

Census Advisory Group (CAG)

Royston House

Tuesday, 3 December 2013.

<u>Present</u>	Dr Norman Caven	NISRA
	Mr Robert Beatty	Census – NISRA (Chair)
	Mr Brian Green	Census – NISRA
	Dr David Marshall	DMB – NISRA
	Mr Alastair Calder	ONS
	Dr John Power	NI Assembly
	Mr Colin McIlheney	PricewaterhouseCoopers
	Mr Darren McKinstry	Equality Commission for NI
	Dr Dermot O'Reilly	Epidemiology and Public Health (QUB)
	Dr Ian Shuttleworth	Queen's University, Belfast
	Dr Tony Dignan	Economic Research and Evaluation
	Mr Joe Frey	NI Housing Executive
	Ms Jocelyn McCarley	Electoral Office NI
	Ms Sharon McNicholl	Belfast City Council
	Mrs Maire Brolly	BY2011 – DMB – NISRA
	Mrs Regina McGeown	Demography/NINIS – DMB – NISRA
	Mrs Cathryn Blair	ADRC/NILS – DMB – NISRA
	Mr Brian French	Census – NISRA
<u>Secretary:</u>	Mr Hugh Kerr	Census – NISRA
<u>Apologies:</u>	Prof. David Martin	University of Southampton
	Mr Richard Ramsey	Ulster Bank
	Mr Stephen Bloomer	NI Council for Voluntary Action
	Prof. Adele Marshall	Queen's University, Belfast

1. Welcome and Introductions

Mr Beatty welcomed members to the meeting, thanked those present for their attendance and recorded apologies for those unable to attend. He welcomed Mr Calder (ONS) to the meeting.

2. Minutes and Actions from previous meeting

The minutes from the previous meeting were accepted.

Mr Beatty also confirmed that all actions were closed.

3. Agenda Item 3: Census Update

Mr Green updated CAG members on progress made on the various Census projects since the last meeting.

[Census Update \(PDF 300 KB\)](#)

The topics covered included reviews of the following:

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| ➤ | Releases in 2012/13 | Population and Household Estimates; Key and Quick Statistics; UK 1 st Release: Population and Household Estimates. |
| ➤ | Releases in 2013/14 so far | Detailed Characteristics; Ethnicity, Country of Birth and Main Language; Housing, Labour Market and Voluntary Work; All Themes (Other geographies); New LGDs; Postcodes; Report of the Registrar General; UK 2 nd Release – Key and Quick Statistics. |
| ➤ | Forthcoming Releases | New LGDs – Key and Quick Statistics; Local Characteristics; General Report. |
| ➤ | Specialist Outputs | Eurostat; Micro-data; Flow data. |
| ➤ | Other Outputs and Projects (all 2014) | Grid Square outputs; Review of Settlement and Urban/Rural classifications; Hard-copy 2011 Census Summary Report. |
| ➤ | Uses of the 2011 Census data | NILS; Future Housing Need; NI Strategic Multi-modelling Transport Model. |
| ➤ | Online Dissemination / Visualisation | 2011 Census results all disseminated through NINIS; SMARTCensus Visualisation; All Ireland Census Atlas. |

Points arising from this agenda item:

- Flow data – Dr Shuttleworth asked what level of disaggregation was planned. Mr Green advised that no decision had been taken as yet and that a workshop was planned for later in December in order to advance the specification of the Flowdata products. He added that the 2001 products would inform the development of the 2011 specifications but that he would be happy to feed any specific requirements into the discussion.
- Comparisons with 2001 – Dr Dignan asked what comparisons would be made at Small Area level between 2011 and 2001. Mr Beatty advised that all 2011 and 2001 information would be available on NINIS. Mrs McGeown added that there is a 'Build your own tables' function on NINIS that will shortly be available again to users so that they can undertake comparisons that are of specific interest to them. In terms of geography, it was felt that SOA level was optimum for such comparisons.
- Mr Green added that Census Branch is now in a position to accept requests for Commissioned Tables. He explained that each would be assessed for Statistical Disclosure before processing to ensure that the information contained is safe to release. Dr Caven asked if Commissioned Tables will have wider circulation. Mr Green advised that all Commissioned Tables will be added to NINIS as part of NISRA's National Statistics obligations. Dr Power asked about costs. Mr Green advised that there was a charging policy for Commissioned Tables in line with the rest of the UK. He agreed to provide the charging policy to Dr Power. Mr Beatty added that a charge is made only where more than a half day's work is needed.

ACTION: Mr Green (Completed)

- Ms McNicholl advised that the availability of the profiles for the 11 new District Councils was very timely and asked if there were any plans to engage directly with SOLAS/NILGA to ensure that customers are aware of the data being made available. Mr Beatty said that he was content for Ms McNicholl to forward the information to SOLAS.
- Mr Frey advised the group that over the course of the next 6-12 months NIHE were intending to use the emerging Census information to take a strategic look at the implications for future housing needs.
- In response to a query from Dr Caven regarding the value of the Census and resulting benefits realisation, members indicated that there had been good coverage in the media, with arguably more interest in national identity than religion, and that the feedback that they had received had been both positive and encouraging. In terms of specifics, Dr Power outlined that the 2011 Census information had been utilised to update Constituency profiles which had been well received, adding that he anticipated ad-hoc queries being submitted to gather specific information to inform policy areas such as 'Care of the Elderly' and 'Welfare Reform'. Dr Shuttleworth added that there was certainly a lot of interest in academia with both staff and students in the school of geography at Queens making good use of the information released to date. He added that the Census had featured heavily in various conferences that he had attended and that he envisaged considerable use being made of the forthcoming Microdata and Flowdata products. Mr McKinstry advised that the information from the Census continues to play an important role in the equality monitoring arena and that he awaited both the Grid-Square and Flowdata products with interest, in particular information on travel to work. Dr O'Reilly indicated that while the tabular data that has been released to date is very informative, from a Health perspective the real value comes from matching the Census data to other health related databases at an individual level.

