

**UK STATISTICS AUTHORITY**

**Minutes**

**Friday 26 June 2015  
Room 4307E, Titchfield**

**Present**

**UK Statistics Authority**

Sir Andrew Dilnot (Chair)  
Professor David Rhind  
Professor Sir Adrian Smith  
Dame Colette Bowe  
Dame Moira Gibb  
Professor David Hand  
Mr Ed Humpherson  
Mr John Pullinger  
Mr Glen Watson

**Also in attendance**

Mr Jonathan Athow  
Mr Robert Bumpstead  
Mr Joe Cuddeford  
Ms Laura Dewis (for item 9)  
Mr Peter Fullerton (for item 8)  
Ms Heather Savory

**Apologies**

Ms Carolyn Fairbairn  
Dr David Levy

**1. Apologies**

Apologies were received from Ms Carolyn Fairbairn and Dr David Levy.

**2. Declarations of Interest**

There were no new declarations of interest.

**3. Minutes and matters arising from previous meetings**

3.1 The Chair welcomed Mr Jonathan Athow to his first meeting of the Authority Board in his new role as Deputy National Statistician for Economic Statistics.

3.2 The Chair noted with regret that this would be Professor David Rhind's last meeting as a member of the Authority Board. Professor Sir Adrian Smith would take on the role of Chair of the Regulation Committee.

3.4 The Chair reported on the topics discussed at the meeting of the non-executive directors that had taken place prior to the start of the Board meeting. The non-executives had discussed accounting issues relating to technology assets, which would be discussed further later in the meeting.

3.5 The minutes of the previous meeting held on 21 May 2015 were agreed.

**4. Report from the Authority Chair**

4.1 The Chair reported on his recent activities, which included: attending the Better Statistics, Better Decisions event on crime statistics; chairing a Remuneration Committee meeting; and meeting with the Minister for the Cabinet Office, Matthew Hancock MP.

4.2 During the course of the morning the Authority Board had visited three Office for National Statistics (ONS) business areas: the Census, the Big Data Innovation Lab, and Population Estimates. The Board agreed this had been a valuable exercise and similar activities would be planned for future meetings.

**5. Reports from Committee Chairs**

Remuneration Committee

5.1 Sir Andrew Dilnot reported on the meeting of the Remuneration Committee held on 9 June. The meeting had considered the outcomes of moderating meetings for Directors and Deputy Directors, and had approved proposals for an increase in base pay of 0.5 per cent for all 'top' and 'achieving' senior civil servants in the Authority.

Audit and Risk Assurance Committee

5.2 Dame Colette Bowe reported on the meeting of the Audit and Risk Assurance Committee held on 23 June. The Committee had considered the accounting treatment for the Authority's in-house developed software and their asset value at 31 March 2015. Dame Colette invited Mr Pullinger to summarise this issue and steps taken to address it.

5.3 The Authority Board endorsed the direction that the Audit and Risk Assurance Committee had proposed, and requested to be kept informed of developments. Furthermore, the Board thanked the financial team for the way it had responded to this issue.

5.4 Dame Colette reported that the Audit and Risk Assurance Committee had also considered the 'capability' strategic risk as part of a new series of strategic risk 'deep dives'.

ADRN Annual Report

- 5.5 Professor Hand introduced a draft of the Administrative Data Research Network (ARDN) Board's Annual Report. The Board noted the achievements of the Network in its first year, including the development of physical infrastructure and the recruitment of 177 staff.
- 5.6 The Board recognised that the first year of operation of the Network had been comprised mainly of setup activity, rather than delivery of particular research projects. Nine initial projects had been approved by 31 March 2015. The Board encouraged the Network to seek further projects of a broad and ambitious nature.
- 6. Report from the Chief Executive [SA(15)20]**
  - 6.1 Mr Pullinger invited Mr Athow to provide his initial reflections on his first weeks in post. Mr Athow reported that he had observed many strengths in the organisation, including an excellent degree of commitment from staff, and many signs of innovation and high performance. But there were some areas where a culture of improvement and performance was not yet firmly embedded. Problems with technology, processes and policies hindered delivery in some areas, although many staff had developed innovative workarounds. It was important that staff saw their role broadly; not just to complete the tasks in front of them but to think how their work connected with the bigger picture. The Authority Board expressed its full support to Mr Athow.
  - 6.2 Mr Pullinger provided an overview of activity since the last Authority Board meeting. It was noted that the GSS was providing analytical support to inform the Government's Implementation Taskforces. Due to tight budgets, the National Statistics Executive Group had instituted a regime of spending controls, including recruitment controls. All of the recognised trade unions had rejected the pay offer the Authority had made, and management were now considering how best to proceed.
- 7. Report from the Director General for Regulation [SA(15)21]**

