

MEETING OF THE STATISTICS ADVISORY COMMITTEE
6th February 2018
Conference Room, Colby House, Stranmillis Court, Belfast, BT9 5RR

In attendance

Philip McDonagh (Chair)	
Sharon McNicholl	
Chris Morris	
Dr Bernie Stuart	
Prof David Jones	
John Compton	
Kieran Payne	
Richard Ramsey	
Derek Bond	
Iain Hoy	CBI Northern Ireland
Roger Pollen	Federation of Small Businesses NI
Carolyn Brown	Federation of Small Businesses NI
Christopher Morrow	NI Chamber of Commerce & Industry
Colin Neill	Hospitality Ulster
Michael Bell	NI Food and Drink Association
Seamus Leheny	Freight Transport Association NI
Siobhan Carey	NISRA
Dr David Marshall	NISRA
Dr Tracy Power	NISRA
Gerard Colgan	NISRA
Dr James Gillan	NISRA
Chris Ganley	NISRA
Cathryn Blair	NISRA
Lynda Keys	NISRA
Mr Robin Griffith	NISRA, Secretary

Item No.	Subject	Action
1.	<p>Welcome and introductions.</p> <p>Mr McDonagh welcomed everyone to the meeting, noting in particular the representatives from the Business Community.</p> <p>Apologies were received from Derek Bond, SAC Member, and Stephen Kelly, Manufacturing NI.</p>	
2.	<p>Role of SAC</p> <p>Mr McDonagh gave an overview of SAC, and explained that the purpose of this meeting, which is part of an ongoing engagement between SAC and the representative business bodies in Northern Ireland, was to share the work that NISRA staff have been doing on EU Exit and also to discuss the burden on business of complying with statutory statistical returns.</p>	

3.	<p>Overview of EU exit Analysis</p> <p>Dr James Gillan presented the committee with the ongoing work on the EU exit analysis. This gave an overview of Northern Ireland’s current trade with Great Britain, Ireland, Rest of the European Union and Rest of the World and included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Analysis of NI external sales and exports by destination • Value of imports and exports by broad destination and product • Characteristics of NI businesses by value of exports <p>Dr Gillan highlighted informational constraints in terms of data sources for trade in services, cross border supply chains and embedded services.</p> <p>He also presented an overview of research carried out on migration and people movement in Northern Ireland including analysis of migrant workers.</p>	Secretary to send link of the EU statistics publication to business representatives and SAC members.
4.	<p>Open discussion</p> <p>Mr McDonagh thanked Dr Gillan for his presentation and opened the discussion to the meeting.</p> <p>Mr Ramsey noted that further to the impact on trade, EU exit will potentially affect the labour force and employment. Further concerns were raised by Mr Neil in relation to the impact of the EU exit on access to migrant labour in the hospitality sector.</p> <p>Ms Carey commented on the difficulty in establishing the contents of containers that move across the border in both directions and asked the business bodies what possible solutions there may be to overcome this. It was agreed that there are no easy answers to this question.</p> <p>In terms of the gap in information with regards road freight, one solution proposed was to go directly to large wholesalers and retailers to ask about their supply chain or use a blockchain solution.</p>	<p>NISRA to Issue letter to business bodies, inviting further engagement and requesting their suggestion on how to proceed in meeting businesses and data users</p> <p>NISRA to explore possibility of further disaggregation of employment by country of birth data.</p>
5.	<p>Latest developments in general NI economic stats</p> <p>Mr Colgan provided an update on Economic Statistics Developments, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Economic Accounts Project • Boosted Labour Force Survey • New Statistical Business Register • Access to Administrative data • UKSA Economic Forum, 7th March Riddel Hall 	Secretary to send copy of ELMS Economic Statistics Developments presentation to Business representatives and committee members.
5.	<p>Review of burden on business</p> <p>Mr Colgan presented on Business Survey Burden. He updated the business representatives and the committee members on the estimated cost to business in NI of complying with government statistical surveys. The cost to business is calculated as:</p> <p><i>Average time taken to complete the survey in hours x Number of responses times x Hourly cost of person completing the survey</i></p> <p>Mr Colgan highlighted the actions being taken to reduce burden, such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Using more administrative data 	Secretary to distribute copy of ONS UK business burden report to SAC members and business representatives

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Digital Economy Act to address legal barriers • Modelling those variables not available from Administrative sources • Electronic Data Collection (e-forms) available on all surveys • Providing help and support to businesses in the completion of forms 	
6.	<p>Open Discussion</p> <p>Mr Neil raised the point that many small businesses operate mainly or in some instances solely from a mobile device. Therefore e-forms that are compatible with these smaller/mobile devices would be necessary to reduce the burden on these businesses.</p>	
7.	<p>AOB/ Dates and Agenda items</p> <p>Committee raised the point that the minutes from October SAC meeting have yet to be circulated.</p> <p>Dr Marshall updated the Committee on the current situation with regards their membership. He advised that the next SAC meeting should be held before June 3rd 2018 before their membership ceases.</p> <p>Mr McDonagh concluded the meeting by thanking Robin Griffith on behalf of all the committee for his hard work as secretary, wishing him luck in his new role and welcomed Clare Kennedy as the new secretary.</p>	<p>Secretary to issue minutes of SAC October 2017 meeting</p> <p>Issue doodle poll to members for the next SAC meeting in May</p>

Robin Griffith Secretary February 2018