

POPULATION AND MIGRATION STATISTICS COMMITTEE (SCOTLAND)

2011 CENSUS PROGRESS REPORT

Introduction

This paper provides a brief update on progress with 2011 Census planning.

Census Test

GROS conducted a Census Test in April 2006, when forms were delivered to around 50,000 households in 5 council areas. A response rate of approaching 50% was achieved – much less than we would expect to achieve in a full Census, but reasonable given that this was a non-compulsory exercise conducted, by design, in areas presenting a number of substantial enumeration challenges.

Evaluation of the Test is well under way. This is a sizeable task considering that there are fieldwork, statistical, processing, geography and other aspects to be explored. Among the key issues to be evaluated are the effectiveness of post-out arrangements as against enumerator delivery, and the impact on response of including in the Test form a question on income. It is intended to complete the Test evaluation by the end of December 2006. Thereafter GROS will take stock of the lessons learned and publish a report setting out the main findings.

Following the Test a follow up survey was conducted at the beginning of June. GROS/SE staff conducted almost 400 interviews with households in the Test area in south Glasgow. Among the subjects explored were why people didn't return their forms, respondents' views on and understanding of the income question, and views on other questions such those on ethnic identity and house conditions. A report on the follow up survey will be made available at the same time as the Test evaluation results.

The Office for National Statistics (ONS) are conducting a Census Test in May 2007. As with the GROS Test the Test form will include a number of new and experimental questions. Details are given at http://www.statistics.gov.uk/about/census/census2011/2007_test.asp .

Procurement of Census Services

After a lot of careful work, the Census Departments have decided on 2 suppliers (Lockheed Martin and T Systems) for the IT services supporting the 2011 Census (and, in the shorter term, the Census Test in England, Wales and Northern Ireland next spring). It is believed that either of the suppliers would be able to do a good job in 2011, but both of them have been kept on board through the 2007 Test process in order to encourage competition as we firm-up the specification for the exact services which one of them will be asked to deliver in 2011.

Consultation

GROS undertook a first round of consultation on the 2011 Census in 2004. Two further consultation exercises will be undertaken shortly:

- (a) a quick consultation to be undertaken shortly with key stakeholders, including local authorities, to obtain a better understanding of whether the 2011 Census form should be extended to 4 pages per individual, rather than 3 as was the case on 2001. See paper PAMS (06) 24 for information on the equivalent consultation on England and Wales.
- (b) a fuller consultation, drawing on the results of the Test evaluation and ranging across many Census issues, which will take place in the first quarter of 2007. This consultation will summarise the current GROS view on inclusion of questions in 2011, and will in particular seek further advice from stakeholders on the strength of the case for certain “borderline” questions.

Statistical Disclosure Control

Considerable progress has been made in planning the disclosure control arrangements that will apply to the 2011 Census. Paper PAMS (06) 23 gives details.

Outputs

Work is now getting underway, led by Valerie West, on planning the output arrangements for the 2011 Scottish Census. Some initial issues will be addressed in the consultation to be initiated in January 2007. See paper PAMS (06) 25 for details of the Output User Consultation Strategy which has been devised by ONS, and which is broadly in line with GROS plans.

Coverage Assessment

Paper PAMS (06) 26 describes the initial strategy in this area, agreed by the 3 UK Census Offices. Work in this area will be led for GROS by Paul Fensom, who will join the Department as a new Statistician appointee from Defra in February 2007.

Geography

A number of Census geography issues will have to be taken forward in the coming months - for example how far output geography should be kept consistent with 2001, and what geographies should be made available in 2011 output. Views on how PAMS members would like such issues to be considered will be welcomed.

GROS Census Division November 2006