. They engage with social media and browse the ONS site on a smartphone or tablet.
7. A single individual may shift between persona types. Academics for example, might be *expert analysts* for their research, but may *forage* for information on a number of issues outside of their expertise to support their teaching. At home they may search the ONS site for the most popular baby names along with many other *inquiring citizens*.

Annex E Potential external suppliers for the Alpha Phase (and possibly later phases)

Kainos

Kainos provides digital technology solutions in government, finance and health. They were a finalist in the Digital Leaders 100 Awards in 2014, a prestigious list of digital innovators in the public sector and are ranked 12th in the list. They are involved in seven of the 25 high profile GDS exemplar projects.

ThoughtWorks

A global software company focused on software design and delivery, providing services and products and leading thought on Agile and Continuous Delivery. They were a supplier to GDS for GOV.UK and work with several government departments to deliver on digital transformation. Have some experience of working with ONS.

UnBoxed

Unboxed are leaders in Agile and the Ruby on Rails programming framework, and have worked with the Department for Education and the Land Registry amongst many other commercial clients. They built the government e-petitions site in eight weeks for less than £80,000.

Emergn

Experts in lean enterprise transformation and Agile. Have some experience of working with ONS.

Steria

With 20,000 people across 16 countries, Steria delivers end-to-end IT-enabled business services that help private and public organisations meet complex business challenges. Have some experience of working with ONS.

Methods

Methods Group specialises in the provision of Advisory, Analytics, Digital, ERP and Professional Services. They are an independent organisation. Have some experience of working with ONS.

Deloitte

Deloitte offers integrated services that include Audit, Tax, Consulting and Corporate Finance.

SA(14)29 – Delivering the Authority's Strategy

UK STATISTICS AUTHORITY

SA(14)29

Delivering the Authority's Strategy

A report on progress with delivery of the Authority Strategy will be included in the Authority's Annual Report and Accounts for 2014/15. This will be published at:

<http://www.statisticsauthority.gov.uk/about-the-authority/what-we-do/corporate-information/annual-report-and-resource-accounts/index.html>

UK STATISTICS AUTHORITY

SA(14)30

Beyond 2011 programme update**Purpose**

1. This paper provides an update on the planning underway in the Beyond 2011 programme to implement the National Statistician's recommendation on the future of the census and population statistics, and describes the proposed approval process for the business case that will be submitted to HM Treasury in October 2014.

Recommendations

2. Members of the Authority Board are invited to:
 - i. note the progress being made in implementation planning;
 - ii. note the proposed shape of the programme and its relationship to other ONS activities; and
 - iii. endorse the proposed process for approval of the business case before submission to HM Treasury.

Background

3. On 27 March 2014 the National Statistician recommended an online census in 2021 supplemented by increased use of administrative and survey data. HM Treasury is content with this recommendation and the Government has now made a very positive formal response (**Annex A**). However, we still need to submit a business case to Treasury to formally underpin the recommendation and to support a bid for funding for the next phase of the programme (covering 2015/16 and 2016/17). We plan to submit this business case in October 2014.
4. The Beyond 2011 team has now undertaken more detailed implementation planning, resulting in the high level plans described below, and a first draft of the business case. Much more detailed plans have of course been developed, and are being approved through the ONS Executive Leadership Team (ELT) and the Beyond 2011 Programme Board.

Discussion**Implementation planning update**

5. A key concern within the programme team when developing implementation plans was that, in the pressured environment of delivering a 2021 online census, we might lose focus on the development of new approaches using administrative data and fail to deliver the potential benefits. To manage this risk, we have organised the work of the programme going forward in three main strands:
 - i. *2021 census operation*. Research development and implementation and operation of a 2021 online census.
 - ii. *Integrated population statistics outputs*. Methods for enhancing 2021 outputs by linking administrative data to census data (for example potentially adding household income to census outputs using data from the Department for Work and Pensions and HM Revenue and Customs) and improving small area statistics about population size and population characteristics between censuses.
 - iii. *Beyond 2021*. Research into the potential use of administrative data and the need for new surveys after 2021.
6. These strands include research into the best method of producing and disseminating outputs, optimal privacy provisions and address register development (in collaboration with Ordnance Survey).

7. The programme will be delivered in eight phases:
 - Phase 1. Research (January 2011 – March 2015) – almost complete.
 - Phase 2. Design and prototyping (ends December 2016).
 - Phase 3. Testing (2017).
 - Phase 4. Development (2018).
 - Phase 5. Rehearsal (January 2019 – June 2020).
 - Phase 6. Collection operations (July 2020 – December 2021).
 - Phase 7. Analysis, output and dissemination (2022-23).
 - Phase 8. Evaluation / future planning (2023-25).
8. There will be key review points in 2017 (to confirm the design for 2021, including how administrative data will be used), in 2019 (to review potential methods beyond 2021) and in 2023 (to agree the census approach going forward).

