



2011 CENSUS LOCAL AUTHORITY LIAISON

ACTION PLAN

Background

- 1 It is clear that it will be mutually beneficial for Local Authorities (LAs) and the Office for National Statistics (ONS) to work in partnership in the conduct of the 2011 Census. ONS wish to benefit from LA resources and the invaluable knowledge of their local areas to improve the enumeration process. In particular LAs have experience and contacts including:
 - knowledge of the profile of local areas and factors that may make them hard to enumerate, such as language problems;
 - experience of similar operations such as electoral registration and postal elections; and
 - contacts with a wider range of local organisations such as the police, student groups, housing associations, religious groups etc, particularly coming together through their Local Strategic Partnerships (or Community First networks in Wales) and, in some areas, with local Royal Mail managers, through postal voting (which will increase before 2011).
- 2 In turn, LAs will benefit from better census results. The key question for both ONS and LAs is how best to manage this engagement.

Options for working with Local Authorities

- 3 There is a range of potential options. At one extreme, LAs could be asked to run the field operation themselves on behalf of ONS, including the recruitment and local management of the field staff (but, necessarily, excluding printing of questionnaires etc), using their experience and contacts from electoral registration for example. At the other extreme, all the field staff could be separately recruited and managed by ONS, simply liaising with staff in LAs to benefit from their local resources, relying on good will.

Benefits and drawbacks

- 4 The potential benefit of LAs running the recruitment and enumeration *entirely locally* is that they would own the problem, and therefore would, potentially, be more willing to commit their time and resources, making use of procedures and structures already established for other purposes, in particular for election processes.
- 5 The clear drawbacks from the ONS perspective are that:
 - some authorities may not be so committed to doing a good job, potentially resulting in a variable quality enumeration;
 - a different approach may be taken in different areas, resulting in inconsistent data and bias across the country;
 - there is potentially a conflict of interest in that a higher population count results in higher central government funding; and
 - there may be a public perception of a risk to confidentiality in that LAs may use information about, for example, hidden addresses not included on council tax or electoral lists.
- 6 The benefits of managing the census *entirely centrally* are that ONS can perhaps be more confident that consistent field staff recruitment, training and pay strategies are adopted and that field management can be more tightly controlled. In practice, of course, recruitment and training other than for the top level of field staff is never entirely managed centrally in that the numbers required necessitate a cascading approach, though training material and field manuals would still be produced centrally.
- 7 The drawbacks of managing the process centrally are that:
 - greater levels of risk are imposed upon ONS;
 - there could be a lack of understanding of local circumstances and difficulties that affect the coverage and quality;
 - there is an increasing dependency on effective communication systems requiring high level of co-operation and competence among field staff; and
 - there is likely to be less support for the census operation by local authorities resulting in reduced confidence in the reliability of resulting outputs.
- 8 The model ONS is currently working towards is somewhere in the middle ground, whereby ONS would wish to encourage LAs to appoint formal census liaison managers to work as agents on behalf of ONS within each Authority area, and where

field staff recruitment would be undertaken by commercial agencies but ONS would encourage LAs to second staff to be area managers, team leaders or enumerators, and involve them wherever possible in providing data that can better inform, and quality assure, the enumeration process.

- 9 The specific areas identified for partnership working include:
- Address Register development to ensure fullest coverage;
 - Enumeration intelligence for targeting of delivery methods and follow-up resources;
 - Identifying and developing Community Liaison contacts;
 - Recruitment and logistics; and
 - Publicity.
- 10 This paper sets out an Action Plan to develop and test strategies for such partnership working as part of the 2007 Census Test. The broad approach of encouraging Local Authorities to appoint Census Liaison Managers has already been endorsed by the Census Local Authority Liaison Steering Group and agreed by four out of the five LAs involved in the 2007 Census Test.

Proposed approach to developing LA partnerships

- 11 The planned approach for the development of strategies for LA partnership working was launched with initial meetings with each of the 2007 Census Test area LAs to establish areas of co-operation and generate ideas. From these emerged a draft Action plan which was broadly endorsed and commented on by the LA Census Liaison Steering Group at its meeting in January 2006.
- 12 Following agreement of these strategies at the Workshop ONS will then try them out during the 2007 Census Test. Through evaluation with LAs after the Test, they would be refined and again adopted during the Census Rehearsal in 2009 (where different LAs are likely to be involved), leading to final strategies for the 2011 Census itself. The timetable in Table 1 broadly sets out the planned process.

