

UPDATE ON KEY STATISTICAL DEVELOPMENTS (SCOTSTAT 9/04)

1. Previous updates for the Board have been based around the priority issues identified by the Board in June 2002. There has been some implicit adjustment to these priorities over the intervening period and it might be appropriate to review these priorities at the next meeting.
2. In the meantime it was felt that an update on a slightly broader range of key issues would be of use to the Board.
3. **The Board is invited to consider the update and any issues arising**

Update on key statistical developments

A. Scottish Neighbourhood Statistics (SNS)	
ScotStat action	SNS Development Group met in March (minutes are on the SNS web site) Future priorities are the filling of data gaps, the promotion of the benefits of the SNS and developing analytical outputs from the data. The SNSDG also agreed to hold an annual seminar to involve the wide range of stakeholder on the latest development, analyses and continuing gaps would be appropriate.
Other developments	The Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation (SIMD) 2004 will be released on 14 th June 2004. The launch of the full Scottish Neighbourhood Statistics website is scheduled for 21st June. Whilst development work continues the emphasis will now shift to promoting the use and analysis of SNS and SIMD in the Executive, in Community Planning Partners and beyond.
B. Key statistics and performance information	
ScotStat action	On agenda for this meeting
Other developments	There has been substantial discussion with Ministers about the range of statistics produced and in particular the need to develop the information available to monitor the delivery and effectiveness of Executive programmes. The Office of Chief Statistician is looking into the feasibility of drawing together a database that provides the user with details on the key targets, associated policy impact and statistics which inform the headline target and provide context.
C. Internet and other dissemination	
ScotStat action	
Other developments	The revised SE statistics site remains one of the most visited parts of the SE website. Statistics topics pages have been expanded in several areas. Consideration will be given later this year to Phase 2 of the re-development – with a view to giving more emphasis to data access instead of publications.

D. Scottish Executive Statistics Plan and Annual Report	
ScotStat action	On agenda for this meeting
Other developments	To allow fuller discussion with Ministers finalisation of the plan has been delayed. It should already have been the subject of consultation with ScotStat Committees – but coverage may be patchy. The final plan will be a web version of business plans for each topic.
E. Statistics Commission	
ScotStat action	Options for the Commission in Scotland were discussed at the last meeting.
Other developments	A meeting of SE/GROS officials and the Commission took place in early February. The Commission has since advertised for additional Commissioners and is considering ways in which this added capacity might allow them to address Scottish issues to a greater extent. The Commission's report on statistics legislation was published in May and is now under consideration.
F. Equality/diversity statistics	
ScotStat action	This falls under the Social and Welfare Committee, but there has been very limited discussion of this area.
Other developments	A social focus report on disability is being developed and will be released in late summer. Work is progressing on ethnicity classifications The Board may wish to consider how Committees progress this cross cutting issue – in particular the way different survey and admin systems collect data
G. Statistical methodology	
ScotStat action	
Other developments	It is expected that the Office of the Chief Statistician will develop a programme of activity in this area over the coming months.

H. Population and household survey harmonisation and co-ordination	
ScotStat action	<p>Summary of key points from last meeting SPSCC</p> <p>The SE has representation on the Continuous Population Survey Steering Group which is chaired by ONS <i>(The CPS is the new term for the Integrated Social Survey)</i></p> <p>SE is taking forward an exercise in which 'topic specialists' will consider how information on a particular topic is collected over a range of surveys. This exercise would be reported on at the next meeting of the SPSCC (around Sept 2004)</p> <p>SE will host a half day seminar which would publicise the work of the ESRC Survey Archive, the CASS Question Bank and the ONS project on 'harmonised concepts and questions for government social surveys'.</p> <p>SE to arrange a seminar on the CPS within Scotland (for members of the SCOTSTAT Board and committees as well as other SE and non SE representatives), taking into account the timing of the various consultation exercises planned by GROS and ONS. <i>Please also refer to the 'Census Futures' section</i></p>
Other developments	<p>ONS to begin a three month formal consultation period in summer 2004</p> <p>Decision on whether to go ahead with the CPS is to be made in Spring 2007. If agreed, the CPS would go live in January 2008</p> <p>A meeting with ONS and the other devolved administration is scheduled for 17th June.</p> <p>A paper setting out issues for the Continuous Population Survey in Scotland is being developed.</p>
I. Census Futures	
ScotStat action	<p>The Population & Migration Committee endorsed the proposal for a seminar on the future of census aimed at theme group members and related interests. This is provisionally proposed for 31st August. A paper outlining a timetable and pathway to change to an Alternative Census would be provided.</p>

Other developments	<p>The dual policy of developing conventional Census and alternatives in parallel continues.</p> <p>The Scottish Population Survey Co-ordinating Committee is taking forward work on integrating statistical surveys. Parallel discussions on UK Surveys covering Scotland are taking place between SE and ONS and links with the Census offices are maintained on a four nations basis.</p> <p>Consultation exercises on census alternatives and conventional census will take place this year. A web page within the GROS web site on Census Question topics is also under development to provide a forum for considering questions to be included in the 2006 Census Test. This will include reference to alternatives sources of data.</p> <p>Planning for a 2006 Census Test is underway.</p>
J. Statistical geography	
ScotStat action	The SNSDG agreed the plan to develop the Intermediate Geography and the general approach to SNS geography.
Other developments	<p>The Office of Chief Statistician (OCS) is progressing the Intermediate Geography work and is planning to have a finished product by end 2004.</p> <p>OCS continues to work closely with other Government Departments across the UK through the National Statistics Geography Group.</p> <p>OCS is progressing the development and maintenance of an urban/ rural classification building on the prior work of the Scottish Household Survey classification.</p>
K. Data protection, data sharing and use of administrative data	
ScotStat action	<p>The last meeting agreed that SE would prepare papers on disclosure control and data protection i) in the context of Neighbourhood Statistics and ii) on processes in relation to National Statistics.</p> <p>OCS is progressing work on confidentiality and disclosure control methods for SNS and is also liaising closely with other government departments on these matters. The first stage of disclosure control software will be implemented by end 2004.</p> <p>National Statistics arrangements for data protection are still under consideration.</p>
Other developments	

L. National Statistics Code of Practice	
ScotStat action	
Other developments	<p>The full set of National Statistics protocols has now been published by the Office for National Statistics.</p> <p>All NS producers will require to produce a Compliance Statement and implement the key requirements by September 2004.</p> <p>A review of the Code of Practice will commence in September 2004.</p>
M. Freedom of Information	
ScotStat action	
Other developments	<p>This has been receiving detailed consideration within the Executive. The Chief Statistician hopes to discuss a number of issues with the Information Commissioner.</p> <p>Copies of internal guidance for statisticians could be made more widely available thereafter.</p>

Annex A - Initial ScotStat prioritisation (June 2002)

1. Initial priorities
 - (a) Neighbourhood Statistics
 - (b) Dissemination and use of SE statistics including use for research purposes
 - (c) Performance information and key statistics
 - (d) Data protection, data sharing and use of administrative data
2. To be dealt with in other ways and if appropriate re-considered as part of next year's plan.
 - (a) Range of statistics produced
 - (b) Equality/diversity statistics
 - (c) Code of Practice
3. No early Board action but Board members should be kept up to date with developments
 - (a) Statistical methodology
 - (b) Costs and value for money
 - (c) Electronic data capture
 - (d) Broadening the scope of ScotStat to include other organisations'
 - (e) Surveys