

**Manchester City Council  
Report for Information**

**Committee:** Resources and Governance Overview and Scrutiny  
Committee - 4 March 2010

**Subject:** Preparations for the 2011 Census

**Report Of:** The City Treasurer

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**Purpose of Report:**

To review progress made in undertaking activity which will support the Office of National Statistic in the delivery of an effective Census in 2011 and provide assurance to the City Council that the results are as expected.

**Recommendations:**

The Resource and Governance Overview and Scrutiny Committee are requested to note and comment on progress towards preparations for the Census to be held in 2011.

**Financial Consequences for the Capital and Revenue Budgets:**

A specific budget allocation of £200k has been made for 2010/11.

<b>Contact Officers</b>	<b>Tel Number</b>	<b>E-Mail Address</b>
Richard Paver	234 3564	r.paver@manchester.gov.uk
John Bradley	234 4328	j.bradley@manchester.gov.uk

## **Introduction:**

- 1) This report summarises the progress which has been made and the activities which are planned to support the Office of National Statistics (ONS) in the delivery of an effective Census in 2011 and provide assurance to the City Council that the results are as expected.

## **Background**

- 2) A national Census of the population is undertaken every ten years, the last being in 2001. Thereafter, mid year estimates of the changes in population are made based on registered births, deaths and estimates of internal and international migration. The Census is a statutory requirement and is covered by the 1920 Census Act.
- 3) The Census is used for demographic analysis purposes and contributes to information used in Council decision making, planning and resource prioritisation. It provides a rich source of data down to small area levels, called output areas, which comprise around 125 households. There are approximately 40 output areas per ward. This data often remains the key source of demographic information which can be analysed to this level of detail for the 10 year period between each Census.
- 4) More directly and significantly, however, the population estimates are used by the Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG) in allocating revenue support grant (RSG) to Council's and by other Government departments to other public sector bodies, in particular, NHS Manchester.
- 5) Members will recall that the results of the 2001 Census were unexpectedly and significantly lower than the previous (2000) mid year estimate. Following publication, and over a period of two years, the Council successfully worked with ONS to review the results and, as a result, the population estimates were increased by around 30,000, people. This meant that over £100m of revenue support grant was recovered over the period covered by the 2001 Census which would otherwise have been lost had the Census outcome not been challenged. In relation to PCT funding, grant was not reinstated even though the population estimate was revised.
- 6) Since the revision of the population estimates, Manchester has continued to work with ONS to consider how the Census in 2011 can be delivered more effectively. The Chief Executive was appointed by ONS as the Census Regional Champion for the North West Region and the Council's National Census Coordinator is a member of the ONS Operational Working Group which combines local authority and ONS expertise to help refine the Census field methodologies.
- 7) The Council's Director of communication is also a member of the ONS Communications Working Group which is helping to identify the most appropriate ways to engage with the population in encouraging them to

complete the Census, including hard to reach groups. These roles have enabled Manchester to be at the forefront of understanding and influencing the design of the 2011 Census.

## 2011 Census Design

8) As a result of the concerns expressed following the 2001 Census, ONS fundamentally reviewed the approach to be adopted for 2011 and have significantly changed the proposed methodologies. Undoubtedly Manchester is and will remain one of the most challenging areas to enumerate because of the dynamic and complex demographic nature of the city.

9) The key changes to the field methodologies used to conduct the Census are:-

- Census forms will be posted to 95% of addresses and can be posted back. Up to and including the 1991 Census, forms were hand delivered and collected. In 2001 forms were hand delivered but post back facilities were provided for the first time.

This approach places even more emphasis on the need for an accurate address register to ensure all households receive a form. Using an out of date address register was a significant failure in 2001.

- Because of post out/post back, ONS will not need to employ as many temporary staff as previously and can shift focus to follow up activity at addresses where forms have not been returned. Nationally, ONS estimate that the workforce deployed will fall from 70,000 to 35,000 but that three times more hours will actually be deployed following up on none response than in 2001. This is an important improvement for the City because this will deploy higher resources in hard to count areas to drive up the response rate. The higher the response rate the better the accuracy of the final count.
  - To ensure that staff are used flexibly and in priority areas a form tracking system will be used which will show, on a daily basis, which addresses are still outstanding. In 2001 control of forms was problematic and the review of Manchester's results uncovered that around 5000 forms had been lost and not counted.
  - A facility to complete Census forms on-line will be provided for the first time. ONS believe this will help to improve overall response rates.
- 10) In addition to improvements in field methodologies, ONS are also developing their quality assurance (QA) processes which provide an independent assessment of the accuracy of the Census. QA processes indicated that the results for Manchester were questionable in 2001 but this did not trigger a change to the published result. Manchester had to make strong representation to ONS to commission a joint post Census review which validated the QA results.

