
Chair of the UK Statistics Authority, Sir Andrew Dilnot CBE

Seema Malhotra MP
House of Commons
London
SW1A 0AA

17 March 2017

Dear Ms Malhotra,

Thank you for your letter of 21 February which John Pullinger has passed on to me. Your letter asked about data on the impact of business rates revaluation. The UK Statistics Authority has looked into this matter and has consulted about it with Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG) statisticians.

As we understand, in September 2016 DCLG launched a consultation¹ on Business Rates Revaluation. The consultation included 'Transitional Relief Supplementary Tables', presenting analysis which showed the possible implications of the policy at Local Authority level. This was produced drawing on Valuation Office Agency (VOA) data. Following the consultation, DCLG updated these tables which are available online.

We have been told that the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government asked the Department's analysts for data on the impact of the business rates revaluation by constituency. The analysts went back to the data that had been used to produce those tables already in the public domain and produced analysis for all MPs by identifying the relevant Local Authorities for each MP's constituency. This analysis was created using publicly available data².

Following your statement in the House of Commons on 24th February³, Marcus Jones MP, Minister for Local Government, deposited a letter⁴ with the House. Mr Jones noted that data on business rate revaluations was not available at constituency level but provided a link to the published Local Authority level tables.

On examining the information provided to Conservative MPs and the published source the UK Statistics Authority has noticed small differences between the data. It appears that these differences exist due to rounding. The data provided to the Secretary of State were rounded to one decimal place whereas the published information was rounded to the nearest whole number. Given the nature of these figures, the extra detail may well be of interest and in terms of equality of access to information, the UK Statistics Authority would expect data released through the Secretary of State to be consistent with the published source or for an

¹ <https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/business-rates-revaluation-2017>

² The analysis produced by DCLG uses published VOA data and tax rate information published in the Local Government Finance Settlement.

³ <https://hansard.parliament.uk/Commons/2017-02-22/debates/10D24AF3-E7B4-4F32-A82E-6B1387C3FBC8/PointsOfOrder#contribution-ACEC7FEC-7F0B-40BF-B180-0DA8F94FAA80>

⁴ <https://www.parliament.uk/depositedpapers?page=3#toggle-177>

explanation to be provided if not. I am pleased to note that the Head of Profession for Statistics at DCLG has agreed to update the online data to ensure it is consistent with that distributed to MPs.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Andrew Dilnot". The signature is written in a cursive, slightly slanted style.

Sir Andrew Dilnot CBE