

Equality of Opportunity Committee

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Date: Wednesday, 24 January 2007

Venue: The Senedd

Title: Preparations for the 2011 Census of Population

Purpose

1. To provide the committee with an update on the latest situation with regards the 2011 Census of Population including the latest Office for National Statistics (ONS) view on content for 2011, recent research and question testing results and user views. The ONS 2011 Census Director gave a presentation on Preparations for the 2011 Census at the March 2006 Panel of Chairs Meeting. The LGPS and the EPC committees discussed the 2011 Census at their 8 November and 13 December meetings respectively.

Summary / Recommendations

2. This paper provides the opportunity for the Committee to discuss the latest ONS thinking on the content for the 2011 Census. Early discussion will allow the identification of potential areas of concern and influence the ONS research and question development programme over the next 9 months.

Background

Transfer of functions

3. In the light of the strength of feeling expressed in Wales on the matter of recording Welsh identity in the 2001 Census of Population, it was agreed that the National Assembly for Wales should have a more formal role in agreeing future census forms in Wales. A proposed transfer of functions will provide the NAW:

- a right in law to be consulted on the making of the Census Order;
- the power to make regulations for administering the Census in Wales.

4. This provision currently forms part of an omnibus draft Transfer of Functions Order (TFO). The draft TFO was discussed and approved by the Assembly in Plenary on October 18th and was subsequently laid in Parliament by the Wales Office Parliamentary Branch. The TFO was discussed at the Lords on November 28 and at a House of Commons Ninth Delegated Legislation Committee on December 6. Privy Council approved the TFO on December 14th, and the Order came into effect the following day.

5. Further information on the Census legislative process, the proposed transfer of functions and the funding agreement is given at Annex A.

Census Test

6. The ONS will conduct a Census Test in May 2007 in parts of five Local Authorities in England and Wales. The local authority areas - Carmarthenshire being one of them - have been chosen to be representative of a range of circumstances providing a varied cross-section of the population and types of housing that would be covered in a full census.

7. The primary purpose of the Census Test is twofold:

- to assess the potential impact on response rates of the inclusion of an income question, and
- to test new approaches to the operation of the Census collection (e.g. postal delivery of forms)

8. In addition, the Test is being used as an opportunity to assess some potential new questions in the environment of a large scale test. Consequently, some questions that are expected to be included in 2011 but have been well tested are not included in the Test. The Test questionnaire includes a Welsh tick box and an additional Welsh language question on frequency of use. The test questionnaire has been published on the ONS website:

Welsh language

9. As a minimum, all households in Wales will receive both a Welsh language and an English language version of the form, as was the case in 2001. The possibility of a single form containing both languages is being investigated. For the 2007 Test in the selected enumeration districts in Carmarthenshire, households will receive both the Welsh and English language versions of the Census Test questionnaire. Information leaflets and guidance will also be available in around 10 other languages.

High Level Timetable

10. An overview of the ongoing timetable is at Annex B.

11. Mechanisms for engaging the Assembly over the next few years have recently been discussed at Cabinet. The proposals include discussing the 2011 Census at each Assembly Committee by early 2007 so that views on potential topics, as well as any areas of concern can be taken into account.

General Consultation, Research and Question Testing

12. The ONS held a public consultation in summer 2005 in order to obtain views from interested parties on Census topic content and to identify any additional topics requested for inclusion. Further information on this user consultation is given at Annex C.

13. ONS have established eight topic groups to consider each topic area. Membership includes a topic lead from ONS or other central government department, ONS methodologist, ONS Census representative, Welsh Assembly Government representative and representatives from the Scotland and Northern Ireland Census offices. The topic groups are responsible for establishing and taking into account user requirements, prioritising between topics, co-ordinating question testing and taking full account of the need for UK comparability. A summary of the ONS progress in terms of consultation and question testing is given at Annex D.

Ethnicity, Identity, language and Religion Consultation, Research and Question Testing

14. ONS is now following up the 2005 general consultation with a detailed consultation on ethnic group, national identity, religion and language running from 4 December 2006 until 2 March 2007. The aim of the consultation is to gain a better understanding of users' and stakeholders; detailed requirements for information. This consultation has been circulated to relevant organisations in Wales, and officials from the Assembly's Statistical Directorate have also arranged a workshop for equality groups on 29 January 2006.