Table 1 Overview timetable for LA Liaison processes

Sep/Oct 2005	Meetings with Census Liaison Managers (CLMs) at each 2007 Census Test LA and some members of the LA Liaison steering group to describe what we want to achieve in 2011 in the above 5 areas, and discuss practical ways of working with all LAs to achieve them.
Oct 05 - March 06	Six months strategy development. ONS will take the ideas discussed at the meetings and turn them into proposals for how LA liaison in each area will work in practice. This may involve further discussions with individuals from test LAs, and other interested parties. LA Liaison Steering Group met 19 January 2006.
March 2006	LA Liaison workshop 27 March to discuss and improve strategies.
March 06 – June 06	Internal ONS approval of strategies and communication to census advisory groups etc.
August 06	LA Liaison Steering Group 3 August
September 06	LA Liaison Workshop 29 September
June 06 - June 07	Implementation of partnership strategies during 2007 Test
June 07 - Dec 07	Evaluation of effectiveness of strategies during 2007 Test
Jan 08 – June 08	Revision and agreement of strategies.
June 08 - June 09	Implementation of partnership strategies during 2009 Rehearsal.
June 09 - Dec 09	Evaluation of effectiveness of strategies during Rehearsal; revision and agreement; increased communication to all LAs; appointment of CLMs for 2011 Census.
June 2009	2011 Census Area Managers appointed.
June 09 - June 11	Implementation of partnership strategies for 2011 Census and ongoing liaison with LAs.

Address register development

- 13 In May 2005, ODPM and the Ordnance Survey announced the development of a National Spatial Address Infrastructure (NSAI) with the aim of creating a comprehensive data source covering all types of addresses/properties including:
 - all postal points/addresses;
 - all households/dwellings at multi-occupied addresses;
 - all communal establishments;
 - all business addresses;
 - all non-residential addresses; and
 - other objects (potentially useful for local activities that are not address-based).
- 14 NSAI development was planned to involve Local Authorities and it was initially hoped that pilot work by Ordnance Survey would have included the areas selected for the 2007 Census Test. However, progress on cooperative development has since faltered, and ONS are now looking at ways in which the separate OS and IDeA initiatives can be utilised in the census field operation both to improve and to quality assure its address lists.
- 15 Irrespective of the outcome of its own assessment of national address products, ONS is committed to ensuring that Local Authorities are actively involved in the quality assurance of procedures for carrying out the next Census. A significant part of this quality assurance will be associated with addresses.

16 The three areas where ONS are particularly seeking LAs' engagement are associated with:

- address coverage;
- categorisation of addresses; and
- plans for maintaining quality during the enumeration.

The 2011 enumeration must begin with a shared understanding of the quality of the address base and with agreement on procedures for improving and maintaining it.

Address coverage

17 ONS is seeking to work with LAs on ensuring that the 2011 enumeration begins with the best possible address coverage. Assuming that the most up to date sources are used then the main area for improvement is likely to be in the identification of multiple occupation at a single postal address. This is the situation where more than one unit of accommodation exists behind a single delivery point. Sub-premise addresses are likely to be identified by further address detail such as flat number.

18 ONS cannot commit to a full scale matching of address sources, and thus the only alternative can be a comparison of aggregated address counts by geographical area. This is the approach that ONS is suggesting as a starting point for agreeing address coverage and areas for improvement.

Action Plan

19 **ONS is proposing is that:**

- **ONS will create counts of addresses by each type (residential etc) by Census Enumeration District (ED) within the five Test areas. The counts will be taken from both the NLPG and the OS Address product.**
- **Where there is a significant difference between the counts within each ED, ONS will re-aggregate at postcode level to isolate differences and produce address extracts for postcodes.**
- **Local Authorities will be provided with ED and postcode levels counts where there are such differences and will be asked for any intelligence that they may have about the possible reasons for the difference (for example, new buildings, multi-occupation etc).**
- **ONS would then target the address checking field staff on those areas where discrepancies had occurred, using more intensive checking procedures (such as attempting to make contact at every address rather than relying on just the visual check to be employed elsewhere).**