- 11) In order to improve QA processes, ONS are examining the extent to which administrative data held by Local Authorities can be used to cross check Census results and have selected Manchester as one of ten pilot authorities to develop this approach. This is an important area and mirrors the council's own desire to establish its own estimate of the population so that we can also assess the accuracy of the outcome. These population estimates will be significantly enhanced if local authority data can be cross checked with PCT data which is a significant component factor used by ONS in calculating population movement. We are currently working with the PCT to develop statistical analysis of this data to derive our own population estimates.
- 12) ONS are seeking considerably more practical assistance from Local Authorities to support them in the delivery of the Census. They recognise that in 2001, Local Authorities across the Country had little involvement in the Census but they are an important source of local information and resources which can be harnessed to improve the result. There is, however, a tension between ONS seeking assistance from local government but also needing to remain sufficiently independent when producing estimates upon which local government funding is dependent. The next section of this report outlines the nature of this support.

### **Manchester's Support for Delivery of the Census**

- 13) The Council has established a Task Group which oversees preparations based on a project plan and is Chaired by the City Treasurer reporting periodically to the Centre Management Group Chaired by the Chief Executive. A budget allocation of £200k has been made to cover the additional costs associated with delivering this level of support over and above the contribution which services can make as part of their day to day activity.
- 14) A Risk Register has been developed to cover activity and this is attached at Appendix 1.

The main areas of activity are

- Address Register
- Communal establishments
- Community engagement and publicity
- Logistical support including recruitment of temporary staff

Each of these areas is explained in more detail below.

#### **Address Register.**

- 15) ONS have sought to use a national address register to enable post out of Census Forms. These are the National Land and Property Gazetteer (NLPG) maintained by local authorities through their own Local Land and Property Gazetteer (LLPG) and the Post Office address file (which deals with post codes) coupled with related products supplied by Ordnance Survey.

- 16) ONS has found neither of these databases to be sufficient for their purposes and are undertaking an exercise to combine them to produce their own household address register. As part of this process ONS requested that the Council review 4000 addresses to resolve potential data anomalies. This work was completed by the deadline of 28 February.
- 17) In addition, as part of developing a better understanding of Council data, as outlined in the Information Strategy and in preparation for improvements in customer relationship management (CRM) systems, the Council has been developing the linkages between the LLPG and other address based systems including Council Tax and the Electoral Register. Work is well progressed to synchronise these systems and improve address data quality but it will be important to continue to keep addressing information accurate and up to date for when the final version is used by ONS to print and deliver Census forms.

### Communal Establishments

- 18) ONS use special enumeration methods to obtain Census returns from a variety of different communal establishment including, for example, student halls, nursing homes, caravan sites and houseboats.
- 19) Work is underway to construct a database of communal establishments which can be used to help ONS validate their own records. It is anticipated that ONS will ask the Council to comment on their communal establishment database in May/June of this year and we need to be ready to do this.

### Community Engagement and Publicity

- 20) ONS have identified target population groups who, for an array of reasons, may not be willing or able to participate in the Census so would need to be encouraged or assisted to comply. The target groups are as follows:-

<b>ONS Target Population Groups</b>				
<b>Ethnic minority Communities</b>	<b>Transient Communities</b>	<b>Older and vulnerable people</b>	<b>Accommodation based groupings</b>	<b>Hard to reach individuals</b>
Bangladeshi	Homeless	Adults 80+	People with more than one residence	Students
Black African	Gypsies and Travellers	Physically impaired	Gated communities	Young adults
Black Caribbean	Illegal immigrants	Blind/visually impaired	Multi occupancy dwellings	Borders/lodgers
Chinese		Hearing impaired	Armed forces	
Indian			People living in	

			prison	
Pakistani				
Long term migrants				
Short term migrants				

- 21) Work has commenced in drawing together information about community groups and key contacts and it intended, over the next two months, to identify an Action Plan for each of these target groups which identifies how best to encourage or assist. This is likely to involve a mixture of local publicity, engagement with community groups and specific types of help and support all of which needs to be assessed against and coordinated with the ONS national campaign and local activity by their Area Manager to ensure that collective resources are deployed to best effect.
- 22) It is also important to recognise the criticality of timing in ensuring activity is neither too early for the effect to be lost or too late to make a difference in improving response rates.