Mr Humpherson provided an update on regulation activity since the last meeting. The meeting heard that there was strong alignment between regulatory activity and the priorities of the Chief Executive, for example on crime, prices, and construction. The Government's Implementation Taskforces offered an opportunity for the National Statistics brand, as trusted, independent statistics would be in demand.
- 8. Spending Review**

Mr Watson provided an overview of activity within the organisation to prepare for the next Spending Review. A further update would be provided to the Board at the end of July.
- 9. ONS Website [SA(15)22]**
  - 9.1 Ms Dewis provided an update on progress with development of the new ONS website. Subject to a forthcoming internal assessment against the Government Digital Service (GDS) Service Standard, it was intended that the website would move to a public beta phase of development. The public beta phase would allow evaluation of search functionality, archiving, the ability to publish at 9.30am and content migration.
  - 9.2 The Board heard that it was anticipated that the public beta phase would begin during July. Depending on an assessment against critical success factors and user feedback, the full website could be launched later in the year.

**10. Government priorities and the implications for statistics**

Mr Watson provided an update on how ONS and the wider Government Statistical Service (GSS) were helping to inform the agenda surrounding the Government's key priorities. ONS was in regular contact with the Cabinet Office Implementation Unit, and had offered analytical support to inform the work of many of the new Implementation Taskforces.

**11. Any other business**

11.1 The Board noted that that this would be Professor Rhind's last meeting as a member of the Authority Board, and paid tribute to the invaluable contribution that Professor Rhind had made to the work of the Authority and the UK statistics system broadly.

11.2 There was no other business. The Authority Board would meet next on Tuesday 28 July 2015 at 10:30 in London.

**UK STATISTICS AUTHORITY****Agenda**

**Friday 26 June 2015**  
**Titchfield, 10:30 – 16:00**

**Chair: Sir Andrew Dilnot**  
**Apologies: Dr David Levy and Ms Carolyn Fairbairn**

1	Minutes and matters arising from previous meetings <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Declarations of interest</li> </ul>	Meeting of 210515
2	Report from the Authority Chair	Sir Andrew Dilnot
3	Visits to business areas Group 1 – Big Data Innovation Lab Group 2 – Census Group 3 – Population estimates	
4	Reports from Committee Chairs <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. Remuneration Committee</li> <li>ii. Audit and Risk Assurance Committee</li> <li>iii. Draft ADRN Annual Report</li> </ul>	Sir Andrew Dilnot Dame Colette Bowe Professor David Hand
5	Report from the Chief Executive	SA(15)20 Mr John Pullinger
6	Report from the Director General for Regulation	SA(15)21 Mr Ed Humpherson
7	Spending Review	Presentation Mr Glen Watson, Mr Paul Layland and Mr Peter Fullerton
8	ONS Website	SA(15)22 Ms Laura Dewis
9	Government priorities and the implications for statistics	Discussion Mr John Pullinger
10	Any other business	

**Next meeting: Tuesday 28 July 2015, 10:30 to 16:00, London**



## UK STATISTICS AUTHORITY

SA(15)20

### *Chief Executive's Report, June 2015*

#### **Purpose**

1. This report provides an overview of activity and issues for June.

#### **Summary**

2. We are entering a phase when several Government Statistical Services (GSS) initiatives are gathering momentum, supported by our bolstered leadership team which is fully in place. However, we have not yet dealt with major legacies from our past related to our reputation, financing, pay and technology. At this critical moment in the formative period after the general election there is a strong imperative for clarity of purpose and strength of resolve.

#### **Review of recent activities**

3. Decision makers and commentators are demanding an outstanding statistical service to help them understand and take action on nationally critical issues. Foremost amongst these is UK productivity. The Authority seminar on this subject last month gave encouragement to the direction we are taking and those present offered support to us in the delivery of our work programme. However, we are operating with a legacy of substantive quality issues in economic statistics and concerns expressed by important stakeholders that will require us to demonstrate that we are focused on the right areas for development and capable of delivering what is needed.
4. In many other domains, most immediately those for which the government has established Implementation Taskforces, there is an urgent need for statistics tailored to help the decision making process. Particular priorities are migration and jobs although the GSS has a big potential role to play in almost all areas. A separate paper has been provided for the Board giving more detail.
5. Within Office for National Statistics (ONS), a considerable amount of effort has gone into the annual accounts for 2014-15. Our spending outturn came out very well indeed as a result of strong management from the finance team and support from across the office. This is a sign of greatly improved financial maturity. Managing our asset base has been more challenging. We have a significant legacy of software assets that we rely on for service delivery and are depreciating in line with current expectations about the rate of technological innovation within the organisation. We are changing our approach but are not there yet. We have been open throughout with the National Audit Office and HM Treasury in order to chart the proper course for the Authority.
6. For the current year, ONS budgets are very tight, now at levels 30 per cent lower in real terms than when the Authority was established. In order to balance the books in 2015-16, and prepare for further financial pressure in the years ahead, the National Statistics Executive Group has instituted a tight regime of spending controls that extends the approach adopted during 2014-15. Looking further ahead, planning for the forthcoming Spending Review is well advanced.