20 For the 2011 Census itself some Local Authorities (such as Manchester and Westminster where there was some evidence of undercounting in 2001) may wish to have the opportunity to get more involved than this. **For such LAs, ONS could undertake an initial OA/postcode level accounting exercise a year earlier, feed the discrepancies to LAs for them to do a canvass (perhaps during electoral registration) in order to check their local lists, which would then feed into the census address check process.**

21 For the 2007 Test the current plan is to have a 2-phase exercise for address checking:

- Phase 1 will involve an initial check from 29 September – 13 October 2006;
- Phase 2 will involve a re-check in areas that have a high incidence of new building identified in Phase 1 some 6-7 weeks before Test Census Day.

ONS will share the output from Phase 1 (November 2006) with LAs by reproducing counts at ED level, and could also include in Phase 2 (April 2007) any areas that were of particular concern to them.

Address categorisation

22 ONS needs to be able to associate addresses with use. At the highest level, residential and non-residential addresses will need to be distinguished, and it is also essential that private addresses are distinguished from communal addresses. The note at Annex B details the types of establishment that ONS will want to identify in advance of the enumeration.

Action Plan

23 **LAs are asked to supply any data that would allow prior identification of establishments and indicate the means of transferring such data to ONS.**

Address maintenance

24 Throughout the Census operation, new address intelligence will be gathered which may lead to the Census address register changing. LAs can play a key role in helping ONS to maintain the address register by providing regularly up-dated information on completed new buildings.

Action Plan

25 **LAs will provide regularly up-dated information on completed new buildings. Ideally ONS would like this information quarterly but recognise that some LAs may only be able to provide this annually.**

Enumeration intelligence

Differential delivery

- 26 The current working assumption is that there will be two delivery methods for Census questionnaires in 2011, one being postout, and the other, hand delivery through a traditional field force. If this model is adopted, the intention is that hand delivery would be at a lower volume (say 20 per cent) targeted at particular areas where the address register is considered inadequate and/or where the demographics of the population mean that response is likely to be lower and will be potentially positively impacted by personal contact at the point of delivery. This is in line with one of the key objectives of the Census - to reduce differential undercoverage.
- 27 ONS are therefore particularly keen to work with LAs in identifying and developing ways in which relevant information held by LAs could be shared with ONS to assist determining the delivery method.
- 28 In particular, ONS would like to provide 2011 Census field staff with information about the characteristics of their enumeration areas, drawing from Neighbourhood Statistics and other statistical sources. Enhancement of this information with local knowledge from LAs would be invaluable, identifying, for example:
- areas of high population or residential property change;
 - areas of high proportions of non-English speakers; and
 - practical, health and safety issues, for example areas which may be dangerous to enumerate after dark;

Targeting follow-up

- 29 As a further means of addressing differential undercount ONS are proposing to focus follow-up staff resources in accordance with an assessment of likely response rates so that the ratio of field staff to households will be higher in hard-to-count areas than in those areas that are easier to enumerate. During the follow-up the strategy will be to move staff between areas (firstly at a local level within a Census Manager's area, but potentially between Local Authority areas) in reaction to patterns of response between areas.
- 30 In order to tackle differential undercoverage ONS are also considering:
- deploying teams of peripatetic staff to assist in areas where response is especially slow; and
 - commencing follow-up activity earlier in certain areas (for example, student areas) before there is direct evidence from the field about response levels but where we might anticipate difficulties in getting responses.

- 31 On all of these issues ONS are seeking to work with LAs in identifying the format and timeliness of relevant information and the best methods of sharing it with Census field managers, and in assessing areas prior to the enumeration.

