

Minutes

Corporate Services and Partnerships Policy
Overview Committee
Wednesday, 13 October 2010
Meeting held at Committee Room 6 - Civic Centre,
High Street, Uxbridge UB8 1UW



	<p>Members Present: Councillors Richard Lewis (Chairman), Raymond Graham, Shirley Harper-O'Neill, Anita MacDonald, Robin Sansarpuri and Michael White.</p> <p>Apologies: Councillor Carol Melvin (Councillor Shirley Harper-O'Neill substituting)</p> <p>Officers: Ben Lea (Schools Resource Manager – Finance and Resources), Pam Nash (Strategic Information Officer, Deputy Chief Executive's Office) and Khalid Ahmed (Democratic Services Manager).</p> <p>Witnesses: Mohamud Ali (Community Adviser – Office for National Statistics), Amanda King (Area Manager for Office for National Statistics) and Nick O'Donnell (Head of Stakeholder Management for Office for National Statistics)</p>
23.	<p>DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST</p> <p>None.</p>
24.	<p>MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 7 SEPTEMBER 2010</p> <p>Agreed as an accurate record.</p>
25.	<p>EXCLUSION OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC</p> <p>It was agreed that all items of business were considered in public.</p>
26.	<p>MAJOR REVIEW – CENSUS 2011 – TO LOOK AT HOW THIS COUNCIL CAN CONTRIBUTE TO IMPROVING THE POPULATION DATA FOR THE BOROUGH</p> <p>Members were provided with a report which provided details of progress made on the review so far, together with details of information which had been requested at the last meeting.</p> <p>Nick O'Donnell, Head of Stakeholder Management and Amanda King, Area Manager for Office for National Statistics (ONS) attended the meeting and provided the review with an update on progress so far in relation to the preparation of the Census.</p> <p>Members were informed that for across Hillingdon, the Census</p> <p>Action By:</p>