7. As reported previously, another legacy issue that remains unresolved is pay inside ONS. ONS pay is low compared with other parts of the civil service but the tightness of public sector pay policy has meant that we have not had the room to manoeuvre that we need to move forward. The latest position is that all of the recognised trade unions have rejected the offer we have made by large margins and we are considering how best to proceed.
8. On a positive note, the new senior leadership team in the Digital Services, Technology and Methodology area is now in place. David Best joined us as Director on 15 June and Bill Oates started as Chief Data Scientist on 1 June. Alongside this we have run a successful recruitment exercise for data scientists seeking to help meet a burgeoning demand from within the GSS (and other parts of the civil service). In addition, at the Government level, a new Data Steering Group is being established co-chaired by Mike Bracken, Government Chief Data Officer, and me and with Heather Savory as a member. This will help ensure both that the GSS contributes fully to the wider Government agenda and that we can get maximum benefit from it, for example through better quality registers.
9. Other important developments in recent weeks include the following.
  - i. Universal credit - we have now moved the claimant count data to be based on a mix of universal credit claimants and job seekers allowance claimants. This is a significant step, demonstrating our determination to focus on what the users of data need rather than just publishing what the sources are showing. ONS, supported by Department for Work and Pensions (DWP), have been working closely with the Regulation team to ensure that we manage the National Statistics designation issues well.
  - ii. Construction - following the transfer of construction output prices from Department of Business, Innovation and Skills (BIS) to ONS we have begun to use improved deflators. The team has worked hard to communicate what we are doing to make improvements but it is challenging to ensure that the focus is on this rather than the problem we are seeking to deal with.
  - iii. Crime - our crime statistics event was well attended and well received, and a good demonstration of our desire to focus the statistical system on the real world problems that we need better statistics to address.
  - iv. Census - the census consultation is off to a good start. The focus of the consultation is on topics for the 2021 census. However, the launch of the consultation has reinforced the criticality of getting early results from the administrative data element of the programme. Our plan is to release some first results later in 2015 and we can expect this to result in considerable interest.
  - v. Prices - similarly, the prices consultation has begun and we can expect interest to build over the coming weeks. In addition, we have for the first time released results from our ongoing work to generate price indices from scraped internet data.
  - vi. Data sharing - we have been working intensely with the Cabinet Office on data sharing legislation for statistics and research. This is building on the work done in the last Parliament.

- vii. Devolution - the Inter- Administration Committee met in Belfast earlier this month and reviewed those areas where we need substantially to develop our statistics, especially in economic domains, to meet the demands of the new settlements.

**Future look**

10. Significant activities between now and the summer include:

- i. the Excellence awards - an opportunity to celebrate teams and individuals who have done something special;
- ii. the first meeting of the newly established National Statistician's Data Ethics Advisory Committee will be on 7 July; and
- iii. the income and earnings event - our event on 2 July will provide an opportunity to follow up on the recent Assessment Report and engage those with an interest in this area so that our work programme is well targeted on what will be of most value.

11. Over the next few weeks I will be working actively with the Leadership Team to look forward with the intention of bringing proposals to the Board after the summer.