Action Plan

- 32 **ONS will identify location of hard-to-count populations that may require a specific enumeration approach and/or where there is a high expectation of poor response. In doing so ONS will distinguish the requirements for information at the address level and those at the local area level to supplement information already available from the 2001 Census or via NeSS.**

- 33 **In particular, ONS would seek information from LAs on:**

(a) *at address level*

- **Location and type of communal establishments (where quantities of Individual forms will be required);**
- **Gated communities (where there may be particular access difficulties);**
- **Large households (where Continuation forms will be required);**
- **Multi-occupied households (where more than one Household form will be required);**
- **Vacant or otherwise unoccupied accommodation (where we would not attempt to follow-up).**

(b) *at the local area level*

- **Ethnic communities, through, for example, take-up of language service provision (requiring interpreting facilities and/or particular enumeration approaches);**
- **Area with high proportion of single person households (where doorstep contact may be difficult to establish);**
- **Areas subject to significant structural change (resulting in new and deleted addresses which may not be included in the address register); and**
- **Areas with particular health and safety concerns, such as high crime levels (which may not be suitable for enumerator delivery);**
- **Areas where LAs have difficulty in take-up of initiatives and engaging with residents (where follow-up resources may need to be focused) ;**
- **Addresses at which there is no initial response to Electoral Registration (where non-response follow-up will be likely);**
- **Areas with high level of take-up of housing benefits (where levels of non-response may also be high);**
- **Areas with significant proportions of second residences and/or holiday accommodation (where we might anticipate higher levels of non-responses but where we would not attempt to follow-up);**

- Sites associated with mobile accommodation (where special enumeration procedures would be adopted);
 - Areas of student accommodation (where special enumeration and follow-up procedures might be necessary).
- 34 LAs are asked to identify locally held available data sources, such as Council Tax data, which can assist in this process distinguishing (a) and (b) sources, and advise ONS on the frequency that such sources are updated, the level of geography at which data is discriminating, and what geographic mapping is available and to start providing this data by early June 2006.
- 35 Both ONS and LAs will aim, through discussion, to ensure statistical comparability between Census and LA data sources, covering issues such as what defines a household, a household space and multi-occupation. There may, for example, be an issue in determining a consistent approach to the identification of single or multiple households in dwellings comprising bed-sits. Different departments within a single LA may even adopt different definitions of multi-occupancy. ONS will provide the definition of multi-occupied households that will be used in the Census.
- 36 ONS will create Area Profiles from a standard template to be compiled from core data from ONS (relating to variables such as tenure, ethnicity, unemployment, educational qualifications, etc) and supplemented with additional data from LA sources.

Mode of transfer of information

- 37 For the 2007 Test, ONS are open to various methods of transfer of LA-held data. These could include ONS staff meeting with relevant contacts within the LA to extract the information directly, or it could include LAs transmitting the information electronically in a series of reports (either ad-hoc or pre-agreed).

Action Plan

- 38 LAs are asked establish the means for providing ONS with consistent and comparable data and for transmitting it in a compatible format, and to indicate to ONS the source department or section within the LA.
- 39 ONS will discuss with LAs their preferred method of transfer and will establish what common data sources are available across the 2007 Test LAs would look to evaluate this after the Test with a view to having a practical transfer method for all LAs in 2011.

Legal framework

- 40 It is not yet entirely clear whether or not there is legal authority for some datasets held by Local Authorities to be shared with ONS in the way proposed. Legal impediments to doing so may, for example, exist by virtue of current Data Protection legislation.

Action Plan

- 41 **LAs are asked to seek advice on the legal framework for data sharing. ONS are already seeking similar legal advice.**

Community liaison

- 42 Concurrent with the LA liaison programme, ONS are meeting with key organisations representing specific population groups such as the elderly, the disabled, ethnic minority and faith groups, to develop a strategy for community liaison. Currently these discussions are mainly with national organisations, but then increasingly, throughout 2006, liaison will be with local organisations and networks as plans for the 2007 Test develop.
- 43 Clearly there is also a role for LAs in working on community liaison as they will have extensive local contacts which could be shared with Census field managers. Additionally, LAs could themselves engage directly with community groups. ONS is keen to develop its understanding of how contact information could best be gathered from LAs and what role LAs could themselves play in community liaison.

Action Plan

- 44 **ONS will contact those key national organisations which are likely to be the most valuable in developing the Community Liaison Programme.**
- 45 These have been identified on the basis of such factors as:
- how big/representative the organisation is;
 - how large a proportion of the national population the organisation represents;
 - how much influence the organisation exerts;
 - what local networks exist; and
 - the experience of working with them during the 2001 Census.
- 46 **LAs are asked to prepare a list of local contacts for the key organisation identified by ONS and to add others that they think would be helpful. ONS may be able to provide an initial list sourced from national organisations for LAs to QA and expand as necessary.**
- 47 **LAs are asked to arrange for the Test Area Manager to give presentations at Local Strategic Partnership meetings or other relevant local network forums in**

summer 2006. For the 2007 Test There will only be two ONS-based Area Managers to cover all the five Test area so ONS may wish to look to the local Assistant Census Liaison Managers to assist in this and to assess how well this arrangement works.

