



2011 CENSUS ADVISORY GROUPS

Advisory Group Paper AG (05) 08

HIGHLIGHT REPORT

Introduction

- 1 This paper highlights progress on a number of issues not covered in the main papers for the round of meetings.

Advisory Group members are asked to note the current position.

Procurement

- 2 The Official Journal of the European Union (OJEU) advertisement for the main IT systems and services contract (operational intelligence, data processing, contact centres and printing of the questionnaires) was placed on the 22 September 2005. Since then, 89 requests for a PQQ (Pre-Qualification Questionnaire) have been received. The cut-off date for receipt of completed PQQs is 7 November 05 and a subsequent evaluation of these is planned for the following two weeks. The procurement process will continue through to award of the contracts to deliver services for the 2007 Test, around August 2006.
- 3 ONS is continuing preparation for procurement for the recruitment, payroll and training contract and currently it is planned to award these contracts by June 2006.
- 4 Procurement for the supporting consultancy services to support the procurement and project are all progressing and contracts should be awarded by the end of 2005.

Finance

- 5 A meeting at the Treasury was held on 7 October, at which the project's objectives and the options considered was put forward, along with key dates for the next two years and the implications on funding. The Treasury were reassured that ONS does not need to commit to total costs until 2007 and that it was able to fully justify its Census procurement strategy.

6 Investment planning for 2006/07 and 2007/08 is currently being undertaken.

Reviewing the plans for a 2011 Census

International Peer Review

7 The 2011 Census team in ONS recently hosted a three-day workshop on 2-4 November, at which eminent representatives of a number of international census agencies, including Statistics Canada, the Australian Bureau of Statistics, Statistics New Zealand, and the Central Statistical Office in Dublin, were invited to review, and comment on, the current plans for the 2011 Census in England and Wales and to offer an international perspective. (US Census Bureau also invited but unable to attend). The Registrars General and other colleagues from the Census Offices in Scotland and Northern Ireland, along with representatives from the Welsh Assembly Government, were also involved in order to present a UK point of view.

8 The review covered a wide range of proposed census operations and issues including:

- The enumeration base – defining households, residents and visitors;
- Address register development;
- Printing questionnaires;
- Field staff structure and recruitment
- Flexible field force management;
- Pre-delivery address processes;
- Delivery mechanisms – postout vs traditional doorstep delivery;
- Data collection options – including postback and internet collection;
- Non-response follow-up;
- Response management systems;
- Treatment of partial response; and
- Public interfaces – including contact centres and self-help website.

9 An Information Paper (*The 2011 Census: a design for England and Wales*), setting out the initial broad proposals for the design of the 2011 Census, was published in March 2004 and is available on the NS website (at <http://www.statistics.gov.uk/statbase/Product.asp?vink=10790>). A more detailed design document, taking account of the comments and feedback from the international review and more recent research will, similarly, be made available in spring 2006.

UK Census Design and Methodology Advisory Committee

- 10 Nearer to home, a panel of census experts has been convened to carry out critical reviews of several aspects of the 2011 Census methodology over the period leading up to the 2007 Census Test and beyond. Eminent demographic academics and others will meet regularly over this period in the forum of the re-vamped UK Census Design and Methodology Advisory Committee, and through particular methodology-related sub-groups, to discuss and comment on the plans of ONS, GROS and NISRA with the overall aim of achieving high quality and comprehensive census outputs that are consistent across the UK.

- 11 The areas identified for methodological review cover:
 - the population base and key population definitions;
 - questionnaire design;
 - data collection;
 - coverage assessment and adjustment;
 - edit and imputation processes;
 - the 2006/07 Census Test aims and design;
 - small scale testing schedule;
 - disclosure control
 - quality assurance; and
 - output geography

- 12 The work of the Committee and its sub-groups will be regularly reported to census users via the several Census Advisory Groups and the NS website.

ONS
October 2005