

2011 CENSUS: HIGHLIGHT REPORT

Introduction

- 1 This Highlight Report is circulated to Advisory Group Members in the absence of the round of meetings initially planned for May-June, but which were postponed. The paper reports on the developments within the 2011 Census Development Programme since the 2011 Census design proposals were announced in the ONS Information Paper, *The 2011 Census: a design for England and Wales*, in February, http://www.statistics.gov.uk/downloads/theme_population/2011_design_information.pdf copies of which were sent to all Advisory Group members at that time).
- 2 The paper outlines the research programme currently envisaged leading to a proposed Census Test in 2007, and notes the progress within ONS on establishing a corporate user consultation mechanism within which discussion on the 2011 Census may be conducted.

Action

- 3 **Advisory Group members are invited to note recent developments and comment on the proposed consultation processes. A separate consultation exercise on the population base definitions for the 2011 Census is reported, and which invites responses by 25 July 2004.**

2011 Census design proposals and strategic aims

- 4 ONS wishes to thank all those who took the trouble to comment on the design proposals Discussion Paper published in October 2003. In addition to these comments ONS have taken note of the all the views of users expressed in earlier consultation and, in particular, at the joint ONS/RSS Conference, *Census 2001 and Beyond: learning from the past – building for the future*, held on 11-12 November.
- 5 A summary of users' comments is available from the National Statistics website (at [http://www.statistics.gov.uk/downloads/theme_population/2011_user_comments final.pdf](http://www.statistics.gov.uk/downloads/theme_population/2011_user_comments_final.pdf))
- 6 More recently the ONS has produced a paper that outlines the central objective for the 2011 Census, the mission-critical aims and some key research that ONS will undertake to help achieve them:

http://www.statistics.gov.uk/downloads/theme_population/Strategic_aims.pdf

These aims will be used as a constant backdrop to give guidance in planning and decision making as ONS researches, develops and shapes the approach to the 2011 Census. The paper does not set out to describe the specific outputs that will be delivered by the Census, nor specific quality targets or standards; these will be the subject of separate documents. Rather, it states general principles that will have a significant impact on either the effective management of the operation or on the quality and utility of the final results. The paper identifies the key questions that will need to be answered by the 2011 Census Programme over the period up to the 2007 Test in order to refine and confirm the proposed design and implementation for a Census in 2011.

Research and development programme

- 7 In setting out the next steps towards a 2011 Census, the February Information Paper noted that ONS would be:
 - (a) carrying out further research into improving response rates and understanding of coverage, and in defining population bases in consultation with users;
 - (b) defining and implementing a rigorous testing strategy from which the final design will emerge;
 - (c) addressing the risks identified, particularly the impact of post-out on coverage and quality, and developing mitigation strategies;
 - (d) instigating an earlier start to the Community Liaison Programme and providing clearly defined roles for local authorities to contribute;
 - (e) producing a full planning matrix that will identify dates by which key decisions must be made to ensure that decennial census figures can be supplied in 2011/12, and identifying tasks required to achieve this;
 - (f) developing an outsourcing strategy in consultation with users; and
 - (g) continuing liaison with international statistical agencies to share experiences.

- 8 This paper highlights progress in the research and development programme and indicates those issues where ONS will be looking for user input.

Population bases for enumeration and output

- 9 The population base for enumeration has an impact on the range and quality of Census outputs achievable. It is of fundamental importance that ONS have a good understanding of user needs for basic population data in order to inform the selection of enumeration base. For example, if data are to be collected on one basis, but outputs are required on another base, how accurately can the data be manipulated to provide the required outputs? Furthermore, if additional questions are necessary for a particular base in order to produce the required outputs, what other questions may need to be removed from the form? The user requirement for the questions that cannot be asked as a result of any additional residency questions will have to be assessed against the user needs for the data provided from these additional questions.

- 10 A number of consultation exercises have been conducted over recent years, including those specific to the 2011 Census exercise and some on wider population statistics requirements, such as the recent ONS report *A Demographic Statistics Service for the 21st Century* (July 2003). **Consultation is continuing, and more recently a Discussion Paper *Consultations with users on population definitions for the 2011 Census* was published on the website on 11 June, seeking the views of users on whether the needs for census outputs on different population basis would be met by the options as set out in the document.**
http://www.statistics.gov.uk/about/consultations/general_consultations/downloads/Population_definitions.pdf
- 11 Responses to this Discussion Paper have been invited by **25 July 2004** with a view to ONS setting out final proposals for the enumeration base by the **end of September 2004**.

