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13th February 2015

Dear Ed

Reinstating the publication of Fly-Tipping Statistics for Wales as Official Statistics

I am writing following our meeting with Mark Pont dated 28th January 2015 regarding the future publication of fly-tipping data for Wales.

In December 2011, the UK Statistics Authority carried out an assessment on the Statistics on Sustainability and the Environment in Wales (Assessment Report 163) which included the publication of statistics on fly-tipping. UKSA judged the statistics to have met the National Statistics requirements. However, over time there have been concerns raised over the quality of the data on fly-tipping.

In 2014, as part of the Welsh Government's Official Statistics consultation, *Proposals concerning the publication of official statistics*, it was proposed and agreed that the fly-tipping annual release was discontinued. This proposal was mainly due to concerns over the quality of the data, which comes from the FlyCapture system (managed by the Environment Agency).

Local authorities submit their data to FlyCapture, where checks for completeness and a limited validation is carried out. It is not clear the extent of the validation of the Welsh data by Environment Agency or within the FlyCapture system. The data are then passed to Welsh Government. Previously Knowledge and Analytical Services (KAS) attempted to carry out some additional validation directly with local authorities when potential discrepancies were identified, but resource was limited and this is not an activity we can prioritise over other statistical work.

Ministers will shortly be publishing a new fly-tipping strategy document, '*A Fly-tipping Free Wales – Our strategy for tackling fly-tipping*'. This is due to be published later this month, and, as such, they wish to refer to the 2013-14 fly-tipping data. As part of our consultation we stated that information would continue to be made available on request. However to ensure transparency of the data it is clear that proactive publication alongside the strategy would be the most appropriate course of action in line with the Code of Practice for Official Statistics.

Therefore to ensure that data to baseline and monitor the new strategy are published in a transparent manner in accordance with the Code, we propose to reinstate the previous statistical output. We then turn to the question of designation. Although the previous statistics were



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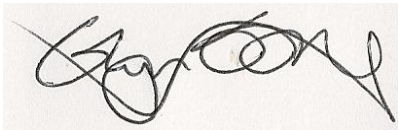
designated as National Statistics it is my assessment that given the concerns over data quality I would be unable to provide the assurance specified under the new toolkit for quality assurance of administrative data. Furthermore we intend now to publish only high level headline statistics, with detailed datasets published on the StatsWales website, without the level of commentary required under the Code. We therefore propose to publish the 2013-14 fly-tipping statistics as official statistics and provide advice to users on the issues that may affect the quality of the data.

Section 14 of the Statistics and Registration Services Act 2007 states that we are unable to de-designate our own outputs from National Statistics without the UK Statistics Authority determining that the statistics do not comply with the Code.

I am writing for your agreement therefore that the reinstatement of the publication of fly-tipping data should be as official statistics. I hope you will agree that this proposal overall benefits users of data by ensuring the data is being put into the public domain in an orderly manner.

I would be happy to discuss any of these matters further if you would like more details.

Yours sincerely



Glyn Jones

Chief Statistician



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