
Chair of the UK Statistics Authority, Sir Andrew Dilnot CBE

Jackie Baillie MSP
Scottish Parliament
Edinburgh
EH99 1SP

15 April 2015

Dear Ms Baillie

SCOTTISH GOVERNMENT ANALYSIS ON IMPROVED ECONOMIC PERFORMANCE

Thank you for your letter of 24 March regarding two analytical papers produced by the Scottish Government entitled “Benefits of improved economic performance”.

The papers summarise the outcome of economic forecasts based on modelling analysis conducted by the Office of the Chief Economic Adviser in the Scottish Government. The papers do not provide details about the data underpinning the model or about the assumptions made, and the results of the analysis are presented as illustrative findings. The economic analysis is not presented in the form of a statistical publication. As such, the estimates presented cannot be considered to be official statistics and the outputs therefore do not fall under the remit of the Code of Practice for Official Statistics.

Although the Code of Practice relates to official statistics, it sets high standards, especially in relation to the quality and presentation of statistical information, which might also be adopted for other pieces of official analysis to help increase public trust and confidence in that analysis.

Voluntary adherence to the spirit and the high standards of parts of the Code of Practice when publishing non-statistical analysis might be beneficial, in particular relating to its orderly release, including:

- adopting clear labelling and presentation of such publications to make them readily distinguishable from official statistics releases, making it clear to readers that the analysis comprises economic estimates based on judgements and assumptions;
- setting out, as far as possible, advice to readers about how they might replicate the analysis contained within; and,
- adopting professional standards in the presentation of the analysis and setting out its strengths and limitations.

A number of non-statistical official publications successfully adopt these standards. I am copying this to John Pullinger, the National Statistician, and to Gary Gillespie and Roger Halliday in the Scottish Government.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Andrew Dilnot". The signature is written in a cursive, slightly slanted style.

Sir Andrew Dilnot CBE