**John Pullinger, 16 June 2015**



## UK STATISTICS AUTHORITY

SA(15)21

### *Report from the Director General for Regulation*

#### **Purpose**

1. This paper provides an update on regulation activity since the last meeting.

#### **Recommendation**

2. Members of the Authority Board are invited to note the activities and proposed actions.

#### **Discussion**

3. The main activities since the Board meeting on 21 May have been as follows.
  - i. **Health statistics:** Following the last board meeting and in discussion with Andrew Dilnot, David Rhind and John Pullinger, I have addressed the risk that our five assessments of patient outcome statistics (which we discussed at the last Board) might not secure a positive impact. My main decision was to publish these reports in sequence over the next four months rather than through a 'Big Bang' approach all on the same day. We will start with the assessments of patient safety and patient experience, which are the most straightforward of the assessments. At the same time we will continue and deepen our engagement with decision makers in the English health system and develop strategic analysis and advice for the Board over summer.
  - ii. **Crime event – 9 June:** The crime event provided an excellent opportunity to advocate the Authority's vision of trustworthiness, quality and value. The event featured very rich discussions about the purpose and relevance of crime statistics.
  - iii. **Northern Ireland:** Earlier in June I spent two days in Northern Ireland. I made several presentations to key groups, including the Statistics Advisory Committee and the Permanent Secretaries group. Since we are a UK-wide body, I'm keen to maintain the Authority's profile in Northern Ireland. A key outcome of this trip was commending the importance of good statistical governance to policy makers beyond the statistics community. These policy makers are deliberating on how to support a new programme for government after their 2016 election. I was able to bring to their attention the Authority's position on the importance of involving statisticians in the development of targets, based on our recently-published review (see below).
  - iv. **Targets and Quality Assurance of Administrative Data (QAAD):** We published our review of targets on 21 May, including sets of recommendations intended to enhance the contribution that statistics and statisticians can make to policy development and ways in which statistics might be better presented on topics related to performance measurement. I have written to Permanent Secretaries and the team is considering the way in which the messages in the report might be consolidated within the assessment framework.

On QAAD we are about to publish first case studies and held an excellent session with senior Office for National Statistics (ONS) staff. Further engagement is planned with presentations to analysts in ONS and at the Royal Statistical Society (RSS) conference in the coming months. Workshops with statistical producers are being arranged in response to needs highlighted in the course of assessment (such as with the Home Office). Tools for non-statisticians are being further developed in discussion with the Good Practice Team.

- v. **Assessment:** On our core work promoting the National Statistics designation there are two key areas of activity. Firstly, we continue to see openness from producers of statistics where they themselves have some concerns about the appropriateness of National Statistics, including, for the first time, the Scottish Government. Secondly, the team has completed draft assessment reports about population statistics in each of the four administrations in the UK: these are currently with the respective producers for comment and we will bring revised drafts to the July meeting of the regulation committee. This is important because statistics on population lie at the heart of any credible system of statistics. The Board should also note that we are likely to finalise our plans for the re-assessment of Consumer Price Index (CPIH) over the next couple of weeks.
  - vi. **Forthcoming events:** We host two important events over the next fortnight. Following the event last year in Edinburgh, on 25 June we'll hold a discussion of the uses of health statistics in Wales chaired by David Rhind. And on 2 July we bring together producers and users on the statistics on income and earnings to explore how producers are innovating and developing the statistics. John Pullinger will be the keynote speaker.
5. Our main challenges are as follows. Resourcing for outreach events and training remains very tight indeed. At the strategic level we continue to explore further ways of securing sufficient influence. One manifestation of this is the decision on health statistics described above, which revolves around finding the right balance of ambition and risk. Similarly, the crime event was about enhancing influence, by showing openness to a wide range of voices and a willingness to address difficult questions. This search for increased influence and impact will be a recurring theme in coming months

**Ed Humpherson, Director General for Regulation, 14 May 2015**

#### **List of Annexes**

**Annex A      Key outputs since the last meeting**

## Annex A Key outputs since the last meeting

### Assessment

Since the last Board meeting we have:

Published 4 Assessment Reports:

- AR 301: Statistics on Police Recorded Crime in Northern Ireland (Police Service of Northern Ireland)
- AR 302: Statistics on Mandatory Surveillance of Healthcare-Associated Infections in England (Public Health England)
- AR 303: English Indices of Deprivation (Department for Communities and Local Government)
- AR 304: Statistics on UK Trade (Office for National Statistics)

Confirmed National Statistics (NS) designations in relation to 4 previous Assessment Reports:

- AR 159: Statistics on Community Health in England (Health and Social Care Information Centre)
- AR 262: Statistics on NHS Diagnostics Waiting Times and Activity (NHS England)
- AR 273: Statistics on the Labour Market (Office for National Statistics)
- AR 291: Statistics on Ambulance Service Quality in England (NHS England)

Removed the NS status from 3 sets of statistics:

- Claimant Count Statistics (Office for National Statistics)
- Scottish Input-Output Tables (Scottish Government)
- Statistics on offences involving firearms in Scotland (Scottish Government)

### Monitoring

- Published Review of targets on 21 May
- Crime: Crime event - Better Statistics, better decisions held 9 June
- Health: Uses of health statistics in Wales scheduled on 25 June
- Income and earnings: producer/user event scheduled for 2 July
- Code of practice: stocktake – to be launched in autumn 2015

### Casework

From	To	Regarding	Date
Mr Ed Humpherson	Mark Sedwill, Permanent Secretary, Home Office	<a href="#">Transparency data on passport applications</a>	19 May 2015



## UK STATISTICS AUTHORITY

SA(15)22

### ***ONS website: moving from private to public Beta***

#### **Purpose**

1. This paper provides members of the UK Statistics Authority Board with an update on progress with development of the new Office for National Statistics (ONS) website as part of the Improving Dissemination Programme (IDP).

