

WORKING IN PARTNERSHIP WITH LOCAL AUTHORITIES ON THE 2011 CENSUS

Background

1. The Office for National Statistics (ONS) has, traditionally, worked closely with Local Authorities (LAs) as both users of census statistics and as partners with a vested interest in achieving a good coverage. In order to achieve a high quality enumeration for the next Census, a programme of consultation needs to take place in the run up to 2011. This consultation includes focusing, in particular, on the preparations for the Test planned for 2007 and the Dress Rehearsal in 2009.
2. **Action: Advisory Group members are invited to note the establishment of the LA Liaison Steering Group and a timetable for future consultation, and to either comment at the meeting on 8 November, or send comments by 30 November to:-**
community.liaison@ons.gov.uk.
3. The March 2004 Information Paper *The 2011 Census: a design for England and Wales* noted that:

“The biggest challenge to a future census will be in reaching groups that are traditionally undercounted. Further research into the types of people missed in the 2001 Census is being undertaken and findings will help to inform the type of initiatives needed. The Community Liaison Programme would also be a key to this. A 2011 programme would build on the 2001 experience, placing emphasis on more collaboration with the many agencies and community organisations involved. In particular, ONS recognises that there would be a need to establish an agreed format and programme for local liaison, which should allow adequate time and resource for training and preparation. While it is recognised that there would be a need to vary the programme according to local situations, the general details would be the subject of consultation and agreement with local organisations.

The best partners in working to maximise coverage have, in the past, been local authorities, whose need for reliable local information provides a strong incentive to assist in identifying and reaching local hard-to-count populations. They are generally best placed to be aware of local interest groups. By positively engaging local authorities in the development and quality assurance of address lists, for example, and actively encouraging them to promote the benefits of the census in their areas the ONS can seek to improve coverage and minimise differential non-response. Such initiatives would aim to cover not only the known disadvantaged groups, such as the disabled or very elderly, but would allow the ONS to target resource at areas known to have the characteristics associated with poor coverage.”

4. The issues on which we will want to consult will be those where LAs are best placed to assist ONS in achieving a number of its mission-critical aims, in particular:
 - maximise response and minimising differential non-response;
 - ensure that key minority groups are well-defined, located and enumerated;
 - build, through a community liaison programme, effective partnerships in planning and executing the enumeration;
 - inspire public confidence, and encourage participation in the census operation; and
 - improve user confidence in the final results.

LA Liaison Steering Group

5. To carry this work forward ONS/LA Side have set up a LA Liaison Steering Group. The group is currently comprised of :

ONS

Ian Cope, 2011 Census Director (Chair)
 Peter Benton, Deputy 2011 Census Director
 Ian White, 2011 Communication and Legislation
 Colin Hardy, 2011 Community Liaison
 Claire Stretch, 2011 Data Collection

LA SIDE

John Hollis (GLA)
 Roger Sykes (LGA)
 Mary Moore (Suffolk)
 Sheila Ritchie (Manchester)

The Steering Group held its inaugural meeting 9 August 2004 (the minutes are attached at Annex A). The next meeting is scheduled for early February 2005. The Local Area Data Network (LADN – Wales) is being asked to nominate a Welsh representative.

Address Lists

6. The 2011 Census design proposals emphasise the importance of engaging users in the quality assurance of the address register that will underpin the enumeration. The lessons learned from the address-matching studies recently carried out in Westminster and Manchester clearly suggest that to enable effective coverage in post-out and to achieve a buy-in to the enumeration strategy ONS needs to have address lists that are as good in quality and currency as can be achieved, and with which LAs will have confidence. It is not currently clear, however, how national address 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 LAs, to assess the viability of 2011 design proposals.
7. It is likely that the 2011 Census address requirement will go 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 LAs in, for example, council tax and non-domestic rating data. It is important that we understand:
 - what sources are available and what legal constraints there may be to their accessibility;
 - how the information is gathered;
 - what quality checks are applied; and
 - how frequently the information is updated.
8. If a centrally delivered address register proves not to be practicable for the 2011 Census, alternative options need to be tested and evaluated in the 2007 Test. Early engagement with LAs will be essential in framing quality judgements in the Test areas.