	<p>field operation consisted of an Area Manager, 15 Coordinators and 1 shared Community Advisor. In addition, there would be approximately 140 collectors and special enumerators,. Exact numbers would be decided and communicated in early November. The Community Advisor, Mohamud Ali introduced himself to Members and explained that he was a representative of the Somali community and would be working across Hillingdon, Hounslow and Ealing.</p> <p>A number of issues were raised and these included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Members were reminded that this Council's Communications Strategy for the Census was drafted. However ONS had yet to release details of the national publicity / communications strategy as this has been delayed pending Government restrictions on marketing spend. ONS hopes to share its plans with local authorities in late November. Members expressed some concern at this as this authority had to co-ordinate its communications and publicity with that of ONS • Members were assured that there would be a national advertising campaign in February and this would involve TV and radio commercials to raise awareness of the 2011 Census and highlight to the public the importance of filling in the Census questionnaire. In addition technology such as Facebook, Twitter etc would be used to engage with younger people • The Council's Communication's Team, pending finalisation of the national communication's strategy, planned to utilise all existing communications channels to help encourage returns of the Census questionnaire including the Council magazine, Hillingdon People, the Council's website, social media, news media and resident engagement • The emphasis of engagement should not just be to focus on minority ethnic groups, but should be to focus on all of the general public. This was because there was evidence to suggest that there were particular groups of the general public as a whole who needed to be aware of the importance of participation in the Census • The Census Local Partnership Group would focus on the general public as a whole where maximum engagement would take place • The Community Advisor would be working with all religious and community groups for the Somali population at community events across the Borough. Reference was made to a community event which would be taking place with the West London Somaliland community in Hayes on 15 October 2010 • Regarding the use of data obtained from the Council, the public would be assured that the data would not be 	<p>Action By:</p>
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	<p>of a personal nature or at individual level, but would be at an aggregate level to enable data quality assurance. This would be publicised to ensure the public were assured of confidentiality.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reference was made to data on maternity rates and ONS said they would check on this to see if this information could be used for the Census • Voluntary organisations had also been contacted as they held useful data • Radio was being used to promote the Census and reference was made to the Area Manager for ONS presenting a Census launch on Hayes FM radio on 18 October. The use of Hospital Radio would also be investigated as a source of publicity for the Census • Brunel University and other further and higher education establishments within the Borough would be targeted for engagement as there had to be a strong message conveyed to students and the youth population in general. Engagement with relevant university managers would also be carried out by the Area Manager later this year to agree arrangements for enumerating students. • Reference was made to future housing developments such as the proposals for RAF Uxbridge and it was reported that for the purpose of the Census, population projections from future housing developments would be used • In relation to the issue of refugees and asylum seekers, ONS confirmed that it had been in contact with the Borders Agency and the immigration and detention centres to capture information about the number of refugees and asylum seekers within the Borough. • Reference was made to a scrutiny review into the Census which Crawley Borough Council plans to undertake and Members felt it would be useful to make contact with them as Gatwick airport falls within the LA boundary. • ONS was working closely with both London Councils and the Greater London Authority to develop a plan London partnership plan. This would capture the marketing and communication activities across London and would look to set out what actions the Mayor might undertake. <p>The Schools Resource Manager for Finance and Resources attended the meeting and provided the review with information relating to the financial impact on the Council of undercounting the Census, specifically in relation to the Government Grant the Council received. The points he made were as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Census data was more critical to the long term financial planning of the Council than the short term. There was 	<p>Action By:</p> <p>Amanda King / Nick O'Donnell</p>
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	<p>no short term gain to this Council from the data produced from the Census</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The data provided was used for the Sustainable Community Strategy which set out Hillingdon's Local Strategic Partnerships aims and ambitions for the Borough over the next 10 years • Census population data would not immediately impact on Government grant allocations to this Council. Formula grant distribution for 2011/12 would be based on ONS 2008 based Sub-National Population Projections which were released in May 2010 • The earliest time that the population data from the 2011 Census would filter through and impact on the Council in terms of grants, would be around 2014/2015. However, once in the funding system, Census population data stayed in the population estimates for a long time, since all ONS population estimates and projections were ultimately based on adjustments to the fixed Census count • One of the main groups believed to be undercounted were recent migrants. Concerns over undercounting of migrants in ONS population estimates peaked in 2007 and had generally receded since then, based on three key factors:- the impact of the recession, a tightening of visa restrictions and an improvement in ONS methodologies for identifying the impact of migrants on population estimates • A significant demographic issue currently impacting on the Council was the increase in live births in the Borough and the impact of this on the future demand for primary school places. The Census would provide a key barometer of this trend and the opportunity to compare the Census population count with other local data generated through the annual school census and early years census and Primary Care Trust data. Schools funding for the Borough was not dependent on ONS Census data but rather on the education censuses • Members were provided with an illustration of the impact of population changes within the Government's distribution model for Formula Grant • In the current year the Council received £84.4m in Government grants which was based on 2008 sub national projections. If the only change to the model was to increase Hillingdon's population by 5,000, then the Council's formula grant would increase by £78,000, or after floor damping by £23,000. However, if the only change to this model was to increase Hull's population by 5,000, then Hillingdon's formula grant would increase by £1.5m, or after floor damping by £326,000 • Allocations to authorities within the formula were made relative to the authorities with the most extreme 	<p>Action By:</p>
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characteristics, e.g the lowest levels of need, the lowest ability to raise resources from Council Tax etc. Hull has a similar ONS estimated population to this Borough and has the lowest ability to raise resources from Council Tax in England, due to the low value of its housing stock relative to its population. Hence a change in Hull's population has a redistributive effect far in excess of the proportion of its share of the population of the country as a whole.

- In the short term and under the current funding model it would be around 15 times more effective for the Council to be assisting ONS to count the population of Hull than Hillingdon's own population
- This underlines the instability contained in the current formula grant distribution rather than any reason not to ensure that the Census count in Hillingdon was as accurate as possible
- Although there were no immediate plans to do so, it was possible that funding distribution systems could change significantly over the medium to long term.