#### **Recommendation**

2. For information, members of the Board are invited to note:
  - i. the progress with the development of the new ONS website as set out below; and
  - ii. that subject to a successful forthcoming internal assessment against the Government Digital Service (GDS) Service Standard, the National Statistics Executive Group (NSEG) have now given approval to move from the 'private' to 'public' Beta phase of development.

#### **Background**

3. Members of the Board last received an update on the development of the new ONS website in December 2014 [SA(14)49]. At that point, the Board were updated on the success of the Alpha phase of development and agreed to devolve the decision making for the next steps in the development and the move to the Beta phase, to the National Statistics Executive Group (NSEG).
4. At the January 2015 NSEG meeting, following a successful assessment by GDS against their 26 point Service Standard and a discussion of progress against the Critical Success Factors (CSFs) for the Alpha, approval was given by NSEG to move from the Alpha to Beta phase of development.
5. The Beta phase of development would be in two parts. During the 'private' Beta, the team would carry out extensive development and testing following user feedback received on the Alpha phase. Then the 'public' Beta phase would take place, during which development work would continue, while at the same time the new Beta website would be opened up to the public to gain further feedback and to allow testing of functionality in real time. The public Beta phase will be publicised via ONS social media (over 130,000 followers), email newsletter (over 33,000 subscribers), the current ONS website, a number of events, key stakeholder relationship managers and via communication with users who took part in any of our user research activities over the previous year, with regular updates provided via the ONS Digital Publishing blog. Users will be encouraged to provide feedback via an online tool on the Beta website.
6. At the NSEG meeting on 11 June, following discussion of progress against the CSFs for the private Beta phase, it was agreed that subject to the work passing an internal assessment against the GDS Service Standard, NSEG gave approval for the move from private to public Beta.

#### **Discussion**

##### **Summary of progress of the private Beta phase**

7. Since NSEG gave approval for ONS to embark on the private Beta phase in January 2015, an external technical team have been procured (Methods Digital) and started work on 16 February. The Beta team includes people who worked on the Alpha phase, along with new people who bring a fresh perspective and a broader range of skills. We

intend to make a Beta website available to the public during the w/c 6 July 2015, enabling ONS to gain feedback from users and test the performance of key functions in a real-world environment.

8. We have worked with a GDS approved security specialist to help ONS better understand solutions for effective and secure publishing at 9.30 and to validate our proposed approach. We have also engaged in an ONS Architecture Review, to further validate the proposal. The Chief Technology Officer and Chief Digital Officer are satisfied that our approach is in line with the direction of travel for digital delivery.

Scope of private Beta

9. During the private Beta, the team focussed on the following elements.
  - i. Prioritising changes to the Alpha based on feedback from users.
  - ii. Agreeing a content migration strategy and implementation plan to migrate content from the current website to the new website.
  - iii. Working with the National Archives to manage the archiving of the current website.
  - iv. Procuring an infrastructure to support the development, secure hosting of the service and the timely publication of statistics.
  - v. Building and testing a publishing tool to enable internal publishers to manage content on the new website.
  - vi. Building a charting tool to enable better communication of data via charts.
  - vii. Building the user interface to be device agnostic.
  - viii. Implementing a search engine, search interface and logic.
  - ix. Establishing tests which will measure the success of the Beta.
  - x. Rewriting key areas of website copy.
  - xi. Developing a recruitment strategy and business case to procure a permanent in-house delivery team.
10. Key achievements during this period have been good progress on working with the National Archives and their web archiving team; timely decisions around content migration enabling us to move ahead with a pragmatic approach; the successful development of open data and a simple industry standard JSON Application Programming Interface (API) to query the data; and the redirection of existing resource to build a Local.ONS alpha to complement the Beta website, based on user needs identified during the Alpha phase
11. Key areas for concern have been the time taken to reach a decision on the underlying technology platform and the speed of delivery not matching our estimates in the first few months, which has resulted in a delay to the Full Business Case (FBC). These issues have now been addressed and the team undertake daily meetings and a monthly retrospective to ensure barriers to progress are actively managed. There are high levels of confidence in the decisions made and quality is excellent, as this is prioritised when trade-offs have to be made.
12. As requested by the Authority Board in July 2014, we are prioritising sustainability and pace and seeking to meet only critical user and business needs during this project, to ensure a new website can go live as soon as possible. The live site will be provisioned to deliver regular improvements, allowing us to rapidly go beyond the users' essential requirements.
13. The team have engaged with, and continue to engage with, a number of high profile stakeholders (including the Bank of England, Sky Television, the Financial Times, the Office of Budget Responsibility, the House of Commons library, the Royal Statistical Society and Full Fact) to elicit feedback on the private Beta phase.

