

# **UK STATISTICS AUTHORITY**

## **Minutes**

**Meeting of Friday 30 March 2012  
Board Room, Drummond Gate, London**

### **Present**

#### **UK Statistics Authority**

Sir Michael Scholar (Chair)  
Lord Rowe-Beddoe  
Mr Richard Alldritt  
Dr Colette Bowe  
Mr Partha Dasgupta  
Dame Moira Gibb  
Ms Jil Matheson  
Mr Stephen Penneck (not for item 10)  
Professor David Rhind  
Sir Jon Shortridge

#### **Secretariat**

Mr Robert Bumpstead  
Mr Joe Cuddeford

#### **Other Attendees**

Mr Richard Laux (for items 9 and 10)

#### **Apologies**

None

**1. Apologies**

There were no apologies.

**2. Declarations of interest**

In relation to item 9, Sir John Shortridge reported that he chairs the Community Service Volunteers.

**3. Minutes, matters arising from the previous meeting**

The minutes of the previous meeting held on 24 February were accepted as a true and fair account.

**4. Authority Chair's Report**

4.1 The Chair reported that Mr Penneck had announced that he would retire in September. The Chair had reported the Board's views on Ms Matheson's continued service as National Statistician to the Cabinet Secretary.

4.2 The Chair discussed the Authority's concerns regarding the situation of the National Statistician of Greece, Andreas Georgiou, who faced an official criminal investigation for allegedly acting against the Greek national interest.

4.3 The Authority had published a Monitoring Brief reviewing the reporting of official statistics about public disorder in August 2011 published on-line by the Daily Mail, in response to representations received about this specific article. No representations had been received about a similar article in the Daily Telegraph, and the Monitoring Brief had not referred to this. The meeting considered the merits of appending a footnote to the published Brief about the report in the Telegraph, or to otherwise communicating this information.

4.4 The Chair had replied to a letter from Stella Creasy MP regarding comparisons of crime statistics made by the Mayor of London. The reply noted that the Chair had already written to the Mayor inviting him to follow the principles of the Code of Practice, but that the Mayor had declined. The meeting considered the likelihood of further correspondence in the period up to the mayoral and local elections. An additional consideration was the Authority's remit in relation to the introduction of elected local police commissioners.

4.5 The Chair, the National Statistician and the incoming Chair had met with Cabinet Office officials and discussed the urgent need to expedite recruitment of the Deputy Chairs and Non-Executive Director. The Cabinet Office had provided assurance that this would be advertised before Easter. It was also agreed that ONS would run the recruitment for the next Director General, to take place shortly.

4.6 The Chair intended to write to the Cabinet Secretary and the Head of the Civil Service about the standing of statistics as a profession in government.

4.7 The meeting considered the effect that regional pay could have on the future of the statistical service and for recruitment of statisticians at the ONS site in South Wales in particular.

**5. Reports from Authority Committee Chairs**

Office for National Statistics Board (ONS)

- 5.1 Lord Rowe-Beddoe reported on a meeting of the ONS Board on 16 March. Members of the Authority Board had been informed of plans to publish the Census prospectus in March and the prospectus had since been published.
- 5.2 Lord Rowe-Beddoe also reported on a joint meeting of the ONS Board and the ONS Executive Leadership Team on 16 March. The joint meeting had had considered roles, responsibilities and working arrangements and had been helpful and constructive.
- 5.3 The meeting noted that under its Terms of Reference the ONS Board was to agree the vision, strategy and priorities of ONS. It was agreed that these issues could be considered further by the Deputy Chair (ONS) and the next Authority Chair, in the first instance.

Assessment Committee

- 5.4 Sir Michael Scholar reported on the outcome of the March Assessment Committee, which had considered eight draft assessment reports via correspondence. These would be considered later in the meeting.

Audit Committee

- 5.5 Professor Rhind reported on a meeting of the Audit Committee on 26 March. The Committee had reviewed eight internal audit reports and noted that fewer were of the opinion 'improvement required' than in previous years.
- 5.6 The Committee had reviewed and approved the draft internal audit plan, which was welcomed as being clear and comprehensive. The meeting had also noted that production of the Authority's Annual Report and Resource Accounts was progressing according to schedule.

**6. ONS and the UK Statistics Authority's allocation 2012/13 [SA(12)11]**

- 6.1 Ms Matheson introduced a paper on the 2012/13 allocation for ONS and the UK Statistics Authority that had been prepared by the Chief Finance Officer.
- 6.2 It was agreed that the Authority's allocation should be shown as distinct from the allocation for the National Statistician's Office (NSO).
- 6.3 The meeting noted the allocation. It was agreed that a detailed budget for ONS should be presented to the ONS Board, and an overall Authority, NSO and ONS budget should be presented to the next meeting of the Authority Board. It was agreed that such a presentation could helpfully include a time series.
- 6.4 Lord Rowe-Beddoe confirmed that current practice was for the ONS Board to consider the ONS Business Plan and Budget and for the Authority Board to consider them thereafter. These would be come before the Authority Board at its meeting of 4 May.

