

POPULATION AND MIGRATION STATISTICS COMMITTEE (SCOTLAND)

Report on the Thirteenth Meeting of the SCOTSTAT Board

Introduction

1. This note reports back to PAMS members on the business of the thirteenth SCOTSTAT Board meeting held on 16th October 2008.
2. The agenda, papers and minutes for the meeting are available on the SCOTSTAT website at: <http://www.scotland.gov.uk/topics/statistics/scotstat/board/meetings>

Meeting report

3. The thirteenth meeting of the SCOTSTAT Board was held on Friday 10th February 2006 at St Andrew's House. The Board was chaired by Rob Wishart, Chief Statistician, Scottish Government.
4. The agenda for the meeting was as follows:
 - Annual Statistics Stakeholder Conference (Paper A)
 - Update on statistics reform issues (Paper B)
 - Stakeholder engagement with the Statistics Group (Paper C)

5. Paper A – Annual Statistics Stakeholder Conference

This paper was in three parts and provided information on the Annual Statistics Stakeholders Conference held on 8th October 2008. The report covered participants' feedback, workshop outcomes and a membership update. Presentations and feedback from the conference can be found on the Scottish Government website <http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Topics/Statistics/scotstat/StatsCon2008>.

There was considerable discussion on the Single Outcome Agreements (SOAs) and Rob Wishart presented a short additional paper proposing the establishment of a SCOTSTAT Network for SOA analysts in local authorities. This proposal had been one of the outcomes from the Conference workshop discussions. This has since been taken forward and a draft remit circulated to interested parties for comment. I can provide further information on request. Contact is Sara Grainger: sara.grainger@scotland.gsi.gov.uk.

It was agreed that there was a need to involve the Research function within the Scottish Government more closely with the SCOTSTAT Board and that they should be encouraged to be represented.

There was a discussion on how to increase the membership of SCOTSTAT as represented by those who were signed up to the website. The membership was felt to be too low in relation to the number of people who were likely to be users of government statistics. One suggestion was that SCOTSTAT Committee should take on the role of organising workshops focussed on key areas of interest in order to capitalise on the interests of stakeholders – which GROS already do from time to time.

The SCOTSTAT Board Statistics Group will discuss options for publicising SCOTSTAT.

6. Paper B – Update on statistics reform issues

The UK Statistics Authority is now in place. They have announced that there will be monitoring reports in 2008/09 on:

- The communication of measures of inflation and consumer prices
- Progress with improving migration statistics
- Statistics not currently included in National Statistics
- Barriers to trust in relation to crime statistics

Assessment teams have been recruited in London and Newport and one for Edinburgh is being recruited.

The consultation on the Code of Practice for Statistics closed on 30th September. The Scottish Government response can be found as an appendix to Paper B for the SCOTSTAT Board.

A first edition of the Framework for Scottish Official Statistics was published in July. Comments were invited with a closing date of 9th October. A second edition will be published in due course.

The Pre-release Access to Official Statistics (Scotland) Order 2008 was laid before the Scottish Parliament on 1st October and approved by the Finance Committee in early November.

The relationship between SCOTSTAT and the Statistics Authority remains an issue. It was suggested that a representative of the UK Stats Authority should attend SCOTSTAT Board meetings.

7. Paper C – Stakeholder engagement with the Statistics Group

This report provided a summary of the stakeholder engagement by the Statistics Group within the Scottish Government. It was noted that there were some gaps (although not GROS who provided a list of their stakeholder involvement) and that much of the work stemmed from policy demand rather than the demands of producers or users. It was agreed that the gaps in the paper should be filled and distributed to Board members.

It was suggested that stakeholder engagement needs to focus more on outcomes and outputs rather than the data collection process.

The SCOTSTAT Board Statistics Group would consider producing a regular SCOTSTAT Bulletin to publicise events.

8. Date of next meeting

It was agreed that the next meeting would take place in the April 2009.

Conclusion

9. This paper summarises the issues discussed by the SCOTSTAT Board at its meeting in October 2008. I should be happy to provide further information if required.