4. **Agenda Item: ONS Beyond 2011 update**

Dr Marshall introduced Mr Calder to the group and asked him to present the current situation in ONS in relation to the BY2011 Project.

[ONS Beyond 2011 Update \(PDF 3 MB\)](#)

Points arising from this agenda item:

- Dr O'Reilly noted the variations across administrative sources and he asked why the overcounts in general did not result in a cumulative overcount. Mr Calder advised that all administrative datasets had been cleansed before use and that the criterion for inclusion on the database was that a person had to exist on both the NHS Patient Register and the DWP databases. He added that the models had been calibrated to the 2011 Census estimates. Mr Calder noted that if he was content that the same person was represented in the NHS and DWP systems that they would be split 50:50 between the two addresses if they differed. He added that this approach worked well.
- Dr Dignan advised that the accuracy seemed to depend on how well people were established, for example that data on older people sourced from Pensions data would be consistent. He added that this points to a risk that, going forward, the benefits information would need to be updated over time. He asked Mr Calder how ONS intended to manage that risk. Mr Calder accepted that there was this risk and advised that, by using several data sources, resilience may be built into the approach and that the advice of the National Statistician would be used when constructing the systems.

- Mr McIlheney asked if Mr Calder's closing remarks had been to recommend continuing with the Census whilst rolling out plans to using an administrative approach for say the 2031 Census. Mr Calder acknowledged that ONS may not yet be ready to move to the new administrative option as there is a strong need for Small Area level information. He added that a Census may be needed augmented with administrative data. He added that administrative data is relatively cheap to generate whilst survey data is relatively expensive.
- Dr O'Reilly asked about the need for boosted samples for minority groups i.e. ethnic minorities, given that the sample of any proposed survey to collect socio-economic data would cover only 4% of the population per year. Mr Calder accepted the point but advised that the survey would be compulsory with follow-up, adding that although it would not be a Census, he would therefore expect a higher response rate than a normal survey.
- Dr Dignan asked about the accuracy of population figures at lower geographies adding that the Census provided accurate estimates at Small Area level which were very important. He added that the Census was very strong at providing a benchmark for population statistics with the ability to drill down to lower geographies and that any administrative data and survey based solution would need to meet that objective. Mr Calder accepted this was the weakness of the survey and administrative data system but added that the alternative would provide change on a regular basis.
- Dr Shuttleworth asked about the availability of both Microdata and Flowdata products from the administrative data and survey based solution. Mr Calder advised that the Microdata product (from the survey) would continue to be produced in the same way. On Flowdata, he advised that based on the current approach, it is available approximately three years after each 10-year Census and that by say 2024, given the current availability of, for example mobile telephone-use data, people may be less interested in it. Dr Marshall added that he had seen studies based on mobile phone signals that monitored the number of people travelling e.g. from London to Manchester, by time of day, but that information on the traveller's characteristics was not available.
- Dr Caven asked about the availability of genealogical information. Mr Calder responded that he had been in contact with The National Archive to try to establish what information would be of interest to genealogists in future.
- Mr Green encouraged the group to feed into the ONS Consultation exercise adding that NISRA had worked closely with the ONS in the past and what happens in England and Wales in the future is likely to impact on the approach taken in Northern Ireland.

5. **Agenda Items: NISRA Beyond 2011 update / Beyond 2011 Discussion**

Mrs Brolly provided CAG members with an update on the NISRA BY2011 Project.

[Demography and Methodology Branch Update \(PDF 170 KB\)](#)

Points arising from this agenda item:

- Dr Dignan asked if the approach was to start out with population information and thereafter consider corresponding information on characteristics. Mrs Brolly confirmed this.
- Mr Green stated that the current programme of work being advanced by NISRA, in terms of securing access to an expanded set of administrative data, improving automated matching techniques and accuracy, and considering operational aspects around capturing proportionately more responses online, was well positioned in terms of modernising the 2011 operation still further. He added that alternative approaches such as using a large survey approach to capture key characteristics was already within NISRA's sphere of expertise.
- Mr Beatty then invited Dr Marshall to outline the next steps. Dr Marshall advised that it is likely that there will be a UK Statistics Authority recommendation in England & Wales in Spring 2014. Dependent upon the UK Government decision legislation may also be needed. He advised that in Northern Ireland, alongside the UK Statistics Authority position, additional advice will be prepared for the DFP Minister.
- Mr McIlheney asked if there was a date by which that decision was needed. In discussions it emerged that ONS would ideally prefer a decision by September 2014. Dr Caven outlined that it would be prudent for NISRA to consider any decisions that ONS might take given the shared work over both the 2001 and 2011 Censuses.

6. **Agenda Item – Other Developments – NILS / ADRC / Population Statistics**

Mrs Blair updated the group on progress on both NILS and the Administrative Data Research Centre (ADRC). Two rounds of testing have been successfully completed on the NILS - 2011 Census Link. The ADRC-NI will be launched in the Spring of 2014.

Mrs McGeown updated the group on recent developments on population and household statistics. The 2012 population projections for Northern Ireland were released on 6 November. The current priority is on the production of Small Area population estimates which are planned for release by the end of March 2014. DMB are currently liaising with NIHE (DSD), DRD and DOE in relation to the production of household projections in 2014/15. DSD and DOE have indicated that they are supportive of the need to produce household projections.

7. **Agenda Item – Any Other Business**

No items were put forward. Mr Beatty thanked members for their attendance. He wished everyone a merry Christmas and a happy new year.

The meeting closed at 16.00pm.

Hugh Kerr
Secretary