



HILLINGDON  
LONDON



**CORPORATE SERVICES AND PARTNERSHIPS  
POLICY OVERVIEW COMMITTEE - 2010/11**

*CENSUS 2011 -  
TO LOOK AT HOW THIS COUNCIL CAN CONTRIBUTE TO  
IMPROVING THE POPULATION DATA FOR THE BOROUGH*

## Members of the Committee 2010/11

Cllr Richard Lewis (Chairman)  
Cllr Michael White (Vice Chairman)  
Cllr Robin Sansarpuri  
Cllr Jazz Dhillon (Member of the Committee for part of the Municipal Year)  
Cllr Raymond Graham  
Cllr Anita Mac Donald  
Cllr Carol Melvin



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## CHAIRMAN'S FOREWORD



We undertook this review in order to improve and understand better the role that the London Borough of Hillingdon could play in working with the Office for National Statistics (ONS), helping to improve the Borough's returned 2011 Census questionnaires.

There is obviously a close relationship between the population data which is gathered from a Census, and in the long term, the level of funding that the Council receives from Central Government.

The review looked at ways that we could increase the engagement and participation of all residents of the Borough in this process. Particular attention was given to the tools which are at the Council's and its partners disposal in terms of engaging with those sectors of the community who are classified as "Hard to Count", whilst not losing focus on engaging with ALL residents, to ensure maximum participation.

The Council's Census Engagement and Communications Strategy has been formulated as a result of the review looking at good practise which exists elsewhere and is aligned with the national communications strategy that the Office for National Statistics is working to.

Hopefully the final report into this review will reinforce the importance of residents of our Borough participating in the Census for 2011.

I would like to thank officers of ONS who participated fully in this review, together with the Hillingdon Council officers who supported us during this review.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "R.A. Lewis". The signature is written in a cursive style with a horizontal line underneath.

## **CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

The last Census took place in 2001 when response rates nationally varied between 63% and 99%. Hillingdon's response rate was 91.5% and ONS' target is to reach around 94%. The review found that it was important that OSN worked closely with local authorities who possessed the knowledge and the data on the communities within their boundaries.

This joint working would be beneficial for ONS in terms of improving the enumeration process and beneficial to local authorities in terms of better population data. This will in the long term result in more Central Government funding but will also help local authorities in the planning and delivery of its services.

The recommendations which the review has come up with all add value to the Council's Engagement and Communications Strategy and assist ONS in ensuring they engage with as many residents of the Borough as possible.

### **RECOMMENDATION 1**

That where practicable and subject to budgetary provision, officers be asked to consider some of the engagement methods and techniques gathered during the review, and tailor them towards the needs and issues applicable to Hillingdon. These be integrated into the Council's Census and Engagement and Consultation strategy.

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### **RECOMMENDATION 2**

That the data from the HMO survey be shared with the Office for National Statistics (ONS) to enable the engagement and participation in the Census of those residents who lived in structures in back gardens.

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### **RECOMMENDATION 3**

That Hillingdon's Census Engagement and Communications Strategy be aligned as far as possible with the national initiatives and timescales, to ensure maximum impact and participation in the Census process.

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### **RECOMMENDATION 4**

That in the Council's Census Engagement and Communications Strategy reference be made in the publicity for the Census to the strictly confidential nature of the information provided in the Census questionnaire and also the

impact of non-participation in the Census on the Council's funding and on the delivery of essential services.

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#### **RECOMMENDATION 5**

That support be given to the Office for National Statistics (ONS) working in collaboration with front line Council services to promote the participation of residents in the Census 2011 and to helping them complete the Census questionnaire.

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## **INTRODUCTION**

The Corporate Services & Partnerships Policy Overview Committee at its meeting on 22 July 2010 agreed to look at the preparations for the Census in 2011.

Since 1801, every ten years the nation has set aside one day for the Census – a count of all people and household in the country. The Census is the most complete source of information about the population we have and it provides essential information from national to neighbourhood level for government, business and the community.

The Office for National Statistics (ONS) is responsible for carrying out the National Census. The Census is the only survey which provides a detailed picture of the entire population and is unique because it covers everyone at the same time and asks the same core questions everywhere. This makes it easy to compare different parts of the country.