Community Engagement meeting

Reference was made to a meeting which took place with community groups, interfaith networks and residents associations on 29 September when the Strategic Information Officer (Assistant Census Liaison Officer) and the Area Manager for ONS gave a presentation on the purpose and aims of the Census. A wide cross section of groups attended the session and proved important as a first step to engaging with people of the Borough. Part of the meeting was aimed at recruiting to the 140 vacancies which were available for Census work within Hillingdon.

Homes in Back Gardens

Members were provided with details on the issue raised at the last meeting which related to the problem of people who lived in dwellings in back gardens. The review was informed that the erection of structures in gardens without Planning or Building Control regulation was a particularly challenging issue and was a London wide matter and reflected demand for rented accommodation and gaps in current Planning legislation.

Members were informed that based on observations during the Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMO) survey, and counts in a number of streets in Hayes, officers estimated there were between 2000 and 3000 such structures, numbers of which were privately rented, either singly or in multiple- occupation. These structures did not tend to show up in HMO counts or censuses and, where occupied, were likely to be on cash basis.

	<p>Members recommended that the data from the HMO survey be shared with ONS for the Census.</p> <p>Impact on provision of health services</p> <p>At the last meeting of the Committee Members discussed the possible repercussions of undercounting on the Census for the provision of health services. The Joint Director of Public Health reported that whether Hillingdon had significantly lost out due to undercounting on the last Census, depended not only on the absolute assumed undercounting in the Borough of the resident population but also more importantly on the relative size of under-reporting compared to other Boroughs. It was this latter issue which would determine how far Hillingdon PCT was underfunded.</p> <p>There would have been two exercises in estimating the absolute and relative size of under-enumeration. Firstly ONS would have made a calculation of the "correct" Borough population and secondly Councils would have made their independent assessment of their resident population. Almost invariably the Borough estimates of population size were greater than the ONS estimates.</p> <p>Members were informed that for PCT funding the Census was much less important than for LBH. This was because NHS funding was predominantly based on historic funding. A target funding based partly on population size was also calculated but the pace of change to the target budget from the historic budget was usually small. There was no compelling case to argue that the PCT had suffered overall in funding allocations over the past decade.</p> <p>Report of Lambeth Council – Census Focus Group</p> <p>Included in the agenda was a report which had been prepared by Lambeth Council and which looked at the reasons why participation rates in the Census differed amongst some groups of the community. Officers were asked to bring back to the next meeting details of the measures which this report had proposed to be introduced, to improve participation in the Census, by all groups and residents within the Borough.</p> <p>The Chairman thanked witnesses for the information provided.</p> <p>Discussion took place on the evidence which had been provided for the review so far and Members agreed that community engagement was vital to promote the importance of the Census. It was agreed that for the Member Development Training Day which was taking place on 2 December, a session should be allotted to the Census 2011. Members noted the</p>	<p>Khalid Ahmed</p> <p>Khalid Ahmed</p> <p>Khalid Ahmed</p>
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	<p>importance of all Members of the Council using their community champion role to promote the Census to all their constituents.</p> <p>Members expressed concern at the delay of the national communications strategy which was delaying this Council's community strategy. Members asked that officers from ONS be invited to the next meeting of this Committee to update the review on the national strategy. In relation to publicising the Census, Members asked that consideration be given to using the many public notice boards within the Borough and that officers be asked to progress this when the Council's communication strategy was finalised.</p> <p>Lastly officers were asked to contact the London Borough of Hounslow, Crawley Borough Council and Dover District Council to ascertain their approaches to the promotion and engagement processes being used for the Census 2011.</p> <p>Resolved –</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. That the information provided from the witnesses form part of the evidence for the review. 2. That approval be given to the actions outlined above. 	<p>Action By:</p> <p>Emma Marsh</p> <p>Khalid Ahmed</p>
27.	<p>WORK PROGRAMME 2010/11</p> <p>The report was noted.</p>	
28.	<p>CABINET FORWARD PLAN</p> <p>The report was noted.</p>	
	<p>Meeting closed at 9.00pm Next meeting: 11 November 2010 at 7.30pm.</p>	

These are the minutes of the above meeting. For more information on any of the resolutions please contact Khalid Ahmed on 01895 250833. Circulation of these minutes are to Councillors, Officers, the Press and Members of the Public.