

UK STATISTICS AUTHORITY

Minutes

**Tuesday, 18 December 2012
Boardroom, London**

Present

UK Statistics Authority

Mr Andrew Dilnot (Chair)
Professor David Rhind
Professor Sir Adrian Smith
Dr Colette Bowe
Mr Partha Dasgupta
Dame Moira Gibb (until item 8)
Dr David Levy
Ms Jil Matheson
Mr Glen Watson

Secretariat

Mr Robert Bumpstead
Mr Joe Cuddeford

Other Attendees

Mr Peter Benton and Mr Guy Goodwin (item 7)
Mr Richard Laux (items 9, 10 and 11)

Apologies

Mr Richard Alldritt

1. Apologies

Apologies were received from Mr Alldritt.

2. Declarations of interest

There were no declarations of interest.

3. Minutes, matters arising from the previous meeting

3.1 The minutes of the previous meeting held on 27 November were accepted as a true and fair account, subject to amendments which were discussed and agreed.

3.2 The National Statistician had now written to Permanent Secretaries of government departments regarding a review of Pre-Release Access to ONS statistics.

4. Authority Chair's Report and Priorities

4.1 The Chair reported on his recent activities which included providing oral evidence to the Public Administration Select Committee on 12 December. The Chair also discussed his other priorities, which included improving the ONS website, improving the communication of statistics more broadly, and funding arrangements for statistics for future years.

4.2 The meeting noted that a recruitment exercise had begun to fill the two vacant non-executive director posts on the Authority Board.

4.3 The Chair had written to the Secretary of State for Health following a complaint from the Shadow Secretary of State for Health regarding statements about the level of NHS spending. The Chair confirmed that the Authority's established process for handling such issues had been followed. The Chair also confirmed that a reply had been received from the Secretary of State for Health, and that his letter explained that changes had been made to statements about NHS funding on the Conservative Party website. The correspondence had been published on the Authority website.

5. Reports from Authority Committee Chairs

Audit Committee

5.1 Mr Dasgupta reported on the meeting of the Audit Committee held on 4 December 2012. The Committee had reviewed eleven internal audit reports and had commended ONS management and staff in respect of those reports which had a 'good' opinion.

5.2 The meeting had considered the implementation of recommendations from previous Internal Audit reports and had noted that, for the first time, no high level recommendations were overdue for implementation. The meeting had also discussed proposals for the Authority's internal audit services to be provided as a shared service.

Office for National Statistics (ONS) Board

5.2 Professor Sir Adrian Smith reported on the meeting of the ONS Board held on 18 December 2012. The meeting had discussed progress with improving the ONS website, the financial position of ONS, and issues of planning and priorities in a climate of reduced resources. A further discussion on planning and priorities would be held in January.

6. Price Indices [SA(12)57]

Ms Matheson provided the Board with an update on the consultation on improving the Retail Prices Index (RPI). The National Statistician's recommended course of action for RPI would be considered by the Authority Board on 9 January 2013.

7. Beyond 2011 [SA(12)58]

7.1 Mr Benton and Mr Goodwin introduced a paper which provided an update on the planned timetable and approach to consultation for the Beyond 2011 Programme.

7.2 The Board discussed the plan for consultation and considered the role of the Chair, National Statistician and other Board members in various engagement activities. Subject to some agreed amendments, the proposals were approved.

8. Authority Strategy [SA(12)59]

8.1 The Chair introduced a draft of the new statement of the Authority's strategy, which had been revised following discussion at the last meeting.

8.2 The Board agreed that the revised draft was a much closer reflection of the Board's views and aspirations. The meeting discussed some areas where the strategy could benefit from further enhancement. Conciseness was favoured and consideration should be given to capturing each priority in a single word.

8.3 A further draft of the strategy would be circulated for comment via correspondence in January, before finalisation at the February meeting of the Authority Board.

9. Assessment Progress Report [SA(12)61]

9.1 Mr Laux introduced a paper which provided a summary of current and planned assessment activity.

9.2 The meeting heard that the Department for Work and Pensions had reported five breaches relating to Pre-Release Access since June 2012. The Board considered breach reports more generally and agreed that the Committee for Official Statistics should receive an analysis of breach reports at its next meeting.

10. Update on Monitoring [SA(12)62]

10.1 Mr Laux introduced a paper which reported progress with monitoring reviews and related work. The meeting heard that the Department for Work and Pensions had decided to continue publishing statistics on income related benefits take-up, and so the Monitoring and Assessment team no longer planned to produce a Statistical Expenditure Report on this.

10.2 The Board considered the draft monitoring work programme for 2013-14, an earlier draft of which had previously been discussed at the November meeting of the Assessment Committee. In relation to a proposal for a monitoring review of ONS ad hoc news releases, the meeting heard that there were plans to phase out news releases in ONS, once the corresponding statistical bulletins had been further developed. It was agreed that work should proceed with the monitoring review, and the review should cover a variety of examples drawn from ONS and some other producer departments.

