

## **Minutes of Statistics Users Group Meeting**

Date of meeting: **26 February 2018**; Concord Room, Cyril Le Marquand House

Present: Martin Richardson (MR, Chair), Auberon Ashbrooke(AA), Julian Barber(JB), Amy Bryant(AB), Martin Delap(MD), Jennie Holley(JH); Graeme Marett, John Noel, Maria Pelin(MP); Matthew Sutton  
Secretary: Duncan Gibaut (DG)

### **1. a) Minutes of last meeting (13 November 2017):**

AB requested that changes proposed by the Group proposed by the Group to the 2018 Release Schedule were specified explicitly in the minutes

[Action DG – include requested specifics and upload minutes onto the Group’s website](#)

### **b) Matters arising:**

#### **Meeting with the Chief Minister: *Potential Risks to Official Statistics***

MR is currently waiting for written confirmation from the Director of Corporate Policy, Chief Minister’s Department, on the outcomes of the meeting of 17 October 2017.

[Action MR– prompt Director of Corporate Policy for a response](#)

### **2. Statistics and Census Law**

DG informed the Group that the Statistics and Census (Jersey) Law 2018 had come into force on 23 February 2018. The Law had been approved by the States Assembly on 13 December 2017 and by the UK Privy Council in February 2018. The Law was registered with the Royal Court in Jersey on 16 February 2018 and came into effect seven days later.

AB enquired about the role and responsibilities of the Statistics Users Group under the Law from the broader perspective of statistics produced by the States of Jersey and other public authorities, i.e. not only the official statistics produced by the Statistics Unit (renamed Statistics Jersey under the Law).

DG pointed out that under the Law (Article 5, Functions of the Statistics Users Group) the Group “*has the primary function of overseeing the quality, relevance and integrity of statistics compiled by or on behalf of a public authority.*” Further, the Code of Practice for Official Statistics in Jersey (May 2015) already acknowledged that, in time, other States of Jersey departments would be encouraged to submit statistics for assessment by the Statistics Users Group as being compliant with the Code.

The Group discussed the scope of its role and responsibilities under the Law and was of the opinion that the focus should be on statistics published by public authorities. A consensus was reached whereby departments of the States of Jersey were to be invited to forthcoming Group meetings to present and discuss their publicly released statistical reports and information. A States Department would be invited to each of the remaining Group meetings in 2018.

[Action – DG to draft and circulate to the Group a letter inviting the Education Department to send one or more representatives to attend the next group meeting.](#)

### **3. Revision of Code of Practice**

DG circulated and invited comments on a draft revised Code of Practice for Official Statistics in Jersey (first published in May 2015). The revised draft incorporated changes resulting from the Statistics and Census (Jersey) Law 2018 coming into effect.

[Action – Group members to send comments to DG](#)

DG also pointed out that the UK Statistics Authority had very recently (on 22 February 2018) published a revised Code of Practice for Official Statistics in the UK. The revised UK Code constituted a substantial change, both in terms of structure and content, from the previous version.

Action – DG to report back to the Group at its next meeting on the feasibility of applying elements of the revised UK approach to the Jersey Code of Practice.

#### 4. Pre-release access to official statistics

The Group considered two requests for pre-release access to official statistics:

- Social Security Department: request for pre-release access to the Index of Average Earnings for operational purposes; specifically to enable appropriate time to calculate the resulting increases to contributory benefits and to schedule and implement the corresponding system/process changes. The request for pre-release access had been provisionally granted by the Chief Statistician and was endorsed by the Group.
- appeal by Communications Officer of the Health and Social Services Department (HSSD) for pre-release access to reports produced by Statistics Jersey on public health statistics. The Chief Statistician had declined to approve pre-release access to these reports.

The Group considered the appeal and decided that the circumstances in the request were not exceptional and did not merit pre-release access.

Action – MR to notify HSSD Communications Officer of the Group's decision.

#### 5. Audit of official statistics

At the previous Group meeting, a sub-group (comprising AA, JB, MD and MP) had been formed to consider auditing of official statistics, from the perspectives of methodology, data processing and quality.

JB and MD reported on the sub-group's first meeting, held on 13 December 2017, at which it had been decided to conduct an audit of the Labour Market figures.

Action – DG to organise a meeting of the sub-group in order to start the audit process.

#### 6. Summary of recent activity

DG summarised the recent publications of the Statistics Unit:

- Retail Prices Index, RPI
- Business Tendency Survey
- House Price Index
- Registered Actively Seeking Work
- Public Health statistics:
  - i. Alcohol profile
  - ii. Middle age health trends

#### 7. AOB

JH noted that the Agricultural statistics for 2016 had been published and that the content and presentation of the report was a notable improvement on previous years' reports.

#### 8. Next meeting: **Monday 4 June 2018**