

TTSAC-RELATED SCOTSTAT NEWS

1 Introduction

1.1 The purpose of this paper is to inform members of the Committee about recent ScotStat developments, and to seek their views on whether there should be any changes to current arrangements.

1.2 ScotStat is a network for users and providers of official statistics. The Scottish Executive (SE) has set up several topic-based committees under the ScotStat banner, including the Transport and Travel Statistics Advisory Committee (T&TSAC). T&TSAC has two "sub-groups", on "Accessibility" and "Progress Indicators", which have met occasionally. In terms of the ScotStat structure, the Liaison Group on Road Accident Statistics is also a sub-group of T&TSAC, but it does not really operate as such (e.g. work is not delegated to LGRAS from T&TSAC, and LGRAS does not report back to T&TSAC).

1.3 There is also a ScotStat Board, one role of which is to oversee the work of these Committees. Each Committee should have a representative on the Board; T&TSAC's representative is David Connolly.

1.4 Further information about ScotStat is available from the Web site:

<http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Topics/Statistics/scotstat/home>

2 ScotStat Committee Structure

2.1 The most recent meeting of the ScotStat Board was on 10 February 2006. The agenda for that meeting is available at:

www.scotland.gov.uk/Topics/Statistics/scotstat/board/scotstatboardagenda9

Under Agenda Item 3 of that meeting Rob Wishart, (SE Chief Statistician and ScotStat Board Chairman) presented a paper called "Developing ScotStat Sub-groups". This summarised the activity of all the ScotStat committees, and highlighted that in some areas the current ScotStat "formal" structure was not working effectively. The proposals were to introduce a more flexible and broad based structure with less rigid requirements. The paper is available from the Web site:

<http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Topics/Statistics/scotstat/board/scotstatboard9paper106>

2.2 At this meeting, David Connolly said that T&TSAC was working well as a committee, and that he did not feel there was a need to change the current structure in Transport.

2.3 In July, the SE's internal ScotStat Board Support Group sent a questionnaire to Committee Chairs asking for their thoughts on the current ScotStat Committee structure. The response from Frank Dixon, as Chair of T&TSAC, is attached as the Annex to this paper: his view was also that T&TSAC is working well and that there is no need for a change of its structure.

3 Conclusion

3.1 Both the Chairman and the ScotStat Board representative feel that this Committee is functioning effectively under the current arrangements, and do not feel that there is any need for substantial changes to the current structure in Transport.

3.2 **Members of the Committee are asked:**

- **do they agree that the Committee is functioning well under the current arrangements?**
- ***if not*, they are invited to suggest how the structure of the Committee (and its sub-groups) might be changed, or other ways in which the effectiveness of the Committee might be improved?**

Review of ScotStat Committee Structure 2006

1. What is the name of your ScotStat Committee?

Transport and Travel Statistics Advisory Committee
also Liaison Group on Road Accident Statistics

2. Has your Committee met in the past 12 months?

Y

If yes, go to question 3.

If no, go to question 6.

3. Over the past year, how many times has your Committee met? Please delete as appropriate.

1 or 2 - T&TSAC and LGRAS have each met once

4. In the space provided below, please indicate the main outputs/ achievements of your Committee’s over the past year.

T&TSAC

Meeting in October 2005:

- discussed possible indicators for informing and monitoring the National Transport Strategy;
- discussed changes to the frequency and timing of SE Transport Statistics publications;
- discussed possible improvements to some of the publications and material on the Web site;
- considered Transport Statistics plan for 2006-07.
- members were informed about recent and forthcoming developments to the SHS and other SE Transport statistics, Department for Transport statistics, and Tourism statistics for Scotland

Members consulted by e-mail about:

- the development of the Access domain of the Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation;
- revising the Transport questions in the Scottish Household Survey;
- the "one page" / "High Level Summary" topics to appear in the Transport part of the SE Web site.

Also, members were:

- invited to contribute to the consultation on the National Transport Strategy and to attend the SHS User Day;
- informed about the outcome of the revision of the SHS's Transport questions, and some other developments.

LGRAS - please see the next page (I can't get the box to expand onto the next page to provide more space)

LGRAS

Meeting in June 2006 discussed:

- the quality of the first year's road accident Contributory Factor data;
- reporting the results of the Contributory Factors in "Road Accidents Scotland" and elsewhere;
- possible improvements to "Road Accidents Scotland" and the material on our Web site;
- points arising from the Quality Review of road accident statistics and the resulting changes (which were made with effect from January 2005);
- the possible linkage of road accident statistics data with statistics of any subsequent criminal proceedings;
- possible future developments in road accident statistics data collection:
 - a draft XML schema for the road accident statistics data;
 - Lothian & Borders Police Force's use of Personal Digital Assistants to record details at the scene;
 - developments in England and Wales.
- what should be done to prepare for the next Quality Review of road accident statistics;
- some other matters.

We are now consulting the "Publications" sub-group of LGRAS (by e-mail) about the details of our proposed Contributory Factors tables, and will also consult the sub-group about some other improvements that we will make for "Road Accidents Scotland 2005".

5. In the space provided below, please indicate what might help your Committee to achieve its aims for effectively (if relevant).

We do *not* need any "organisational/structural" changes - indeed, from our point-of-view they could be counter-productive. T&TSAC works well, as (I understand) David Connolly, the T&TSAC member of the ScotStat Board said at the Board meeting on 10th February. We get on well with the Transport Statistics Users Group - T&TSAC meets in the morning before the annual TSUG Scottish seminar (at which I and/or SE colleagues usually give one of the talks).

I believe that we do a very good job given our resources. Of the topics with ScotStat committees, Transport & Travel has one of the smallest (possibly the smallest) FTE number of statistical staff in Scotland. Our users appreciate what we do. They know that, over the years, we have made considerable improvements (often in response to their suggestions/requests).

Of course, our statistics are not perfect. There are some big potential developments that cannot be tackled without extra staff/resources (e.g. developing a Scotland-wide measure of traffic congestion, finding out about road accidents which are not reported to the police, obtaining statistics of bus patronage at a local level). The need for some of these may be established as part of the development of the National Transport Strategy and the statistics that will be needed to monitor progress. However, the ScotStat Committee structure is not relevant to these matters.

6. If your Committee has not met in the past 12 months, please indicate the main reasons for this and what alternative mechanisms may have been used to engage/ consult with external users/ providers

N-A

7. Please use the space provided below to provide additional comments about any aspect of ScotStat - including any ideas about how ScotStat could be restructured to achieve more effective engagement with external users/ data providers?

As indicated above, from our point-of-view, there is *no* need for "restructuring".

Other areas may wish to follow our example, and arrange their meetings "back to back" with seminars or other events run by (e.g.) the relevant Users Group.

We have also found it helpful to use e-mail between meetings to consult and inform T&TSAC members about various matters (examples were given in section 4). Again, this may be something that others could do more of.

However, what matters is whether the people in an area want to make things work - if commitment is lacking, no amount of "restructuring" will do any good, and the introduction of new requirements could well be counter-productive. New requirements may simply increase the burden on "good" areas, and fail to achieve anything in "bad" areas - of which (it seems, on the basis of the table in the ScotStat paper) "Social & Welfare" is the prime example. The "solution" might be for OCS and/or the ScotStat Board Support Group to meet those who work in the "poorly-performing" areas to discuss what can be done there.