#### **Logistical support including recruitment of temporary staff**

- 23) ONS are currently finalising the numbers of staff who will be employed to conduct the Census. Area managers are recruited from summer 2010 concentrating, at first, on community liaison activity. From early 2011, Census Coordinators and Collectors are appointed and the main activity happens between March 2011 and May 2011 involving form delivery, return and follow up. "Census day" is 27 March 2011.
- 24) After the Census follow up period, in June 2011 a separate Census Coverage Survey (CCS) is undertaken to quality assure the original results and provide a statistical basis for estimating for those people who did not respond.
- 25) Final staffing numbers have not yet been finalised by ONS and are currently under review based upon the results of the rehearsal in late 2009. This showed that response rates in inner cities were much lower than expected. Subject to this review by ONS, best assessments are that around 300-400 posts are envisaged for Manchester.
- 26) While these posts will be advertised nationally through open competition, there is significant advantage to both ONS and the Council if Council staff are appointed. MCC employees would bring motivation, experience and local knowledge to support the process. Work is currently underway to consider how best to support this appointment process in encouraging council staff to seek to undertake Census roles, however, the Council's support to this process could be constraint by the national contractual arrangements entered into by ONS to recruit and train an overall workforce of 35,000.

- 27) In addition to supporting staffing, the Council may also be able to assist with logistics such as meeting rooms or training facilities but it is too early to plan for the details of this.

**Conclusions.**

- 28) Work is progressing well in preparing for the 2011 Census as preparations move from seeking to assist ONS in the design of methodologies to the practical implementation of the finalised approach.
- 29) Project planning methodologies are in place to manage activity which is being overseen by the City Treasurer.
- 30) It remains the case that Manchester will be challenging to enumerate because of its diverse and complex nature and we will need to liaise closely with ONS to ensure that an accurate Census is produced.

## Appendix 1

### Census 2011 Risk Register

**Note** Risk scores are a product of the **consequence** of something happening and the **likelihood** of it happening. The risks described below all relate to a single issue so the consequence is identical for all risks.

#### **Consequence – Major (score of 5).**

Revenue support grant (RSG) is dependent on population estimates and corrections to the 2001 Census resulted in reinstatement of RSG of £10m per year for 10 years which would otherwise have been lost. There are also associated financial impacts on the PCT.

The reputation of Manchester as a City growing in international significance would be damaged by an inaccurate and significantly lower estimate of the population.

Poor Census results could jeopardise effective decision making, resource prioritisation and planning between 2012 and 2022.

#### **Likelihood**

All risk score either “could emerge” or “should emerge” based on corporate criteria. None can be classed as “unlikely to emerge” or impossible.

**Consequently, all risks outlined below are scored as High.**

Risk	Mitigation	Comments
<b>ONS methodologies are ineffective in delivering an accurate Census Estimate</b>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>In overall terms ONS fail to engage with local government to design and deliver an effective Census</li> </ul>	<p>The Chief Executive has been appointed by ONS as the Census Regional Champion for the North West Region</p> <p>The Council's National Census Coordinator is a member of the ONS Operational Working Group which is advising ONS on the effective design of methodologies</p> <p>The Council's Director of Communications is a member of the ONS Communication Working Group which is advising ONS on the best way to engage diverse communities and provide effective communication to encourage participation</p> <p>The Councils National Census Coordinator is working with other key Councils involved in testing methodologies to identify potential issues for ONS to address.</p> <p>Manchester agreed to be one of ten pilot authorities chosen to develop quality assurance processes to validate the accuracy of the Census</p>	<p>Manchester will be one of the most difficult areas to enumerate and the extent to which ONS engage specifically with Manchester is an important dimension.</p> <p>These roles have enable us to stress this point</p>

