

MEETING OF THE STATISTICS ADVISORY COMMITTEE
10th October 2014
Boardroom, McAuley House

In attendance

Mr Philip McDonagh
 Mr John Compton
 Mrs Esther Ervine
 Professor David Jones
 Mrs Sharon McNicholl
 Dr Chris Morris
 Mr Richard Ramsey
 Dr Bernie Stuart

Dr Norman Caven	NISRA
Dr David Marshall	NISRA
Dr Tracy Power	NISRA
Mr Robert Beatty	NISRA
Dr James Gillan	NISRA
Mr Gerard Colgan	NISRA
Ms Deborah Lyness	NISRA
Mrs Maire Brolly (from 11.30)	NISRA
Mr Iain Bryson (from 11.30)	NISRA

Mrs Marie Webb	NISRA, Secretary
Mrs Eilish Murtagh	NISRA, Secretariat

Item No.	Subject	Action
1.	<p>Welcome and apologies</p> <p>The Chair welcomed members to the meeting. There were apologies from Mr Derek Bond and Dr Kieran Payne. No conflicts of interest were declared.</p> <p>The Chair welcomed Dr Power and Dr Marshall to the Committee and congratulated them on their recent promotions.</p>	
2.	<p>Minutes and Matters arising</p> <p>The Committee agreed the minutes of the previous meeting (10th March 2014). All matters arising were either complete or on the agenda for further discussion with the exception of that noted below.</p> <p>“Dr Donnelly to investigate DSD work on town/city profiles.”</p> <p>This work on town and city profiles is ongoing and will be considered as an agenda item for a future SAC meeting.</p>	

	<p>Under Action Point 4, Survey Control Report, Dr Stuart referred to the work of DETI's Red Tape Advisory Group, and NISRA Corporate Services agreed to follow up on the work of this group for the members.</p>	<p>Action: Corporate Services to follow up on the work of DETI's Red Tape Advisory Group.</p>
3.	<p>NISRA Annual Report and Accounts</p> <p>Dr Power updated the Committee, noting that NISRA is required to prepare an Annual Report and Accounts which are laid before the Assembly. The 13/14 Report was completed before the summer recess.</p> <p>Referring to the Agency's 14/15 Business Plan, Dr Power explained that the plan includes 4 Ministerial targets and a further range of Chief Executive targets for which Dr Caven is accountable. Dr Gillan noted that one of these targets related to input-output tables and he would update the Committee on this at item 4 on today's agenda.</p>	
4.	<p>Update on Economic and Labour Market Statistics</p> <p>Ms Lyness updated the Committee on the latest developments in Financial Business Surveys (Section A of SAC 08/2014). She explained that work has been ongoing over the last year to develop a NI broad economy exports measure, in recognition of the limitations of exports data. A methodology paper with high level results for broad economy exports (based on the existing ABI methodology) is due to be published in November 2014.</p> <p>She also explained to the Committee that ELSMB is currently considering cost implications and determining user need to make a number of further changes to NI ABI 2014. This exercise is driven by the need for ONS to comply with the new European System of National and Regional accounts (ESA 2010), implemented across member states in September 2014. Required changes for ONS compliance are limited to the capital expenditure question, and consideration is being given to the value of redesigning the NI forms in order that ONS will not need to estimate for missing questions in the NI form and as additional information which may be utilised in the ongoing work for Supply Use Tables. In terms of compliance costs, the proposed changes are likely to see an increase of approximately 2%.</p> <p>Ms Lyness also sought members' views on an anticipated rise to the NI sample in the E-Commerce Survey which is an annual, statutory survey issued to UK Business which aims to measure the usage of information and communication technology (ICT) by businesses, and the value of business conducted electronically (whether buying or selling). The NI sample size for this survey is currently around 200 and the NI boost is anticipated to be small.</p> <p>Mr Colgan updated the Committee on the Labour Market indicators</p>	