Evaluating the private Beta phase

14. A series of CSFs were proposed to benchmark the worthiness of the Beta project to move from a private to public state and to eventually replace the current website. They are provided at **Annex A**, along with information to evidence whether each has been met
15. The team have been observing and interviewing a small group of users interacting with the private Beta website and have qualitative results from user testing.

Evaluating the public Beta (October-December 2015) and move to a live website

16. The CSFs for the public Beta to live phase are proposed as follows:
  - i. Ability to publish typical volume of content to meet the 9.30am deadline under representative performance conditions.
  - ii. Ten representative searches (based on search log data) result in more accurate search results than the current website.
  - iii. Search monitoring tools provide intelligence on search activity and search engine regularly tuned to meet user needs<sup>1</sup>.
  - iv. Current ONS website archived and a continuous archiving process in place<sup>2</sup>.
  - v. Sustainable delivery team in place.
  - vi. Additional content migrated according to user need.
  - vii. Public Beta passes an independent GDS Service Assessment.
17. We would expect to provide NSEG with an evaluation of our progress against these CSFs when requesting approval later in the year to move from the public Beta to a live service. We welcome feedback on whether these CSFs are sufficient to inform the decision. As part of the Service Assessment, the National Statistician will be asked to use the service in advance of a live launch.

Assurance mechanisms

18. By the end of June, ONS will conduct an internal assessment of the private Beta and evaluate our readiness to move into the public Beta phase. There are no expectations from GDS that the private to public Beta stage requires an independent assessment. ONS have staff trained by GDS to run internal assessments. ONS will need to pass the internal assessment in order to move into public Beta. The assessment will look at areas such as: the quality of the user research; the capability and structure of the team; the security of the data storage; the tools and systems used to build, host, operate and measure the service; the use of agile methods; the performance benchmarks; the features and tasks identified for the next stage of development; the usability of the service; the quality of the design; whether there is the technical flexibility to update and improve the service on a very frequent basis; whether open standards have been used; whether the end-to-end service can be tested adequately to ensure the safe release of code; and, value for money.
19. The overall IDP (including the website development) reports progress against scope, budget and risk management into three internal boards. At the IDP Programme Board on 21 May, the programme reported an improvement in delivery confidence from Amber to Amber/Green, with confidence only lowered by the need to get HM Treasury approval for the FBC and the need to enhance the software delivered by the Web Data Access Programme in order to release complex datasets as open data. We expected to submit the FBC to internal committees in March 2015 and to the Cabinet Office Efficiency and Reform Group and HM Treasury in April 2015. Our current expectation is that we will

<sup>1</sup> Based on GDS approach documented here:

<https://gdstechnology.blog.gov.uk/2014/12/22/monitoring-search-performance-on-gov-uk>

<sup>2</sup> Documentation of agreement with the National Archives will be provided.

submit the FBC to internal committees throughout June 2015. The delays have been in part due to it taking longer than expected to establish the infrastructure requirements in order to firm up costs with suppliers, and the need to prioritise keeping delivery on track, over engaging with internal stakeholders on FBC matters.

20. The IDP was subject to an internal audit in November 2014, which returned an overall 'moderate' score, with three moderate recommendations. In addition, an external Gateway Review was conducted in February 2015, to evaluate the inception of the anticipated Beta phase. The panel included Alex Holmes, Deputy Director, Office of the Chief Technology Officer, GDS and Steph Gray, managing director of two digital companies. The Gateway Review assessed the Programme delivery confidence as Amber/Green, and made eight recommendations: two critical, five essential and one recommended.
21. Risks are considered as part of all these assurance mechanisms. Further information on high scoring risks/dependencies and mitigation plans is available should members of the Board wish to see it.

