

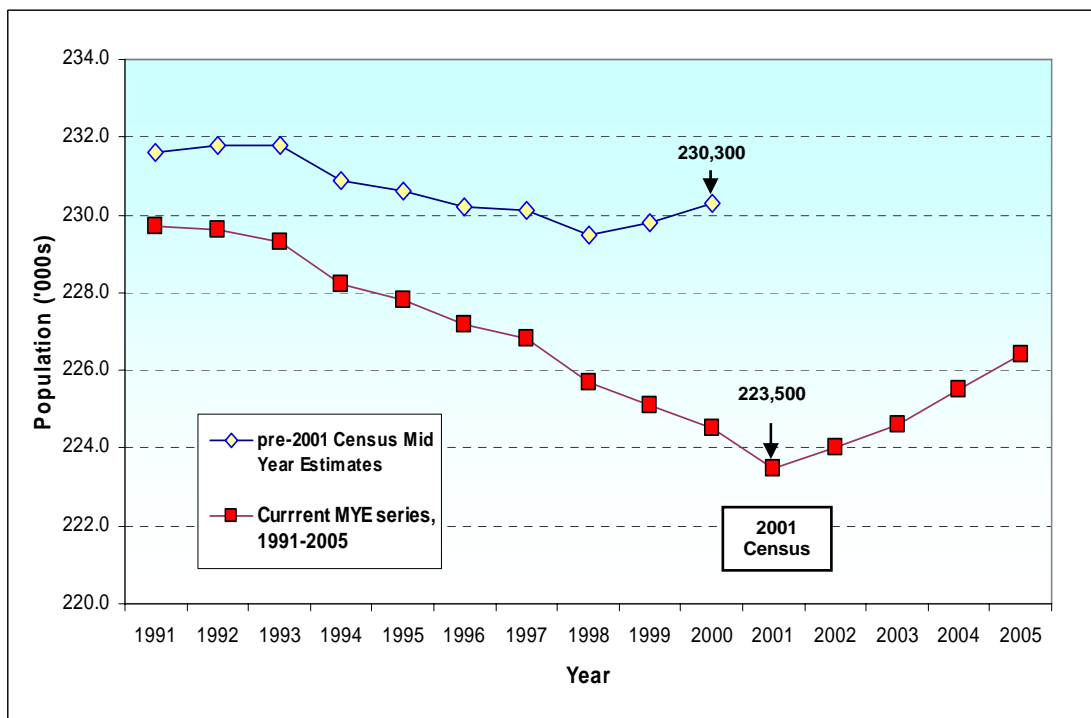


City and County of Swansea

'Everybody Counts!'

A Review of Population Estimates and the Census

SWANSEA'S POPULATION: IMPACT OF THE 2001 CENSUS



Community Leadership Scrutiny Board

March 2008

Why This Matters

Cllr Tony Lloyd (Chair)



Cllr Ceinwen Thomas (Vice Chair)



The Board considered an overview presentation on 2001 Census issues, resultant population estimates and preparations for the 2011 Census and was struck by the significant impact population estimates had on the Council's funding. It has been estimated that the Authority could lose up to £¾ million of funding per year per 1000 population not identified based on Census figures.

The Board wanted to further explore proposals for the remedy of deficiencies identified in connection with the 2001 Census, Council engagement in preparations for 2011 Census and opportunities for the generation of improved local population estimates to assist Council decision-making, service planning and funding bids.

The Board felt that by undertaking a review of this topic it could make a positive contribution to improving local population estimates and ensuring that an undercount of Swansea's population does not occur in the 2011 Census and adversely affect Revenue Support Grant funding that Swansea receives from the government and therefore service delivery.

By doing this work the Board aimed to improve the accuracy of local population information available to the Council for strategic planning / service delivery, bidding and funding purposes; develop enhanced local population counts; and help facilitate the generation of property and population information that could be supplied to Office for National Statistics (ONS) to aid the effectiveness of the Census. The local population counts would also give the Council an empirical base to challenge any undercount that might appear in the 2011 Census.

We would like to thank the Members of the Board, those that gave evidence and the support staff for their participation and assistance in the Review.

Summary

1. Aims of the Review

- 1.1 The aim of this review was to deliver improved local population estimates and more accurate findings from the 2011 Census.

2. Evidence Considered

- 2.1 Overview Presentation (The Census, Population Estimates and Local Authority Funding) and Further Evidence from the Council's Research & Information Manager.
- 2.2 Evidence from Office for National Statistics (ONS).
- 2.3 Corporate Working Session – Evidence from Directors / Heads of Service / Service Managers.
- 2.4 Evidence from the Head of Information and Customer Services
- 2.5 Community Session – Evidence from Community Representatives.
- 2.6 Research – How other Local Authorities are tackling the problem of inaccurate population estimates and other initiatives.

