

# **UK STATISTICS AUTHORITY**

## **Minutes**

**Meeting of Friday 4 May 2012  
Board Room, Drummond Gate, London**

### **Present**

#### **UK Statistics Authority**

Mr Andrew Dilnot (Chair)  
Lord Rowe-Beddoe  
Mr Richard Alldritt  
Dr Colette Bowe  
Mr Partha Dasgupta  
Ms Jil Matheson  
Mr Stephen Penneck (not for item 13)  
Professor David Rhind  
Sir Jon Shortridge

#### **Secretariat**

Mr Robert Bumpstead  
Mr Mervyn Stevens

#### **Other Attendees**

Mr Paul Layland, ONS (for item 6)  
Mr Paul Jackson, ONS (for item 10)  
Mr Richard Laux, Monitoring and Assessment (for items 12 and 13)

#### **Apologies**

Dame Moira Gibb

**1. Apologies and introductions.**

- 1.1 Apologies were received from Dame Moira Gibb.
- 1.2 On behalf of the members of the Authority, Lord Rowe-Beddoe welcomed Mr Dilnot to his first meeting of the Board as Chair of the Authority.

**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 30 March were accepted as a true and fair account.
- 3.2 The meeting was informed that the former Chair, Sir Michael Scholar had written to the Cabinet Secretary, Sir Jeremy Heywood and the Head of the Civil Service, Sir Bob Kerslake about the standing of statistics as a profession in government.
- 3.3 Following discussion at the last meeting, ONS had published on its website its new process for dealing with bespoke, ad-hoc data requests from media organisations, journalists and the public. The meeting agreed that it would be very useful if ONS could provide an analysis of enquiries on statistical outputs to the Authority Board at a future meeting.

**4. Authority Chair's Report and Priorities**

- 4.1 The Chair reported that he had visited the Authority and ONS at the London, Newport and Titchfield sites, and had held discussions with management and staff. He had been interviewed by journalists, and had also met with the Chair of the Public Administration Select Committee (PASC), Bernard Jenkin MP. The Chair would be meeting the Minister for the Cabinet Office, Rt. Hon. Francis Maude MP on 8 May.
- 4.2 The meeting noted that there had been an exchange of letters between the Chair and Will Moy, Director of Full Fact regarding the handling of ad hoc requests for statistics; and with Valerie Isham, President of the Royal Statistical Society (RSS) about the Authority's forward agenda. This correspondence had been published on the Authority's website.
- 4.3 The Chair informed the meeting that the recruitment of two deputy Chairs of the Authority and up to two Non-Executive Directors had been announced by the Cabinet Office which was administering the recruitment process. The closing date for applications was 8 May, and it was hoped that the selection process would be completed by the end of May. The meeting also noted that the recruitment process for a successor to Mr Penneck as Director General of ONS would be announced shortly.
- 4.4 The Chair informed the meeting that, following on from the programme of remedial work carried out recently by ONS, it was one of his top priorities to deliver significant improvements in the accessibility and functionality of the ONS website. To this end he would be establishing a task force under his chairmanship, and whose members would include the National Statistician, Mr Glen Watson (Web Data Access, Programme Director) and others. Improving the website would require significant time and money, and additional resources might need to be acquired to supplement in-house resources.

- 4.5 The Chair remarked that, with the initiative to improve the ONS website and his other communications priorities in mind, the Authority Board needed to have a clear understanding of the Authority's finances and the strategic priorities for its budget. This would be discussed later in the meeting.
- 4.6 The meeting noted and considered some recent media coverage of the ONS preliminary estimate of Gross Domestic Product (GDP) for the first quarter of 2012, and comment about the construction statistics element of the release.