Targeting enumeration

9. In planning our 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 the 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 the decision on the 2011 field methodologies will be dependent on local information which must be more up-to-date. This work needs, therefore, to progress in tandem with close co-operation with LAs.
10. We will need to develop a strategy to work with LAs on the means of defining, identifying and targeting the following groups of hard-to-count population and accommodation including:
 - 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
11. Work on defining and identifying the hard-to-count characteristics has already started in ONS and is due to be completed **around mid-2005**. We need, therefore, to start working with LAs in identifying areas with critical proportions of population and/or housing falling within the categories.

Data collection options

12. Users have already expressed concern about the impact on data quality of adopting significantly different data collection strategies through the use, particularly of post-out and variable response modes. ONS needs therefore to balance these issues with the use of resources to minimise differential undercoverage. This will mean more research in some areas than in others. While we will, of course, be testing these approaches rigorously in 2007, we must ensure that the implications on data quality are transparent and acceptable to users.
13. Enumeration strategy development is underway and procedures are to be defined by **December 2005**. Consultation with LAs (and others) will be conducted 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.

Census Liaison Officers

14. Good contact between ONS and LAs should build on the existing goodwill. LAs need to be assured at an early stage in planning that they will have a clearly defined role as stakeholders, and the value of each (if not every) local authority having a Census Liaison Officer (CLO) has been recognised. As part of the Community Liaison Programme we would wish to agree with LAs the role and function of CLOs.

15. CLOs have a vital role to play. The CLO would be the main point of contact for seeking information, advice or guidance about the conduct of the 2011 Census in that authority. The areas that ONS may seek liaison with CLOs include:

- targeting hard-to-count populations;
- address lists;
- data collection strategies and supporting the field activities;
- language strategy;
- field staff recruitment;
- local publicity;
- coverage assessment; and
- evaluation.

16. It is proposed that every LA should attempt to appoint a CLO, or where an LA is unable to do so, a CLO appointed in a neighbouring authority may also act for that authority. The characteristics of each individual LA may vary a great deal therefore it is unlikely that a 'one size fits all' approach would be suitable. This suggests that discussions with each local authority will be very important. ONS would like to start working with CLOs in the areas to be covered by the 2007 Test (see below) by **Spring 2005**.

17. In order to ensure that CLOs are used appropriately, a review is being carried out by ONS to establish the effectiveness of CLOs during the 2001 Census. This work is due to be completed by the end of **January 2005** and the results will be circulated initially to members of the LA Liaison Steering Group for comment.

Census Test Areas

18. The 2011 Census Planning Team is currently looking at the criteria for selecting suitable areas in which to conduct a Census Test in 2007. A short list of areas is due to be produced by the end of **January 2005**. These will be circulated to members of the LA Liaison Steering Group for discussion at a meeting to be arranged for early February 2005.

Timetable for LA liaison activities

Period of consultation	Issue
Autumn 2004 – mid 2005	Defining and identifying hard-to-count groups and areas and appropriate enumeration strategies
November 2004 – December 2005	Identifying alternative sources for address registers
December 2004 – June 2005	Role of CLOs reviewed, developed and appointments made
January 2005 – February 2005	Test areas shortlist identified
February 2005	Meeting of LA Liaison Steering Group

19. **Action: Advisory Group members are invited to note the establishment of an LA Liaison Steering Group and a timetable for future consultation, and to either comment at the meeting on 8 November, or send comments by 30 November to:-**
community.liaison@ons.gov.uk.

2011 CENSUS LA/COMMUNITY LIAISON

NOTE AND ACTIONS OF MEETING ON 9 AUGUST 2004 at ONS, DRUMMOND GATE

Present:	ONS	LA Side
	Ian Cope	John Hollis
	Pete Benton	Roger Sykes
	Ian White	Sheila Ritchie
	Colin Hardy	Mary Moore

Introductions

- 1 An informal agenda and papers on the issues for liaison/consultation and the role of Census Liaison Officers had been circulated.