3. Conclusions

- 3.1 The Census is the most comprehensive single and important survey of the UK's population, accuracy of which is critical to the planning, development and delivery of local services, resource allocation and decision making.
- 3.2 There are significant financial implications of miscounts in population to Local Authority funding and therefore service planning and delivery.
- 3.3 The City and County of Swansea has been pro-active in recognising the problems of inaccurate population estimates and it is notable that Swansea, in comparison with other Authorities, is well engaged in the search for solutions.
- 3.4 The ability to develop an accurate local population count is dependent on information sharing both within the Authority and between the Council and external organisations.
- 3.5 The engagement of communities is crucial to the achievement of accurate population counts and evidence suggests that knowledge and awareness of the purpose of the Census and population counts is mixed and that negative perceptions exist.
- 3.6 It is encouraging that the Office for National Statistics intends to liaise and engage more closely with Local Authorities for the 2011 Census and there will be clear benefits from closer working.

4. Recommendations

The Board recommends that Cabinet:

- 4.1 consider the costs and benefits of:
- (a) pursuing the development of the Authority's own independent City and County wide local population and household estimates and property list information (with the support of Corporate Management and Service Units, using all available datasets within and accessible to the Council) through the Local Land & Property Gazetteer building on the pilot work carried out by the Research & Information Manager, in order to:
 - assist in the compilation of property lists for Census enumerators and provide a guide to household numbers
 - assist ONS in planning for the 2011 Census and avoid any possible undercount of the area's population
 - provide the Council with a source against which to check and challenge (if need be) the accuracy of Census and intervening Government Mid Year population estimates
 - support Council service planning, the development of Customer Relationship Management systems, resource allocation and decision-making
 - (b) utilising the annual electoral register canvass for wider purposes to support the calculation of a local population count.
 - (c) a sustained educational and promotional campaign of publicity, advertising and targeted awareness-raising (e.g. press releases, road shows) in the run up to the 2011 Census to explain the purpose of the Census and help improve participation and ensure the maximum level of returns.
 - (d) the introduction of Census education in schools through regular events / workshops for longer term benefit.
 - (e) working with ONS to employ the methods for community engagement described in this report particularly the engagement of local leaders and representatives within communities, voluntary groups and outreach workers (with appropriate training) to act as Census champions, using existing community events to generate interest, and the use of the local knowledge of Councillors.
- 4.2 explore the potential for sharing population and address data with outside agencies through engagement (including Data Protection Act implications) to assist the calculation of local population estimates.
- 4.3 undertake pro-active engagement with ONS in the preparation and delivery of the 2011 Census, on all aspects from consultations and preparation of property lists through to the recruitment of enumerators and the return of forms, and agrees a liaison strategy with ONS with clear lines of demarcation to overcome enumeration problems associated with the 2001 Census.

- 4.4 nominate a Census Liaison Officer within the Council to liaise with ONS and co-ordinate related activities, support and information dissemination within the Council.
- 4.5 develop a formal Council Strategy for involvement in and the delivery of information from the 2011 Census
- 4.6 advise ONS:
- (a) that the hand delivery and collection of Census forms should be undertaken or the savings generated from post out should be redirected to publicity and follow up.
- (b) that it should utilise the expertise and local knowledge of those involved in the electoral register canvass as Census enumerators.
- 4.7 designate the Council's Contact Centre a first stop for Census advice, and assistance with the completion of forms, to help improve the response level.

1. Aims of the Review

1.1 The primary reason for the review was to improve local population estimates and ensure that an undercount of Swansea's population does not occur in the 2011 Census and adversely affect Revenue Support Grant funding.

1.2 The following aim for the review was agreed:

To deliver improved local population estimates and more accurate findings from 2011 Census.

1.3 The review also had the following objectives:

- To improve the accuracy of local population information available to the Council for service planning, bidding and funding purposes.
- To evaluate the benefits of local population counts
- To identify opportunities for the Council to engage with ONS in preparations for the 2011 Census with a view to delivering more reliable information.

2. Evidence Considered

Date		Activity
25 th October 2006	–	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Overview Presentation from the Council's Research & Information Manager – The Census, Population Estimates and Local Authority Funding
14 th February 2007	–	
Mar – Apr 2007	–	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Scoping the Review

6 th June 2007	–	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Board agrees work programme for municipal year and confirms that review will proceed
4 th July 2007	–	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Presentation from Office for National Statistics
1 st August 2007	–	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Corporate Working Session
29 th August 2007	–	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Further Corporate Working Session • Presentation from the Head of Information and Customer Services • Further Evidence from the Research & Information Manager
31 st October 2007	–	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Community Session
21 st November 2007	–	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Further Community Session • Review of Evidence Gathered
9 th January 2008 (Task & Finish Group)		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Update on recent developments from the Research and Information Manager • Consultation responses received from organisations working with older people and carers • Findings from research into how other Local Authorities are tackling the problem of inaccurate population estimates • Analysis of Evidence Gathered • Consideration of Conclusions / Recommendations
30 th January 2008	–	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Report back from Task & Finish Group / Discussion of Conclusions and Possible Recommendations
26 th March 2008	–	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Final Report Agreed