Topic content and questions

- 12 Although the question content of the 2011 Census will not be finalised until later in the decade (when the White Paper proposals are announced around mid-2008), it will be necessary to identify, as soon as possible, the requirements for any new or substantially revised questions so that the necessary research and testing programme can be carried out in the period mid-2004 to mid-2006 prior to the planned major field test in 2007. Consultation to date indicates, for example, that there is a continuing desire for information on income and national identity to be collected, and to extend the current question set to collect information on language, disability and travel to place of education.
- 13 Also there is a need to identify any redundant questions which could either be traded for new topics or help reduce the overall size of the form. One such question that has been identified by users in Scotland, for example, is the long-standing question on access to WC and bath/shower which is seen by some users as having less significance as a discriminating indicator of poor housing.
- 14 While some use will be made by ONS of the detailed business cases for topics made by users prior to the 2001 Census, the need for the inclusion of topic content of the 2011 Census to be thoroughly justified will require a robust cost-benefit analysis of each question to be made afresh by ONS from the requirements expressed by users.
- 15 **Initial consultation with users on data needs is planned to start Autumn 2004 and be concluded in March 2006**, by which date the questions to be included in the April 2007 Test will need to be decided.
- 16 **Further consultation with users on any changes to the final question set, resulting from the assessments of the results of the 2007 Test will take place over the period Autumn 2007-Autumn 2008** by which time the format and content of the 2009 Census Rehearsal forms will need to be finalised.

- 17 If lessons from the 2001 Census are to be learned, however, the ONS would not wish to make significant changes to the question content after the April 2009 Rehearsal. **It is crucial, therefore, that users should given every opportunity to contribute to the question development programme up to this point.**

Address lists

- 18 The 2011 Census design proposals emphasise the importance of engaging users in the quality assurance of the address register that will underpin the enumeration. To enable effective coverage in post out and to achieve a buy in to the enumeration strategy we need to have address lists that are as good in quality and currency as can be achieved, and which must also be acceptable, in particular, to LAs. It is not currently clear, however, how national addressing initiatives will develop or what and when they will deliver. **This places greater emphasis on the need for early consultation with interested parties, and in particular local authorities, to assess the viability of 2011 design proposals.**
- 19 The use of sources additional to the Postcode Address File (PAF) in the creation of an address list might compensate for the known under-coverage of households in a single source. The degree to which other sources will offer improved coverage of households is, however, currently unknown. The key alternative sources to the PAF are likely to be Local Land and Property Gazetteers (LLPGs) which are managed by local authorities, of whom around 277 claim to have produced a working LLPG. However, their quality has yet to be assessed and there is a risk that duplication may be an issue that could undermine their usefulness.
- 20 The requirements for the delivery of an address register are:
- decision on centrally delivered address register by **August 2005**;
 - centrally delivered address register for 2007 Test areas by **December 2006**;
 - centrally delivered address register for 2009 Rehearsal areas by **December 2008**;
 - and
 - centrally delivered address register for England and Wales by **December 2009**;
- 21 It is likely, however, that the 2011 Census address requirement goes beyond whatever national initiatives may deliver, placing greater emphasis on combining address details with attribute data to support targeted enumeration methods. The 2011 Census team will carry out more research in advance of the 2007 Test to assess the potential quality of this data. Much of the additional information may originate with Local Authorities in, for example, council tax and non-domestic rating data. It is important that we understand:
- what sources are available;
 - how the information is gathered ;
 - what quality checks are applied;
 - how frequently the information is updated; and
 - what legal and other impediments there might be to accessing and utilising such data.

- 22 If a centrally delivered address register proves to be impracticable for the 2011 Census, alternative options need to be agreed by **December 2005**. **Early engagement with Local Authorities will be essential in framing quality judgements in these areas. It is proposed that this dialogue should begin before the end of 2004.**
- 23 In any case, and in particular, it will be necessary to liaise directly with those local authorities covering the areas to be selected in the 2007 Census Test, as soon as they are decided (**January 2006**), so that the feasibility and quality of alternative local sources of data for more accurate address listing can be identified and assessed as part of the aims of the Test.

Targeting hard-to-count groups

- 24 In planning the 2011 Census enumeration strategy it will be important to identify those areas which are hard-to-count, either because of the characteristics of their population profile or the nature of the housing, so that we can establish the best alternative means of enumerating such areas. An analysis of 2001 Census results and response rates will help identify areas with those characteristics that will suggest a propensity to be more difficult to enumerate, but this work needs to progress in tandem with close co-operation with local authorities, particularly in those areas where there were known to be significant differences between the 2001 Census counts and the expected mid-year population estimates.
- 25 The work will feed into the development of the different form delivery and data collection strategies to be adopted at the local area level, which themselves will be dependent on the decision on the population base for enumeration (see Paragraph 9 above).
- 26 ONS will work with local authorities and others on the means of defining, identifying and targeting the following groups of hard-to-count populations and accommodation types:

- Ethnic minority communities
- Elderly
- Disabled
- Students
- Lone-person households
- Large households
- Multi-occupied accommodation
- Vacant accommodation and second homes
- Gated communities
- Communal establishments
- No-go areas

- 27 Work on defining and identifying the hard-to-count characteristics is due to be completed in **March 2005**. **ONS will start working immediately with local authorities on identifying areas with critical proportions of population and/or housing falling within the categories (start July 2004).**

Census Liaison Officers

- 28 Good contact between ONS and local authorities should build on the existing goodwill. Local authorities need to be assured at an early stage in planning they will have a clearly defined role as stakeholders, and the importance of each authority having a Census Liaison Officer has been recognised.
- 29 As part of the Community Liaison Programme, ONS would aim to agree in with local authorities the role and functions of the Census Liaison Officers to be appointed within each (if not every Authority) by the end of the year.
- 30 Consultation with LAs on the Community Liaison Programme in general and on CLOs in particular will also need to run hand in glove with work on address lists and the hard-to-count.
- 31 **Initially ONS will discuss this issue with the LA Side of the CLIP Census Sub Group and the Local Government Association to get agreement in principle from local authorities to the strategy to be adopted and their role within it.** The characteristics of each community, and even each local authority area, may vary a great deal. It is unlikely therefore that it would be possible to have a 'one size fits all' approach. This suggests that discussions with each local authority will be very important.

Data collection options

- 32 Users have already expressed concern in response to the 2011 Census proposals document about the impact on data quality of adopting significantly different data collection strategies through the use, particularly of post out and the variable possible response modes suggested. While we will, of course, be testing these approaches rigorously, ONS must be sure that the implications on data quality are transparent and acceptable to users.
- 33 Enumeration strategy development is scheduled to start in **October 2004** and procedures defined by **December 2005**. We would expect consultation with local authorities and others to start in **Autumn 2004** in tandem with the work on other coverage issues such as identifying hard-to-count areas and address lists (see above) as part of the Community Liaison Programme.

International developments

- 34 ONS continue to work both with international censuses agencies in order to share experiences of recent censuses and future census planning activities and with organisations such as Eurostat and the United Nations Economic Commission for

Europe to ensure that, wherever possible, harmonised procedures for, definitions of, and output from, censuses or similar exercises are adopted for member states. In particular the UN-ECE is scheduled to produce a set of Recommendations for the 2010 round of international censuses by the end of 2006, and ONS are currently working closely with the Commission on preparing a preliminary draft for submission to the Conference of European Statistics. Many of the lessons learned from the UK and other recent European censuses will feed into the proposals for the next round.

- 35 ONS are also liaising regularly with census takers in the US, Canada, Australia and New Zealand as well as in other European countries so that the lessons learned and more recent developments there can be adopted wherever relevant to the UK situation.

Other 2011 Census-related issues on which ONS will want to consult users

Output geography

- 36 There will be a need to understand users requirement for varying degrees of statistical detail and accuracy at different geographic levels. While separate ONS consultation will be conducted with users on Super Output Areas, the extent of revision necessary at the basic Output Area level should involve close consultation with users to ensure fit-for-purpose statistics at the small area level. The 2011 Census Team would not anticipate detailed discussion, however, until **Spring 2005** with the knowledge that there would be a wider review of SOAs due in 2007.

Disclosure control

- 37 Users will need no reminding of the disquiet from the late imposition of small cell adjustments of the 2001 Census small area outputs. What had made this particularly frustrating to users was the effort that ONS had previously made through earlier extensive consultation to devise a disclosure control mechanism that had responded to the criticisms voiced about the post-tabulation measures imposed in the 1991 Census, particularly the Barnardisation procedures.
- 38 In the light of users' concerns ONS plan to address this issue at the earliest opportunity, by perhaps engaging with users to a timetable in parallel with consultation on output geography (start **Spring 2005**), although effective measures to implement disclosure control will not need to be finalised until output requirements and means of dissemination are considered in more depth (from **2007-2010**).

Evaluation of 2001 Census outputs

- 39 ONS has already started evaluation with key users including their assessment of the outputs from the 2001 Census. This evaluation will feed into the programme of proposals for 2011 but should be concluded by **end 2004**.
- 40 In addition, the valuable collective experience gained within ONS by Census Customer Services will not be ignored. They, more than any others within ONS, will

be aware of the particular difficulties that users, at the grass roots level, have had in accessing and interpreting 2001 Census data. It is proposed here that the opportunity be taken to record the views of Customer Services through an internal workshop to be arranged in **Autumn 2004**.

Summary of 2011 Census consultation timetable

41 A summary of the currently planned areas of research that ONS anticipate will involve local authority liaison and user input is given in the table below.

