

## **Agenda Item 6. Joint BIS/ONS paper ‘Guide to the Business Population and Demographics Statistics Publications’: Discussion on Closer Integration**

A draft document was presented at the Business Population and Demographic Statistics User Group meeting during March 2012, drafted by ONS and BIS, with input from the devolved administrations and Insolvency Service. It was then published on both BIS and ONS websites on 29 June 2012 ("[Guide To The Business Population And Demographics Statistics Publications](#)"). GSS BRG members were asked to review whether there was a continued need to produce both the ONS *UK Business: Activity, Size and Location* and BIS *Business Population Estimates* publications separately or whether the two publications amount to duplication and should be rolled into one.

The positive side to combining the two publications together would be that it would be less confusing for users as repetition would be removed and disparity between the two publications would no longer be an issue.

On the negative side, a single publication would be unwieldy for users to navigate and difficult to produce if it is to incorporate all the existing data (geography, enterprise and Local Unit information). It also would not resolve the issue of providing users with just one number for the total number of businesses (since certain levels of detail and characteristics are only available for certain sections of the business population).

In addition, following recent changes BIS made to the *Business Population Estimates* methodology, the numbers produced in each publication have been more consistent.

The Group agreed that there was no benefit in one publication at the moment but that wider consultation should be conducted. Andrew Allen and Karen Grierson will consider seeking the views of Business Population and Demographics Statistics User Group (BPDS).

It was agreed that the newly published guide provides a useful explanation of the differences between the publications for users and that as long as this was available and we ensured links between the two publications were clearly displayed then there wasn't currently a need to merge the two.