



## Advisory Group Paper AG(02)05

### FUTURE ROLE OF CENSUS ADVISORY GROUPS

#### Introduction

- 1 The several Census Advisory Groups have played a significant role in the planning of the form, content and conduct of the 2001 Census, in particular by providing vital input into the exercises to assess user requirements for data and the design of output products. In respect of these issues the role of the Groups has been very much fulfilled.
- 2 At a time when ONS is now entering the evaluation stage of the 2001 Census and looking beyond (see Paper AG(02)04) it is perhaps timely to review the role of the Groups and decide whether or not there is a need and benefit for them to continue in their present format through the intercensal period.

#### Action for Advisory Group Members

- 3 **Members are invited to:**
  - **comment on the value to their user community in continuing the Advisory Groups in their present, or an amended, structure through to the next Census; and if so:**
  - **consider new terms of reference and revised membership;**
  - **suggest ways in which liaison with users on census and other related statistical issues can be improved; and**
  - **identify those issues on which they feel that regular liaison with the Census Office should continue.**

#### Current role of Census Advisory Groups

- 4 Currently the role of each Group is to provide a forum for discussion of the needs of a particular user community for information from the 2001 Census with particular reference to:
  - the geographic base;
  - census questions;
  - the design of statistical reports and abstracts and the arrangements for dissemination; abstracts; and
  - the co-ordinated development of the means of handling and analysing census output.

- 5 The Groups act as a prime link between the Census Offices and the user communities to advise in arrangements for promoting and monitoring the use of Census statistics and for wider consultation within those communities on census issues generally. Additionally the Groups may play a role in considering ways in which other 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.
- 6 The current Terms of Reference of each of the Advisory Groups are shown at Annex A. **Members are asked to consider whether, the Advisory Groups are to be continued, these should now be revised more to reflect post-2001 Census activities and whether current membership is sufficiently representative of the user community.**

### **Small area development over the next decade**

- 7 ONS are considering a proposal that the various initiatives addressing the provision of statistics for small areas should be co-ordinated to maximise the use of scarce resources and the collective use of expertise. This approach would also ensure that duplication of effort would be avoided. The three main initiatives are:
  - Neighbourhood Statistics;
  - 2006 Census replacement; and
  - 2011 Census planning.

#### *Neighbourhood Statistics*

- 8 Currently these are being taken forward under a series of different programmes. The first phase of Neighbourhood Statistics is the responsibility of the PAT18 Programme Board and a plan is in place to expand the initial set of statistics by adding 2001 Census outputs in 2003 and then an extensive series of other data sets. Later stages of the programme will identify further data sets and start to consider linking data to expand the richness of the data and to meet policy needs.
- 9 It has previously been suggested that the role (and possibly membership) of the Census Advisory Groups could be extended to incorporate Neighbourhood Statistics. The original terms of reference of these Groups included addressing the provision of synthetic estimates for small areas in the intercensal period. Although this role has been overtaken by events and did not prove to be feasible in the decade prior to the 2001 Census, now could be a good time to review the position and discuss whether the Groups should have a formal input to the Social Statistics programme for small area data, or whether other existing consultative arrangements on NeSS are sufficient to cover census users' needs.

### *2006 Census replacement*

- 10 Paper AG(01)10 reported that following the recommendations in the report of the national strategy for neighbourhood renewal, the ONS and the Neighbourhood Renewal Unit (NRU) in DTLR were undertaking a review to evaluate whether there was merit in conducting a census in 2006 to update at least some of the 2001 Census core demographic data for benchmarking Neighbourhood Statistics. The outcome of the review, and the case subsequently put to Ministers earlier this year, was that there was insufficient justification to do so. The Government has now accepted the National Statistician's recommendation, and planning will now proceed on the basis that the next census will not be before 2011.
- 11 Plans are, however, being put in place to scope a programme of work to provide small area statistics for population and housing in lieu of a 2006 Census. Users may have a role to play in defining such a programme, subject to wider discussions within ONS.

### *2011 Census*

- 12 ONS have announced initial plans to involve census users in the evaluation of the 2001 Census and a wider strategic review programme that will look ahead and make recommendations for a 2011 Census (Paper AG(02)04). This envisages the involvement of the Census Advisory Groups at least up to the period ending December 2003 when it is proposed to publish a report of the strategic review. Depending on the outcome of that review there may be a further defined role for Advisory Groups to play in the development of ONS plans for the collection of future census-type information.