15. In co-operation with ONS methodologists, Welsh Assembly Government researchers will be testing potential ethnicity and national identity questions within Wales. They will test people's understanding of the terminology, and this will also inform ONS as to whether perceptions vary across the UK.

16. In the 2005 general topic consultation, there was strong demand for information on sexual orientation. But, the ONS has significant concerns surrounding the issues of privacy, acceptability, accuracy, conceptual definitions and the effect that such a question could have on the overall response to the Census. This requirement is being taken forward elsewhere in the ONS with the intention of developing a question for a household survey.

17. ONS held an exploratory meeting in April with interested parties, including representatives from other Government departments and non-governmental organisations, academics and Lesbian Gay and Bisexual (LGB) groups. Following this meeting, several groups were formed to assist the project, including a user/stakeholder group and an expert research group.

- User/Stakeholder Group - made up primarily of representatives from different government departments and LGB groups. The first meeting was held in July 2006 in order to discuss user requirements.
- Expert Research Group, made up primarily of academics and researchers with experience in this field. The first meeting was held in September 2006 to discuss the members' experience of conducting research in this area. The group members will be asked to comment on the Research Plan being drafted by ONS.

18. Both groups will reconvene in early 2007.

19. ONS are currently in the first phase of the question development process, which includes:

- defining concepts and user requirements;
- full review of existing literature and previous research;
- clarifying the legislative requirements for the collection of sexual identity data;
- producing a draft project proposal and timetable

20. A sexual identity question was run on the Omnibus over July and August 2006, primarily to provide a sample for qualitative investigations. A higher than expected proportion of respondents answered 'prefer not to say'. An amended sexual identity question has now been developed that (with further questions investigating those that prefer not to respond to several types of questions, including sexual identity) was run on the November/December Omnibus.

Consideration

21. Development of questions for the 2007 Test has identified the potential for nearly six pages of questions for individuals were all the requirements of users to be met. Given the basis of the ONS Census funding bid is for three pages of individual questions, there is a need to identify the topics that are likely to be taken forward for 2011 so that resources for question development are targeted appropriately.

22. The ONS have recently begun a programme of consultation activities aimed at clarifying the priorities for the Census question content given the current working assumption for a 3 page per person form. To facilitate these discussions, ONS have prepared an option for the content of a 3 page per person Census questionnaire (Annex E), using the results of previous consultations. Content for a potential fourth page of individual questions is also covered. While this is not in current plans and central funding is extremely unlikely, there is the possibility that Government Departments could fund the extra page, but this would be subject to an assessment of the impact on response rates by ONS. It is currently estimated that a fourth page of questions would cost an additional ?20 million in questionnaire printing, delivery, collection and processing for the UK as a whole.

23. ONS plan to discuss the content of Annex E at workshops for England and Wales users and stakeholders in early 2007. In addition to the ONS user consultation events, officials from the Assembly's Statistical Directorate are organising workshops for key stakeholders (including equality groups, local authorities, police and health authorities, public bodies etc) in North and South Wales during early 2007.

24. The Census of Population is not the only source of statistical information and may not necessarily be the most suitable source for collecting information on particular topics. Decisions on Census content will take into account the availability of alternative sources, the requirement for the level of detail provided by a Census (e.g. the ability to analyse small areas and small population groups) as well as the suitability of the Census as a collection mechanism. The ONS will report on these considerations as part of developing their response to the information needs expressed by users.

Financial Implications

25. The TFO and the proposed agreement on funding would not impose any financial implications on the Assembly. However the Assembly may have the option of requesting differences to the content and methodology of the Census in Wales, which may result in financial contribution. There is the possibility, therefore, that there will be additional financial implications. These may fall to be considered at in-year review or BPR. It is not yet possible to quantify the extent of these costs and how they would be affected by different information requests. ABPM have noted that costs have not yet been quantified, and when they are further advice will follow as appropriate on how best they should be funded. The earliest year for which additional costs may be identified is 2008-09 but this is more likely in 2009-10 or 2010-11 (BP Clearance No 1793)

Cross Cutting Themes

26. As the Census of Population is a cross-cutting issue, the Minister for Finance, Local Government and Public Services has recently written to all Subject (and Equality of Opportunity) Committee Chairs encouraging them to discuss the 2011 Census at a forthcoming meeting.

