

## **TTSAC-Related SCOTSTAT News**

### **1. Background**

SCOTSTAT is a network for users and providers of Scottish statistics. It aims to provide communication amongst those interested in particular statistics and to facilitate the setting up of working groups on specific statistical issues.

It currently has ten committees, as shown:

- **Transport & Travel**
- Economic, Business and Commerce
- Education & Training
- Population and Migration
- Health and Care
- Social and Welfare
- Crime and Justice
- Built Environment
- Natural Environment
- Neighbourhood Statistics

Further details can be found at: <http://www.scotland.gov.uk/stats/scotstats.asp>

### **2. Extracts from Minutes of SCOTSTAT Board Meeting on 16 June**

**(NB Full minutes can be found on the SCOTSTAT website at:**

**<http://www.scotland.gov.uk/stats/scotstats/board/meetings/mins160604.pdf>**

#### **Present:**

Rob Wishart, Scottish Executive, Chief Statistician (chair)  
Jill Alexander, Scottish Executive, Senior Statistician (secretary)  
Stuart Ashworth, Quality Meat Scotland (Agriculture)  
Richard Belding, Aberdeenshire Council (PAMS)  
Nick Bland, Scottish Executive, OCR  
Charles Brown, Scottish Executive  
Alan Campbell, Aberdeenshire Council (Built Environment)  
David Connolly, MVA (Transport and Travel)  
Hervey Gibson, Cogent Strategies International Ltd (Economy)  
Marion Lacey, SCVO  
Chris Mitchell, Fife Council (Neighbourhood Statistics)  
Graham Mitchell, ISD, Common Services Agency (Health and Care)  
Ron Mitchell, Inverclyde Council (Education and Training)  
Gillian Raab, Royal Statistical Society  
Simon Wakefield, SPICE  
Denise Laughlan, Scottish Executive (minutes)

#### **Apologies:**

Peter Knight, ISD, Common Services Agency (Health and Care)  
Pete Whitehouse, Scottish Executive, Senior Statistician (Social and Welfare)

## **2.1 Key Statistics and Performance Indicators (SCOTSTAT 7/04)**

Rob Wishart introduced this paper detailing the recent developments made within the SE on targets related work and the proposals to develop a comprehensive database of targets. Comments were welcomed from group members.

Rob also advised that the 2004 Spending Review is currently underway and the targets for this should be finalised in October 2004.

It was noted that the SE Delivery Unit are currently undertaking a Targets and Commitment Review, with the aim of developing an up-to-date database that has details of all partnership agreement targets and any other targets as agreed by Ministers. ScotStat will be able to add any relevant and appropriate targets to this database. No definite timetable is known as to when the work will be completed.

A paper on 'Guidance on Target Setting, Monitoring and Reporting' was presented and discussed – see <http://www.scotland.gov.uk/stats/scotstats/board/2004-06-16.asp> for details.

The aim of this paper was to have a short, easy-to-read document that provides useful guidance for those involved in setting targets. A flow chart was provided which summarised the steps involved in choosing targets and performance indicators.

The overall consensus on the flow chart was positive across the Board. It was decided that there will be a joint SE / ScotStat publication on this topic, with reasonable profile and circulation to external stakeholders using the ScotStat register.

## **2.2 ScotStat Committee discussions (SCOTSTAT 8/04)**

Full details of the discussions and information on how work has progressed within each of the Committees was provided as an annex to a paper for the meeting. (Annex B of paper (8/04). On the whole, there has been a very positive response from Committees and they continue to be aware of the actions that they must address from meetings of the ScotStat Board.

The following actions (relevant to TTSAC) were agreed:

**Action 8: SBSG members to continue to work with Committee Chairs to identify any cross-cutting issues that require consideration from other Committees.**

**Action 9: Annual/6 monthly newsletters to be sent round Committees providing information on both the current and future work of the ScotStat Board. This will also publish expected dates of Committee meetings and allow a standard to be set of what the Board expects.**

**Action 10: A short document (1-2 pages) to be published on the ScotStat website detailing the key areas that each Committee work on.**

**Action 11: Committee's to submit their work plan for the year ahead to the Board and publish on the ScotStat website. This should happen around January for the Board meeting each year.**

**Action 12: SBSG to prepare a report every year detailing how each of the Committees has progressed against their work plan for the year. It is anticipated that members of the SBSG will go out to Committees and report back for the Board meeting in June of each year.**

There was a suggestion that the Board should discuss population change / demographic issues, and circulate papers to all relevant Committees inviting participation.

Rob Wishart advised the Board that there was a proposal currently in place to hold a seminar with ONS to discuss the Continuous Population Survey and that the General Register Office for Scotland (GROS) will also be consulting on the 2011 Census and alternatives to the Census. A seminar subsequently took place on 2 September 2004.

The Board agreed that further discussion on issues of demographic policy (headline issues, migration, fertility rates) is needed. They are keen to involve Policy colleagues but it is difficult to engage with them. There are also additional problems since demographic policy is very much diverse.

**Action 14: SBSG to consider item on demographic change for next Board agenda.**

### **2.3 General Statistics Issues**

#### **(a) Scottish Statistical Developments (SCOTSTAT 9/04)**

This paper provided an overview of key statistical developments in the SE. It was noted that the Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation (SIMD) and the update to the Scottish Neighbourhood Statistics (SNS) website have recently been launched on 14 June and 21 June respectively.

Rob Wishart advised that the population and household survey harmonisation and coordination is a very active area of development at present. A seminar was planned for August / September 2004 to publicise the work on 'harmonised concepts and questions for government social surveys'.

Data zones were confirmed as the new statistical geography for Scotland. Rob welcomed these developments as a fixed/stable geography will allow analysis of change over time in a consistent manner. The SE is currently working on an intermediate geography to facilitate release of certain data that is not available at data zone level. The SNS development group will now spend more time focusing their efforts on the use of small area level data; they previously focused heavily on data development.

Details of other key developments are included in paper 9/04.

#### **(b) National Statistics issues**

Rob Wishart provided an update on the National Statistics protocols which were recently published in Spring 2004. The protocols provide guidance on areas such as release practices, data access and confidentiality, and statistical integration. The SE is required to

produce some form of compliance statement by September 2004. A data management policy will set out specific details.

#### **2.4 Development of the ScotStat website (SCOTSTAT 11/04)**

Charles Brown attended the Board meeting, representing the ScotStat Board Support Group, and provided an update on recent developments to the ScotStat website. These include:

- Increasing membership among Scottish Universities
- Using the ScotStat Register as a central database of all users within the SE
- Improving usage and encouraging more feedback
- Increasing the profile of ScotStat
- Removing 'dead' e-mail addresses

The Board advised that it may be best to target the letter being sent to Universities to Directors of Research and Directors of Postgraduate Students to ensure optimum response. It may also be worthwhile contacting final year and MSc students and encouraging them to register as they are likely to follow on into the private sector. To target this group, it may be necessary to contact relevant academic staff.

#### **2.5 Freedom of Information (FoI) (SCOTSTAT 12/04)**

A paper on Freedom of Information (SCOTSTAT 12/04) was introduced by Rob Wishart. It was noted that there is not a huge amount of change needed as the Statistics Group already publishes the majority of information and data it holds.

**Action 18: Rob Wishart to send final version of paper on Freedom of Information (12/04) to Board members following meeting with the Information Commissioner.**

### **3. Date of next SCOTSTAT meeting**

The next SCOTSTAT meeting is scheduled to take place on Wednesday 19<sup>th</sup> January 2005. Please let David Connolly know if there are any particular TTSAC items you would wish to be added to the agenda for this meeting