

MEETING:	CABINET
DATE:	16 DECEMBER 2010
TITLE OF REPORT:	2011 CENSUS LIAISON
PORTFOLIO AREA:	CORPORATE & CUSTOMER SERVICES AND HUMAN RESOURCES

CLASSIFICATION: Open

Wards Affected

County-wide

Purpose

To brief Cabinet on the support being given to the Office for National Statistics (ONS) as it prepares for the national census on 27 March 2011.

To seek Members' active support in encouraging residents to complete their census forms.

Key Decision

This is not a Key Decision.

Recommendation(s)

THAT Cabinet:

- (a) Recognises the importance of supporting the Office for National Statistics to ensure that the 2011 Census response is maximised in Herefordshire;**
- (b) Notes the ongoing liaison activities; and**
- (c) Encourages all Members to use the information in ONS' Councillor Handbook to help spread the word in their communities.**

Key Points Summary

- The next national census of population will be undertaken across England & Wales by ONS on 27 March 2011.
- The census is vital to Herefordshire and its public services. Population estimates based on the results will influence the county's share of central government funding for the next decade. No other source provides more detailed statistics for service planning and funding bids.
- The 2011 Census is being run in Herefordshire by John Tyler, ONS' Census Area Manager.

Further information on the subject of this report is available from
Charlotte Devereux, Senior Research Officer and Assistant Census Liaison Manager, on (01432) 260498

However, ONS have asked local authorities and their partners for support: JMT has already agreed this and has nominated an Assistant Census Liaison Manager to identify ways in which local knowledge and networks can be used to help make the census a success.

- Public awareness-raising will start with ONS' national publicity campaign, during January 2011.
- Members can use the information in ONS' Councillor Handbook to champion the census in their local communities.

Alternative Options

- 1 The alternative is not actively supporting ONS, which could result in poorer coverage of the census in Herefordshire and reputational damage. This would have financial implications and undermine data quality.

Reasons for Recommendations

- 2 To ensure a successful census, i.e. a high response rate across all areas of the county and all population groups.

Introduction and Background

- 3 A compulsory national census of population is undertaken in England and Wales by the Office for National Statistics (ONS) every ten years. The next takes place on 27 March next year.
- 4 The success of the 2011 Census is vital to Herefordshire and its public services. Population estimates based on the census will be used to determine the county's share of government grants throughout the next decade. Also, the detailed statistics will provide evidence for funding bids and enable effective service planning and resource allocation on the basis of accurate assessments of local need.
- 5 ONS has asked local authorities and their partners for help in ensuring the census is a success. The Chief Executive nominated a Census Liaison Manager (role shared between the Head of Policy & Performance and the Deputy Chief Executive) and Assistant to respond to ONS' requests and champion the census across Herefordshire Council.

Key Considerations

- 6 In August 2010 ONS appointed a Census Area Manager to run the census in Herefordshire (and parts of Worcestershire). His name is John Tyler, and the council's nominated Assistant Census Liaison Manager (Charlotte Devereux) has been supporting him as he develops community contacts and starts to plan fieldwork operations. A Census Local Partnership Plan records planned local activities.
- 7 Local information has already been used in helping ONS to develop the address register that will be used to deliver census forms. This is particularly important as census forms will be posted out to households, not hand-delivered as previously.
- 8 The 2011 Census will create more than 100 temporary jobs in Herefordshire, and these opportunities have been widely publicised: in the council's Job Opportunities, Herefordshire Matters and public buildings; at events for people seeking work and in community newsletters.
- 9 To date, other awareness-raising has been limited to Herefordshire Public Services and community and voluntary groups - asking for their support in encouraging, and helping if

necessary, the people they work with to fill in and return their forms (see also paragraph 14).

- 10 Public awareness-raising will start with ONS' national publicity campaign, during January 2011. Locally, tailored messages and engagement will be aimed at groups of people that may be less likely to respond (e.g. Gypsies and Travellers).
- 11 As community leaders, Members can help build awareness of and support for the census in local communities. ONS' Councillor Handbook has been distributed to all Members and contains key messages and more details about the importance of the census.
- 12 Information about the census in Herefordshire, including links to ONS' 2011 Census website and the Census Jobs website, is published at www.herefordshire.gov.uk/census.

