

Scottish Census Steering Committee

Minutes of Meeting

8 September 2009

Minutes of the Scottish Census Steering Committee meeting held on Tuesday 8 September 2009 in General Register Office for Scotland (GROS), New Register House, Edinburgh.

Present:

Duncan Macniven	GROS, Registrar General
Peter Scrimgeour	GROS, Director of Census
Shirley Cameron	GROS, Census Programme Management
Sandy Taylor	GROS Census Outputs Statistician
Alan Dickson	Capability Scotland
Grahame Smith	Scottish Trade Union Congress
Ros Micklem	Equalities and Human Rights Commission
Peadar Morgan	Bòrd na Gàidhlig
Professor. David Martin	University of Southampton
Professor. Michael Anderson	University of Edinburgh
Ian Lees	Scottish Council for Voluntary Organisations
Ken Macdonald	Information Commissioner's Office
Jennifer Wallace	Consumer Focus Scotland
Jon Harris	CoSLA
Dr Eric Baijal	NHS Borders
Ann Moises	Scottish Government

Apologies:

Ranald Mair	Scottish Care
Bashir Maan	Scottish Council for Muslims

1. Welcome and introductions – Duncan Macniven

- 1.1 Duncan welcomed everyone to the meeting, in particular to those unable to attend the previous meeting on 11 June 2009. Members were thanked for their previous input and for their continued interest.

2. Minutes of the of Meeting 11 June 2009 – Duncan Macniven

- 2.1 The minutes were accepted as an accurate reflection of the discussion and will now be published on the [GROS website](#).

3. Terms of Reference – Duncan Macniven

- 3.1 The text had been changed to reflect members' previous comments. Members were concerned that there may be conflict in the minutes between what was a collective view of the group and the personal view expressed by a member representing their organisation. Duncan suggested that members could avoid such a conflict by commenting on the draft minutes before they were approved at the subsequent meeting ahead of publication.
- 3.2 The Terms of Reference were agreed.

4. Early Lessons from the Census Rehearsal Part II – Peter Scrimgeour

- 4.1 Peter followed-up his report of the early findings of the 2009 Census Rehearsal given at the previous meeting.

Evaluation

- 4.2 Evaluation is continuing and around 160 lessons have so far been identified. These are matters of detail which do not point to major problems but give the census team the opportunity to adjust the plans for 2011 before they are finalised.

Internet Data Collection

- 4.3 The video clips on the [census website](#) attracted considerable interest during the rehearsal period. Although that was welcome, it risked slowing response times as people downloaded video while others uploaded questionnaire responses. GROS will consider changes to where this information is hosted, to protect the performance of the main site, particularly during the prime data collection period.
- 4.4 The internet collection had worked so well that extension of the internet option to certain types of communal establishments is now being considered.
- 4.5 Valuable feedback was received from those who submitted their rehearsal returns online, for instance, that the internet form should route respondents

away from inapplicable questions such as whether a one year old was married.

Field Services

- 4.6 Enhancements will be made to a number of the field services IT systems to make it less complicated for field staff to use.
- 4.7 Decisions have been taken to manage two services in-house, rather than contracting out. These are:
- Picking and packing of field materials for delivery to enumerators; and
 - The census helpline and fulfilment of requests, by the public, for additional forms.

Fieldwork

- 4.8 The rehearsal area was chosen to include a university, prison and army barracks as well as care homes. Enumeration of these communal establishments is a continuing concern. More work is being done to establish if there are alternative ways of gathering information from certain groups, for instance prisoners. An agenda item will be included for the next SCSC meeting to discuss this in more detail; outputs from the evaluation should be available by then. Discussion should also cover how vulnerable groups living in the community are going to be assisted.
- 4.9 The physical aspect of enumerator work will be highlighted more during recruitment, as some enumerators reported that this had not been made clear to them. More emphasis will have to be given in the training programme, to the IT aspects of the field staff role.
- 4.10 The advance leaflet had proved informative to those who had read it. Evidence pointed to the leaflet being more useful if it was included with the questionnaire for 2011, rather than being delivered beforehand.

Questions

- 4.11 The rehearsal outputs, once available, will aid discussion on the final choice of questions, which is critical for the Census Order. The second analysis phase will run up to Christmas, ahead of finalisation of the Census Regulations.

Discussion on items in the paper

- 4.12 Questionnaire post out - Members discussed the potential change to the volumes of questionnaires posted out and the potential impact this could have on contact with householders, particularly with those requiring language assistance and vulnerable people. The final decision has still to be taken on this and further information would be provided to members at the next meeting.

- 4.13 Internet for Field Staff - The possible use of the 3-G card as an alternative to having broadband installed in the field managers' homes was discussed because, during the rehearsal there had been disruption to some field managers' existing broadband. Members pointed out that mobile connectivity could be an issue and the 3-G card may not be a suitable solution for field managers in rural areas.
- 4.14 Production of Images - Images of the 2011 Census questionnaires will be securely stored digitally and in the same format, irrespective of method of completion (paper or internet). The images from the 2001 Census were also preserved digitally.
- 4.15 Assistance for householders - A doorstep routine, based on the 2001 processes, has been developed to ensure enumerators give the best possible help to householders requiring assistance. Consideration is also being given to whether enumerators should enter householders' homes where a careful balance between helping householders, the perception of security of householders, and the security and safety of the field staff must be achieved.

