

## **Minutes of Council Census Liaison Officers meeting held in Crieff Hydro Hotel on 13 October 2005**

Present:

Census Regional Managers:	Ken Thomson Norma Hay Eric Mckenzie
Council Census Liaison Officers:	Sandra Thomson, Perth & Kinross Paul McNamara, Stirling Charles Reppke, Argyll & Bute Gerry McInerney, West Dunbartonshire Jan Freeke, Glasgow Sheila Lunn, Highland
GROS:	Duncan Macniven, Registrar General Bev Gardiner Richard Morrison Shona MacDonald Esther Roughsedge Norman Gillies
Visitor:	Iain Mackay, Improvement Service

### **Welcome**

1. Duncan welcomed everyone to the meeting and outlined Census history, stressing the success of 2001 and the lessons which had been learned (eg problems of under-enumeration and pay processes). He explained that great efforts were now being put into resolving past issues and that any ideas for improvement would be greatly appreciated.

### **Outline of Census Test Areas & Design**

2. Charles asked if there was an incentive for completing the form particularly the income details and asked if we had thought about involving Dialogue Youth in Scotland? He gave the example of the Community Safety Survey where a single prize of £100 was awarded.

3. Duncan said the main incentive was to avoid court action but it was also feared that the provision of financial or other incentives for the Census might be a disincentive for other survey completion. It is also felt that there is a social incentive by providing proper representation. Incentives however may not overcome the difficulty of getting the forms filled in. But it was an approach worth thinking about.

4. Charles confirmed that perhaps local privacy may be one of the main issues which may be helped by the post-back option and Eric reminded everyone that remote

and rural areas want proper representation. Charles also asked if a question on 2<sup>nd</sup> homes and ownership was being included and Richard confirmed that the test would include a question on 2<sup>nd</sup> homes but not on car ownership since that had already had been tested.

5. Jan asked whether consideration had been given to including young males and students in our test areas and Duncan confirmed that although Pollockshields is included, students are not really a problem. Richard confirmed that the test areas were chosen more as areas of deprivation. Jan was still concerned however that students were not being included and Duncan confirmed that this area may be looked at between 2006 and 2011. Charles suggested that the Argyll & Bute Youth Project Survey which covered the 18 – 26 age range and National Young Scots surveys may be of use.

### **Operational matters and recruitment**

6. Bev encouraged LA involvement in enumeration action and asked whether adverts could be placed on LAs internal web pages. She also asked if the Liaison Officers could suggest possible suitable accommodation within their areas and also whether there were any local publicity options available. Charles asked whether training/accommodation costs could be met and Duncan confirmed they could. Suggestions of advertising on Pay slips and using Libraries, Sports Centres and Community Centres as training accommodation were made.

### **AP1 Council Liaison will look at options and get back to GROS.**

7. Charles flagged up that the Health & Safety of staff visiting private houses is a problem which needs to be taken into account and Bev agreed that this issue was paramount and that Councils expertise and involvement will be much appreciated. Hopefully the definition for the Address Checker role will help clarify in Nov/ Dec.

8. The group then discussed Health & Safety issues for Field Staff and Bev confirmed that H & S was already included in the training packs. There definitely should not be any entry into premises however challenging or endearing this option may be. It may also be necessary to 'double up enumerators' or carry out 'escorted visits' at a pre-arranged time and hopefully LA experience of the areas would make this easier.

9. Gerry asked for advise on West Dunbartonshire's initiative on door answering. They are currently advising elderly residents not to answer the door unless they are expecting callers. It would be comforting for these people to have prior notification of impending visits or for some checking mechanism to verify callers was in place. Bev confirmed that arrangements are already in hand for leaflet notification to be made in relevant areas before enumeration commences. Gerry asked if the Help Desk would

be available for checking validity of callers using a secure password. Bev confirmed that this option could be looked at. She didn't foresee a problem using the help desk but was unsure of the secure password use.

## **AP2 Bev will discuss options with her team**

### **Community Liaison**

**10.** Richard outlined the reason for holding **Focus Group meetings** and Charles confirmed that the councils are not really achieving much more even contacting the Community Planning Partnerships. As part of the Dialogue Youth Experience, Argyll & Bute found that provision of a return for getting involved was necessary and they, as part of that programme, had improved transport facilities which had been much appreciated. Richard confirmed that this example was an almost instant return whereas it may be much longer before any effect of form completion became evident.

