



CENSUS ADVISORY GROUP

AG(03)03

CENSUS/NeSS OUTPUT ROADSHOW Report of meetings in England and Wales

Introduction

- 1 A nation-wide series of 1-day meetings with users was recently held at which representatives from ONS Census Division and the Neighbourhood Statistics Team gave presentations and were on hand to discuss the programme of output from the 2001 Census, the plans to develop the Neighbourhood Statistics website, and other related issues.
- 2 There was a common agenda to all meetings which covered, in the morning sessions:
 - Highlight results from the 2001 Census key statistics for local authorities, released on the 13 February;
 - Plans for the release of, and access to, remaining 2001 Census products;
 - Introduction to the revamped NeSS website; and
 - Initiatives providing for better information from Neighbourhood Statistics.
- 3 The afternoon sessions covered:
 - The developments in planning a future output geography for Neighbourhood Statistics; and
 - Data quality issues aimed at assisting users gain a better understanding of Census statistics.
- 4 There were opportunities for questions and answers throughout both sessions.

Attendance

- 5 In all there were ten meetings over the period 4-27 March. The venues (and attendances) were: Bangor-on-Dee, Wrexham (42), Coventry (52), Bristol (61), Darlington (60), Harrogate (81), Manchester (87), Northampton (45), Southampton (68), LGA, London (62), RSS, London (82). In all 640 users attended; a further 80 people had confirmed that they wished to attend but did not show. ONS were very pleased with the response and with the lively and helpful contribution made by users at all the meetings. The overall impression gained at each venue was that users also welcomed the opportunity to comment and question.

Issues covered

6 Some of the main issues/concerns commonly discussed were:

Census Outputs

- The need to recognise ward boundaries other than those current at 1 January 2003;
- Formats for, and availability of, OA boundary files;
- Availability and content of look-up files;
- Compatibility of output formats with SASPAC;
- Availability of census data for Civil Parishes;
- Sharing of costs for commissioned tables;
- Final specification of Origin-Destination Statistics;
- Level of output from, and availability of tables commissioned for, Multi-Source Topic Reports;
- Use of 1991 Census output under Census Access arrangements;
- Late changes to specified tables.

NeSS outputs

- Frequency of updating data;
- Need for indicating which ward boundaries were being used;
- Include time series for historical analyses;
- What new data sets would be added;
- Data needs driven by Neighbourhood Renewal Unit;
- User-friendliness for inexperienced users;
- Information required on suitability of different data sets.

NeSS policy issues

- Future need for authorities to collect information on ethnicity routinely;
- Particular disclosure issues surround the collection of data on ethnicity;
- Need to ensure consistent quality of, and the practicalities of applying consistent disclosure control measures to, disparate data sets;
- Availability of data at the lowest possible area level.

Future output geography

- Separate consultation exercise on proposed geography in process;
- Proposals for Super Output Area generally welcomed;
- Output for user-defined geographies to be available on a best-fit basis;
- SOAs designed to serve socio-demographic analyses not economic;
- Both high and low resolution boundaries required;
- Need to reflect geographic change over time;
- Should SOA be constrained to statutory geographies?;
- Nomenclature for new geography invited.

Data quality

- Requirement for more detail on household and question response at the small area level;
- Cells subject to high level of imputation to be identified;
- Interest in seeing quality analysis repeated at OA level

Action

- 7 **Advisory Group members are invited to note the main issues covered in the Output Roadshow meetings and that a full account of the presentations and the issues raised by users is being prepared and will be circulated to users in due course. In the meantime, copies of the PowerPoint presentations are available on request to Census Customer Services.**

ONS

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