<p>(section B of SAC 08/2014). The Committee were asked to note that Dr Gillan and Dr Power had attended the DEL Committee on the 26th March to brief the members on the latest labour market statistics including Youth Unemployment, NEETS, Zero Hours Contracts and Migration. Further written updates were provided in June and September. He also advised that a presentation will be given to members on the work that ELMSB and Central Survey Unit are currently engaged in with ONS in investigating the possibility of utilising data from other NI household surveys to improve the precision levels of annual LFS data.</p> <p>Mr Colgan also explained that ELMSB are currently costing the development of the electronic data collection (EDC) option within the Integrated Business Survey System (IBSS). This will enable businesses to receive an electronic form-type which on completion can be submitted back to the IBSS for validation purposes. This should make the process of submitting data easier for some businesses. It also ensures that data is secure as the data will be encrypted at all stages of the process. It is hoped to introduce this in the first instance for the quarterly surveys and review its appropriateness for longer surveys, subject to funding being available.</p> <p>Mr Colgan also updated the Committee on the latest GVA and GDHI releases as follows: the latest GVA release refers to 2012 headline data (2011 industry detail) whilst the latest GDHI was released in April 2014. GVA estimates for 2013 (2012 industry detail) will be released in December 2014 whereas GDHI estimates for 2013 will be released in spring 2015.</p> <p>Dr Gillan gave a presentation to the Committee on progress on the development of Supply-Use Tables (SUTs) for NI. During May 2014 NISRA invited users of economic statistics from across 40 different organisations for their views on the value of developing the tables following the publication of a report on the feasibility of such a project. Key findings from the user engagement have been analysed in a summary report (SAC 09/14) highlighting users' feedback along with NISRA's response. All users welcomed the development a set of Tables for NI, similar to those already available for Scotland and highlighted their value for policy evaluation and economic impact studies. Users are supportive of the need to address data gaps.</p> <p>Dr McClelland of ASU, DETI updated the Committee on progress in relation to the ONS-led development of a new statutory business survey entitled "Low Carbon and Renewable Energy Economy Survey". The survey focuses on the economic contribution (turnover, employment, investment, imports/exports, etc.) of businesses operating within the broad low carbon economy sector. Given that developments in terms of sampling and methodology are still ongoing Dr McClelland agreed to provide members with more details about the survey by correspondence.</p> <p>Mr McDonagh thanked Dr Gillan, Ms Lyness, Mr Colgan and Dr McClelland for their input.</p>	<p>Action: Provide additional details of the 'Low Carbon and Renewable Energy Economy Survey' to members.</p>
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<p>5.</p>	<p>Official Statistics Update</p> <p>Dr Power updated the Committee on Official Statistics Issues. Since the last meeting, Statistics on Pesticide Usage have had their National Statistics designation confirmed. It was noted that a number of further statistical series are awaiting assessment outcomes and three further assessments are underway as outlined in paper SAC 10/14. Mr Compton raised the issue of inappropriate early access to statistics and Dr Power explained that statisticians are aware of the need to report any breaches of pre release access and take follow up action as necessary which could include removing the pre release access.</p> <p>Members were also asked to note 2 breaches of the Code of Practice which were reported to the UK Statistics Authority - full details are published on the Authority's website.</p> <p>Finally, Dr Power noted John Pullinger's appointment as Chief Executive of the UK Statistics Authority and National Statistician to succeed Jil Matheson who retired at the end of June 2014.</p>	
<p>6.</p>	<p>Census Update</p> <p>Mr Beatty updated the Committee on the dissemination of Census results, noting that the last of the 4 main Census releases was published as scheduled on 20th March 2014. The focus is now shifting to more specialised outputs including, micro data products (SARS) and settlement statistics. The General Report of the Census will be published before the end of March 2015.</p> <p>Results have largely been disseminated on line, but 2 hard copy publications have also been produced, Census 2011 Ireland and Northern Ireland and a Key Statistics Summary Report. Copies of the latter report will be available for members at the end of the meeting. In response to a question from Mr Compton, Mr Beatty noted that a "resident" under the Census definition was a person who "Lived in UK for 12 months, or expects to live in the UK for 12 months".</p> <p>Mr McDonagh thanked Mr Beatty for his input.</p>	

7.	<p>Beyond 2011</p> <p>Dr Marshall explained to the Committee that following the conclusion of a three-month public consultation, the National Statistician recommended a predominantly online census in 2021 supplemented by the further use of administrative and survey data. Indicative proposals for Northern Ireland will be published in the next few weeks and will be circulated to members.</p> <p>In response to a question from Mrs McNicoll regarding the ROI position, Dr Marshall noted that conducting a Census is a constitutional requirement in the ROI. It is conducted every 5 years, with the next one scheduled to take place in 2016.</p>	<p>Action: Circulate Census 2021 proposals to members.</p>
8.	<p>UK –wide civil society engagement on Data Sharing</p> <p>Dr Marshall outlined the background to recent legislative developments designed to increase access to administrative data. Within NI, 3 data sharing Orders have been taken through the Assembly (by affirmative resolution) to facilitate data sharing. The UK government is now developing a UK wide permissive legal gateway on data sharing, of which statistics is one strand. The Cabinet Office is engaging with NISRA to take this forward.</p> <p>Mr McDonagh thanked Dr Marshall for his input.</p>	
9.	<p>ADRC</p> <p>Mrs Brolly gave a presentation to the Committee on the Administrative Data Research Centre (ADRC) and the Administrative Data Research Network (ADN), a UK wide ESRC funded initiative set up to facilitate access to, and linkage of, administrative data for research purposes.</p> <p>The formal launch of the ADRC in Northern Ireland is due to take place on 1st December 2014 and members will be invited to attend.</p> <p>Mr Compton suggested that it would have been helpful to have received a paper on the ADRC in advance as this would have facilitated a more informed discussion and Mrs Brolly agreed to provide such a paper to members before the ADRC formal launch.</p>	<p>Action :Issue invitation to ADRC launch to members.</p> <p>Action: Issue briefing paper on ADRC to members.</p>
10	<p>Pooled Household Sample</p> <p>Mr Bryson outlined the background to the Pooled Household Sample</p>	

	<p>project which is being taken forward by ELMSB and NISRA's Central Survey Unit. A feasibility study is currently underway to assess the viability of combining data from LFS with other household surveys to meet the growing demand for sub regional and sub group analysis of unemployment and labour market statistics. Pilot results indicate that data pooling from the two surveys will result in improved precision, thus enabling lower level analysis.</p> <p>Members welcomed this project.</p>	
<p>11.</p>	<p>Date of next meeting/Close</p> <p>Mr McDonagh explained that at the pre-meeting, members had put forward various proposals regarding the format of future SAC meetings. He will discuss these with Dr Caven and members will be advised of the date and venue of the next meeting.</p>	

Marie Webb Secretary October 2014