**11.** Jan asked what the plans were for **Asylum Seekers** and Richard confirmed that meetings are being arranged to speak with this group and test out the new language question. Jan asked if the form contents had been decided upon and Richard confirmed that although the 2011 content had still to be agreed the 2006 questions were almost settled upon. Ken confirmed that there was a possibility of employing asylum seekers as enumerators/ interpreters but the legality of this is still being looked at. Eric confirmed that each area seemed to be becoming specialised areas and gave the prawn factory as an example. Paul confirmed that postcode G21 needs enumerated in pairs and suggested that perhaps 1 Asian and 1 white person worked together there. Sheila confirmed that in Inverness the Polish community were making their own arrangements for schools and training, etc.

### **Role of CRMs and Census Liaison Officers**

**12.** Bev explained that grassroots involvement is needed and that local re-assurance is being sought so it would be helpful if Local Authorities could give known contact details to use. Shared information on Accommodation, publicity and address information would help understanding by all concerned.

## **AP3 All Council Liaison Officers agreed to prepare lists of contacts**

**13.** Bev asked if the Liaison Officers understood their roles and Charles confirmed that he was at the meeting to find out what he can do to help. Bev asked if formalising the roles and responsibilities would help and the unanimous decision was that this would not be helpful. Eric confirmed that operational help was needed not help with the strategy and it was agreed that the best way forward was to use a network of contacts.

## **Address List developments**

14. Bev explained Field Staff involvement and Charles said he was keen to help but timing may be a problem. Esther confirmed that much involvement may not be necessary before the 2006. Councils representatives confirmed they presently use computerised Address Gazetteer and check with DNA. There is a 5% error rate and sometimes the data is 3 days out of date. Norman confirmed that for the Census GROS will use ground checking. Eric reminded everyone that address checkers carried out other functions than address checking.

## **Address List developments**

15. Esther explained the plans for beyond 2006 and beyond 2011 and asked where address lists should be sent to. Councils are 'data custodians' and Iain confirmed that the Gazetteers needed constant checking and that DNA Scotland is currently looking at procedures and requirements. So far 26 Gazetteers have been checked by a consultant and problems are being ironed out. DNA Scotland is not perfect but definitely better than PAF. Norman asked how DNA Scotland identify anomalies and Iain confirmed that they are highlighted when addresses don't make sense. Norman agreed that sometimes it was difficult to convince Royal Mail of errors. Iain confirmed that Assessors Portal was a good search engine. Improved structures are being looked at resulting in improved property classification. All Liaison Officers agreed that local knowledge was essential and Esther asked if she could get access to the Portal via them. All agreed.

16. Esther asked all Liaison Officers for contact details for Communal Establishment information. Charles suggested that local Refuse Collection Services may have the best lists.

## **AP4 Liaison Officers to supply details**

The discussion then went on to more **general** topics.

## **Publicity**

17. Charles confirmed that the Lochaber Life is a good local magazine for publicity and Gerry confirmed that West Dunbartonshire Council have a good local newspaper that could also be used.

## **On-line services**

18. Charles asked if there would be on-line electronics by 2011 and Bev confirmed that this was being looked at with ONS & NISRA. Test results will be examined but it is envisaged that electronic access will be needed at some time. Richard responded that on-line completion can cause scanning difficulties and also pointed out the cost implications which could be incurred in order to get very few additional forms

returned. Bev confirmed that naturally there will be political pressure for on-line completion and Charles asked about the risk level of risk involved if there is no electronic completion. Bev confirmed that all factors are being heavily discussed including the possibility that the issue of ID cards in 2010 may result in adverse publicity for e-capture of data for Government Departments. Charles suggested that a good incentive such as the Young Scots Card was needed and Bev asked for ideas from the group.

**19.** Duncan closed the meeting by thanking everyone for coming and stressed that the meeting had provided a good focus on everyone's reliance on each other and the ability to help each other provide the best services in the future. Closer liaison with local authorities was one of the lessons learned from 2001 and he looked forward to that in the run-up to 2006 and 2011.