> # Population And Migration Statistics (PAMS) Committee (Scotland)

2021 Census Programme Update

Progress since last PAMS meeting

Overall Programme Progress

1. Since the previous meeting on 6 May 2015, good progress has been made and momentum is developing. The overall governance and team structures for this stage of the census programme continue to be developed. Effort continues on recruitment activity to staff up the new structure and to grow the teams at a sustainable rate.

2. Progress continues on developing the high level programme. The programme has been divided into tranches and work is under way on a Programme Definition document that will set out the activities and outcomes of each tranche. Planning workshops are on-going with the teams and we are iteratively progressing our thinking around overall design and deliverables. This has allowed a more detailed plan to be developed for up to submission of the initial Outline Business Case to Ministers in 2016. A number of key planning documents have been drafted, including a Design Strategy, a Data Collection Strategy and Data Processing Strategy.

3. Considerable effort went into completing the 'Scotland's Census 2011 - General Report' and in planning and launching the Topic Consultation for 2021. The Topic Consultation will run until 15 January 2016.

4. As part of the current Spending Review, we have put considerable time into preparing costs estimates and profiles for the whole census, with a particular focus on the next four years. We continue to work on the outline business case and have made progress in working with Scottish Government Finance colleagues to map out scrutiny and approvals process. We have recently tendered for a commercial advisor to assist in the development of our commercial and sourcing strategies and, following an evaluation of the bids, we hope to make an appointment by mid-November. We continue to liaise with Office for National Statistics (ONS) about the potential opportunities for joint working and procurement.

5. We continue to liaise with colleagues in the Scottish Government (SG) and local government to discuss our plans and to explore areas for collaboration. In particular, we plan to work closely with SG Digital colleagues to assist in the planning and delivery of an online census but also to capture the potential for wider benefits and reuse. Likewise, we are liaising with Society of Local Authority Chief Executives (SOLACE) around how local authorities may be able to assist this time. Initial discussions have also been held with Scottish Council for Voluntary Organisations (SCVO) who may be able to help in delivering the census. In terms of helping to raise the profile of the census programme, we have explored opportunities to work with a variety of organisations such as the Scottish Council for Development and Industry (SCDI) and The Royal Society of Edinburgh (RSE).

Workstreams

6. User Needs, Outputs and Benefits Management
    This team has now been established and has recently been focusing on the topic consultation. A major activity of the team has been the development of the topic consultation and plans to engage with users during the consultation period. The team is working closely with ONS and Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency (NISRA) to prepare for the analysis of the responses and publication of the result of the consultation. The team is also continuing to engage with users of the 2011 Census data and will publish more information on the data quality of 2011 Census outputs.

7. Communications and Stakeholder Engagement
    The main focus of recent activity was on producing and publishing the 'Scotland's Census 2011 - General Report'. This provided input to the 'UK Statistics Authority (UKSA) Special Assessment of the 2011 Censuses in the UK' draft report and the team has also offered comment on that. The General Report was published in early October to coincide with the launch of the Topic Consultation for Scotland's Census 2021. Other areas of focus over last few months included:
    *   Finalising a report on the User Satisfaction Survey of the 2011 Census; the report, which will be published soon, informed the General Report;
    *   Developing a Communications Plan for the 2021 Topic Consultation, which is now being followed;
    *   Planning and conducting a variety of activities and events to help publicise the Topic Consultation;
    *   Continuing to develop a draft engagement strategy for Tranche 1 of the 2021 programme;
    *   Initiating discussions with wider Scottish Government around PR and marketing for the 2021 Census and how best to align this with other Scottish Government activity.

8. Census Design
    Continuing to make good progress on this and, following discussion at planning workshops, a draft Design Strategy and Design Outline have now been developed for review. A draft Enumeration Strategy has been produced. Related documents include consideration of Hard to Enumerate groups and an Enumeration Prioritisation Strategy. Work has also begun on an Outline Quality Strategy.

9. Census Methods / Admin Data use
    Good progress has been made by the team and over the last few months, work has included:
    *   Producing drafts of the following documents:
        o   Data processing Strategy; Edit and Imputation (E&I) Strategy; Edit and Adjustment (E&A) Strategy
    *   Continuing to test different estimation strata, moving away from using local authorities as the basic building block;
    *   Finalising the provisional design for the Census Coverage Survey (CCS);
    *   Following problems with the most recent version of Canadian Census Edit and Imputation System (CANCEIS), awaiting an updated version be released by Stats Canada;
    *   Analysing the activity flag data; initial results positive though issues with students.

10. Data Collection / Technology

These teams are continuing to make progress. Following discussion at planning workshops, a draft Data Collection Strategy for household enumeration has been produced. This will be further considered and developed. The team lead for Census Information and communications technology (ICT) Solutions Architect has recently been recruited. A high level approach outlining how the IT architecture will support census and National Records of Scotland (NRS) to achieve its business strategy will be base lined within the next quarter. The Data Collection team has developed the scope and outline approach for Public Assistance. Current focus is on developing our thinking on the requirements for the field force operation and how this may interface with digital assistance staff.

Looking forward

11. The next six months will be extremely busy. To maintain and develop momentum, we will need to step up our recruitment process and grow our team.

12. As well as developing the overall programme, we aim to make progress across all the work streams. We need to further develop and refine key strategies for the census design, enumeration, data collection and data processing, and then identify, define and progress various projects. Key elements that underpin the data collection and processing, particularly the Address Register, Geographical Information System (GIS) mapping, Management Information System and the supporting business and technical architecture, will all need to be developed.

13. Work will continue on the Topic Consultation. An update on this report will be provided separately for this meeting.

14. Following the appointment of our commercial adviser, we will begin our market engagement. This will help our understanding of how to cluster the various systems and services that we will have identified as being necessary run the census and produce outputs. It will also help hone our cost estimates which will feed in to the Outline Business Case (OBC).

15. The OBC will set out the purpose of the census and the benefits to be derived from it. It will identify options and costs for the collection and processing of the data required to produce the outputs that provide the benefits to stakeholders. An initial OBC will be prepared for consideration by the Board. As feedback from the market engagement helps to refine our cost estimates and to develop our list of systems and services into a Statement of Requirements, a final OBC will be prepared for submission to Ministers. Acceptance of this OBC will allow us to proceed with the tendering process.

16. We will continue to develop and communicate plans for how we will engage with all stakeholders over this period, with communications being tailored to align with this stage of the programme, and we will keep PAMS involved. Likewise, we will continue to pursue the potential for partnership working and to liaise with ONS and NISRA.

NRS: Statistical Futures
11 November 2015