The last Census which took place on 29 April 2001 saw response rates in local authority areas vary between 64% and 99%. In certain areas of London and among some population groups, significant numbers of people failed to complete the Census questionnaire.

In its report on the 2001 Census, the Treasury Select Committee recommended that any future Census should be justified in cost-benefit terms. A detailed business case has therefore been produced which clearly demonstrates the unique value of the Census and that the benefits of having the information far outweigh the costs of its collection. For example, over £100 billion per year (over £1 trillion in the decade between each Census) is allocated from central government to local authorities and to NHS Primary Care Trusts and the allocation formula takes account of the demand for services and is heavily dependent on population estimates, numbers of elderly, numbers of children, etc.

### **AIM OF THE REVIEW**

To make a positive contribution to improving local population estimates and to maximise the data which is gathered for the 2011 Census for the Borough. There are a number of implications of undercounting the population of the Borough and the review would focus on how the Council could promote the importance of residents of the Borough filling in the Census forms.

## **TERMS OF REFERENCE**

1. To look at the preparations and methods used for the 2011 Census and to support and add value through engagement with the area manager for the Office for National Statistics (ONS).
2. To look at measures which could be used to improve the accuracy of local population information to help the Council in its service planning.
3. To examine the role the Council has in promoting and encouraging residents of the Borough in conjunction with the ONS, to actively participate in the Census to ensure the best results for the Council and its residents.
4. To look at the plans the Council has to communicate the purpose of the Census and to see how the Council can work with community groups to maximise the response to the Census questionnaire.
5. To look at the measures which will be used to capture data from those hard to reach groups within the Borough.
6. To examine the implications of undercounting the Borough's population in relation to the grant funding the Council received from Government.
7. To consider measures which could be used with the Council's Strategic Partners to ensure population figures are accurate.
8. To look at the methods other local authorities use to improve the accuracy of Census data
9. To make recommendations to Cabinet on what the Council can do in relation to the promotion of the Census to residents of the Borough to ensure the Census questionnaire is widely completed.

## **REASONS FOR THE REVIEW**

The last Census in 2001 saw response rates in local authority areas vary between 64% and 99%. Hillingdon achieved a response rate of 91.5%. In certain areas of London and among some population groups, significant numbers of people failed to complete the Census questionnaire. This has serious consequences for Councils, as population is one of the main factors in determining how much funding various public services including local authorities, primary care trusts and the Probation Service receive from government.

Hillingdon births have risen for several consecutive years with births in 2008 being exceptionally high at 4,126 children, which was several hundred more than the previous record high.

Demographic professionals at the Greater London Authority (GLA) have indicated a prolonged period of births at around the high 2008 level. This demographic pressure is exacerbated by unusual family movements within the Borough caused by the economic climate.

In the present economic climate with local government having to rationalise budgets it is vital that the Council does as much as it can to ensure that population data from the Census is as accurate as possible to ensure the Council receives maximum funding from the Government.

## **METHODOLOGY**

For the review, witness sessions took place on 7 September, 13 October and 11 November 2010 and involved the following witnesses:

### **7 September 2010**

Nick O'Donnell – Head of Stakeholder Management – ONS  
Amanda King – Area Manager for ONS  
Pam Nash – Strategic Information Officer – London Borough of Hillingdon  
Kevin Byrne – Head of Policy and Performance – London Borough of Hillingdon  
Emma Marsh – Deputy Head of Communications – London Borough of Hillingdon

### **13 October 2010**

Nick O'Donnell – Head of Stakeholder Management – ONS  
Amanda King – Area Manager - ONS  
Mohamud Ali – Community Adviser – ONS  
Ben Lea – Schools Resources Manager – Finance & Business Services – London Borough of Hillingdon  
Pam Nash – Strategic Information Officer – London Borough of Hillingdon

### **11 November 2010**

Nick O'Donnell – Head of Stakeholder Management - ONS  
Amanda King – Area Manager – ONS  
Kevin Byrne – Head of Policy and Performance– London Borough of Hillingdon  
Toni Brown – Policy Team – London Borough of Hillingdon

In addition to hearing evidence from witnesses, Members were provided with the following material which provided useful background information to the review