## **5. Reports from Authority Committee Chairs**

### Assessment Committee

- 5.1 The Chair reported on the April Assessment Committee, which had considered eight draft assessment reports. Seven of these draft reports would be considered later in the meeting. The meeting had also considered a draft Monitoring Report on the first cycle of Assessment, and had discussed draft proposals for the future development of the Assessment function. In addition, the Assessment Committee had endorsed tentative proposals for a collaborative piece of work between the Head of Assessment and the National Statistician, designed to provide an additional advisory function to support statisticians in Departments.
- 5.2 The Authority meeting agreed that proposals for the future of Assessment work would be submitted to a future meeting of the Authority Board. The Monitoring Report on the first cycle of Assessment could usefully include an audit of the extent to which requirements and suggestions in Assessment Reports had been implemented; a summary of common themes and issues, and; a clear picture of what was envisaged for the next phase of Assessment.

### Committee for Official Statistics

- 5.3 The Chair reported on the April meeting of the Committee for Official Statistics. The meeting had agreed that a working group should be established to review statistical releases and propose how these should be improved, and that this initiative would start with a review of three key ONS releases.
- 5.4 The Committee had received update reports from the National Statistician on the activities of the Government Statistical Service (GSS), on cuts to official statistics and on the second stage of the review of housing market statistics. The meeting had also considered progress of a review of the public availability of data from three ONS areas.
- 5.5 The Authority agreed that the Secretariat should produce and maintain a log of Authority concerns, such as where its findings in Statistical Expenditure Reports are not heeded.

### Office for National Statistics Board (ONS)

- 5.6 Lord Rowe-Beddoe reported on the April meeting of the ONS Board. The meeting had received a report from the Director General, and had considered an update on the ONS 2012 programme and the Web Recovery programme.
- 5.7 The ONS Board had held a special meeting on 1 May to consider a draft budget for ONS for 2012/13, and this would be further discussed later in the meeting.
- 5.8 The Authority noted that, following structural changes in ONS, Mr Paul Layland was currently the Authority's Chief Finance Officer and he would be presenting budget proposals for 2012/13.

**6. UK Statistics Authority and ONS Budget 2012/13 [SA(12)16]**

- 6.1 Mr Layland introduced a paper which set out the outturn position for 2011/12 (subject to audit), and the proposed allocations for the Authority's budget, including ONS, for 2012/13.
- 6.2 It was agreed that the proposed budget would be represented in light of the points made in discussion.
- 6.3 The Authority Board confirmed that, while it would be looking to the Chief Finance Officer and the ONS Board to monitor the budget on a regular basis and provide a robust challenge to managers regarding their budgets and actual expenditure as the year progressed, it would nevertheless require updates on finance on a regular basis in order that it could reassess priorities for the available financial resources.
- 6.4 The meeting approved the current total net operating costs budget of £187.7 million the Authority, noting that revised forecast positions would be made in light of ONS income being confirmed, and resources being found from within that budget for the ONS website and other strategic priorities.

**7. ONS Business Plan 2012 to 2015 [SA(12)17]**

- 7.1 Mr Penneck presented a business plan for ONS for the years 2012 to 2015. The ONS Board had endorsed the plan at its meeting on 17 February, and had agreed that it should be submitted to the Authority Board for approval.
- 7.2 Following discussion, the Authority approved the ONS business plan for publication on the ONS website, subject to agreed amendments. In particular, the plan should reflect the priorities of improving the website specifically and communication generally. It was also agreed that the Authority should consider at a future meeting how it might further explain its governance structure, and the identities and branding of the Authority, and ONS.

**8. Authority Risks [SA(12)18]**

- 8.1 Mr Bumpstead introduced a paper which included a draft high-level risk register for the Authority, together with proposals on how these risks might be managed.
- 8.2 The Authority welcomed the broad approach to its risks, and agreed that a further version should be submitted to a future meeting. This could include an assessment of residual risk after taking account of the mitigation strategies and an overall risk appetite.

**9. Priorities for Authority Business [SA(12)19]**

- 9.1 Mr Bumpstead presented a chart which showed priority business for the Authority Board and its sub-committees for the period April to July 2012.
- 9.2 The meeting welcomed the new format and agreed that it could be updated to reflect additional strategic priorities which might include: GDP and construction statistics; the future Authority Assessment programme; relations with Government and Parliament and stakeholder engagement.