3. Conclusions

- 3.1 **The Census is the most comprehensive single and important survey of the UK's population, accuracy of which is critical to the planning, development and delivery of local services, resource allocation and decision making.**

3.1.1 The Census, first held in 1801, is the definitive source of population and household information and plays a major role in the allocation of resources. The Census is held every 10 years and covers the whole of the UK. It is carried out by Office for National Statistics (ONS) through a household survey. Completion of the survey is compulsory – the fine for failure to complete in 2001 was up to £1,000.

3.1.2 Reliable and up to date population data is essential for service planning, resource allocation and decision making purposes.

3.1.3 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 etc.
- To monitor and review the impact of plans and policies
- To inform decision-making

3.1.4 The Council plans and targets its local services and make extensive use of Census information for a variety of means:

- Service delivery planning
- Population and household projections
- Calculating the scale of future housing needs
- Local education needs - such as where to site new schools
- Local transport planning and traffic modelling;
- Preparation of Local Authority Development Plans
- Community support services, including the delivery of home help and home care.
- Profiling wards and other small areas, e.g. Communities First Areas, localities
- Preparing funding bid submissions
- To check Standard Spending Assessments for Revenue Support Grant e.g.
 - dependent children in households with head in low occupational classification
 - usual residents of pensionable age with a limiting long term illness
 - single pensioners living in households
 - dependent children in lone adult households
 - under-18 population living in wards with a higher population density than the Welsh average
 - dependent children in social rented housing
 - dependent children in overcrowded housing
 - households (where head is aged 18-64) with no carer
 - persons 18-64 in non-white ethnic groups

- population by age group
- population in areas of multiple deprivation

- Calculating performance indicators and benchmarking
- Developing corporate strategies and plans e.g. Equal Opportunities Policy, Housing Need Assessments

3.1.5 The Census is clearly beneficial to any organisation providing services to help them to make effective use of resources to meet the needs of local people.

3.2 There are significant financial implications of miscounts in population to Local Authority funding and therefore service planning and delivery.

3.2.1 The Government allocate about £60bn a year to Local Authorities 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. from the decennial Census. Census data plays a key role in the calculation of the Council's Revenue Support Grant. The Board heard that ONS had worked the Local Government Funding Team in the Department for Communities and Local Government to quantify the potential impact of errors in population estimates across all Local Authorities by calculating the impact of an error of 1,000 people in each local authority's population estimate. As a very broad generalisation, an error of this magnitude resulted in a misallocation of around £500,000 per local authority per year.

3.2.2 At a further evidence session the Council's Head of Financial Services outlined to the Board that approximately 80% of grant funding was based on population and that it would not be an exaggeration to say that the effect of miscounts of 1000 in population can mean a loss of around £¾ million to the Authority in funding each year based on the Census figures. The actual amount of potential Revenue Support Grant loss will depend on who was 'missed out'. The Board was informed of the sub division of funding per person that relates to certain age groups and the obvious financial implications of not gathering the correct figures. As an illustration, the actual range of could be anything from £200,000 (1000 under 2's x £200) to nearly £2 million (1000 over 85's x £1,900).

3.2.3 The Authority needs to ensure that the 2011 Census figures are as accurate as possible in order that the Authority secures the correct funding from Central Government and Welsh Assembly in order to plan for service delivery.

3.2.4 The 2001 Census population count for Swansea is considered to be flawed for various reasons including issues with the survey, community engagement and awareness, post back, and coverage. The 2001 Census resulted in a reduction in population figures by 7,000 (from

230,300 to 223,500) and meant the subsequent loss of money received via Standard Spending Assessment and Revenue Support Grant from the Central Government. The Board was advised that the loss attributable to the 7,000 population reduction was £1.1 million in 2003/04 and £1.2 million in 2004/05 – a significant loss. The Council had no empirical evidence to challenge the loss at the time.

3.2.5 Many other Authorities also experienced a downward revision in their estimated population as a result of the publication of results from the 2001 Census, including Manchester, Westminster and Cardiff. Revisions that many Authorities have considered to be at odds with a growing demand on local services. The revisions have had a detrimental impact on their finances and services and have led a number of Local Authorities to challenge to the Census statistics. Successful challenges made by Local Authorities have relied mainly on local property registers and population counts. More recent challenges, arising in connection with subsequent Mid Year Estimates, have come from Local Authorities such as Slough which has experienced a major influx of Eastern European migrants.

