

UK STATISTICS AUTHORITY

Minutes

**Meeting of Friday 20 May 2011
Board Room, Titchfield**

Present

UK Statistics Authority

Sir Michael Scholar (Chair)

Lord Rowe-Beddoe (Deputy Chair, ONS)

Professor Sir Roger Jowell (Deputy Chair, Official Statistics)

Mr Richard Alldritt

Dr Colette Bowe

Mr Partha Dasgupta

Ms Moira Gibb

Ms Jil Matheson

Mr Stephen Penneck

Professor David Rhind

Sir Jon Shortridge

Secretariat

Mr Robert Bumpstead

Mr Mervyn Stevens

Other Attendees

Mr Glen Watson (ONS) for item 5

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1. Apologies

There were no apologies.

2. Declarations of interest

There were no declarations of interest.

3. Minutes, matters arising from the previous meeting and other issues

- 3.1 The minutes of the previous meeting held on 15 April were accepted as a true and fair account.
- 3.2 The Chair reported on his appearance, together with the National Statistician and the Head of Assessment, before the Public Administration Select Committee (PASC) of the House of Commons on 10 May.
- 3.3 The Chair informed the meeting that he had not received a reply to his letter of 24 March to the Secretary of State for Health, Rt. Hon. Andrew Lansley MP regarding proposals by the NHS Information Centre to withdraw funding of £300,000 for health statistics in the ONS General Lifestyle Survey. The meeting agreed that the Authority's Statistical Expenditure Report (SER) on this issue should be finalised and published on the Authority's website as soon as possible, and that the Chair should write again to Mr Lansley to draw his attention to the SER.
- 3.4 The meeting noted that a reply dated 27 April had been received from Andrew Stunnell MP, Parliamentary Under Secretary of State at the Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG) to the letter from the Chair to Rt. Hon. Eric Pickles MP, Secretary of State, DCLG regarding the decision to cease production of the Citizenship Survey.
- 3.5 The Authority agreed that its concerns regarding the loss of certain time series of statistical outputs and the associated damage to the coherence of the statistical system, as a result of reductions in statistical expenditure, should be reported to PASC and reflected in the Chair's foreword to the Authority's Annual Report 2010/11.
- 3.6 The meeting was informed that there had been a breach by HM Treasury on 16 May of the pre-release access restrictions for the Consumer Prices Index (CPI) for April, which had been published on 17 May. A breach report was being prepared by HM Treasury and this would be sent to the Authority and published in the usual way. The meeting agreed that the Chair might then consider writing to the Chancellor of the Exchequer to express the Authority's concern about the breach.
- 3.7 Dr Bowe reported that she had held initial discussions with the National Statistician and the Head of Assessment regarding the monitoring review of statistical releases and publications that she was chairing. A further progress report would be made at the next meeting.

4. Reports from Authority Committee Chairs

Office for National Statistics Board (ONS)

- 4.1 Lord Rowe-Beddoe reported on the meeting of the ONS Board held on 13 May 2011. The meeting had considered a report from the Director General of ONS and had reviewed risks and progress with major programmes and projects. The Director General of ONS had also reported on the circumstances that had led to this delay of the launch of the new ONS website, which would now be launched at the end of August.

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- 4.2 The meeting had received an overview of the plans for 'Beyond 2011', the UK wide population statistics programme set up to establish and test models for meeting future needs for census-type statistics. It had been agreed that the ONS Board would receive six-monthly reports on progress.

Remuneration Committee

- 4.3 Lord Rowe-Beddoe reported on the meeting of the Remuneration Committee held on 13 May 2010. The Committee decided that it had no option but to approve the Cabinet Office's strategy for the remuneration of the Senior Civil Service (SCS) employed by the Authority, including ONS. The Cabinet Office had confirmed that a pay freeze remained in place for the SCS in 2010/11 but there remained a provision to award unconsolidated bonus payments in recognition of performance for the year ended 31 March 2011.

5. Census 2011

- 5.1 Mr Watson reported on progress with the Census. The work of the census collectors had almost been completed. The Census Coverage Survey had commenced on 9 May and would continue until 2 June.
- 5.2 The meeting was provided with an overview of the work that would take place over the next year or so in processing the data in order that the first outputs from the Census could be published in July 2012. A further and final report of an independent review of the measures in place to ensure the confidentiality of census data would be published in due course.

- 5.3 The Authority welcomed this very good progress.