Relationship to other ONS initiatives

9. The Beyond 2011 programme has interfaces to other initiatives within ONS, in particular the Electronic Data Collection programme, the Administrative Data Programme and the Procurement of Replacement IT Service Environment (PRISE) project (selecting new IT suppliers for ONS). We are working closely with these projects to ensure that interfaces and dependencies are well understood and well managed, reporting regularly to ELT. We do not yet have all the answers, but ONS has initiated a three month Enterprise Architecture review as the mechanism for fully understanding and defining the relationships between these activities, and Beyond 2011 staff are actively involved. This will systematically document the statistical activities undertaken across ONS, enabling a clear understanding of the areas where there are common statistical processes and hence the areas where systems and services could be shared.
10. More broadly, we have set a strategic aim for the Beyond 2011 programme of maximising wider ONS benefit from the census investment, to the extent that this can be achieved without putting the successful delivery of the programme at risk. We have agreed with ELT four priority areas for seeking this wider benefit (which include, but are not limited to, the initiatives described in paragraph 9):
 - i. systems for dissemination of statistics;
 - ii. survey management systems (case management, field staff management, online field staff training, for example);
 - iii. online data collection systems (while the Electronic Data Collection programme should deliver a system that could be used for small scale census tests in the short term, a different solution is likely to be needed for the 2021 online census given the scale of the census data collection activities (requiring around 250,000 concurrent users); the 2021 census may therefore be able to provide a refreshed system for other ONS surveys after 2021); and
 - iv. administrative data management and processing systems.
11. Clearly, there are many unknowns at this point and we will not have detailed answers about the precise nature of these wider benefits (or the costs of delivering them) by the time the Beyond 2011 business case is delivered to Treasury in October 2014. However, the case will set out our intention to systematically assess the potential for wider ONS benefits, and a plan for how this assessment will be undertaken, with the Enterprise Architecture project being at the heart of the process. Firmer proposals, costs and benefits will be set out in a later business case planned for early 2016, which will be required in order to gain Treasury approval to start census procurements (see next section for further detail).

12. However, we will also need to develop a sufficient understanding of future costs by the time of the 2015 spending review, which we anticipate will determine budgets for 2016/17 to 2019/20. It will be challenging to develop firm estimates in this timeframe, so our approach (subject to agreement with Treasury) is to seek agreement of a best estimate (including contingency) for our spend over this period, with a firm budget being sought in 2016 when the next business case is submitted.

Business Case Development

13. At this stage of the programme, HM Treasury processes require an Outline Business Case to underpin the National Statistician's recommendation, with five sections:
- i. the strategic case ("why is this the right thing to do?")
 - ii. the economic case ("is it good value for money?")
 - iii. the commercial case ("how will the commercial sector be involved?")
 - iv. the financial case ("what will it cost, and where will the money come from?")
 - v. the management case ("how will the work be delivered?")
14. The strategic, economic, financial and management cases will be well developed by October 2014.
15. The commercial case should, in principle, include detailed plans for involvement of the commercial sector in programme delivery (what contracts will be let, what they are likely to cost, what risks will be transferred etc.). However we will not have defined this in detail for at least another 18 months. We have therefore agreed with Treasury that we will submit an interim Outline Business Case in October 2014 to underpin the National Statistician's recommendation and release funds for phase two of the programme, followed by a final Outline Business Case in 2016 once commercial plans, and the detailed relationships to other ONS activities, are clear.
16. A full Business Case will be required in 2017 to support award of key contracts.

Assurance mechanisms

17. The Major Projects Authority will be conducting a gateway zero review of the programme in week commencing 15 September. This will review implementation plans, the business case, capacity and capability, risks etc.
18. The programme's research and implementation plans have been reviewed and shaped through a two day research conference, and a three day international review panel of census experts (from both traditional census and register census countries).
19. In addition, the interim Outline Business Case content is being assured in three ways:
- i. review by a Business Case Review Group, which has met quarterly for the past three years, and includes Joe Grice (ONS Chief Economic Advisor), Treasury, ONS Portfolio Delivery Unit and a user representative (Prof David Martin);
 - ii. review of the benefit analysis by Deloitte experts (note that the benefit analysis has already been discussed extensively with key sets of users); and
 - iii. review of the five individual sections by relevant ONS experts.
20. Following discussion between Glen Watson and Andrew Dilnot, Adrian Smith and David Rhind have also been asked to review the content of the business case and provide feedback.