#### Written evidence from witnesses

- Office for National Statistics – Information paper on The 2011 Census – A Design for England and Wales
- <http://www.ons.gov.uk/about>
- Presentations from the Census Liaison Officer and the Area Manager of ONS from the meeting which took place with community groups, interfaith networks and residents associations on 29 September 2010.
- Questions following presentation to Assistant Census Liaison Managers and a number of Area Managers who attended the Census Forum on 8 September 2010.
- Lambeth Council's Census Focus Group's Report on the reasons why participation rates in the Census differed amongst different groups of the community
- Greater London Authority / London Councils and ONS – Partnership and Engagement – A Pan-London Partnership Plan for the 2011 Census

## EVIDENCE AND FINDINGS

### What is the Census?

The Census is the definitive source of population and household information and plays a major role in the allocation of resources. The next Census will take place on Sunday 27 March 2011. The population data which comes out of the Census is essential for service planning, resource allocation and decision making purposes.

Central Government uses the Census:

- To monitor changes in society and local areas
- To identify problems
- To allocate and target resources
- To support bids for funding
- To plan for housing, education and transport
- To monitor and review the impact of plans and policies
- To inform decision making

The Council plans and targets its local services and makes extensive use of Census information for a number of reasons:

- Services delivery planning
- Population and household projections
- Calculating the scale of future housing needs
- Local education needs
- Local transport planning and traffic modelling
- Preparation of Local Authority Development Plans
- Community support services, including the delivery of home help and home care
- Preparing funding bid submissions

The last Census in 2001 succeeded in achieving a 94% questionnaire return rate overall, although return rates in some areas had been as low as 63%. The target for 2011 was to achieve around 94% again with the minimum target being 80%.

### The Census process

The Planning process for the 2011 Census started in 2002 with a wide ranging review of the future requirements for information, and alternative ways of gathering it. This confirmed that there is an ongoing need for high quality Census information, and that it can only be provided by a traditional Census in 2011. No alternative source would provide the quality of data required.

For the 2011 Census, the Office for National Statistics will be drawing on the experiences of the 2001 Census, world best practice and changes in available technology. ONS is also looking to make best use of the knowledge that exists within local authorities about their own communities. It is clear from the 2001 experience that it will be mutually beneficial for local authorities and ONS to work in partnership when conducting the Census for 2011.

ONS want to benefit from local authority resources and their knowledge of governed areas to improve the enumeration process, and in turn, local authorities should benefit from better Census results.

### **New approaches for the process for 2011**

For the 2011 Census there will be a number of new approaches which will be introduced which have been designed to improve Census return rates in all areas and with all population groups. These include:

- Wide engagement in the community with the help of local authorities, representatives of target population and accessibility groups and a national publicity campaign
- Post out of all household questionnaires (around 25 million), based on a newly developed national address register
- Online completion: people will be able to complete and submit their answers online or fill in and return the paper questionnaire
- Questionnaire tracking and targeted field follow ups: to identify and follow up households which have not returned a questionnaire
- For the 2011 Census there would be a centralised system for tracking questionnaires. This would detect pockets of low returned questionnaires.
- There would be a newly developed national address register which would support the delivery of questionnaires, completion, tracking and follow up for all households.
- Questionnaires would be posted out and posted back, with questionnaire tracking making sure that the Census reached as many people as possible and ensured that addresses where questionnaires had not been returned were followed up by the Census field team.
- The Census field team would be a flexible team which would carry out intensive follow up work which would target areas where there were low returns. It was estimated that there would be 2.7million hours of follow up field activity.
- Field checks had already taken place on 15% of the country.
- There would be an on-line questionnaire and help centre, and a telephone helpline providing advice and guidance in many languages.

- The Census questionnaire would have to be completed in English and would be available in Braille if required. However there would be a translation in 56 languages of the Census questions.

### **Working in partnership with local authorities**

A crucial factor in the success of the Census would be working closely with local councils in improving public awareness and addressing the accuracy of the register. The key to the working relationship between ONS and the local authority would be the Census Local Partnership Plan (CLPP) which would be developed by the ONS area manager in conjunction with the Assistant Census Liaison Manager.

A CLPP is required for every district or unitary council in England and Wales. The CLPP will provide a shared view of the priorities for engagement and enumeration and summarise the actions that ONS, local authorities and local community partners will undertake.