*Transition to Beta phase: costs and timescales*

22. The timescales, indicated in the high-level roadmap at **Annex B**, are based on the information we have to date, such as the speed and quality at which the Alpha and Beta team have delivered, and emerging user needs which are defining the scope of the Beta phase. However, these dates are constrained by budget and our contract with suppliers and we have minimal levels of contingency.
23. The full scope of the private Beta has been delivered within 19 weeks at a cost of £405,000. The overall contract for the Beta development (private and public over 32 weeks) is £732,500.
24. There was an under spend of £448,000 in 2014/15 due in part to delays associated with the website development. This has put a pressure on the funds available in 2015/16 to complete the project. Although tight, we believe that we can stay within the budget forecast for 2015/16.
25. In terms of overall programme costs, this under spend is offset by increased costs in 2016/17 to 2018/19 of £106,000, £146,000 and £170,000 respectively due to a change in the ONS planning rates and an under forecast for salary costs and general administrative expenditure (GAE).
26. The current draft FBC anticipates total programme costs over the business case horizon to end 2018/19 at £13.9 million. The website build is just one aspect of the Programme. The capital costs of development of the Alpha to 'Live' phase are £1.3 million. In addition, the programme funding allows for the 26 new FTEs recruited to establish the Digital Publishing Division, ongoing GAE of £100,000 per annum and hosting charges of around £216,000 per annum.
27. With the new website, we are expecting to reduce the costs of ongoing development and support, and increase value for money by deploying enhancements more regularly to the live environment. For example, in 2013/14, we reported costs of £1.7 million for development and support resource of the existing ONS website. We anticipate the ongoing running costs of the development and support team for the new website to be in the region of £300,000 per annum, with £200,000 per annum estimated to cover additional consultancy for specialist projects (e.g. security assessments). There is a risk that we will not be able to recruit an in-house team with the requisite skills and that costs could increase if we have to rely on contractors. We have mitigation plans in place, but we are reliant on skills being available in the market.

28. In 2013/14 we reported £760,000 for licenses, hosting and infrastructure of the existing website. The hosting, infrastructure and licensing costs will reduce to £216,000 per annum as we make use of cloud based services and open-source software. We are unable to make the full savings of £760,000 as the underlying infrastructure for the ONS website is being shared with the Web Data Access solution, which will remain live after the current ONS website is decommissioned. We expect to make capital savings of at least £203,000 per annum once we have retired all possible servers. However, we will incur decommissioning costs of £173,000 in 2016/17.
29. There will be no depreciation costs if we decommission the ONS website in early 2016/17.

### Conclusion

30. This paper provides members of the Board with an update on the latest progress with the development of the new ONS website. Subject to the public Beta phase successfully passing a forthcoming internal assessment against the Government Digital Service (GDS) Service Standard, the National Statistics Executive Group (NSEG) have now given approval to move from the 'private' to 'public' Beta phase of development.

**Laura Dewis, Deputy Director, Digital Publishing Division, ONS, 19 June 2015**

### List of Annexes

- Annex A** Evidence of meeting the Critical Success Factors to move from private to public Beta
- Annex B** High level roadmap and scope of Alpha-Beta-Live production phases