- 48 ONS will establish contacts with local community groups and drop-in centres for particular community groups and Citizens Advice Bureaux.**
- 49 LAs will identify existing forums such as Neighbourhood Committees for developing community networks.**
- 50 As part of its Language Strategy, ONS will undertake further research into the range of languages for which it may be necessary to have translations of census documentation.**

Recruitment and logistics

- 51 In 2001 Census, several local authorities (in particular Greater London Boroughs) were flexible in providing time off for staff to act as census field officers (as enumerators or at higher levels), recognising the value of having field staff with experience and local knowledge.
- 52 Recruitment for the 2007 Test is being outsourced, and thus LA staff will generally be required to apply for field staff posts through the appointed agency channels, but the procured suppliers are being asked to prioritise their recruitment from among Local Authority applicants wherever possible. Additionally (for the 2011 Census) LAs may be encouraged to offer staff to be seconded to ONS for the purposes of taking up senior field management posts as a further means of strengthening the working relationship between ONS and Local Authorities.
- 53 Also, LAs may, in many cases, be able to provide either office accommodation from which local managers can train field staff and direct operations, and/or storage space for local supplies of materials and equipment. For 2007, some Test LAs have already indicated that this might be possible. Though the requirements for such accommodation in the Test may be minimal, ONS wish to explore fully the potential for this and other areas of logistical support such as the provision of car parking facilities.

Action Plan

- 54 **LAs are asked to identify potential field officers at Team Leader and Enumerator level from among LA staff for recruitment (and/or possible secondment to ONS for the 2011 Census). Staff with previous census or electoral registration experience are likely to be the most suitable.**
- 55 **LAs will confirm whether or not there are likely to be any Human Resource difficulties in LA employees being employed also by outside contractors.**
- 56 **LAs are asked to identify accommodation for use as temporary office and/or storage space. ONS will advise on the likely volumetrics.**

Publicity

- 57 Providing the right level and type of publicity material is essential to maximise response in the Census. National publicity planning for 2011 is already underway (although this will not be practicable for the 2007 Test) but, additionally, LAs will have established local communications into which ONS may be able to tap. ONS welcome the opportunity of benefiting from the sorts of local communication channels available to LAs.

- 58 During the 2001 Census, some LAs established their own census advice lines. ONS seek, in particular, to work with LAs on developing these channels for the 2011 Census and to ensure that the messages that they give out are synchronised and harmonised with changing events within the national enumeration programme.
- 59 The simplest approach might be to ask LAs to pass on all public enquiries about the Census directly to the central Census Contact Centre, which ONS will endeavour to ensure will have a greater capacity to deal with calls than was the case in 2001 and where consistent and updated messages and information will be available. But LAs will also need to be aware of these messages so that, as a contingency, they may offer more direct local support as and when necessary.
- 60 For the 2011 Census ONS would develop scripts for public messages and establish a mechanism for giving LA contact centres access to these (with daily updates).

Action Plan

- 61 **LAs are asked identify potential local media outlets to provide to Area Manager(s) such as:**
- **Local press and radio;**
 - **LA newsletters;**
 - **Community newsletters; and**
 - **Other media.**
- 62 **LAs are asked to inform ONS of any current local issues that may pose risks to the enumeration.**

Higher level stakeholder engagement

- 63 ONS also aim to engage with LAs through forums such as SOLACE and CIPFA, in order to develop ways of championing the Census at the senior executive level and of encouraging LAs to actively engage in partnership working for 2011 Census.

Action Plan

- 64 **ONS have initially discussed engagement with SOLACE at a meeting of its Electoral Matters Panel and this is being taken in a newly formed Census Working Group.**
- 65 **Other possible forums being investigated include future SOLACE and CIPFA Annual Conferences, and, in particular, the CLIP Annual Conference.**

**ONS
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