Action for Subject Committee

27. The committee is asked to:

- note the progress on the transfer of functions which will give the Assembly a more formal role in agreeing future Census content and conduct
- note the consultation currently taking place on the topic of ethnicity, identity, language and religion;
- offer its view and potential concerns on the ONS proposals for the content of a 3 page per person questionnaire (Annex E).

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Annex A: Legislative Process and Proposed Transfer of Functions

The Registrar General for England and Wales is responsible for conducting a Census of Population in England and Wales.

The current legislative process and parliamentary timetable for England and Wales is as follows:

(a) Census White Paper: The Census White Paper is the vehicle through which the UK Government formally announces proposals for the Census. It is presented to Parliament and can be debated. It is expected that the White Paper will be laid before the Westminster Parliament in Autumn 2008. It is currently envisaged that there will be separate White Papers for the Census in Scotland and Northern Ireland. No decision has yet been taken on whether there will continue to be a single England & Wales White Paper or separate White Papers.

(b) **Census Order:** The Census Order is laid before Parliament for 40 days and approved by both Houses of Parliament before it can be made by Her Majesty in Council after it has been approved by both Houses of Parliament. This sets out the date on which the Census shall be taken, the areas to be covered by the Census, the persons required to complete the returns and the particulars to be stated in returns. It is currently planned for the Draft Census Order to be laid before Parliament in Autumn 2009 and to be made in Council in Spring 2010.

(c) **Census Regulations:** Immediately after the Census Order, the Chancellor makes the Census Regulations; these set out the arrangements for conducting the Census – appointing enumerators, delivering forms and returns, roles and responsibilities of Census enumerators and their managers, and a facsimile copy of the Census questionnaire. The current aim is to lay the Regulations in Spring 2010.

The proposed transfer of functions would provide the NAW:

(a) a right in law to be consulted on the making of the Draft Census Order;

(b) the power to make regulations for administering the Census in Wales.

The transfer of functions will give the National Assembly for Wales the final say on the content of the Census in Wales as well as in the way it is conducted. However, while the Regulations set out the detailed specification for the Census, these are constrained by the Census Order which will not (nor can it, under existing legislation) be made by the Assembly. Moreover, the Office for National Statistics (ONS) have, in the end, to carry out the Census in Wales as well as England and cannot, in practice, adopt a completely different approach in Wales.

The Financial Secretary to the Treasury and the Assembly Minister for Finance agreed to the principles of a funding agreement in July 2006. Essentially that ONS will pay for:

The Census in Wales where the arrangements are the same as for England in respect of:

- Content and Questions
- Enumeration Procedures
- Data Processing and Release

Questions and procedures that are different in Wales but which have traditionally been funded by ONS (requirements which ONS are required to meet under its Welsh Language Scheme) such as:

- Including a question on Welsh language
- The provision of a Welsh language census form

- Enumeration procedures in Wales including the appointment of Welsh speaking field staff at levels which are in line with the Welsh language scheme and which will at least match those adopted in the 2001 Census.

Marginal differences to the questionnaire in Wales that arise from the Census consultation process e. g. the inclusion of a different question (of a similar format, for example tick-box) in Wales as a replacement for a question asked in England, where the demand for the topic in Wales arises from the ONS decision process on Census topics.

The Assembly will pay for differences in Wales over and above those identified above (for example: a question or changes in the enumeration procedures that the Assembly may want in Wales but which would not be included in England, and which would not otherwise be accommodated).

Annex B: Office for National Statistics Provisional Timetable

Date		White Paper	Census Order	Census Regulations
October 2006	2007 Census Test Questionnaire published			
November/ December 2006	ONS latest view on likely content discussed at Census Advisory Group for Wales			
January/February 2007	Workshops for key stakeholders within Wales (organised by Welsh Assembly Statistical Directorate officials)			

Spring 2007	ONS workshops for users of Census data on likely content for 2011 (including workshop in Wales)			
April 2007		ONS Project Board agree broad outline for White Paper		
May 2007	Census Test			
May 2007	Possible decision on Census funding			
September 2007	Question testing completed			
January 2008		Start consultation on White Paper with Welsh Assembly Minister		
Early 2008	Questionnaire content/ topics finalised			
April 2008		White Paper submitted to appropriate Westminster Cabinet Committee		

Autum 2008		Westminster Cabinet Committee approval of White Paper.		
Spring 2009	Census Rehearsal			
Summer 2009			Draft Order considered by NAW*	
November 2009			Draft Census Order laid before Parliament	England Draft Regulations submitted to Minister
January 2010			Draft Census Order approved by Parliament	
February 2010			Census Order made in Council	
March 2010				Welsh Regulations and England Regulations made by respective Ministers*
May 2010				England Regulations Come into force
September 2010 onwards	Printing of Forms			
Spring 2011	Census Day			

* Proposed under the Transfer of Functions Order. Exact mechanisms to be determined.

