



General Register Office
for
SCOTLAND
information about Scotland's people

Report on Autumn 2004 Census Consultation



' S c o t l a n d C o u n t s '

1. Acknowledgements

- 1.1. GROS would like to thank the individuals and organisations who contributed to this consultation.

2. Introduction

- 2.1. The General Register Office for Scotland (GROS) currently carries out the Census of population every 10 year in Scotland. The data collected by the Census is the most accurate small area data available to researchers and planners giving an accurate profile of our population. Local Government, Health Boards and Central Government use this data to allocate resource and plan for the future.
- 2.2. GROS have already begun consultation with these data users and other community groups and will continue through to 2010 for the Census in 2011. The consultation is in two parts, a web-based consultation on Census Questions which is ongoing until 2010 and three formal 12 week consultations on all aspects of the Census. This report outlines the responses to the first 12 week consultation period which took place in Autumn 2004. The second and third formal consultation periods will take place in 2007 and 2009.
- 2.3. The first formal 12 week consultation period began with three workshops, two in Edinburgh and one in Glasgow, in November 2004. Following a request from local organisations GROS also held an additional workshop in Inverness in February. A report summarising the comments made at these workshops was published on the GROS website and can be found via the link below.

<http://www.gro-scotland.gov.uk/statistics/census/censushm2011/report-on-census-consultation-events-2004.html>

- 2.4. A 56 page consultation document was presented at these workshops and is available either for download on the GROS website or by post on request. The document has five sections describing the
 1. Consultation plan and timetable;
 2. Evaluation of the 2001 Census in Scotland;

3. Statistical strategy and design for the 2011 Census in Scotland;
4. 2006 Census Test design; and
5. Summary and conclusions.

2.5. The paper asked users to respond to eight consultation points. Respondents were asked to make clear whether they were responding as an individual or group. The eight consultation points were as follows;

1. We invite users views on the outline consultation timetable and methods.
2. We consider that the key objectives of the 2001 Census were met. Do you agree? If not, which of these objectives do you believe were not met and what lessons can be learned?
3. Could users indicate how they would benefit from earlier publication of full results (say a year after Census day instead of 18 months) in a way which allows us to assess how much extra it would be worth spending to meet that timetable?
4. Would users welcome a two stage publication of results (provisional followed by fully-adjusted)?
5. Could users give their opinions of the the four population enumeration bases which we are considering? If changes from the 2001 Census are needed, please explain why.
6. Could users give their opinions on other aspects of the Census which they feel we may not have fully considered?
7. We would welcome input on the design aspects of the income question for the 2006 Census Test.
8. We would welcome your opinions of how useful/relevant alternative methods of Census data collection would be.

3. Summary of Responses

- 3.1. GROS received nine responses to the consultation paper from a cross section of community groups, Local Authorities and NHS Health Boards.
- 3.2. One joint response from the Highland Well-being Alliance consisted of contributions from Highland's & Island Enterprise, Communities Scotland, NHS Highland and Highland Council. They responded to all the consultation points individually and gave more general view relating to Census data output.
- 3.3. A response was received from Gypsy Travellers representatives, including the Gypsy Travellers Health and Well-Being Initiative; the Lochaber Routes; Gypsy Traveller Community Project; and Traveller Education & Information Project. This group expressed concerns about both the Census questionnaire content and the Census in general. Their comments relating to questionnaire content have been published separately on the GROS website in a Three Monthly Summary Report of the Census Questions Consultation.
- 3.4. The Crofters Commission responded mainly on the Question Content of the Census but also made a case that the Census Test area should to include Crofting Communities.
- 3.5. Two responses were received from disability groups, the British Sign Language and Linguistic Access Working Group and Deafblind Scotland. Both groups were concerned about the accessibility of the Census questionnaire to various disabled people.
- 3.6. Frank Dixon of the Scottish Executive Transport Department highlighted problems with using DVLA data as a Census alternative.
- 3.7. The Equality Network recommend the use of web-based Census questionnaires to enhance privacy.
- 3.8. David Hensen and Christopher Tait made individual responses on the fundamental design of the Census in Scotland.

4. Consultation Point One

“We invite users views on the outline consultation timetable and methods.”

- 4.1. Feedback on the consultation timetable and methods was on the whole very positive. The Highland Well-Being Alliance thought that the timetable was reasonable but that it was possibly not publicised well enough as they were not aware of the deadline until reminded by GROS.
- 4.2. The methods used in the consultation were generally well received. Organisations felt that web-based consultation was particularly useful in allowing different members access to the appropriate documents.
- 4.3. An individual criticised GROS for not involving Scots Language representatives in the Autumn Workshops. (In fact, a number of representatives were invited but did not attend. We are now in close contact with several Scots Language Representatives.)
- 4.4. The Highland Well-Being Alliance were particular pleased that GROS had convened a workshop in Inverness at the request of the Crofters Commission. They felt the meeting was very successful and provided them with the ideal opportunity to discuss issues specific to the Highlands & Islands.

5. Consultation Point Two

“We consider that the key objectives of the 2001 Census were met. Do you agree? If not, which of these objectives do you believe were not met and what lessons can be learned?”

The 8 key objectives for the 2001 Census were:

1. To carry out the 2001 Census fieldwork in April/May 2001, with suitable publicity.
2. To ensure 2001 Census form data capture and coding is complete by December 2001.
3. To ensure that the procedures to capture and clean data from forms and create databases for analysis comply with predefined quality standards.
4. To decide, after consultation, the products and services to be delivered using 2001 Census data.
5. To produce counts of the population by age, sex and area by August 2002 taking account of any Census undercount.
6. To produce predefined outputs from the Census for all areas and covering all topics by March 2003.
7. To Maintain a Geographical Information System to assist Census planning and meet other GROS geography needs.
8. To evaluate and review the 2001 Census programme and make recommendations for the future.