Community Impact

- 13 The census is the *only reliable* source of some data (e.g. provision of unpaid care, limiting long-term illness), and the *only* source of detailed statistics about the characteristics of small geographical areas (e.g. ethnicity). It is essential that census data is accurate as it will be used to inform needs assessments, etc. and plan how resources should be allocated to best deliver the sustainable community strategy.
- 14 Equalities considerations include:
 - a) Completion – it is important that *everyone* completes their census form, but inevitably some groups will be harder to reach than others. Therefore special consideration is being given to engaging with and supporting particular groups, namely Gypsies and Travellers; recent migrants; seasonal workers; disabled people; the elderly; young adults.
 - b) Data – the 2011 Census will, for the first time, provide data on languages spoken by adults in Herefordshire; national identity; civil partnerships; people of Gypsy and Traveller ethnicity; short-term migrants.
- 15 It is recognised that the wider Herefordshire Partnership can play a vital role in ensuring success of the 2011 Census. Messages are being shared through established communication channels, and organisations are already offering help to the Area Manager. For example, Deaf Direct will be explaining the importance of the census to their service users and holding 'completion events' for those that need help filling in the form.
- 16 Special consideration has also been given to collecting census returns from the military.

Financial Implications

- 17 In 2010/11 the LA Formula Grant from Communities & Local Government (CLG) was worth £57.6 million to Herefordshire Council, and the recurrent baseline from the Department of Health was worth approximately £267 million per annum to NHS Herefordshire. Estimates from ONS and CLG suggest that 100 people missed from the census could equate to as much as £5,000 p.a. just in missed funding from CLG, i.e. £50,000 over the decade.
- 18 No budget has been identified for census liaison activities and ONS is not able to provide any funding. The additional activity will need to be absorbed within existing resources. The biggest commitment has been the allocation of one-third of an existing Senior Research Officer's time for 2010/11 (circa £10,000). The cost of the involvement of other officers has not been calculated, but much of the support is intrinsic to council business – for example the Recruitment and Community Learning & Employability teams offering support to local people

applying for census jobs. It is expected that volumes of calls from members of the public will increase during March and April, despite a national census helpline being available. There may be an adverse effect on response times if capacity is reached.

Legal Implications

- 19 The only direct legal implication for Herefordshire Council is in regard to its responsibilities under the Data Protection Act when considering ONS' requests for data to help with planning fieldwork and for quality assurance purposes. Most will be aggregate data and therefore not personally identifiable. Legal advice will be sought if the data owner is unclear whether information can be shared.
- 20 However, there are also legal implications for individuals to consider in providing support:
- a) It is a statutory requirement that everyone completes a census form and returns it to ONS or one of their census employees. They have not discharged their duty if they hand it to anyone else and may be liable for prosecution if it goes missing. Therefore any councillor or council employee (or any other volunteer) providing support to a resident should **not** offer to return the form for them.
 - b) The confidentiality of personal information given on a census form is protected by law. Help in filling in a form should only be given if a householder specifically asks, and anyone who does this should be aware that disclosing any personal census information would leave them open to prosecution and up to two years in prison.

Risk Management

- 21 The risk of not supporting ONS is that the coverage of the census would be poorer. As a consequence Herefordshire wouldn't receive its fair share of funding nor have accurate statistics for small areas on which to base policy decisions. This is not yet identified on the Corporate Risk Register but is on the Deputy Chief Executive's Register.

Mitigating actions have been:

- The nomination of a CLM to champion the census at senior management level and an ACLM dedicating sufficient time to ONS' requests for support.
- Identification of support for the 2011 Census in the Joint Corporate Plan
- Alerting JMT to the importance of the census early enough in the preparations to ensure that colleagues respond positively to those requests – or are pro-active in developing local initiatives.

Consultees

- 22 The ACLM consults and works with officers across the council as and when required, to make use of knowledge in particular areas of expertise as well as existing networks.

Appendices

- 10 None

Background Papers

- ONS' 2011 Census: Councillor Handbook – hard copy already circulated to all councillors.