6. National Statistician's Review of Crime Statistics

- 6.1 Ms Matheson reported on progress with her review of crime statistics. The emerging findings had been discussed fully at a well attended public meeting on 9 May. The final report would be sent to the Home Secretary at the end of May and then published.
- 6.2 The meeting noted progress.

7. ONS Policy on Statistical Bulletins and News Releases [SA(11)28]

- 7.1 Mr Penneck introduced a paper, consideration of which had been deferred from the previous meeting, that set out the ONS strategy and policy on its different types of statistical publications. At its meeting in February the Authority had asked ONS to provide an explanation to the ONS Board on the rationale behind having both 'statistical releases' and 'news bulletins'. The ONS policy had been considered by the ONS Board at their meeting on 11 March when it had been agreed that a paper explaining the ONS position should be presented to the Authority Board in May.
- 7.2 The meeting noted the paper and agreed that it should be considered further in the context of the current monitoring review of statistical releases and publications.

8. Draft Statistical Expenditure Report: Scottish Schools Statistics [SA(11)37]

- 8.1 Mr Alldritt introduced a draft of the third Statistical Expenditure Report (SER) which dealt with Scottish Schools Statistics. This was different in kind from the two SERs already published because the changes were not a discontinuation of a self-contained survey but rather a complex set of changes to the publication of statistics from related administrative sources.
- 8.2 Following discussion, it was agreed that the SER should be submitted to the next

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meeting of the Committee for Official Statistics for further consideration.

9. Update on Monitoring

9.1 Mr Alldritt reported on progress with monitoring reviews. Three Monitoring Briefs dealing with different aspects of the Authority's Monitoring and Assessment work were nearing completion and would be published shortly.

9.2 Three further Monitoring Briefs were at differing stages of completion and drafts would be submitted to the next meeting, as follows:

- i. immigration statistics;
- ii. climate change statistics; and
- iii. parliamentary constituency data.

9.3 Monitoring reviews were also in progress for the following topics:

- i. statistics in answers to Parliamentary Questions;
- ii. UK deprivation index;
- iii. statistical audit of administration systems used for statistical purposes;
- iv. statistical releases and publications;
- v. use made of official statistics by the voluntary sector; and
- vi. multiple sources of sets of statistics.

9.4 In noting progress, the meeting agreed that the Committee for Official Statistics should further consider the work programme for monitoring reviews at their next meeting.

10. UK Statistics Authority Annual Report 2010/11 [SA(11)38]

10.1 The meeting considered a draft of the Authority's Annual Report 2010/11 and agreed that a further draft should be considered at the next meeting.

10.2 The Authority reviewed progress against its aims and objectives over the past year and agreed that it would consider its priorities for the forthcoming year at the next meeting.

11. Any other business

There was no other business.

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Agenda

Friday, 20 May, 2011

Board Room, Titchfield, 11:15 - 12:45

Chair: Sir Michael Scholar

Apologies:

1	Minutes and matters arising from previous meeting Declarations of interest	Meeting of 150411
2	Reports from Authority Committee Chairs: <ul style="list-style-type: none">● ONS Board● Remuneration Committee	Oral Reports Lord Rowe-Beddoe Lord Rowe-Beddoe
3	Census 2011	Oral Report Mr Glen Watson
4	National Statistician's Review of Crime Statistics	Oral Report Ms Jil Matheson
5	ONS Policy on Statistical Bulletins and News Releases	SA(11)28 Mr Stephen Penneck
6	Draft Statistical Expenditure Report: Scottish Schools Statistics	SA(11)37 Mr Richard Alldritt
7	Update on Monitoring	Oral Report Mr Richard Alldritt
8	UK Statistics Authority Annual Report 2010/11	SA(11)38 Secretariat
9	Any other business	

**Next Meeting: Friday, 24 June, 2011
London, 11:15 - 15:00**

UK STATISTICS AUTHORITY

SA(11)28

ONS Guidance on News Releases and Statistical Bulletins

This document will be published as part of a Monitoring Review on the UK Statistics Authority website in due course.

The document will be available at:

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

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SA(11)37

Statistical Expenditure Report 3 – Scottish Schools Statistics

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-sir-michael-scholar-to-john-swinney-msp-14062011.pdf>

1K STATISTICS AUTHORITY

SA(11)38

UK Statistics Authority Annual Report 2010/11

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>