**Annex A Evidence of meeting the Critical Success Factors to move from private to public Beta**

Critical Success Factor	Evidence of meeting the Critical Success Factor
1. An efficient publishing tool that can demonstrate time saved by publishers	<p><b>Met</b></p> <p>The publishing tool has been tested with users (our internal staff with responsibility for publishing) at the end of every fortnightly iteration throughout the private Beta. Recent tests have shown significant improvements to the speed of the publishing process, for instance with time taken to complete publishing tasks for the Producer Prices Index (PPI) release reduced from 5 hours to 1 hour. This improvement is reliant on the tool being built for use by an expert publishing team. The business change needed to move from devolved publishing to a more efficient model is taking place in parallel to the development, with positive support from across the business.</p>
2. All content described in the content migration plan has been migrated	<p><b>Met</b></p> <p>The content migration plan was put to the Improving Dissemination Programme Board and agreed by the Board which includes three Directors and three Deputy Directors in output areas. The Board agreed to the recommendations that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Limited time is available before launch of the public Beta so content migration will be prioritised based on user demand and legal obligation.</li> <li>• We must deliver an improved search. In order to ensure that search is not compromised we will take the opportunity to archive or delete unnecessary and out-of-date content and improve the content that is migrated as much as possible.</li> <li>• All data will only be loaded and available in one instance with the option to download in multiple formats, e.g. either as time series data <b>OR</b> as xls.</li> <li>• Based on analysis of the metrics the last three statistical bulletins for every release will be migrated to the Beta site. All articles published in 2015 will be migrated to the Beta site with analytics being used to identify others that require migration due to user need.</li> <li>• The only content types available on the Beta site will be Data (including time series), Statistical Bulletins and Articles.</li> <li>• Back data for all available time periods will be migrated for all releases.</li> <li>• The latest version of compendia publications, e.g. Blue Book, UK Economic Accounts (UKEA), Family Spending, will be available on the public Beta.</li> <li>• For public Beta the Quality and Methodology Information (QMI) will be migrated as PDFs with the introduction of a title and summary - they provide key methodological information for each release. We will work with the Good Practice Team to move away from PDFs during the parallel run.</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Based on Government Digital Services (GDS) best practice a slimmed down version of About ONS will be migrated for public Beta, including a Minimal Viable Product media centre which provides statements and letters/rebuttals to the press.</li> <li>• For public Beta we will migrate all 2015 Freedom for Information (FOIs) and ad hocs.</li> <li>• Jobs and Survey respondents - we will replicate what we currently have and look to develop these sections further in the future.</li> <li>• Release calendar - our approach will be to input once and publish both on the public Beta and GOV.UK.</li> <li>• We will look at delivering the minimum viable product for public Beta (30 June) and migrate more content and develop sections during a period of parallel run and as a process of continuous improvement of the site.</li> <li>• The National Archives (TNA) will save a copy of the site online that will act as an archive. We have engaged with TNA at an early stage and will work with them to improve the quality of the archives.</li> <li>• 301 redirects will be used for all pages that are on the current site (when we close the current site) to ensure search engines and users can still find content via links to the old site.</li> </ul>
<p>3. Chief Technology Officer approves technical approach</p>	<p><b>Met</b> The approach to the private Beta has been assessed at an ONS Architecture Review and we continue to engage with this group, who report to the Design Authority. The Chief Technology Officer has approved the technical approach and the Chief Digital Officer has confirmed that it aligns with the emerging Digital and Technology Strategy (indeed, it has informed this strategy).</p>
<p>4. Private beta passes an internal Service Assessment</p>	<p><b>Pending</b> An internal assessment against the GDS Service Standard has been scheduled for the 26 June 2015. The service will not move to public Beta unless it passes this assessment.</p>
<p>5. Representative users judge the website positively on 3 counts: ease of use, appropriate context, ease of understanding</p>	<p><b>Pending</b> The private Beta development has focussed mainly on building the back-end publishing tool and re-building and architecting the Alpha for long-term sustainability. We have made some changes to the interface based on user research completed during the Alpha phase and will test this with a small group ahead of the private Beta moving to public. Usability tests are effective with only small numbers of users needed to identify any major barriers. Once those are resolved, much larger numbers of users are needed to identify and prioritise smaller issues, and this will be best done when the site is open to the public. We intend to conduct user research at regular stages throughout the public Beta phase. Throughout June and July we have four usability testing sessions booked (taking place in Newport and London) consisting of 5 representatives of our persona types per session.</p>

6. An updated critical friends group judge the website positively on 3 counts: ease of use, appropriate context, ease of understanding	<b>Pending</b> Meetings have been scheduled throughout June with members of our critical friends list – including representatives from other Government departments, the media, members of the Royal Statistical Society, the financial sector and charities.
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## Annex B High level roadmap and scope of Alpha-Beta-Live production phases

What	Alpha	Private Beta	Public Beta	Live
Start	Sep 2014	Feb 2015	July 2015	November 2015 (at earliest)*
Deliver	Jan 2014	June 2015	Oct 2015 (at earliest)*	
High Level Goal	<p><b>Working website with broad but shallow content coverage.</b></p> <p><b>Analysis of backend requirements.</b></p>	Working publishing platform that provides secure end to end publishing.	Fully functioning website running in parallel with current site.	Continuous improvement.
Primary Artefacts	<p><b>Fully responsive website.</b></p> <p><b>Pattern library.</b></p> <p><b>User stories for Beta site.</b></p> <p><b>Content migration plan.</b></p>	<p>A secure application that can;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Meet the requirements of the Publishing team</li> <li>Support the new Publishing approach by streamlining existing processes</li> <li>Support continuous deployment &amp; test driven development</li> </ul> <p>First phase of content migration complete.</p>	<p>09.30 publishing testing and proven.</p> <p>PST staff trained.</p> <p>Agreed KPIs.</p>	
Governance & Acceptance Criteria	<p><b>Digital by Default Service Assessment (GDS)</b></p> <p><b>UKSA Board approval</b></p> <p><b>Beta team procurement.</b></p>	<p>Internal Digital Service Assessment (including Architecture Review)</p> <p>Security certification from Information Assurance</p> <p>Business case approved.</p>	<p>Digital by Default Service Assessment</p> <p>NSEG approval to move to live.</p>	

\* The proposal is that we will run in parallel until there is appropriate confidence in the Beta to replace the existing site – the deadline for this decision could be as late as February 2016.