The ONS representatives provided the Committee's review with details of a number of steps which had already been taken to this affect:

- Local Councils (including Hillingdon) have appointed Census Liaison Managers and assistants who would support the Census and be the single point of contact for the Census planning and activity. They would both work with the ONS Area Manager to promote the importance of the Census to residents, staff, Members and local partners.
- An important role that the Council would have would be helping to get the Census message across to communities. Reference was made to communicating the message to children and Members were informed that work would take place with schools to enable children from ethnic backgrounds to communicate the message to their parents.
- Information sharing would take place between ONS and local Councils to identify where there were demographic anomalies with returned questionnaires. However, it would be stressed that Census information would not be shared and was confidential.
- With the help of local Councils, engagement would take place with those sectors of the population who were reluctant or found it difficult to take part in the process.
- The local knowledge which Ward Councillors possessed would be an important resource.
- Local Councils would assist in the recruitment of local field staff, identifying suitable candidates with appropriate experience, such as electoral canvassers and people who worked on the last Census. Field staff would be representative of the community areas they would be covering to encourage participation.

- The safety of field staff would not be compromised and staff would be reminded not to put themselves in danger when on people's doorsteps.
- 6 weeks after Census day on 27 March 2011, a doorstep survey would take place on around 1% of households.
- As Census data underpinned the planning and funding of Council services and healthcare, the Census was subject to a comprehensive quality assurance strategy. This would ensure that a number of key checks would take place to compare Census population figures with information from other sources.

### **The Role of Members in engaging with residents**

Through out the review Members were informed on the importance of themselves as Ward Councillors engaging with their constituents on the importance of participation in the Census.

The local knowledge which Members possessed was invaluable in terms of engaging and encouraging residents in their participation of the Census and to this end a number of training sessions and briefings were arranged for Members.

A Census Briefing took place for all Councillors on 29 November 2010 and as part of this Council's Member Development Day on 2 December 2010, a session was provided for all Members which provided details on the importance of their involvement in the Census 2011.

Members were asked to help the process by:

- Encouraging the completion of Census questionnaires via their surgeries and through their contacts out in their constituencies and throughout the Borough
- Promoting the completion of Census questionnaires at events and meetings etc
- Reassuring residents that the Census is confidential and the data is not shared with other organisations
- Supporting Census community events
- Encouraging local applications for field staff roles
- Supporting the ONS Area Manager with community liaison contacts

### **Partnership and Engagement - A Pan-London Partnership Plan for the 2011 Census**

In September 2010 a Census regional event was held in London where ONS, the Greater London Authority and London Councils agreed to produce a partnership plan which would identify potential gaps in Census engagement

and communications and also outline potential actions which would help raise the profile of the Census Across the city as a whole.

This Pan-London approach would draw on the relative strengths, resources and knowledge of a complex world city, held by ONS, the GLA, London Councils and the London Boroughs to add genuine value and avoid the duplication of effort in the approaches to maximise participation in the Census.

### **Hard to Count Groups**

Throughout the review Members were provided with details of how ONS would engage with those “hard to count” groups within the community. However the review felt that 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.

Representatives of ONS reassured Members that engagement would primarily be aimed at ALL members of the public. Information provided from ONS during the review included:

- An ONS Community Advisor would be working with all religious and community groups for the Somali population at community events across the Borough.
- Census information would be communicated to schools to enable children from a BME background to talk about the importance of completing the Census questionnaire
- With the help of local Councils, engagement would take place with those sectors of the population who were reluctant or found it difficult to take part in the process.
- In the recruitment of field staff, where possible, staff recruited would be representative of the community areas they covered to encourage participation of different community groups.
- The Census questionnaire would be translated into 56 different languages, although the questionnaire would have to be completed in English

The review was informed that community engagement meetings would take place throughout the Borough and one took place on 29 September 2010. This involved community groups, interfaith networks and residents associations. At this meeting, the Area Manager for ONS and the Assistant Census Liaison Officer gave a presentation on the purpose and aims of the Census and also provided details to these groups on the 140 Census vacancies which ONS were recruiting to.

## **Report of Lambeth Council – Census Focus Group**

The review as part of its evidence gave consideration to 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.

Lambeth Council's corporate research and consultation team ran a series of focus groups in May this year with residents from those groups that are known to be less likely to respond to the Census. Four groups were held with young private renters, Black Caribbean, Black African and Polish residents.