Proposed business case approval process

21. The proposed timetable for internal review and approval of the interim Outline Business Case is:
- i. 1 July - ELT (high level message review) - complete
 - ii. 18 July - ELT (discussion and feedback on first draft)

- iii. 24 July - Beyond 2011 Programme Board (discussion and feedback on second draft)
 - iv. Late July - Review by Adrian Smith and David Rhind as representatives of the UK Statistics Authority Board (already circulated)
 - v. 21 August - Beyond 2011 Programme Board (for endorsement)
 - vi. Late August - second review by Adrian Smith and David Rhind (to be confirmed)
 - vii. 2 September - ONS Business Investment Group (for endorsement)
 - viii. 10 September - ELT Strategy (for final discussion of any remaining strategic issues)
 - ix. 15 September - ONS Portfolio Scrutiny Committee (for endorsement)
 - x. 22 September - ELT Business Committee (for approval)
 - xi. 2 October - final stocktake by UK Statistics Authority Board
22. This allows one month contingency, with the business case being submitted to Treasury by the end of October at the latest.

Conclusion

23. Implementation planning and business case development are progressing well, with comprehensive assurance and approval mechanisms. Board members are invited to comment on the high level direction of travel and the assurance and approval processes for the business case in particular.

Pete Benton, Beyond 2011 Programme Director, 24 July 2014

List of Annexes

Annex A Government's response to the National Statistician's recommendation



Cabinet Office

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Sir Andrew Dilnot CBE
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6.1

18 July 2014

Dear Andrew,

Government's response to the National Statistician's recommendation

Thank you for your letter of 27 March regarding the census and future provision of population statistics in England and Wales. The Government welcomes the recommendation for a predominantly online census in 2021 supplemented by further use of administrative and survey data.

Government recognises the value of the census and its history as a bedrock of statistical infrastructure. The census provides information on the population that is of fundamental importance to society. At the same time, Government has long said that the census in its current form is outdated and – with modern technology – could be delivered more effectively and more cheaply. Modernising the approach could significantly improve the speed of analysis and outputs. In addition, we are not making the best use of the considerable data that government already collects.

We agree with the recommendation for an online census in 2021 as a modern successor to the traditional paper-based decennial census, with support for those who are unable to complete the census online. We welcome the increased use of administrative data in producing the census in 2021 and other population statistics, and to improve statistics between censuses, since this would make the best use of all available data and provide a sound basis for the greater use of administrative data and surveys in the future. We welcome ONS plans for further research to determine the most appropriate blend of methods and data sources for the 2021 census. However, our support for the dual running of an online (decennial) census with increased use of administrative data is only relevant to 2021 and not for future censuses. Our ambition is that censuses after 2021 will be conducted using other sources of data and providing more timely statistical information. However, any final decision on moving to the use only of administrative data beyond 2021 will be dependent on the dual running sufficiently validating the perceived feasibility of that approach. In the period up to 2021

UKSA's plans should include ensuring that adequate research into the use of administrative data and surveys is carried out to enable a decision about the future methodology for capturing population and census data.

The Government recognises that the public must be assured of privacy and confidentiality with the use of administrative data for statistical purposes, which is why we have launched an open policy making process. We are working in a collaborative and open manner with civil society organisations and the wider Public Sector as well as groups with a specific interest in individual privacy. This process will explore how government data can be better used to improve national statistics and our understanding of the economy and society. Colleagues from ONS are fully engaged in this work.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank you and the UKSA Board for the work on this important matter and look forward to receiving the detailed financial estimates which underpin these recommendations.

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Francis Maude." with a period at the end. The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

FRANCIS MAUDE

UK STATISTICS AUTHORITY

SA(14)31

Data Sharing Legislation

Purpose

1. This paper informs the Board on the progress made on the ONS involvement in Cabinet Office proposals for the research and statistics strand of data sharing legislation.

Recommendation

2. The Authority board is invited to note the progress since June 2014, and to consider what role it wishes to play in any public debate about the benefits of sharing identified administrative data for statistics.