### **Action**

- 13 **Members are invited to:**
- **comment on the value to their user community in continuing the Advisory Groups in their present, or an amended, structure through to the next Census; and if so:**
  - **consider new terms of reference and revised membership;**
  - **suggest ways in which liaison with users on census and other related statistical issues can be improved; and**
  - **identify those issues on which they feel that regular liaison with the Census Office should continue.**

**ONS**  
**27 May 2002**

## ANNEX A



### **2001 CENSUS HEALTH SERVICE ADVISORY GROUP**

#### **Terms of Reference**

- a) To provide a forum for discussion of health service needs from the 2001 Census of Population for Great Britain with particular reference to:
  - i) the geographic base;
  - ii) the content of the census schedule;
  - iii) the design of statistical reports, abstracts and derived data sets, and the arrangements for dissemination;
  - iv) co-ordinated development of the means of handling and analysing census output; and
  - v) the enumeration of populations in health service institutions.
- b) To act as the principal link between the Census Offices and the National Health Service and to advise on arrangements for wider consultation with census users in the Health Service.
- c) To report on the main discussions and conclusions to the Census Office steering committee for the Census.

March 1998

## **2001 CENSUS BUSINESS ADVISORY GROUP**

### **Terms of Reference**

- a) To provide a forum for discussion of needs from the Census of Population for Great Britain with particular reference to:
  - i) the geographic base;
  - ii) the questions to be included on the census form;
  - iii) data collection methods;
  - iv) the design of published reports and other outputs and the arrangements for dissemination;
  - v) co-ordinated development of the means of handling and analysing census output; and
- b) To act as a link between the Census Offices and the business community and to advise on arrangements for wider consultation with census users throughout the business community and with users in other groups.
- c) To consider ways in which other data may be used together with census data to produce improved statistical information throughout the intercensal period.

April 1997

## **2001 CENSUS ACADEMIC ADVISORY GROUP**

### **Terms of Reference**

- 1 To identify areas of work in the analysis and presentation of 2001 Census results (other than the LS and SARs) where collaboration between ONS and the academic sector is desirable and feasible.
- 2 To identify suitable end-products of such collaborative work and to promote their design and production.
- 3 To discuss and agree proposals for the organisational and funding aspects of such collaborative work.
- 4 To report progress to the ONS Academic Advisory Group, the ESRC Census Advisory Committee and the ESRC/JISC Joint Working Group on the Census; and to obtain the endorsement of these groups where appropriate.

November 1997

## **CENTRAL AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT INFORMATION PARTNERSHIP (CLIP) CENSUS SUB GROUP**

### **Terms of Reference**

- 1) To provide a forum for discussion of local authority needs from the 2001 Census of Population for Great Britain with particular reference to:
  - i) the geographic base;
  - ii) the content of the census schedule;
  - iii) local authority involvement in the preparations and public relations for census field operations;
  - iv) the design of statistical reports and abstracts and the arrangements for dissemination;
  - v) the methods and practice of census field operations; and
  - vi) the co-ordinated development of the means of handling and analysing census output.
- 2) To act as a link between the Census Offices and Local Authorities and to advise in arrangements for wider consultation with authorities.
- 3) To consider ways in which other 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.
- 4) To consider relevant technical matters relating to wider use of Census statistics.
- 5) To consider the opportunity for management information for Local Authorities from data collected nationally in the Sub-Group's field of interest.
- 6) To consider ways of promoting and monitoring the use of Census statistics by Local Authorities.

December 1997

## **CENSUS DEPARTMENTAL WORKING GROUP**

### **Terms of Reference**

- a) To provide a forum for discussion of Central Government needs from the 2001 Census of Population for Great Britain with particular reference to:
  - i) the geographic base;
  - ii) the content of the census schedule;
  - iii) data collection methods;
  - iv) the design of published reports and other outputs and the arrangements for dissemination;
  - v) co-ordinated development of the means of handling and analysing census output;  
and
- b) To act as the principal link between the Census Offices and Other Government Departments and to advise on arrangements for wider consultation with census users in Central Government.
- c) To report on the main discussions and conclusions to the Census Office steering committee for the Census.

April 1996