

POPULATION AND MIGRATION STATISTICS COMMITTEE (SCOTLAND)

Report on the Sixth Meeting of the SCOTSTAT Board

Introduction

- This note is intended to report back to PAMS members on the business of the sixth SCOTSTAT Board meeting.
- Papers from the meeting are available on the SCOTSTAT website at: <http://www.scotland.gov.uk/stats/scotstats/board/papers.asp> and the minutes are at: <http://www.scotland.gov.uk/stats/scotstats/board/minutes.asp>

Meeting report

- The sixth meeting of the SCOTSTAT Board was held on Wednesday 16th June 2004 at Victoria Quay. The Board was chaired by Rob Wishart, Chief Statistician, Scottish Executive. There was a good attendance at this sixth meeting. Jill Alexander is to be replaced as Secretary by Sandy Stewart.
- The papers for the meeting were as follows:
 - Key Statistics and Performance Indicators (Paper SCOTSTAT 7/04)
 - Report on work in progress on SCOTSTAT Committee discussions (Paper SCOTSTAT 8/04)
 - General Statistics Issues:
 - (a) Scottish Statistical Developments (Paper SCOTSTAT 9/04)
 - (b) National Statistics issues (oral report)
 - Measurement of Public Sector output/productivity (Paper SCOTSTAT 10/04)
 - Development of SCOTSTAT website (Paper SCOTSTAT 11/04)
 - Freedom of Information (FoI) (Paper SCOTSTAT 12/04)

Paper 7/04 Key Statistics and Performance Indicators

The first paper detailed the recent developments made within the SE on targets related work and the proposals to develop a comprehensive database of targets. The second paper was on 'Guidance on Target Setting, Monitoring and Reporting'. The aim of this paper was to have a short, easy-to-read document that provides useful guidance for those involved in setting targets. There were questions on how much had been piloted, and if the methods had been found to actually work.

Paper 8/04 Report on work in progress on SCOTSTAT Committee discussions

This paper summarised the discussions held between the SCOTSTAT Board Support Group (SBSG) and individual SCOTSTAT Committees. They are (currently) all different with different histories. See in particular the part concerning the PAMS Committee.

- Consultations are about to start later this year on Census issues such as lessons learned from the 2001 Census, question content for the 2006 Test Census, as well as alternatives to the Census such as administrative data sources and enhanced and co-ordinated sample surveys leading to

an integrated population and social statistics system. This would also include Neighbourhood Statistics, developments in population and personal address registration and related estimation systems. The SCOTSTAT Board and its committees should be involved in this consultation process not only directly, but also to help facilitate a wider consultation.

- Linkage with demographic policy makers and policy related research material in SE is not as close as we would like, eg fertility, migration. I was told that such policy links are not easy to introduce because responsibility is dispersed between SE departments, but this is precisely why SCOTSTAT needs to be involved.

SBSG to consider item on demographic change for next Board agenda.

General Statistics Issues

(a) Paper 9/04 Scottish Statistical Developments

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 had been / would be launched on 14 June and 21 June respectively. Data zones were confirmed as the new statistical geography for Scotland. 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.

(b) National Statistics issues (oral report)

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.

Paper 10/04 Measurement of Public Sector output/productivity

This paper gave details of the Atkinson Review, which looked at how the government and public sector currently measure output, activity and productivity.

Paper 11/04 Development of SCOTSTAT website

This paper provided an update on recent developments to the SCOTSTAT website.

Paper 12/04 Freedom of Information (FoI)

It was noted that there is not a huge amount of change needed in SE as the Statistics Group already publishes the majority of information and data it holds, but nb management information, incomplete and poor quality data (but note the 12 week rule), previous confidentiality agreements (compare with Data Protection Act). Implications for local authorities...

Date of next meeting

It was agreed that the next meeting will take place on Wednesday 19th January 2005, 1.30 pm.

Conclusion

- This paper summarises the issues discussed by the SCOTSTAT Board at its meeting in June 2004. I should be happy to provide further information if required.

Richard Belding
Aberdeenshire Council
8 July 2004