5. Outputs – Sandy Taylor

- 5.1 Introducing the paper, Sandy emphasised that the investment of time and resources in conducting a census can only be justified if the results are made widely accessible and in a format that meets user needs. Output from the 2011 Census will potentially be the most complex and comprehensive set of information about the population of Scotland ever produced.
- 5.2 The first Scottish outputs are expected to be produced around mid- 2012. The three UK Registrars General have agreed to the production of harmonised comparable UK-wide data from a single source.

Challenges

- 5.3 In order to achieve the aim of getting the greatest value possible from the 2011 Census data, outputs should be easily accessible, have the relevant content to meet user needs while at the same time achieving value for money. Confidentiality was vital, so the delivery of the outputs must also allow for disclosure control which protects the data for small areas.

Next Steps

- 5.4 A consultation exercise will start later in 2009. This will seek to establish views on:
- Content of output products;
 - How the data should be made available;
 - Geographic products to be supplied;
 - Disclosure control, and the balance between the level of perturbation to ensure confidentiality and the level of detail included in the outputs;
 - Licensing, funding and charging models;

- Analytical uses of the data, e.g. linking census with other data and using census data as a sampling frame for follow-up surveys; and
- The need for microdata such as samples of anonymised personal data.

Discussion on items in the paper

- 5.5 For users looking to use census data for comparison with earlier data, particularly around civil parish population figures, accessibility can be time consuming as separate tables must be opened to obtain the data. Duncan explained that the vision for the 2011 Census data would allow an increased number of geographies to be available for end users to create their own tables.
- 5.6 The proposal to have the facility to compare the 2011 outputs with those of 2001 was welcomed.
- 5.7 Apple Mac users tended to find themselves at a disadvantage over Microsoft applications due to problems with tabulation software. Many schools and universities use Apple Macs. It was not difficult to produce Mac-compatible data on CD or have a separate web application. The consultation would gather information from users on their needs in terms of access to data.
- 5.8 The proposal to use multi-dimensional tables ('hyper-cubes') was welcomed. This proposed move potentially introduces enormous flexibility in the number of dimensions that can be tabulated and the geographies and classifications that can be used. The real challenge may be in educating the end user who is used to getting census data in a more traditional format. The 2001 data will be used to test the feasibility of the hyper-cube solution.

6. Response to Controversy about CACI (UK) Limited – Duncan Macniven

- 6.1 Duncan explained that the 'back office' contract to supply systems and services for the 2011 Census was let in accordance with EU procurement rules. Although GROS was aware that allegations had been made against CACI (UK) Limited's parent company in the US, only proven allegations could be considered as part of an evaluation of bid, and the company strongly denied the allegations. Nonetheless, there has been public interest in the contract award. GROS will plan how best to manage interest in the contract, and other potentially negative census stories, ahead of the compulsory 2011 Census.
- 6.2 CACI (UK) Limited is one of 18 contractors/sub-contractors supporting GROS in delivering the census. Duncan detailed the services that CACI (UK) Limited and its sub-contractors are contracted to supply to GROS. Census Confidentiality and Data Protection legislation safeguard private census records. The CACI (UK) Limited contract is clear that personal census data will be processed in Scotland and remain here at all times in both paper and electronic formats. Duncan described the additional steps GROS has taken to ensure that the USA Patriot Act could not be used to oblige CACI (UK) Limited

to supply the data to the US government. Members suggested that a pictorial diagram of the services supplied would be helpful.

- 6.3 Members agreed that it would be useful for GROS to explain its contract arrangements, particularly the security measures in place and the benefits that the census brings to Scotland, to interested parties before the Census Order is put before the Scottish Parliament later this year.

7. Any Other Business

- 7.1 Ian Lees had been invited to a seminar on the disability question and asked how this fitted in to the GROS consultation. Peter explained that the GROS public consultations on question topics had been held in 2004 and 2007 before the Government Statement on the census was published in December 2008. Although the final decisions on questions had still to be taken, there would no further public consultation on the question topics for the census. The seminar might be concerned with the disability question to be used by the Scottish Government in other surveys, which might in the event be a close relation to the census question.

8. Date of Next Meeting

- 8.1 It was agreed that a meeting would be provisionally arranged for mid to late October in case GROS proposed, in the light of evaluation of the rehearsal outputs and other testing, any significant variation to the census questions set out in section 3 of the [2011 Census – A Government Statement](#). The meeting would be cancelled if no such variation was proposed.
- 8.2 The subsequent meeting will be held in January 2010.
- 8.3 Members will be canvassed for availability for both meetings.

General Register Office for Scotland
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