5.1 Overall, respondents were content that the key objectives of the 2001 Census were met. The Highland Well-Being Alliance commented that it would have been more useful for them if Census outputs were available at Local Enterprise Company level for all topics alongside the other geographical outputs.

6.0 Consultation Point Three

“Could users indicate how they would benefit from earlier publication of full results (say a year after Census day instead of 18 months) in a way which allows us to assess how much extra it would be worth spending to meet that timetable?”

6.1 Members of the Highland Well-Being Alliance expressed a view that it would be of great benefit to receive the full results earlier to allow more responsive policy making. They understood that earlier results might compromise the accuracy of the data, which they see as the great strength of the Census rather than timeliness. They stressed that the important thing was to produce a detailed timetable and adhere to it. This allows users to plan other pieces of work around delivery of Census data.

7.0 Consultation Point Four

“Would users welcome a two stage publication of results (provisional followed by fully-adjusted)?”

7.1 The Highland Well-Being Alliance would prefer a one-stage publication of results as GROS did for the 2001 results. This, they feel, would prevent confusion between provisional and fully adjusted results.

8.0 Consultation Point Five

“Could users give their opinions of the four population enumeration bases which we are considering? If changes from the 2001 Census are needed, please explain why.”

8.1 All respondents commenting on this consultation point stated that the population usually resident would be most desirable to keep consistency with previous Censuses, to include people temporarily away from Scotland and to exclude people temporarily present in Scotland.

8.2 A number of respondents thought the term “usual residence” needed to be defined clearly so that those with more than one address can determine which one they should class as usual residence. The definition should take

into account people with no usual residence, that is homeless and staying in the household on a temporary basis. They noted that it would be beneficial if the question could enable individuals in these households to be identified.

9. Consultation Point Six

“Could users give their opinions on other aspects of the Census which they feel we may not have fully considered?”

- 9.1. This consultation point had the highest response rate probably owing to the openness of the question. Respondents commented on a wide range of topics including enumeration procedures, under-enumeration, date of the Census, publicity and the 2006 Census Test.
- 9.2. Probably the strongest representation was made on enumeration issues. Generally, respondents thought that enumeration procedures could and must be improved to reach more communities and evidence suggests that some of these groups had been under enumerated in 2001. The range of methods needed to count these groups are wide and varied.
- 9.3. Gypsy Travellers representatives said there were two main barriers to Gypsy Travellers completing the Census Form; they do not understand how Census information can help advance their interests and the community suffers a relatively high rate of literacy problems.
- 9.4. They suggested that GROS should publicise the Census better in 2011 advertising exactly what the information will be used for and how it can help communities.
- 9.5. GROS should also work with as many Gypsy Traveller representatives during the next five year as possible because there is no single overarching representative organisation.
- 9.6. Enumeration procedures should take into account the fact the many Gypsy Travellers have literacy problems and may not want to admit that to an enumerator. One suggested method is to use Gypsy Travellers as enumerators in their own communities. These community enumerators, or ‘Champions’, would be trusted in the

communities and could help provide assistance in a sensitive fashion. The number of community enumerators required is difficult to gauge as estimates for the number of Gypsy Travellers vary between 2000 and 15,000.

- 9.7. Concerns about enumeration were also expressed by representatives from disabled groups. They said that GROS would have to identify hard to reach groups and consider how to ensure they are included. They pointed out that for many disabled people, such as the Deafblind, the Census questionnaire is a difficult and inaccessible. The document requires transcription into an appropriate format, such as Braille, Moon, extra large print or audio tape. Some other Deafblind people communicate solely by the Deafblind Manual - a longer and more protracted process. Deafblind people should be afforded more time to complete their form and GROS should fund guide/communicator support when it is not available through their Local Authority.
- 9.8. The British Sign Language and Linguistic Access Group said that enumerators would have to be trained to identify what needs a person has and then assist deaf and Deafblind people in completing their form.
- 9.9. The Equality Network, a Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender organisation, supported web-based completion of Census forms because it would enhance individual privacy, which is especially important for sensitive questions.
- 9.10. Two responses focused on the Census more generally. One individual requested that Census records are released after 80 years instead of 100 as they are now. One other questioned the cost of running a Census and described it as an unwarranted intrusion into his life.

10. Consultation Point Seven

“We would welcome input on the design aspects of the income question for the 2006 Census Test.”

- 10.1. The Highland Well-Being Alliance commented in depth on this issue.

- 10.2. They said that it would provide a greater understanding of the population and economy and significantly enhance the ability to target resources to those most in need. It is however recognised that this has complicating implications for response rate.
- 10.3. The Alliance pointed out that collection issues for those who are self employed may be different for employees and suggested that separate questions would be required for each. It was suggested that individual income should be collected and collated to household level in processing.
- 10.4. Within year variation in income is important in some sectors of the economy and the Alliance would prefer a question which provided data on seasonal variation of income.
- 10.5. They commented that collection and output of income data should be harmonised with other surveys.

11. Consultation Point Eight

“We would welcome your opinions of how useful/relevant alternative methods of Census data collection would be.”

- 11.1. Frank Dixon of the Scottish Executive Transport Department commented on the possibility of replacing the vehicle access question with data from the DVLA. His view was that there are significant problems with this data that preclude its use as a census alternative.
- 11.2. Company cars available for private use are often registered at a company address. DVLA data can not identify to the correct household address for company cars. Further, although the data allows some aggregation of vehicle numbers at post code level the distribution between households isn't given.
- 11.3. The Highland Well-Being Alliance commented that council tax rates are inadequate as an indication of income. They also cited two pieces of research into second homes and the private rented sector being conducted by Communities Scotland. They were not yet available at the time of writing.