The research consolidated the findings that these groups were less likely to respond to the Census with the majority of participants stating that they would not complete and return the Census form. Reasons given for this were:

- Lack of awareness of what the purpose of the Census is, and what is it for
- Not having English as their first language puts people off as well as the length and complexity of the form
- There was a belief that the Census questionnaire was unimportant as it was addressed 'to the occupier' whereas anything that they should fill in and return would be addressed to them personally
- There are misconceptions with the Census such as the belief that completion of the Census is optional and that the Council and the government already know the information about them through previous contact with Council services
- Young private renters expressed the view that they generally do not use Council services and therefore they do not see the improved government funding the Council would get from improved Census responses, as being of any benefit to them

The findings of the research emphasised the importance of effective communications in maximising the response rate to the Census in 2011. Suggestions which came out of the research and which could possibly be used for Hillingdon in terms of publicity were:

- Early implementation of a Census awareness raising campaign
- A clear explanation of what the Census is, what it is used for and why it is important for residents to participate
- Localise the message, help people to see it as important to the borough, rather than a national initiative
- It is important to focus the message around the increased funding the Council would receive from central government and the positive impact this would have on service delivery

- Include some case studies of potential improved service delivery which are relevant to the groups which are least likely to complete the Census
- Emphasise that the money will be spent on better quality services to combat perceived cynicism about Council services
- Publicise the translation sheet at the back of the envelope and that people can phone a free helpline number or download an information pack in their language
- Give an explanation that the Census questionnaire will only be addressed to the occupier but that it is still an important document
- The targeting of places of worship through engaging with priests and pastors etc
- Targeting foreign newspapers. For example in relation to Polish newspapers; Panorama, Cooltura, Polish Express and websites
- Reference was made to the Census in Poland which is known as Spis Ludnosci. This or other foreign equivalents to the Census could be used in publicity
- Information posters and leaflets about the Census could be left in nurseries, schools, churches, pubs etc. Also in shops selling foreign cuisine.

#### In terms of practical help

- Attending tenants association meetings to explain the importance of the Census, engage with prominent figures on estates to explain and encourage their tenants to complete the Census form
- Run Census sessions in schools to explain to children the importance of the Census and to encourage them to explain to their parents why they should fill the Census forms in
- Front line Council and partnership staff to ask residents that they encounter whether they have completed their census form
- Engage all community faith leaders to pass on information about the Census to their congregations

The review was also given an insight into the work that the London Borough of Hounslow had carried out in relation to their communications strategy and the main points of their draft strategy were:-

- To Identify those groups who are classified as 'hard to count' groups who had significantly low response rates during the last Census
- To also identify from local intelligence those groups of people who have a low level of engagement with the Council i.e. private tenants, hard to reach white working class residents, residents with learning difficulties etc
- Using ONS population estimates, and local intelligence to identify the main cluster areas where these 'hard to count' groups are located

- Planned communication and engagement activities divided by Council Department and Partner Organisation and working with a Census Stakeholder Group
- A wide range of activities such as front line staff talking to clients about the importance of the Census, public notices, use of local media, websites, use of youth centres, schools, community centres and voluntary groups and so on

Residents in the Hard to Count Groups make up approximately 6% of the Borough population. Therefore it is vital that in order to secure a high volume and coverage of Census responses in 2011, that residents in these Hard to Count Groups are sufficiently engaged to ensure completion of the Census questionnaire. The review asked that officers give consideration to some of the methods and techniques suggested during the review and use them where they are suitable for Hillingdon.

#### **RECOMMENDATION 1**

***That where practicable and subject to budgetary provision, officers be asked to consider some of the engagement methods and techniques gathered during the review, and tailor them towards the needs and issues applicable to Hillingdon. These be integrated into the Council's Census and Engagement and Consultation strategy.***

#### **Homes in Back Gardens**

During the witness session when the review was provided with information regarding the problems that ONS would have in terms of engaging with Hard to Count Groups, discussion took place on the group of people who resided in sub-let properties. ONS representatives informed the review that since the last Census there had been an increase in home owners sub-letting their properties and engaging with these groups would be a challenge.

The review was also provided with details of the London wide issue of houses / structures in back gardens. People who lived in these structures tended not to be on the electoral register or registered for Council Tax.

