

Statistics Commission

REVIEW OF STATISTICAL FIRST RELEASES PROGRESS UPDATE AND OUTLINE OF REPORT

ACTION FOR MEETING: To note progress on the review of statistical first releases and to consider the attached draft outline of the review report.

Introduction and progress to date

1. The review of Statistical First Releases has two parts – an evaluation of the content of statistical releases against a set of criteria representing best practice, and a review of current release practices and arrangements. For both parts, assessment is based on a selection of some 30 plus releases spread over a wide range of departments, including ONS and the devolved administrations. The review is overseen by a project board that includes Ian Beesley and Joly Dixon.
2. To date we have assessed 27 releases against the good practice criteria and there are a further ten assessments to complete.
3. The process followed for assessing release practices and arrangements for the selected releases has been to first put together as much information about release arrangements from publicly available sources (the releases themselves, departmental websites, the ONS website), and then write to the department responsible with a list of questions. This process has now been followed in respect of 27 releases from 15 departments; we have so far received replies from 10 departments covering 17 releases. Initial assessments remain to be completed for 5 releases, all from ONS.

The draft report

4. A draft outline of the report is attached at Annex A. This is very much a first shot, based on the results from the research so far. The project board met before Christmas to discuss progress, and the review report but the attached

outline has not as yet been seen or discussed by the board. It should also be noted that the attached draft has not taken on board most of the feedback and information on release arrangements now received from departments – much of which was only received in the past few days. However, we have been able to draw some conclusions from the emerging findings, and have included these in the draft report.

Conclusion

5. Comments and views on the draft report outline and the early conclusions are welcome. We plan to complete the research this month, with publication planned for February or early March.

Secretariat
Statistics Commission
January 2008

**THE STATISTICS COMMISSION WILL PUBLISH THE FINAL VERSION OF
THE REVIEW OF STATISTICAL FIRST RELEASES IN DUE COURSE.**