

## Statistics Governance Group

Mar 18 BM C 01.2

Date: 12 December 2017  
Location: Meeting Room 2, Fleetbank House, London, EC4Y 8JX  
Time: 13:30 – 15:30

### Present

Theo de Pencier	TP	Chair
Philip Mendelsohn	PM	Board Member
Bob Linnard	RL	Board Member
Anthony Smith	AS	Chief Executive
Jon Carter	JC	Head of Business Services
Ian Wright	IW	Head of Insight
David Greeno	DG	Senior Insight Advisor
Robert Pain	RP	Senior Insight Advisor
Murray Leader	ML	Senior Insight Advisor
Rosie Giles	RG	Senior Insight Advisor
Shelly van der Nest	SVDN	CEO Team Support Officer

### 1. Welcome and apologies

TP welcomed everyone to the meeting. There were no declarations of interest.

### 2. Minutes

The Group discussed the minutes of the meeting held on Tuesday 12 September 2017; no substantive changes were made but PM pointed out a few discrepancies that should be corrected. JC to email PM the word document to amend.

### 3. Matters Arising

TP noted that Northern had been running a NRPS-like predictor survey with another agency. Transport focus were currently in negotiations to continue this work.

IW confirmed that Arriva group had stepped in and want to do something at group level. This is now going ahead based on the GA model. Bespoke work will not start until April 2018, but how bespoke is an interesting question.

## Statistics Governance Group

With Jordan in place we will be using the data more than simply predicting what scores are likely to be. Data will be made available in a six monthly customer report by Northern. All data will be published eventually but will depend on events or publication opportunities. An update will be provided at the next meeting.

### 4. Action Matrix

Reference	Issue	Action	Conclusion
1718-116	BPS	Provide analysis on trust	Covered on the agenda. Complete. Delete.
1718-117	TPS additional data	Distribute when available	Covered on the agenda. Complete. Delete.
1718-118	TPS Edinburgh Trams	Provide update	Covered on the agenda. Complete. Delete.
1718-120	Trust update	Provide analysis of data	Covered at the member's event on 12/12/17. Complete. Delete.
1718-121	SRUS Work plan	Update timeline	Covered on the agenda. Complete. Delete.
<b>1718-122</b>	<b>Open data tool</b>	<b>Explore options</b>	<b>Ongoing*. Changed to March 2018</b>

\* The Open Data Tool had been setup and maintained by MySociety, but they were changing their strategy and will no longer be able to support the tool. Some industry funding may be available, but SRUS data will also have to be added at some stage. IW noted a common, holistic approach to cover all data was needed, and it must be useful to both the public and research professionals. A dashboard approach would be necessary. There had not been time to do justice to this issue to date; he would reconsider the options and report back again in March.

## Statistics Governance Group

### ***B. National Rail Passenger Survey***

#### **Autumn 2017 & Spring 2018 Update**

DG confirmed the handout rate per shift was 68%, which was much higher than the previous wave. All shifts had been completed by 15 November, slightly later than the planned date of 9 November, mainly due to extra boosts which were considered necessary - some of the last few shifts did not yield quite as many returns as the agency had expected.

The overall response rate on paper was similar to the previous wave, although slightly down at 23% compared to 25%. The online response rate was higher than paper with 32% compared 22%. Overall, 20% of the responses were made online and 80% on paper.

There were quite a number of Boosts in the autumn wave. Non-franchised TOC's took part, as did Network Rail, Merseytravel, Flintshire County Council; the parallel run in Scotland continued. High Speed 1 is planning a boost at St Pancras International in December, partly as they are no longer the top Network Rail station for overall satisfaction.

The online portal developed by Chime was launched. Some feedback from users was that less information was available than the previous system but overall it was very user friendly and well received.

Publication is scheduled for 30 January 2018. AS had asked TP to be an interim member of the scrutiny panel.

The spring 2018 wave starts on the 15 January 2018 and goes up to the end of March 2018. Significant engineering work have been built into the planning. Publication dates have been agreed for the spring wave results.

RL wondered if there was anything to be learned from BPS online response rates – can RRPS response rates be speeded up? IW believed it was largely a matter of audience, and that the BPS profile was much younger.

PM noted that an email was circulated in November concerning a question change for the spring wave on the subject outward or return journey. This matter might have come to the meeting for the record, even if the decision was required earlier.

A further key question was whether ScotRail were content once they knew there were no *significant* differences in the questionnaire. IW confirmed that discussions

## Statistics Governance Group

were ongoing – it was agreed a deadline to get it sorted of on or around 17 January 2018 was necessary.

AS congratulated DG and the team on the transition to the new agency – all appeared to be going as planned – but we need to keep an eye on the level of resource we are committing.

PM mentioned that we had discussed several times that we should try and be more commercial – we can and must charge for additional work; there should be a 'line' which represents the limit of the core service for NRPS, BPS and TPS. Over and above that, operators have to pay. IW confirmed that in their contract Chime have 60 hours of analysis time; when the time is used up, sometimes needs to pay.

IW reported that the team have a session with Chime the following week in which they will discuss a range of strategies, including the response rate. We need to engage with our audience and not just dish out forms to them!