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 in a review undertaken by the Residents' and Environmental Services Policy and Overview Committee in 2009/10 on Planning Enforcement – Construction and Use of Detached Out Buildings

(Homes in Back Gardens) reference was made to observations made during a Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMO) survey. From counts made in a number of streets in Hayes, officers estimated there were between 2000 and 3000 such structures locally, 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.

The review asked that the information from the HMO survey be passed to ONS to enable contact to be made with residents in these properties to ensure their participation in the Census process.

## **RECOMMENDATION 2**

***That the data from the HMO survey be shared with the Office for National Statistics (ONS) to enable the engagement and participation in the Census of those residents who lived in structures in back gardens.***

### **National Communication and Advertising Campaign**

The review was informed that with the change in the Government in May 2010 a review took place into the advertising and publicity budgets of Government departments which resulted in details of the national advertising campaign for the Census being delayed. Hillingdon's Engagement and Communications Strategy would be aligned to the national campaign to ensure completeness and consistency.

ONS informed the review that the national advertising campaign would reinforce the message to residents that Census information was confidential and could not be accessed by other public authorities. The advertising campaign would run from February 2011 to May 2011 and would comprise of the following:

- The campaign would be insight based and would be influenced by education, engaging and enforcement
- The first phase of education would run from 21 February – 17 March
- Phase 2 - engaging and "call to action" – 18 March till 6 April
- Phase 3 – enforcement – 7 April till 1 May
- The education phase would aim to promote awareness and understanding of the Census benefits. It would give the general public the reasons of why to take part in the Census
- The advertising campaign would be up-weighted for student, youth and Black Minority Ethnic (BME) audiences
- The National TV advertising would consist of 30 second adverts. There would be a national outdoor advertising campaign with large bill board posters

- BME audiences would also have TV advertising in relevant languages and press advertising in relevant languages
- A Census purple coloured bus would travel around London to increase the general public's awareness of the Census
- Phase 2 – “Call to action” would give everyone clear direction of what they needed to do and when
- The national TV campaign in Phase 2 would be high frequency 10 second TV adverts with a clear message of “it's time to fill it in”. There would be a National outdoor campaign at heavyweight and premium sites
- There would be online and mobile advertising for youth and student audiences
- Reference was made to the work which would be carried out in student residences and that efforts should be made to engage with foreign students to ensure the message of the Census got across
- Phase 3 would clearly state what the consequences of non-compliance would be. The potential of a fine would be a motivator to some people
- Local partnerships would continue to be developed with local authorities and the Third Sector.
- There would be BME parents outreach events in schools
- There was an on-line BME photo competition around a ‘Then and now: family stories’ theme
- Reference was made to the work being carried out with secondary schools with CensusAtSchool. This was an educational programme provided by the Royal Statistical Society Centre for Statistical Education. The real life example of the Census was used to teach mathematics and statistics in schools
- The Census would be written into the story lines of TV programmes such as soap operas
- A message would be communicated that the penalty for failing to fill in the Census questionnaire would result in a fine of £1,000.
- Reference was made to the many uses of Census data and the increased amount of genealogy research which now took place. In addition the data helps voluntary organisations and charities identify populations to target initiatives and to make representations to Government

### **Hillingdon's Census Engagement and Communications Strategy**

Members were informed that this Council's Communications Strategy for the Census was drafted, having worked closed with ONS. An article had been published in Hillingdon People but the main publicity push would be at the beginning of next year. There would be events, presentations, poster campaigns and the Council's website would promote the Census.

The review was informed that a Councillor's Census toolkit had been produced which would provide Members with information to help them engage with their constituents on the Census. This was subsequently sent to Members and would help them when speaking to their constituents about the Census.

### **RECOMMENDATION 3**

***That Hillingdon's Census Engagement and Communications Strategy be aligned as far as possible with the national initiatives and timescales, to ensure maximum impact and participation in the Census process.***

#### **Primary Care Trust**

The review was provided with details on the repercussions of undercounting on the Census for the provision of health services. The Joint Director of Public Health provided written evidence and commented that in respect of the PCT funding, the Census is much less important than for LBH. This is because NHS funding is predominantly based on historic funding. A target funding based partly on population size is also calculated but the pace of change to the target budget from the historic budget is usually small. The formula for calculating the target budgets for PCTs has varied over the years and it is therefore possible to argue that the formula does not reflect the relative needs of Hillingdon but it would not be straightforward to claim PCT under-funding. However, looking ahead it is clearly advantageous to have as complete an enumeration as possible in the next Census in 2011.

