

MEETING OF THE STATISTICS ADVISORY COMMITTEE
11th March 2014
Boardroom, McAuley House

In attendance

Mr Philip McDonagh
 Mr Derek Bond
 Mr John Compton
 Mrs Sharon McNicholl
 Dr Chris Morris
 Dr Kieran Payne
 Mr Richard Ramsey
 Dr Bernie Stuart

Dr Norman Caven	NISRA
Mr Robert Beatty	NISRA
Dr Stephen Donnelly	NISRA
Dr James Gillan	NISRA
Mr Gerard Colgan	NISRA
Ms Deborah Lyness	NISRA
Mr Chris Ganley (from 10.30)	NISRA

Mr Jim O'Donohue (from 10.30)	ONS
Mr Fred Norris (from 10.30)	ONS
Ms Charlotte Richards (from 10.30)	ONS

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

Item No.	Subject	Action
1.	<p>Welcome and apologies</p> <p>The Chair welcomed the new and outgoing members to the meeting. There were apologies from Mrs Esther Ervine. No conflicts of interest were declared.</p>	
2.	<p>Minutes and Matters arising.</p> <p>The Committee agreed the minutes of the previous meeting (27th September 2013). All matters arising were either complete or on the agenda for further discussion.</p>	

<p>3.</p>	<p>Census Update</p> <p>Mr Beatty updated the Committee with progress on the dissemination of Census results, noting that 3 of the 4 main Census releases have been published. The fourth release, Local Characteristics, is a single release scheduled for 20th March 2014. He noted that the harmonised table set across EU which is coordinated and delivered by ONS for the UK, is due to be made available online in late March 2014. A joint Census overview report with CSO Ireland will be available in summer 2014. In response to a question from Mr Compton regarding plans for Social Media, Mr Beatty explained that Census used both the NINIS twitter service and the NISRA facebook page. Mr Ramsey noted that the infographics produced by ONS was a good way of generating interest. Mr Beatty explained that Census 2011 infographics had been produced for the 11 new NI Local Government districts and that perhaps more could be done in this area in the future.</p>	<p>ACTION: Copy of joint overview report to be circulated to members.</p>
<p>4.</p>	<p>Survey Control Report</p> <p>Dr Donnelly updated the Committee on the key points from the recently published Survey Control report for 2012/13 which details the cost to business of completing statistical surveys issued by NI Departments. He explained that 124 surveys of businesses were issued by government departments in 12/13, approximately two thirds of which were statutory. He further explained that this report was the first to present costs for a financial year and also to calculate costs using the new methodology and outlined plans extend the survey control report to included surveys to household and individuals.</p> <p>Mr McDonagh thanked Dr Donnelly and reminded members that this was an important item on the agenda because the statutory role of the Committee was to consider the burden on business. He noted that the presentation of the report was very much improved.</p> <p>Mr McDonagh and Mrs McNicholl suggested that it would be useful to send a copy of the report to the Chamber of Commerce and the Federation of Small Businesses.</p>	<p>ACTION: Dr Donnelly to circulate Survey Control report to Chamber of Commerce and the Federation of small businesses.</p>
<p>5.</p>	<p>Update on Economic and Labour Market Statistics</p> <p>Ms Lyness updated the Committee on the latest developments in Financial Business Surveys as outlined in section A of SAC 03/2014. In particular she asked members to note that in order to improve information on NI businesses' intermediate consumption, NISRA is proposing to add some additional questions to the 2013 reference year NIABI form, with an estimated increase in compliance cost of approximately 10%. She also asked the Committee to consider the inclusion of an NI sample (approximately 62 businesses) in the annual ONS Business Spend on Capital Items Survey (BSCIS). After a wide ranging discussion the Committee agreed to the inclusion of the NI sample in BSCIS. Ms Lyness also updated the Committee on</p>	

developments on the ONS Financial services sector survey developments. It is ONS' intention to issue the survey to approximately 2000 UK businesses each quarter from Q1 2015 onwards. This will include only a small number of NI businesses which will not be enough to produce separate estimates by region and ONS systems are currently unable to accommodate ELMSB request for an NI sample boost. NISRA would welcome an early indication on the Committee's view as to whether there is a need for NI level data. In an answer to questions for Mr McDonagh, Mr Compton and Mr Ramsey, Ms Lyness explained that proving work was ongoing on the IDBR to improve data quality and ONS planned to contact around 200 NI businesses for this purpose. In conclusion Mr Gillan agreed that the best option at present would be to include the small number of NI businesses in the ONS survey as a pilot.

Mr Colgan updated the Committee on the Labour Market indicators as outlined in section B of SAC 03/2014. The Committee were asked to note that Dr Gillan And Dr Power would attend 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. He also advised the Committee that ELMSB and Central Survey Unit are currently engaged with ONS in investigating the possibility of utilising data from other NI household surveys to improve the precision levels of annual LFS data. Members were also asked to note that ONS currently plan to include a zero hours contract (ZHC) question in the 2015 ASHE survey which would allow regional breakdowns.