Annex C: Census Topic Consultation

In May 2005, the ONS published a consultation document 'The 2011 Census: Initial view on content for England and Wales'. This formed part of a programme of consultation regarding prospective topics for the 2011 Census in England and Wales. The aim of the consultation was to obtain feedback from interested parties on the ONS's initial position on Census topic content and to identify any additional topics requested for inclusion.

The number of responses was significantly higher than expected with around 2,000 topic responses from nearly 500 users in England and Wales. Amongst the respondents were central government departments, local and regional government, academia, businesses, faith groups, charities and the general public. The ONS response document was published in March 2006 and the Welsh Assembly Government's Statistical Directorate simultaneously published a summary of the 330 topic responses received from Welsh organisations or regarding Welsh issues. This summary is available at:

Most Welsh media coverage focused on the likely inclusion of a Welsh tick box in 2011, with some coverage of a potential additional Welsh language question on frequency of use.

Annex D: Summary of Topic Research and Question Testing

ONS have established eight separate topic groups responsible for reviewing and evaluating user requirements, prioritising between topics, co-ordinating question testing and taking full account of the need for UK comparability. Census topic group membership includes ONS staff with expertise in the Census, the topics covered by the group, question development and harmonisation. The groups also include representatives from the Welsh Assembly Government, The General Register Office for Scotland (GROS) and the Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency (NISRA).

Population definitions and Bases

This topic group is responsible for the development of definitions, questions and instructions to ensure that the Census counts the whole population and collects detailed information at the correct address.). Thus far:

- Significant development work to improve the instructions on who should be included has been done, and more is planned.
- Visitor questions have been developed for the 2007 Test, although further work is needed
- A question on Second Residence has been developed, but testing has shown some problems with the question on time spent at second address so more work is planned.
- Work is underway to establish detailed user requirements for information on communal establishments.

Ethnicity, Identity, Language and Religion

The key priorities for this group are:

- to consider response categories for the ethnicity question (including the acceptability of colour terms and potential new categories)
- to consider the suitability of a multiple response ethnicity question (possibly incorporating national identity)
- to analyse the interaction between ethnicity, identity, country of birth and citizenship/nationality
- Confirmation of user requirements for religion. i.e. focus on identity rather than practice; whether there is a need for breakdown of different Christian groups.
- UK requirements for information on language (including the level of detail required, and the languages of interest)
- Frequency of use of Welsh

There has been little progress thus far in terms of developing an ethnicity question, and the question asked in the 2007 Test is a slight variation of the 2001 ethnicity question. More detailed consultation will start on November to establish what changes to the question are required for the 2011 Census.

The Scottish Executive have developed a new approach to the ethnicity question, based around geography and dropping the terms 'black' and 'white', which was adopted by GROS for the 2006 Census Test in Scotland. The ONS consultation on this topic area will investigate the acceptability of a similar approach in England and Wales.

In the 2007 Census Test, a matrix-format language question will be asked. This will ask whether respondents can read, write, speak and understand English and Welsh, with a 'write in' space for another language. It will also collect similar information about British Sign Language and other sign languages. However, small scale testing suggests that this question may be difficult for respondents to complete, particularly if English or Welsh is not their first language, and further evaluation is required. This question is only likely to be considered if it is shown to be answered in the same way as the question on Welsh language proficiency used in the 2001 Census, to ensure comparability of the results over time.

ONS is now following up the 2005 general consultation with a detailed consultation on ethnic group, national identity, religion and language running from 4 December 2006 until 2 March 2007. The aim of the consultation is to gain a better understanding of users' and stakeholders; detailed requirements for information. This consultation has been circulated to relevant organisations in Wales, and officials from the Assembly's Statistical Directorate have also arranged a workshop for equality groups on 29 January 2006. The consultation documents are available at:

Labour Market and Qualifications

This group's key aims are to review, update and prioritise the labour market and qualifications questions. The qualification question was poorly answered by some respondents in the 2001 Census, but a clearer format and changes to the response categories have significantly improved understanding of the question. It is likely that some labour market questions will be dropped, although major outputs (Economic Activity and NS-SEC) will still be produced.