### ***C. Bus Passenger Survey***

#### **BPS Update**

RP updated on his paper to the meeting. Field work was still in progress and this should be the final week. The extension in Scotland and Wales will also apply in England in some areas. A general decline in response rates was evident; trying to get people to take part in the first place was increasingly difficult. Recruitment is key. Of course, levels of patronage are also in decline. In Wales Arriva had run their survey at the same time as ours and we need to avoid this from happening in the future. Individual interviewers were a concern as late booking had meant we had to settle for less experienced interviewers.

Top up shifts have been put in place. Across the piece as a whole we are looking at reaching the 98% overall target. England struggles a bit, but across the piece Scotland and Wales are slightly better. TP mentioned that it was important that we meet our target in Wales as it was the first time we have been back there. IW mentioned the other problem we have with Wales and Scotland is if we run short we can't top up the funding with our own money.

A lot of work had been put into the online survey. We expected that there would be a better uptake as time goes on for the online but in fact we are seeing the opposite. Online has accounted for a smaller percentage of the overall mix than last year.

## Statistics Governance Group

On the one hand we are not seeing the click-through from those that have been sent the email - they give the email address to an interviewer but are not then opening the survey, and on the other there appears to be some reluctance to giving out an email address. This suggests some people might prefer to complete a paper copy!

RP was concerned we do not have an automated process where the email is sent instantaneously – the process is manual whereby the email is only sent when the documentation get back to the office. The delay has come down from 4.9 days in 2015 to 4.2 days at present. TP questioned why this was so slow? PR confirmed it was slow partly because of the lack of investment in equipment, some of the interviewers having to post the documentation back to the office. Whilst a much higher proportion of people are using smartphones, many are much more likely to finish the survey on a desk top rather than on a smartphone.

RP confirmed that the re-tender process is ongoing. He thanked those for coming back with feedback on the ITT document. Bids closed yesterday with only two bids received. This is very disappointing as 20 agencies originally registered. Feedback will be essential. The next step is to assess and shortlist by the 20 December 2017 and interviews will be by 10 January 2018. The outcome will be advised on the 14 March 2018. An in-principle decision on supplier appointment was to be made at the February member's event.

AS got the distinct impression that we are spending more money chasing fewer passengers. Are we on a burning platform and when do we say we can't do this anymore? IW agreed it is getting harder but the fire on the platform is not yet out of control.

## ***D. Tram Passenger Survey***

### **TPS Update**

RG confirmed the last day of field work was extended to the 7 December 2017 and are all shifts are now completed. We have met 109% of our target. The sampling plan was delivered on all areas apart from SST where we only achieved 99% on the yellow line. RG mentioned that they are looking into how they are going to address Glasgow subway in terms of publishing as they are such a different network. As they are much more of a subway its thought best to keep them separate. However it is likely to be published before the end of the business year. We are working on new templates at the moment and to incorporate new Transport focus branding.

## Statistics Governance Group

With regard to online it is a similar situation to BPS where there have been a slight decrease in online and a slight increase in paper. Smartphones are more commonly used than desktops. Compared to last year we did have fewer click-through's, but when they do click through they are more likely to complete the survey. The same as with BPS, people are reluctant to give out email addresses and appear to be afraid of what they may be used for.

Regarding the initial interest from TFL, they may be getting more interested for TramLink. This could be a great opportunity for us.

The TPS will feature as part of the workplan for 2018-19.

## ***E. Strategic Road Users Survey***

### **SRUS Update**

Tenders for SRUS are due from agencies today, the deadline is 5pm. Two have been received so far.

There was a lot of involvement on SRUS from DfT prior to and following the issue of the ITT. A number of meetings on technical points were held. They do however appear happy with the methodology we have developed.

RL wondered how robust the evaluation of bids would be – a sanity check might be needed. IW confirmed that there would be an external evaluator and that in any event the brief was very prescriptive – experience and price would be the biggest factors to consider.

There are 2 outstanding issues to agree:

- They agree with us that SRUS should be a survey of journeys, but want further discussion on the question to be used for the weighting of journeys; and
- We are also waiting on a budget decision from DfT to inform sample size, we have asked agencies to cost for 8,000, 15,000 and 20,000 interviews.

To ensure there were a minimum number of issues in the future, consideration was being given to introducing financial penalties for the SRUS supplier; the reporting will be monthly and it obviously needs to be correct.

## Statistics Governance Group

Once an agency is appointed in January, no major problems are foreseen. The biggest challenge will be ensuring the research agency and map developer work well together to get the survey software integrated with the map.

### ***F. Any other business***

#### **NRUSS Update**

ML confirmed that agreement has been reached via a single tender procurement, with the supplier improving their pricing model. Funds have been approved and allocated for the whole project term. An exchange of letters for a 1+1 year arrangement from April 2018 is planned. The situation will be reviewed in March 2019 in light of RIS2 issues and the first year of SRUS.TP questioned the supplier's credibility, for example credit rating. IW confirmed there were no concerns in this respect.

TP thanked RL for his huge contribution over the years and wished him well in the future.

There being no other business, the meeting closed at 1530 hrs.

Signed as a true and accurate record of the meeting:

---

**Theo de Pencier**  
**Chair**

Date: \_\_\_\_\_