Mr Colgan also updated the Committee on NI Regional Accounts (section C of SAC 03/2014). ELMSB is responsible for the quality assurance of GVA and GDHI estimates for NI while the ONS is responsible for the production of the estimates. A presentation will be given by Mr Fred Norris of ONS to the Committee on the regional accounts methodology (Item 8 on Agenda). Mr Norris will also present to the Regional Accounts User Group meeting later today to give users a better understanding of the statistics and answer any questions they might have regarding the development of the regional accounts.

Mr Gillan updated members on the reasons for the postponement of Quarter 2 2013 IOP, IOS and NIECI Index results due to the need for additional quality assurance checks on IOS estimates. The IOP results were subsequently published on 30th October with no revisions and a full set of revised results for IOS were issued in November 2013. Q2 and Q3 NIECI results were published in January 2014. To conclude, Mr Gillan advised the members that ELMSB is currently setting up a new Twitter account @ELMSNISRA. This was welcomed by the committee members.

Mr McDonagh thanked Dr Gillan, Ms Lyness and Mr Colgan for their input.

<p>6.</p>	<p>Economic Accounts</p> <p>Dr Gillan briefly updated the Committee on the progress made on the production of a set of Supply-Use tables (SUTs) for NI. He explained that the work has been taken forward with Mr Jim O'Donohue, an ONS consultant from the Methodology Advice Service and invited Mr O'Donohue to give a presentation to the committee on the scoping study into the feasibility of developing a set of Supply-Use tables for NI.</p> <p>Mr O'Donohue's presentation included the objectives of the study, an overview of key national accounts concepts and the general approach taken in the construction of the tables. He explained that a draft set of tables had been developed for 2010 and that priority areas for development had been identified.</p> <p>Dr Gillan outlined the next steps which include identifying priorities and seeking resources, on-going training of NISRA staff, the addition of other data sources, further quality assurance of the accounts developed by ONS and NISRA, preparing documentation and user consultation. In addition to SAC the views of other expert users would be taken and a methodology report would be issued in the near future and a wider user consultation would be carried out.</p>	<p>ACTION: Dr Gillan to issue user consultation to members.</p>
<p>7.</p>	<p>Regional Accounts</p> <p>Mr McDonagh welcomed Mr Fred Norris and Ms Charlotte Richards from ONS to the meeting.</p> <p>Mr Norris and Ms Richards gave a comprehensive presentation to the Committee on Regional Accounts. Mr Norris explained the differences between the GVA and GDHI measures and gave details of both the Income and Production approach to the calculation of Gross Value Added. Ms Richards gave details of the methods used to regionalise data and details of what was published for each measure and at what level of disaggregation. Future work plans included the publication of an updated Regional accounts methodology guide later in the year, and a regional GVA balancing project to consider the validity of producing a single balanced measure of regional GVA.</p> <p>A wide ranging discussion took place among the committee on some of the results presented by Mr Norris and Ms Richards.</p>	
<p>8.</p>	<p>Official Statistics Update</p> <p>Dr Donnelly updated the Committee on Official Statistics Issues. Since the last meeting a number of statistical products which have been assessed by the Authority have had their designation as National Statistics confirmed. These included Poverty Statistics (Report 253); FRS- Urban-Rural Report (Report 198) and; Pensioners Income Series Bulletin (Report 198); Northern Ireland Environmental Statistics Report (Report 263);</p>	

	<p>Northern Ireland Local Authority Collected Municipal Waste Management Statistics; Annual Report (Report 263); and Northern Ireland Local Authority Collected Municipal Waste Management Statistics; Provisional Estimates (Report 263). Members were also asked to note 4 minor breaches of the Code of Practice - full details are published on the Authority's website.</p> <p>Dr Donnelly also advised the Committee that the pilot of the peer review process in NISRA which was set up with the aim of improving how NISRA communicates its statistics was considered a success and would now be rolled out across the Agency.</p> <p>In addition, he informed the Committee that the functionality and visual design of the NISRA website was being reviewed but it was dependent on the Information Strategy and Innovation Division's decision on CMS software.</p>	
<p>10.</p>	<p>AOB</p> <p>Mr McDonagh asked members whether there were any other specific topics that they would be interested in having brought before the Committee. Mrs McNicoll noted that she had an interest in city level statistics. Dr Gillan explained that the UK Statistics Authority had issued a monitoring review on 'The Geography of Economic Statistics' which considered the geographies for which economic statistics are currently available which may be of interest. Dr Donnelly added that DSD were working on town/city statistical profiles and he would investigate whether there was anything which could be shared with the committee.</p>	<p>ACTION: Dr Gillan to issue 'The Geography of Economic Statistics' report to members.</p> <p>ACTION: Dr Donnelly to investigate DSD work on town/city profiles.</p>
<p>11.</p>	<p>Date of next meeting/Close</p> <p>Secretariat to inform members of the date of the next meeting.</p>	

Marie Webb Secretary April 2014