Income

Question testing suggested that an individual income question was the best way to collect this information. For the 2007 Test, half of all households will receive a questionnaire including questions on sources and level of income, while the other half will receive a questionnaire without these. The effect on response will be examined, together with the quality of the responses received.

Testing has also shown that a household level question would be difficult to answer and may be negatively received by householders.

Health and Care

Testing has been carried out for new questions to collect information about the type of long-standing conditions that respondents have. However it is unlikely that it will be possible to include questions of this size in the 2011 Census, and further development work may be required.

Migration

This group was recently established and will focus on establishing and evaluating the user requirements for information on country of birth, address one year ago, citizenship/nationality and month and year of entry to the UK. Migration is a topic area of increasing political interest, and it is likely that more information will be collected in 2011 than in previous censuses.

Demographics and Household Relationships

The key priorities for this group are the questions to collect information on legal marital or civil partnership status and household relationships. For the 2007 Test, the marital status question has been expanded to include civil partnerships. Initial question testing suggests some confusion over the understanding of the term 'civil partnership', although it is likely that this issue will reduce over time, as the term is more widely used

Housing

This group was recently formed and will consider the requirements for all the information collected at a household level in the 2001 Census, and identify any new topics required.

A requirement for information on the quality of housing has been identified, and a new question to collect this is included in the 2007 Census Test.

Annex E: Options for possible content of the 2011 Census questionnaire.

Table 1: Content of three pages of individual questions

New topics from 2001 are indicated in italics.

Option 1

Page 1:

- name
- sex
- date of birth
- marital/civil partnership status
- student status & term-time address
- country of birth
- year/month of entry into UK
- ethnicity & national identity

Page 2:

- religion
- Welsh language proficiency in Wales
- health status
- long-term illness/disability
- address one year ago
- qualifications
- workplace address

Page 3 :

- economic activity status questions
- self-employed, occupation, supervisor status, ever worked (used to derive reduced version of NS-SEC)
- transport to place of work
- instructions at end of questions

Question included on the 2001 form, but not included in the three page options

- industry
- carers
- hours worked
- number of employees at workplace (used to derive full version of NS-SEC)

Option 2

Income question instead of self-employed, occupation, supervisor status and ever worked questions (used to derive NS-SEC) and the long-term illness/disability question. However, the inclusion of an income question is dependent on the results of testing income in the 2007 Test.

Option 3

Citizenship and second residence questions instead of qualifications question. However, a second residence question would have to be substantially reduced in size from that used in the 2007 Test.

The 2001 topics excluded from both three page options but which could be included on a fourth page are industry and carers. The user need reported for these topics was not as strong as for other topics

on the three page options (apart from year of entry into UK where a strong requirement has recently emerged in terms of migration statistics).

Table 2: Content of potential fourth page of individual questions

Option A	Option B
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● income (4/5 column) ● industry (1/2 column) ● citizenship (1/6 column) ● carers (1/3 column) ● language (1/5 column) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● income (4/5 column) ● industry (1/2 column) ● citizenship (1/6 column) ● carers (1/3 column) ● Welsh frequency of use (1/5 column)
Option C	Option D
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● income (4/5 column) ● industry (1/2 column) ● citizenship (1/6 column) ● second residence (1/3 column) ● language (1/5 column) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● industry (1/2 column) ● citizenship (1/6 column) ● carers (1/3 column) ● language (1/5 column) ● second residence (1/3 column) ● Welsh frequency of use (1/5 column)

The potential new topics requested by users which are excluded from all the three or four page options include:

- study place address or travel to place of study
- nature of long-term illness/disability (although existence of long-term illness/disability is included)
- nationality (conceptually different to citizenship or national identity)
- country of previous residence
- country(ies) of parents' birth
- change of country of usual residence

place of birth (as distinct from country of birth)

The user need reported for these potential new topics was not as strong as for other topics.

There was also strong demand for information on sexual orientation but the ONS has significant concerns surrounding the issues of privacy, acceptability, accuracy, conceptual definitions and the effect that such a question could have on the overall response to the Census. Therefore, this requirement is being taken forward elsewhere in the ONS with the intention of developing a question for a household survey.