Discussion

3. At the June 2014 meeting, the Authority Board was provided with an update paper on progress with Cabinet Office proposals for data sharing legislation, to include research and statistics. Proposals would give ONS easier access to identified data held by public authorities, and make it easier for public authorities to share de-identified data with participants in the Administrative Data Research Network (ADRN), of which ONS is one.
4. The current proposals are to:
 - i. create a new generic gateway that would allow public authorities to share identified data with ONS without first seeking Parliamentary approval. This would be achieved by amending the Statistics and Registration Service Act 2007, replacing the current power to raise Information Sharing Orders (ISOs). Amended powers would not only be limited to removing obstacles in place before 2007;
 - ii. allow HM Revenue and Customs (HMRC) to share identified data with ONS. This would be achieved by amending Section 45 of the Statistics and Registration Service Act. HMRC support this proposal; and
 - iii. create powers to allow public authorities to share de-identified data for research purposes. This would optimise the benefits from the ADRN.
5. ONS is also developing the case for using the proposed permissive gateway to access identified data in order to provide statistical services to other Government Departments (OGDs). Section 47 of the Statistics and Registration Service Act cannot currently be used to access data to provide statistical services. In the absence of a wide gateway open to all in the Government Statistical Society (GSS), this would maximise the benefits of the policy, without creating the risk that identified data could be used directly against the data subject.
6. In addition, ONS is developing the case for options to provide a rigorous and independent scrutiny of data sharing proposals to replace ISOs and affirmative resolution in Parliament. We have identified seven options, including the status quo. These are:
 - i. ISO approved by affirmative resolution in Parliament (the status quo);
 - ii. ISO approved by negative resolution in Parliament;
 - iii. decision by minister, briefed by officials;
 - iv. decision by an independent ethics and approvals body;
 - v. advice from a single, independent ethics committee, leading to a ministerial decision;
 - vi. advice from a single, independent ethics committee, leading to a decision made by officials; and
 - vii. decision by a Crown appointee.

6. Proposals will be considered at an open policy workshop on 23 July 2014, which will have a strong influence on the policy proposals that Cabinet Office develop over the Autumn. We anticipate that Cabinet Office will produce a paper setting out their proposals in December 2014. Legislation is not envisaged before the General Election.
7. The development of the policy arguments since the summer of 2013 have changed the appetite of departments in relation to data sharing. Many now accept in principle that they should share individual data with ONS. HMRC, in particular, are more receptive to approaches from ONS. We are establishing a strategic approach to data sharing with them. ONS and HMRC are prioritising areas of interest and applying pressure to ensure that business cases for data shares are developed and agreed with pace. This could be a useful model to adopt with other data providers.

Next Steps

8. The next nine months provide us with an opportunity to refine our thinking and develop the proposals. Open policy making will help Cabinet Office to gauge the acceptability of the proposals, and to develop mitigations that will alleviate/address any concerns.
9. We have established an internal UK Statistics Authority/ONS Senior Official's group comprising Glen Watson, Ian Cope (Director Population and Demography), Peter Fullerton (Population and Demography, ONS) and Rob Bumpstead to sign off the ONS response to policy proposals. This group met earlier in July 2014 to sign off the policy positions that had already been established.
10. In the coming months ONS plan to:
 - strengthen the case for the additional benefits to policy making from wider access to identified administrative data, in particular for economic statistics; and
 - use the next nine months to influence the public debate about data sharing, in relation to its use for statistics. We should explain the importance of confidentiality in statistics and the steps we take to prevent identification of individuals. The Authority is invited to consider how it can contribute to this debate, articulating publicly the importance of statistics in making and monitoring policy, and holding decision makers to account.
11. Originally it was planned that data sharing legislation would include powers for compulsory household surveys, a major enabler of alternatives to the Census. This policy is not sufficiently advanced for inclusion in the current proposals, and Cabinet office has, at the previous National Statistician's request, withdrawn them. Over the coming months we will give more consideration to the case for these powers and how we would use them. This will inform future thinking about the need for any new legislative measures, which will not, at this stage, form part of the data sharing initiative.

Background

12. The Cabinet Office is developing the policy for all three strands of data sharing legislation. ONS is supporting them and developing some of the policy arguments.
13. Ian Cope leads on data sharing legislation in ONS. Beyond 2011 is likely to be a major beneficiary for data legislation and is closely involved in developing proposals. Peter Fullerton leads on maximising the use of administrative data within ONS. Rob Bumpstead leads on the Authority's interest in the ADRN and the legislation.

14. Within ONS, Ben Humberstone heads the Administrative Data Programme, overseeing the work on the ADRC-England, matching and linking administrative data for ONS purposes and developing a proactive, prioritised approach to acquiring and using identified data.

Ian Cope, Director Population and Demography, ONS and James Edmonds, Shadow Bill Team, ONS, 23 July 2014