Risk	Mitigation	Comments
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The address register is incomplete and properties are missed or unaccounted for in the Census and Census coverage survey</li> </ul>	<p>ONS are producing a national address register by merging Post Office and local authority address registers and will undertake further address checking work in selected areas which will include parts of Manchester</p> <p>MCC have been asked to resolve 4000 address anomalies by 28 February 2010 to improve address quality</p> <p>The Council is synchronising its main address registers to gain a more comprehensive view and is pressing ONS to share results</p>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Communal Establishments which require special enumeration techniques are not identified</li> </ul>	<p>ONS are developing a database of communal establishments and will allow MCC to comment on this.</p> <p>MCC are developing our own database of CE's to cross check with ONS</p>	<p>The most challenging communal establishments to enumerate relate to students and HMO's. There is a high prevalence of these in Manchester</p>

Risk	Mitigation	Comments
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Insufficient ONS resources are deployed in Manchester to provide for effective enumeration</li> </ul>	<p>ONS have designed an algorithm to determine the resources to be deployed locally, based on anticipated response rates which they believe will effectively cover the whole country but will distribute additional resources to those areas which are hardest to Count</p> <p>For the first time ONS will provide an on-line internet option for completing Census forms.</p>	<p>We are pressing to understand this basis for distribution and have raised concerns that poorer than expected responses in the rehearsal mean it needs to be re-evaluated</p> <p>Responses to on-line completion of forms in the Census rehearsal were much lower than expected and the reasons are being investigated by ONS</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>People employed by ONS are insufficiently skilled or committed and response rates suffer</li> </ul>	<p>Operational Working Group and other LA' groupings have raised various issues for consideration by ONS. Arrangements are currently under review based on these concerns and the outcome of the rehearsal</p>	<p>Arrangements for CAPITA liaison are as yet unclear in terms of targeting local skills and knowledge and tailoring training to local conditions.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The form tracking system and associated flexible deployment of resources fail and the delivery, completion and follow up of Census forms is inadequate</li> </ul>	<p>IT systems were tested in the recent rehearsal and are said to have worked well</p>	<p>The Operational Working Group will be seeking evidence of this.</p>

Risk	Mitigation	Comments
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Communication and publicity campaigns fail to get the message over generally and to hard to reach groups and responses are lower than required for accurate estimation</li> </ul>	<p>ONS have researched barriers to completion and have designed publicity materials accordingly</p> <p>ONS will appoint 50+ community liaison staff nationally to assist community liaison and intend to deploy 3 in and around Manchester</p> <p>ONS will appoint an area manager from summer 2010 to assist in community engagement</p> <p>MCC has recognised the importance of engagement and is planning to supplement the national ONS processes at a local level. Community engagement and publicity plans are currently under development</p>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The postal provider fails to deliver and return forms as contractually required</li> </ul>		Contingency plans by ONS as yet unknown
<b>The Council does not provide the necessary assistance to ONS to deliver an accurate Census</b>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>There is insufficient political and senior management support for the delivery of an accurate Census in 2011</li> </ul>	<p>The Leader and Chief Executive are both personally committed to supporting the 2011 Census because of the poor results associated with 2001.</p> <p>The Council appointed a National Census Coordinator to oversee the Councils preparation to support ONS</p>	Reporting lines to SMT currently under consideration

Risk	Mitigation	Comments
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Inadequate budget is provided to deliver the necessary levels of local publicity and other logistical support</li> </ul>	<p>£200k included in proposed budget.</p>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Individual officers or teams of the city council and partner organisations do not recognise the priority of the Census and provide inadequate support</li> </ul>	<p>SMT are committed to supporting this work and are committed to intervene if barriers are encountered</p> <p>A Project Plan and Risk Register have been developed to identify the individual workstreams and issues associated with providing effective support across the Council</p> <p>A Census Task Group has been established to oversee the detailed workstreams and support the National Census Coordinator is delivering the project plan</p>	<p>Reporting lines to SMT currently under consideration</p>
<p><b>Despite effective systems, processes and resources the results of the Census are significantly lower than current estimates and government grant is significantly reduced</b></p>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Quality assurance processes at ONS are ineffective in identifying flaws in the conduct of the Census</li> </ul>	<p>Since the outcome of 2001 MCC has pressed ONS to consider quality assurance and has provided input into the development of revised methodologies.</p> <p>Manchester is to act as an initial pilot authority to develop QA processes using LA administrative data.</p>	

<b>Risk</b>	<b>Mitigation</b>	<b>Comments</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>The Council does not have a reliable view of the population of Manchester or the administrative data available to make an effective challenge of the results</li></ul>	An initiative to bring together MCC administrative data and PCT data is progressing to develop our own population estimates.	Initial results are unclear and more work is needed to understand data issues