

Minutes of Statistics Users Group Meeting

Date of meeting: **18 July 2013**; 4th floor CLMH

Present: Martin Richardson (Chair), Mary Friswell, Jennie Holley, Craig Leach (CL), Graeme Marett, John Noel, Ray Shead, Peter Surcouf, Matthew Sutton, Rozanne Thomas

Statistics Unit: Duncan Gibaut (DG), Helen Hale (HH)

Apologies: Peggy Gielen

1. a) Minutes of last meeting

Agreed and signed off.

2. Breaching of embargoes

DG informed the Group that there had been two breaches of an embargo condition imposed by the Statistics Unit on its publications in recent months. He informed the Group of the release protocol which had been applied to such releases for several years (Ministers/Committee Chairs since 2004; States Members since 2007):

- a small sub-set of specific Ministers and senior States Officers receive a copy of Statistics Unit releases (under embargo) at least 24 hours before the pre-announced release date.
- all States Members receive Statistics Unit reports, again under embargo, approximately 12 hours before the pre-announced release date.
- finally, reports are released to the media, under embargo, and at least 1 hour after all States Members.

DG described two breaches of an embargo by Ministers in recent months, one in May 2013 and another in July 2013; the first breach constituted a release of information into the public domain and the second breach was to an external agency.

The Group noted the breaches and observed that both had occurred in the busy circumstances of Ministers travelling out of the Island on official business. The Group decided that no further action was required at this time but that all future releases would be monitored.

3. Jersey Retail Prices Index – June 2013

HH gave the Group a presentation on the June 2013 round of the Jersey Retail Prices Index; the report was scheduled for release at 00:01 Friday 19th July.

4. Jersey Annual Social Survey (JASS) 2013

DG gave the Group an update of the status of JASS 2013.

Survey questionnaires had been mailed out to 3,300 randomly selected household addresses in late May 2013. A reminder questionnaire had been mailed out to those households who had not responded after the initial two-week response period.

As of 18 July 2013, more than 1,800 questionnaires had been returned and completed, including fewer than 100 completed on-line. Overall, this represented a response rate, to date, of 55%.

The data entry phase was proceeding very well; to date, some 1,500 questionnaires had been entered into the database. DG informed the Group that the survey process was on schedule for publication of the report in December 2013.

5. **Update on Statistics Unit activity**

DG summarised recent publications and ongoing work of the Statistics Unit:

Recent:

- Population update 2012
- Jersey in Figures 2012
- Housing Affordability Index 2012
- Quarterly: Retail Prices Index, RPI
Business Tendency Survey
Retail Sales Index
House Price Index
- Monthly: Registered Actively Seeking Work (ASW)

Ongoing/upcoming in August-October 2013:

- Index of Average Earnings – June 2013
- UK-Jersey consumer prices comparison
- National Accounting aggregates 2012
- Labour Market – June 2013

6. **AOB**

Hidden economy

CL had previously enquired about the incorporation of the hidden (“black”) economy within the UK and Jersey National Accounts measures. DG had informed the Group at the previous meeting that:

- the treatment of the hidden economy was described within the ONS publication;;
- an evasion adjustment is included, which in 2010 represented 1.7% of UK GDP;
- a conceptually similar adjustment is also included within the mixed income component of Jersey’s measure of GVA.

CL brought the topic up again, particularly in light of a report from Visa Europe which suggested that the hidden economy represented a considerably greater proportion of the GDP of OECD countries than indicated by the UK evasion adjustment.

DG referred the group to the sections of UK National Accounts, Concepts, Sources and Methods which described those components of the hidden economy that the evasion adjustment attempted to address.

7. **Next meeting**

Thursday 17 October 2013

12.30 – 14.00, Concord Room, 4th floor of Cyril Le Marquand House