**7. UK Statistics Authority's Annual Report 2011/12 [SA(12)12]**

- 7.1 Mr Bumpstead introduced four draft chapters for the UK Statistics Authority Annual Report 2011/12. The report included an introductory chapter from Sir Michael Scholar, and would also include a short foreword by Andrew Dilnot.
- 7.2 The meeting considered the draft chapters and agreed various amendments.

7.3 The report was significantly shorter than in previous years, but it was agreed that the draft should be condensed further. There was also a case for a separate short document focusing on the Authority's objectives and achievements, and the Secretariat would consider this further.

**8. Publishing Statistics and Analysis requested by Specific Users [SA(12)13]**

8.1 Mr Penneck introduced a draft policy on publishing ad-hoc statistics and analyses requested by users. The proposed policy had previously been discussed at the ONS Board and amended subsequently. This followed an earlier instruction from the Authority Board that ONS responses to ad hoc data requests from the media should be simultaneously published on the ONS website. The National Statistician intended to publish related guidance for the Government Statistical Service (GSS).

8.2 The meeting heard that, due to the large number of ad hoc requests received by ONS (about 13,000 per annum) and the technical constraints of the current ONS website, publishing all responses to such requests was currently technically challenging and very resource intensive. An interim solution had been developed, whereby analysis and data for all media and Freedom of Information requests, and for all other requests for large datasets, would be published on the ONS website at the same time as it was supplied to the requesting party. Information about all other requests would be listed on the website, and the responses to these would be made available on request.

8.3 It was agreed that ONS would consider further the responses which were to be published at time of supply to users, for example, to include responses to lobbying organisations or other bodies operating in the public domain. The meeting considered that, while the revised ONS policy was in the right direction of travel, it should recognise that there was still some way to go. It was agreed that the policy should be amended to connect it to the wider objective of making as much data as readily open and available as possible.

8.4 It was agreed that the policy should be revised in light of discussion and circulated to the Board via correspondence for approval, alongside the draft guidance for the GSS. It was further agreed that the ONS policy should be reviewed in six months, with a view to continuing to seeking to further expand the publication of data and analyses by ONS.

**9. Draft Monitoring Brief: The Use of Official Statistics by the Voluntary Sector [SA(12)14]**

9.1 Mr Laux introduced a draft Monitoring Brief on the use of official statistics by the voluntary sector. The meeting heard proposals to develop this into a series of Monitoring Briefs for other sectors of industry and society.

9.2 The Board commended the draft Brief as useful and timely. The title of the report did not fully reflect the wide-ranging substance of the report, which also included information about the availability of statistics about the sector, so this might be amended. It was suggested that this account of the availability of statistics could be further expanded.

9.3. It was agreed that the Brief could helpfully state which bodies had been consulted as part of the production of the Brief, and the Monitoring and Assessment team should otherwise ensure the key stakeholders had been consulted.

9.4 The meeting considered dissemination of the Brief, and agreed that it should be brought to the attention of relevant Chairs of Select Committees, the National Council for Voluntary

Organisations NCVO), and the Office for Civil Society (OCS) at the Cabinet Office. It was also agreed to further explore engagement with NCVO, OCS and other bodies with an interest in this topic.

- 9.5 The Board asked to see plans for subsequent Monitoring Briefs for other sectors, and for future Monitoring Briefs in general. These plans could usefully set out high-level information including the audience that the Briefs were primarily intended for and what tangible action they would aim to bring about.
- 9.6 Subject to consideration of these comments, the Board approved publication of the Monitoring Brief.

**10. Assessment Reports for Approval [SA(12)15]**

10.1 Mr Alldritt reported that the Assessment committee had recommended that the following eight assessment reports be published:

- i. AR 191: Statistics on Substance Misuse in Scotland (Information Services Division of NHS National Services Scotland)
- ii. AR 192: Statistics on Ophthalmic Services (Health and Social Care Information Centre (formerly called the NHS Information Centre for Health and Social Care))
- iii. AR 193: Statistics on the Operation of Homeless Persons Legislation in Scotland (Scottish Government)
- iv. AR 194: Statistics on Trade Union Membership (Department for Business, Innovation and Skills)
- v. AR 195: Statistics on Inheritance Tax, Personal Wealth and Capital Gains Tax (HM Revenue and Customs)
- vi. AR 196: Statistics on Labour Productivity (Office for National Statistics)
- vii. AR 197: Statistics on Defence Health (Ministry of Defence)
- viii. AR 198: Statistics from the Family Resources Survey in Northern Ireland (Department for Social Development in Northern Ireland)  
*(In total 8 Assessment reports, covering 23 outputs)*

10.2 The meeting approved these assessment reports for publication.

**11. Any other business**

Lord Rowe-Beddoe and all members of the Authority Board paid warm tribute to Sir Michael Scholar at the conclusion of his term of office as Chair of the UK Statistics Authority.