10.3 A proposal for a monitoring review about statistical indicators for the four nations of the UK was considered. It was agreed that the review should not go ahead until consideration had been given to other similar work currently in train across government.

10.4 The Board considered other issues that could be included in the work programme, and the process for consulting on and approving the list of topics. It was agreed that it would be helpful if it was clearer how issues were identified and how monitoring work was joined up with wider initiatives. It was agreed that the monitoring work programme would benefit from discussion at the Committee for Official Statistics. One additional option for inclusion could be a review of poverty statistics. In the meantime, the draft work programme should be published on the Authority's website, alongside a statement that the Authority would review the programme regularly to ensure that it best reflected changing priorities.

11. Progress with Monitoring Recommendations [SA(12)63]

- 11.1 Mr Laux introduced a paper which provided an update on progress with the implementation of recommendations made in Monitoring work.
- 11.2 The Board discussed the progress made, which had been mixed, although there was a reassuring level of improvement in some areas.
- 11.3 It was agreed to further consider progress in implementing the recommendations in *Statistics for Parliamentary Constituencies* at a future meeting.
- 11.4 Subject to amendments which were discussed and agreed, the report was approved for publication.

12. Any other business

- 12.1 The meeting noted that Neil Jackson, head of the Authority's Edinburgh office, would leave the Authority at the end of January to take up post as the Head of Profession at the Department for International Development. The Board expressed thanks for Mr Jackson's work for the Authority and wished him well in his new post.
- 12.2 The next meetings of the UK Statistics Authority Board would be in London on Wednesday 9 January 2013 and Thursday 7 February 2013.

UK STATISTICS AUTHORITY

Agenda

***Tuesday, 18 December 2012
Board Room, Drummond Gate, London, 12:30 - 15:00***

Chair: Mr Andrew Dilnot
Apologies: Mr Richard Alldritt

1	Minutes and matters arising from previous meeting Declarations of interest	Meeting of 271112
2	Authority Chair's Report and Priorities: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Parliament• Strategy• Settlement	Oral Report
3	Reports from Authority Committee Chairs: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Audit Committee• ONS Board	Oral Reports Mr Partha Dasgupta Professor Sir Adrian Smith
4	Price Indices	SA(12)57 Ms Jil Matheson
5	Beyond 2011	SA(12)58 Mr Peter Benton and Mr Guy Goodwin
6	Authority Strategy	SA(12)59 Secretariat
7	ONS Ad Hoc Data Request Policy	SA(12)60 Mr Ian Cope
8	Diligent Boardbooks	Demonstration Mr Ben Bourne
9	Assessment Progress Report	SA(12)61
10	Update on Monitoring	SA(12)62
11	Progress with Monitoring Recommendations	SA(12)63 Mr Richard Laux
12	Any other business	

Next Meeting: Thursday 7 February 2013
Drummond Gate, London, 12:00 – 16:00

SA(12)57 – Price Indices

UK STATISTICS AUTHORITY

SA(12)57

Price Indices

A statement has been published on the UK Statistics Authority website.

To see this statement go to:

<http://www.statisticsauthority.gov.uk/news/statement-consultation-on-the-retail-prices-index-10012013.pdf>

SA(12)58 – Beyond 2011

UK STATISTICS AUTHORITY

SA(12)58

Beyond 2011

The information on the Beyond 2011 project is provided on the ONS website at:

<http://www.ons.gov.uk/ons/about-ons/what-we-do/programmes---projects/beyond-2011/index.html>

SA(12)59 – Authority Strategy

UK STATISTICS AUTHORITY

SA(12)59

Authority Strategy

The Authority Strategy 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/other-corporate-information/index.html>

SA(12)60 – Ad Hoc Data Request Policy

UK STATISTICS AUTHORITY

SA(12)60

ONS Ad Hoc Data Request Policy

Information on ad hoc data requests is provided on the ONS website at:

<http://www.ons.gov.uk/ons/guide-method/best-practice/open-data/index.html>

UK STATISTICS AUTHORITY

SA(12) 1

Assessment 3URJUV 5 HSRUW

Assessment Reports and Programme of Assessments are published on the UK Statistics Authority website at:

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

UK STATISTICS AUTHORITY

SA(12)

Update on Monitoring

Monitoring Reports and Briefs are published on the UK Statistics Authority website at:

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

UK STATISTICS AUTHORITY

SA(12)63

***Progress with the Implementation of
Authority Recommendations in Monitoring reports***

A Monitoring update has been published on the UK Statistics Authority website.

To see this document go to:

<http://www.statisticsauthority.gov.uk/assessment/monitoring/monitoring-reviews/monitoring-review-1-2013---monitoring-update---january-2013.pdf>