Census governance

- 2 Ian Cope explained role of the various boards, committees and advisory groups. A number of these had a UK remit in order to establish a harmonised approach to the census as far as possible.

Action: ONS to put details of governance structure, terms of reference of the various boards, and names/responsibilities of senior census post-holders on the website.

Liaison with LAs as partners

Hard to count

- 3 Pete Benton explained that ONS need to agree definition of hard to count populations with LAs, and to acquire the necessary local information to enable groups to be targeted on an address basis. Some of the information that LA could provide would be qualitative, some would be more quantitative. ONS also need to establish at what area level the various enumeration methods would be decided – buildings, Output Areas, wards or higher levels.
- 4 Research on identifying hard to count areas had been delayed while staff had been working on the LA studies. ONS were not yet able to report on a firm timetable for this work.
- 5 John Hollis noted that, ultimately, confidence in post out would depend on confidence in the quality of the address list. Mary Moore was concerned

that there might be legislative restrictions to the wider accessibility of LA-held lists. The LA Side noted that local social services and education departments were potential sources of relevant information.

- 6 Roger Sykes suggested approaching six LAs to ascertain the range of information sources available and how accessible these might be. Ian Cope thought that such LAs should be those from which the 2007 Test areas would be selected. One approach might be to research different data sources within each authority, but Sheila Ritchie felt that each authority should be encouraged to investigate all potential sources of information.
- 7 Pete Benton noted that it would be important to pick LAs that had high and low response rates in the 2001 Census. He reported that the recent LA studies work within ONS had graded LAs by a number of characteristics.

Action: ONS to identify a number of local authorities to be approached for the purposes of researching potential data sources.

- 8 Sheila Ritchie noted the difficulty in engaging the attention of Chief Executives in census or other statistical issues unless a clear financial or political interest was indicated.
- 9 John Hollis reported on the work that the London Research Centre (now Greater London Authority) had been commissioned to do for the Audit Commission on preparing LAs for the 1991 Census.

Action: ONS would include SOLACE in its liaison programme and, particularly would seek, with Roger Sykes' help, a slot in its Annual Conference or otherwise arrange some form of presentation. ONS would also initiate discussion with the Audit Commission to raise the profile of the census.

- 10 John Hollis said that some work had been done at the GLA on the disabled in the labour force and agreed to forward a note about definitions of disability as used in the Labour Force Survey.

Action: John Hollis to provide disability definition.

Population bases

- 11 Ian Cope reported that a user consultation paper on the population base for enumeration would be going out in October. John Hollis was currently preparing the GLA's response to the recent paper on output bases.

Address lists

- 12 Roger Sykes noted the particularly difficulty in engaging LAs on work on address lists. Ian Cope noted that the Statistics Commission had identified this as a particularly important issue. He thought that it was unlikely that there would be a national list for use in time for the 2007 Test, and that instead ONS would need to liaise with the relevant individual authorities.
- 13 John Hollis thought that the Valuation Office would be preparing revised lists of addresses for the purposes of re-evaluating the Council Tax, but Sheila Ritchie noted this information would, in any case, originate from the individual local authorities. Roger Sykes felt that the recent consultation on the Electoral Register might also contribute to this issue.

Action: ONS would follow-up lines of enquiry with the Valuation Office and the Electoral Commission.

Data collection

- 14 Sheila Ritchie thought that post-out/post-back would be acceptable in many areas, but needed to be backed up with better publicity and support. Local authorities could contribute by providing a centre where help could be provided to the public in completing and returning census forms. Local media networks should also be utilised to disseminate the message of the census. John Hollis noted that he regularly reported upon developments on the census in the LARIA Newsletter, and that there were other potential outlets for publicity and awareness.

Action: ONS would investigate other channels for raising census awareness such as BURISA.

Consultation with LAs as users

- 15 The LA Side agreed the paper had identified the key issues where LAs would want to consult with ONS on the 2011 Census.
- 16 Ian Cope briefly summarised the developments within ONS on wider consultation. Census Division was taking forward, at least for the short term, consultation with users on population bases and topics, and a round of meetings was planned for October/November. He noted that there would likely be a different approach in setting out the business case for questions. More work would be done, for example, on establishing what use had been made of the information requested from the 2011 Census.

