

# **FIRE AND RESCUE STATISTICS USER GROUP SUBMISSION TO TREASURY SUB-COMMITTEE INQUIRY INTO INDEPENDENCE FOR STATISTICS**

## **1. Introduction**

**1.1** The Fire and Rescue Statistics User Group (hereinafter referred to as the Group) is drawn from the fire community and includes representatives from the following organisations;

- The Association of British Insurers
- The Chief Fire Officers Association
- The Fire Brigades Union
- English Heritage
- Historic Scotland
- The Fire Industry Confederation
- Fire Information Group
- London Fire and Emergency Planning Authority
- World Fire Statistics Centre
- University of Central Lancashire
- The Fire Protection Association
- The Fire Service College
- Her Majesty's Fire Service Inspectorate
- Buildings Division - Department for Communities and Local Government
- Fire Statistics and Research Division - Department for Communities and Local Government
- National Community Fire Safety Centre - Department for Communities and Local Government

**1.2** The Group is a member of the Statistics User Forum of the Royal Statistical Society and is represented there by the Group Chairman and Group Secretary. Due to the wide ranging nature of the Group's membership and the fact that the consultation process initiated by HM Treasury fell between two scheduled meetings of the Group, members were notified electronically of the consultation process, its location and invited to comment individually if they wished to do so. Members were also asked to forward any views that they might have to form a collective response from the Group.

**1.3** The matter was further discussed at the last meeting of the Group held on the 7<sup>th</sup> June 2006 and as a result the following comments and observations are made.

## **2. Comment on the Proposals for the Independence for Statistics by HM Treasury**

### **2.1 Paragraph 2.8, Footnote 3**

The following observation was made by a Group member;

I see no valid reason why a politician - the Chancellor of the Exchequer - should retain responsibility for the scope and definition of the Retail Price Index, rather than this, as in the case of all other statistical series, being the responsibility of the National Statistician and the ONS.

### **2.2 Paragraph 4.42 - Funding**

The Group supports the principles that all government statistics should be beyond reproach and independently monitored. There was concern that, to ensure the complete independence of the monitoring body, funding for it should be allocated by a cross party Parliamentary Committee rather than via one particular Minister or Government Department.

That concludes the comments and observations of the Fire and Rescue Statistics User Group.

Glyn Evans  
14 June 2006