Period of consultation	Issue
Already started-end 2004	Evaluation of 2001 Census outputs
June 2004-Sept 2004	Population bases requirements
July 2004-March 2005	Defining and identifying hard-to-count groups and areas and how we will enumerate them
Sept 2004-March 2006	Data needs for topics (pre-2007 Test)
Sept 2004-March 2006	Data needs for questions (pre-2007 Test)
Sept 2004	Census Liaison Officers
Oct 2004-Dec 2005	Data collection options and associated quality issues
Nov 2004-Dec 2005	Identifying alternative sources for address registers
March 2005	Annual Information Paper
April 2005	Geography (Output Areas) and disclosure control
April 2007	Census Test
Sept 2007-June 2008	Data needs for topics and questions (post-2007 Test)
Dec 2007-end 2010	Detailed output requirements
September 2008	White Paper
April 2009	Rehearsal

Future arrangements for user consultation

Current role of Census Advisory Groups

42 The current, and long-standing, role of the Advisory Groups has been to provide a forum for discussion with informed users of the needs of the particular user communities for information from the Census with particular reference to:

- the geographic base;
- the population base;
- census topics, questions and classifications;
- the content and design of statistical reports and abstracts and the arrangements for their dissemination; and the co-ordinated development of the means of handling and analysing census output.

- 43 Generally meeting twice a year, the Groups have acted as the prime link between the Census Offices and the user communities to advise on arrangements for promoting and monitoring the use of Census statistics and for wider consultation within those communities on Census issues generally. Additionally the Groups have played a role in considering ways in which other small area population statistics may be integrated with census output in order to enhance the use of the Census and to produce improved information throughout the intercensal period.

Consultation on the 2011 Census

- 44 In 2003, the ONS announced plans to involve census users in the wider strategic review programme that would look ahead and make recommendations for a 2011 Census. This envisaged the involvement of the Census Advisory Groups at least up to the period ending December 2003 when it was proposed to publish a report of the strategic review. Depending on the outcome of that review ONS proposed that there would be a further defined role for Advisory Groups to play in the development of ONS plans for the collection of future census-type information. This was widely welcomed by users.
- 45 At the joint Advisory Groups seminar in October 2003 there was a broad consensus among users that there was a continuing role for the Groups to play in liaising with the ONS on 2011 Census planning and other issues related to the provision of small area population statistics.
- 46 Consequently the ONS agreed at the time to re-define the roles, terms of reference and membership of the Groups to reflect not only this wider remit but also to respond to the recommendations of the Treasury Sub Committee that ONS should engage with other sectors of the wider community in its future consultations on the Census.
- 47 More recently, however, there have been corporate moves within ONS to instigate the strategic approach of consulting users on the census within a framework of a wider programme of data collection for the purposes of producing population statistics more generally. The current re-organisation of functional arrangements with ONS now provide an opportunity to review and rationalise the several disparate existing arrangements for consultation with a wide range of users. ONS believe it is in everyone's interest to ensure that such consultation arrangements should provide an effective and efficient way of enabling feedback and comment. There is evidence that some rationalisation will be welcomed by some of our major customers and stakeholders. In turn, ONS will benefit from showing a joined-up approach in dealing with them.
- 48 However, in taking forward the plans to engage with users and partners on the 2011 Census, in particular, as set out in the main part of this paper, ONS will build on the experiences of previous censuses and utilise the valued expertise that exists within the user community.

- 49 Currently the user communities covered by the existing Advisory Group structure include:
- Central Government Departments;
 - Local Authorities;
 - Health Service;
 - Academics; and
 - Business community.
- 50 But ONS are also committed to extending consultation on the 2011 Census to cover, specifically users in Wales and minority interests groups such as the elderly, the disabled, ethnic communities and faith organisations. Additionally other communities have indicated a wish to be more closely involved in the planning of the 2011 Census; these include, for example, learned societies, professional institutions and other minority groups such as the gay community and charitable organisations.
- 51 ONS will thus wish to develop a consultation structure that can effectively accommodate a wide range of user interests and perspectives. It will aim to create a forum whereby users and stakeholders for ONS analyses and data can contribute to an understanding of the requirements of particular constituencies of interest. In particular the aim will be to identify: requirements for additions and changes to ONS topic portfolio; gaps and deficiencies in the existing provision of data and analysis; new European or other legislative commitments; policy development in key stakeholder departments etc.
- 52 Where necessary ONS will establish expert working groups and task forces with sufficient statistical expertise to seek the optimal way of meeting users' needs and to manage customer expectations in terms of priorities and delivery. Where there are already developed initiatives under which such consultation with particular user sectors can be conducted (such as the CLIP Sub Group structure for local authorities) these will be utilised to avoid duplication of effort.
- 53 Proposals for conducting formal consultations on the 2011 Census within the framework of wider population statistics requirements will be announced later in the summer.

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June 2004