# UK STATISTICS AUTHORITY

## *Agenda*

**Friday, 30 March, 2012**  
**Board Room, Drummond Gate, 11:15 - 15:00**

**Chair:** Sir Michael Scholar

**Apologies:**

1	Minutes and matters arising from previous meeting Declarations of interest	Meeting of 240212
2	Authority Chair's Report	Oral Report
3	Reports from Authority Committee Chairs: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● ONS Board</li><li>● Assessment Committee</li><li>● Audit Committee</li></ul>	Oral Reports Lord Rowe-Beddoe Sir Michael Scholar Professor David Rhind
4	UK Statistics Authority's Budget 2012/13	SA(12)11 Mr Stephen Penneck
5	UK Statistics Authority's Annual Report 2011/12	SA(12)12 Mr Rob Bumpstead
6	Publishing Statistics and Analysis requested by Specific Users	SA(12)13 Mr Stephen Penneck
7	Draft Monitoring Brief: The Use of Official Statistics by the Voluntary Sector	SA(12)14 Mr Richard Alldritt
8	Assessment Reports for Approval	SA(12)15 Mr Richard Alldritt
9	Any other business	

**Next Meeting:** Friday, 4 May, 2012  
Drummond Gate, London, 12:00 - 16:00

**UK STATISTICS AUTHORITY**

SA(12)11

***UK Statistics Authority's Budget 2012/13***

The Authority's allocation, including the Office for National Statistics, is published on the HM Treasury website at:

[http://www.hm-treasury.gov.uk/d/sb\\_mainsupplyestimates\\_201213.pdf](http://www.hm-treasury.gov.uk/d/sb_mainsupplyestimates_201213.pdf)

**UK STATISTICS AUTHORITY**

SA(12)12

***UK Statistics Authority Annual Report 2011/12***

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

The document will be available 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(12)13

***Publishing Statistics and Analysis requested by Specific Users***

This document is published on the Office for National Statistics website.

To view the document go to:

<http://onstest.landmarkgovernment.co.uk/ons/guide-method/best-practice/open-data/publishing-ad-hoc-statistical-data-and-analysis-requested-by-specific-user.pdf>

**UK STATISTICS AUTHORITY**

SA(12)14

***Draft Monitoring Brief: The Use of Official Statistics by the Voluntary Sector***

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

To see this document go to:

<http://www.statisticsauthority.gov.uk/reports---correspondence/correspondence/letter-from-andrew-dilnot-to-nick-hurd-03052012.pdf>

**UK STATISTICS AUTHORITY**

SA(12)15

***Assessment Reports for Approval***

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

To see these documents go to:

Assessment Report 191: Statistics on Substance Misuse in Scotland

<http://www.statisticsauthority.gov.uk/assessment/assessment/assessment-reports/assessment-report-191---statistics-on-substance-misuse-in-scotland.pdf>

Assessment Report 192: Statistics on Ophthalmic Services

<http://www.statisticsauthority.gov.uk/assessment/assessment/assessment-reports/assessment-report-192---statistics-on-ophthalmic-services-in-england-and-wales.pdf>

Assessment Report 193: Statistics on the Operation of Homeless Persons Legislation in Scotland

<http://www.statisticsauthority.gov.uk/assessment/assessment/assessment-reports/assessment-report-193---statistics-on-the-operation-of-scottish-homeless-persons-legislation-in-scotland.pdf>

Assessment Report 194: Statistics on Trade Union Membership

<http://www.statisticsauthority.gov.uk/assessment/assessment/assessment-reports/assessment-report-194---statistics-on-trade-union-membership.pdf>

Assessment Report 195: Statistics on Inheritance Tax, Personal Wealth and Capital Gains Tax

<http://www.statisticsauthority.gov.uk/assessment/assessment/assessment-reports/assessment-report-195---statistics-on-inheritance-tax--personal-wealth-and-capital-gains-tax.pdf>

Assessment Report 196: Statistics on Labour Productivity

<http://www.statisticsauthority.gov.uk/assessment/assessment/assessment-reports/assessment-report-196---statistics-on-labour-productivity.pdf>

Assessment Report 197: Statistics on Defence Health

<http://www.statisticsauthority.gov.uk/assessment/assessment/assessment-reports/assessment-report-197---statistics-on-defence-health.pdf>

Assessment Report 198: Statistics from the Family Resources Survey in Northern Ireland

<http://www.statisticsauthority.gov.uk/assessment/assessment/assessment-reports/assessment-report-198---statistics-from-the-family-resources-survey-in-northern-ireland.pdf>