
Chair of the UK Statistics Authority, Sir Andrew Dilnot CBE

Barry Gardiner MP
Houses of Parliament
London
SW1A 0AA

8 August 2014

Dear Mr Gardiner,

FLOODING STATISTICS

Thank you for your letter of 9 July regarding statistics on flood defence spending and flood risk.

Since my most recent letter of 14 April to Hugh Bayley MP, the Authority has had a number of constructive discussions with the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra) about the publication of flood defence expenditure figures as official statistics. On 12 July, the former Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs wrote to Mr Bayley to confirm that Defra will develop the flood defence expenditure figures and will publish them as official statistics¹. Once the figures are published as official statistics, the Authority's Head of Assessment will review them and advise whether they should be a priority for formal assessment against the Code of Practice for Official Statistics.

With regards to information about flood risk – in particular the number of houses that will be better protected from flooding in future – I understand that the information you mention is based on Environment Agency models. These figures are not official statistics. I understand from Defra that its statisticians are working with the Environment Agency to ensure the interpretation and assumptions relating to these figures are as clear as possible.

I am copying this letter to Hugh Bayley MP, Bronwyn Hill CBE, the Permanent Secretary at Defra, Peter Helm, the Head of Profession for statistics at Defra, and Ed Humpherson the Authority's Head of Assessment.

Yours sincerely,



Sir Andrew Dilnot CBE

¹ <http://www.statisticsauthority.gov.uk/reports---correspondence/correspondence/flood-defence-statistics.pdf>