**10. Reform of European Statistical Law [SA(12)20]**

10.1 Ms Matheson introduced a paper which set out proposed changes to the legal framework for European statistics, and sought the Authority's mandate for the purpose of establishing a UK position through Ministers and Parliament and negotiation with the European Parliament and Council. Four areas had been identified for improvement:

- i. guaranteed independence for producers of European statistics;
- ii. a stronger role for National Statistics Institutes (NSIs);
- iii. enhanced self-assessment and peer review, leading to commitments on confidence'; and
- iv. enhanced access to administrative records.

10.2 The Authority gave its broad support to these developments - being as they were for the most part in line with the Statistics and Registration Service Act 2007 and the Authority's policy priorities - subject to any EU legislation being flexible enough to accommodate the devolved and decentralised statistical system and framework in the UK.

**11. Consumer Prices Advisory Committee (CPAC): Incorporating Owner Occupier Housing Costs in an Expanded Consumer Prices Index [SA(12)21]**

11.1 Ms Matheson presented an update and timetable for the inclusion of owner occupiers' housing costs (OOH) in an expanded Consumer Prices Index (CPIH). The Consumer Prices Advisory Committee (CPAC) had met on 30 April and had agreed by a majority to support the rental equivalence approach to OOH. CPAC were recommending that this now be the subject a 12-week public consultation. A paper on the outcome of the public consultation would be submitted to the Authority Board in September, with the anticipation that the agreed changes could be implemented early in 2013.

11.2 The Authority agreed that a public consultation on the method to be used for the incorporation of OOH for CPIH should commence on the basis of CPAC's recommendations.

**12. Update on Monitoring [SA(12)22]**

12.1 Mr Alldritt introduced a paper which provided an update on progress with Monitoring work and sought the Authority's advice on priorities for future Monitoring Briefs.

12.2 In noting the paper, the Authority agreed that there needed to be more consultation on priorities for Monitoring, and that a process for determining such priorities needed to be established. It was important to consider how the Monitoring programme contributed to the Authority's strategy and what each piece of work sought to achieve.

**13. Assessment Reports for Approval [SA(12)23]**

13.1 Mr Alldritt reported that the Assessment committee had recommended that the following seven assessment reports be published:

- AR 199: Statistics on Poverty and Income Inequality in Scotland (Scottish Government);
- AR 200: Statistics on Mortality (Office for National Statistics);
- AR 201: Statistics on Internet Access (Office for National Statistics);
- AR 202: Statistics on Heart Disease and Stroke in Scotland (Information Services Division of NHS National Services Scotland);
- AR 203: Statistics of Scientific Procedures on Living Animals (Home Office);
- AR 204: Statistics on Conceptions (Office for National Statistics); and

AR 205: Statistics on Child Health in Scotland (Information Services Division of NHS  
National Services Scotland)  
*(In total 7 Assessment reports, covering 31 outputs)*

13.2 In approving these Assessment Reports for publication, the meeting noted that the final stage of the current Assessment programme had commenced.

**14. Any other business**

14.1 There was no other business.

# UK STATISTICS AUTHORITY

## Agenda

**Friday, 4 May, 2012**

**Board Room, Drummond Gate, 12:00 - 16:00**

**Chair: Andrew Dilnot**  
**Apologies: Dame Moira Gibb**

1	Minutes and matters arising from previous meeting Declarations of interest	Meeting of 300312
2	Authority Chair's Report and Priorities: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Appointments to the Board</li> <li>● Communications and ONS Website</li> <li>● Budget</li> </ul>	Oral Report
3	Reports from Authority Committee Chairs: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Assessment Committee</li> <li>● Committee for Official Statistics</li> <li>● ONS Board</li> </ul>	Oral Reports Mr Andrew Dilnot Mr Andrew Dilnot Lord Rowe-Beddoe
4	UK Statistics Authority and ONS Budget 2012/13  ONS Business Plan 2012 to 2015	SA(12)16 Mr Paul Layland  SA(12)17 Mr Stephen Penneck
5	Authority Risks	SA(12)18  Secretariat
6	Priorities for Authority Business	SA(12)19  Secretariat
7	Reform of European Statistical Law	SA(12)20  Ms Jil Matheson Mr Paul Jackson
8	Consumer Prices Advisory Committee (CPAC): Incorporating Owner Occupier Housing Costs (OOH) in an Expanded Consumer Prices Index	SA(12)21  Ms Jil Matheson
9	Update on Monitoring	SA(12)22  Mr Richard Alldritt
10	Assessment Reports for Approval	SA(12)23  Mr Richard Alldritt
11	Any other business	