#### **Financial impact on the Council of undercounting the Census**

One of the major implications of undercounting in the Census is the impact on the funding the Council receives. Over the long term, Census data would impact on the Government grant distributed to the Council. The review was provided with the following information on the reason why maximising the returns of Census questionnaires benefitted the Council's funding from central Government:

- Census data was more critical to the long term financial planning of the Council than the short term. There was no short term gain to this Council from the data produced from the Census
- 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 stay 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 which take place
  - The review was made aware that the impact of population change on current Government grant allocations was uncertain and unpredictable. In the current year the Council received £84.4m in Government formula grants which used 2004 based sub national population projections as the population indicator.
  - This underlines the instability contained in the current formula grant distribution model rather than any reason not to ensure that the Census count in Hillingdon is 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.

The review concluded that the message should be communicated to residents of the Borough that completing the Census questionnaire will benefit the Council in terms of the funding it receives from Government and the resultant planning and delivery of services to residents.

Evidence suggested that one of the reasons that residents used for not wanting to participate in the Census, was the distrust in public authorities in terms of using personal information supplied by residents. ONS officers assured the Committee that the information supplied on Census questionnaires was treated in strictest confidence and would not be used for any other purpose, other than for the purpose of the Census.

#### **RECOMMENDATION 4**

***That in the Council's Census Engagement and Communications Strategy reference be made in the publicity for the Census to the strictly confidential nature of the information provided in the Census questionnaire and also the impact of non-participation in the Census on the Council's funding and on the delivery of essential services.***

#### **Council Front Line Staff**

The review was provided with information relating to utilising the Council's front line service staff in communicating the purpose of the Census to residents and in ensuring that residents returned Census questionnaires.

ONS informed the review that part of the reason for ONS recruiting Council staff as enumerators and field staff was because of the varied nature of the work undertaken by the Council and its partner staff. These staff would be invaluable in terms of communicating the Census message to service users out in the community.

The review was also supplied with information on the importance of engaging with schools and that some local authorities had undertaken "Mini Censuses" in schools, bringing in a history element to make the subject interesting. Reference was made to providing information on the importance of the Census to children which would enable discussions to take place with their parents and thus reinforce the Census message.

ONS reported that protocols would be developed in collaboration with local authorities in relation to carers and other front line staff in relation to communicating the Census and also completing the Census questionnaire on behalf of clients.

#### **RECOMMENDATION 5**

***That support be given to the Office for National Statistics (ONS) working in collaboration with front line Council services to promote the participation of residents in the Census 2011 and to helping them complete the Census questionnaire.***

#### **Migrants and Refugees**

The review was provided with information in relation to Dover District Council and how the authority was dealing with migrants and refugees. ONS officers had made contact with migrant community organisations that offered help and support to recent and longer term migrants in and around the Dover area.

The promotion of Census completion was being carried out through these organisations and all promotional materials were being provided in a variety of languages. Members noted that many of these communities were often hesitant to provide official authorities with information on themselves and the objective was to gain the trust of these people.

Migrants tended to settle in small geographical areas and ONS would be linking in with local shops and using these as information hubs. Local Gateways would be used to promote the Census, links would be developed with local letting agents who would be asked to promote Census completion to tenants.

### **Detention Centres**

For Census day on 27 March, data will also be collected from the Detention Centres which are located at Heathrow Airport as those people who have been detained when entering the country at the airport will also be included in the Census data.

The review was informed that the Area Manager of ONS for the Crawley area had informed the review that he would be working with the Home Office and would visit detention centres for Gatwick Airport to gauge the numbers of people detained. The Area Manager of ONS for Hillingdon would replicate this in the case of Heathrow Airport.

### **Financial Implications of the Review's Recommendations**

The activities which will be undertaken as part of the Census process and which will be included in the Council's Census Engagement and Communications Strategy will all be within existing budgets and within planned workloads of officers concerned. ONS, through the national communications strategy will provide the overall funding for most of the engagement activities for the Census.

Joint working will take place between ONS and public organisations such as Hillingdon Council, and the Council on its part is providing assistance to the Area Manager of ONS in terms of providing storage space for literature associated with the Census.