- 17 The problems of devising an effective census question on disability highlighted the value of ONS establishing users' requirements for information generally rather than specifically from a census.

The role of Census Liaison Officers

- 18 The value of establishing Census Liaison Officers was acknowledged by the LA Side, and the ONS proposals were generally welcomed. It was not yet clear if the role of CLOs as proposed could also encompass the community liaison function that had been adopted in 2001. Sheila Ritchie noted that all too often the 2001 appointees had been ineffective.
- 19 Ian White agreed that there were two distinct aspects to local liaison as envisaged by the Community Liaison Programme. One was to establish working links with LAs on the issues covered earlier such as identifying the hard to count populations and the best way of enumerating these. The other was to establish networks among local communities to facilitate better awareness of the census operation itself and the recruitment of field staff. One of the aims of the 2007 Test would be to pilot the Programme.
- 20 Ian Cope noted that the suggestion of using the pool of CLOs as a source for Census Area Managers was being considered. In response to some ONS reservations Sheila Ritchie noted that many potential CLOs would have the necessary experience to recruit and manage a large staff.
- 21 John Hollis thought that establishing CLOs at the 'virtual' county level would overcome the difficulty of some districts not having sufficient resources. There was, however, some uncertainty as to whether the existing county structure would continue up to the time of the 2011 Census. Also the differing characteristic of many LAs suggested that liaison would be better at the district/UA level. Roger Sykes thought that lessons could be learned from the consultation on Super Output Areas. Whereas the county may have the vision for a strategic approach, it was at the district level where the local experience more often rested.
- 22 Roger went on to note that there might be an expectation that ONS would partly resource the work being requested of local authorities. There might otherwise be some reluctance on the part of authorities to comply with what might be regarded as a 'edict from London'. He thought that the role of the LAs within the Community Liaison strategy should highlight the incentive of the financial benefits to local authorities.
- 23 Ian Cope noted that there would be a need to ensure that CLOs were in post early in the areas to be selected for the 2007 Test, but that it would not be necessary to appoint post elsewhere before the Test. Ian White agreed that it was sensible not to appoint CLOs until there was something

constructive for them to do, but nevertheless hoped that they would be appointed in good enough time to absorb the ONS census 'culture'. It was agreed that LAs should be given sufficient notice of when CLOs should be appointed and full details of their role and responsibilities.

Action

ONS to:

- **prepare a paper for the CLIP Census Sub Group and other Advisory Groups for the next round of meetings setting out in more details the aims of the Community Liaison Programme with a proposed timetable of events and key dates; and**
- **draw up a more detailed job description and timetable for CLOs indicating when the post would require full-time activity.**

Next steps

- 24 LA/Community Liaison Proposals paper to go to Advisory Groups for autumn round of meetings. See action point at para 22.
- 25 Establish LA Liaison Steering Group (essentially those present plus Claire Stretch (ONS Data Collection manager and Welsh LA rep) to meet next in January 2005.

Action : ONS would set up a steering group

- 26 Engage Chief Executives through SOLACE in March 2005. See action point at para 9.
- 27 Arrange workshop for key LA representatives in autumn 2005.
- 28 Select local authorities for pilot liaison and initial research, possibly with 2007 Test areas in mind, though this will depend on timing. See action point at para 7.
- 29 Discuss application of Programme across the UK with devolved administrations.

Action : To be raised at the next UKCHC meeting on 21 October 2004

Membership of CLIP Census Sub Group

- 30 Ian White reported on-going discussion with John Hollis on widening the membership of the Census Sub Group to cover under-represented areas of the country (such as the South West) and other bodies (such as the Regional Observatories). There were concerns on both sides that the Sub Group should not become too unwieldy. Revised Terms of Reference would be submitted for approval at the autumn meeting.

Action: Ian White to liaise further with John Hollis on membership

- 31 Ian White reported on expanding the existing Advisory Groups to facilitate separate consultation in Wales. A further group focusing the interests of special population groups such as the ethnic communities, the elderly and the disabled would also play a key role in the Community Liaison Programme.