**Next Meeting: Friday, 1 June, 2012**  
**Statistics House, Newport, 10:00 - 13:00**

**UK STATISTICS AUTHORITY**

SA(12)16

***UK Statistics Authority and ONS 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)17

***ONS Business Plan 2012 to 2015***

This document has been published on the Office for National Statistics website.

To see this document go to:

<http://www.ons.gov.uk/ons/about-ons/what-we-do/ons-business-plan/ons-business-plan-2011-2015.pdf>

**UK STATISTICS AUTHORITY**

SA(12)18

***Authority Risks***

A further draft is to be considered at a future meeting.

**UK STATISTICS AUTHORITY**

SA(12)19

***Priorities for Authority Business***

The agenda for meetings of the Authority Board are published at:

<http://www.statisticsauthority.gov.uk/about-the-authority/board-and-committees-documentation/minutes-and-papers/index.html>

**UK STATISTICS AUTHORITY**

SA(12)20

***Reform of European Statistical Law***

These proposals are published on the Eurostat website at:

[http://epp.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/portal/page/portal/about\\_eurostat/documents/1\\_EN\\_ACT\\_part1\\_v2.pdf](http://epp.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/portal/page/portal/about_eurostat/documents/1_EN_ACT_part1_v2.pdf)

**UK STATISTICS AUTHORITY**

SA(12)21

***Consumer Prices Advisory Committee (OPAC):  
Incorporating Owner Occupiers' Housing Costs in an Expanded  
Consumer Prices Index***

This document has been published on the Office for National Statistics website.

To see this document go to:

<http://www.ons.gov.uk/ons/about-ons/consultations/open-consultations/index.html>

SA(12)22 – Update on Monitoring

**UK STATISTICS AUTHORITY**

SA(12)22

***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)23

***Assessment Reports for Approval***

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

To see these documents go to:

Assessment Report 199: Statistics on Poverty and Income Inequality in Scotland

<http://www.statisticsauthority.gov.uk/assessment/assessment/assessment-reports/assessment-report-199---statistics-on-poverty-and-income-inequality-in-scotland.pdf>

Assessment Report 200: Statistics on Mortality

<http://www.statisticsauthority.gov.uk/assessment/assessment/assessment-reports/assessment-report-200---statistics-on-mortality.pdf>

Assessment Report 201: Statistics on Internet Access

<http://www.statisticsauthority.gov.uk/assessment/assessment/assessment-reports/assessment-report-201---statistics-on-internet-access.pdf>

Assessment Report 202: Statistics on Heart Disease and Stroke in Scotland

<http://www.statisticsauthority.gov.uk/assessment/assessment/assessment-reports/assessment-report-202---statistics-on-heart-disease-and-stroke-in-scotland.pdf>

Assessment Report 203: Statistics of Scientific Procedures on Living Animals

<http://www.statisticsauthority.gov.uk/assessment/assessment/assessment-reports/assessment-report-203---statistics-on-scientific-procedures-on-living-animals.pdf>

Assessment Report 204: Statistics on Conceptions

<http://www.statisticsauthority.gov.uk/assessment/assessment/assessment-reports/assessment-report-204---statistics-on-conceptions.pdf>

Assessment Report 205: Statistics on Child Health in Scotland

<http://www.statisticsauthority.gov.uk/assessment/assessment/assessment-reports/assessment-report-205---statistics-on-child-health-in-scotland.pdf>