3.3 The City and County of Swansea has been pro-active in recognising the problems of inaccurate population estimates and it is notable that Swansea, in comparison with other Authorities, is well engaged in the search for solutions.

3.3.1 Given the significant implications of the Census' population estimates on Revenue Support Grant funding, and planning the delivery of services, the Council's Research & Information Team have been exploring alternative options for the generation of accurate local population estimates. The Board were informed of a local population count pilot scheme that had been developed by joining up information already held by the Authority in different service areas. The resultant population count would give the Authority, amongst other things, an empirical basis to challenge, where appropriate, official Census figures and Mid Year Estimates. The thinking within the Authority is well developed and appears to be ahead of others and this is to be applauded. Whilst issues in relation to population are not unique to Swansea, there is little evidence of such work going on in other Authorities. Research does suggest that there is a growing weight of opinion that current population estimates are not fit for purpose, particularly for Authorities experiencing significant levels of migration, and that the use of (and sharing of) local data is necessary.

3.3.2 Swansea now has a Local Land and Property Gazetteer (LLPG), which was developed post 2001. It is the single most accurate source of property and address data, providing a comprehensive listing of all residential properties and communal establishments for the City and County and could be used to generate target lists for Census Enumerators in 2011 and assist ONS in preparation for the 2011 Census. Linked to other Council data sources such as the Electoral

Register and Education records it could also be used to generate 'local population counts'.

3.3.3 The development of a local population and household estimate could assist ONS in the delivery of the 2011 Census and will:

- Support corporate service planning, resource allocation and decision-making – based on existing databases / information within and accessible to the Council
- Improve the quality and accuracy of the 2011 Census and minimise the dangers of potential undercounts
- Provide a sound basis for judging the accuracy of, and challenging where necessary, population statistics used in the allocation of Central Government funding and decision-making.
- Enable the Authority to quality assure address lists

3.3.4 Successful challenges to official statistics have been based on a variety of information:

- Local Authority Property Registers
- Local Authority Population Estimates
- Electoral Roll records
- New Homes built
- Extra student places
- Net gains in jobs
- Local Authority Housing Stock figures
- NHS Patient Registers (National Health Service Administrative Register Data)

3.3.5 For the purposes of demonstrating the practicality of generating local population counts from existing datasets, the model had been applied to three distinct electoral division test areas: Newton (with a stable population area), Landore (with a high proportion of ethnic minority group representation) and Uplands (with its student and transient professional populations). The Research and Information Manager demonstrated to the Board the results of the Local Population Count Pilot used in these 3 electoral divisions. The estimates based on the Local Land and Property Gazetteer were constructed using data from the Electoral Register, SIMS pupil database, Higher Education student database, and live births. Whilst the results aligned closely with the Census for Newton and Landore (prior to the consideration of Housing benefits data) the count in Uplands pointed to the presence of an additional 1,198 people - 9% above the 2001 Census figure.

3.3.6 The tests demonstrated the practicality of linking the primary datasets via LLPG and the potential reliability of the results. It was evident that the pilot model for delivery of local population counts works and is potentially promising as an accurate tool, and would benefit from further refinement.

3.3.7 There are many examples of the possible corporate use of population counts and the underlying database including:

- Monitoring and projecting local demographic change
- Preparing area profiles
- Informing service planning / assess performance
- Developing local housing, transport and education strategies
- Bidding for resources
- Supporting the development of Council Customer Relationship Management (CRM) systems

3.3.8 There are also benefits of linking the population count database to the Council's Geographic Information System (GIS). This could enable (subject to the imposition of appropriate restrictions on access) the selection and viewing of household data from an interactive map base – by a simple click on the property. Area boundaries could also be superimposed on the interactive plan to quickly retrieve small area population counts, generate mailing lists, and assemble summary resident population and household details – the latter of which could be used to provide considerably enhanced information support for emergency services.

3.3.9 Board Members commented on the opportunity for Swansea to be the first Local Authority to introduce a local population count but acknowledged that the Authority would need to investigate the resources that would be required to develop the business case and deliver a full and robust local population count, and keep it maintained as a living system. The expertise already exists within the Council's Research and Information Team to take this forward and the Board considers the development of such a system a corporate priority, and fully supports their efforts. In time such a system may make the decennial Census, and the huge cost associated with this survey, unnecessary. A failure to invest could result in the repetition of the Council's 2001 Census experience, loss of funding and an inaccurate population base on which to plan and deliver services.

3.4 The ability to develop an accurate local population count is dependent on information sharing both within the Authority and between the Council and external organisations.

3.4.1 As has been described earlier, much of the data needed to construct reliable local population estimates already exists through a wide range of databases within or accessible to the Council. There are opportunities for delivering population counts from existing data sources, as a check / alternative to the Census and Mid Year Estimates and to help ensure that the appropriate level of Government funding is awarded to the City and County of Swansea.

- 3.4.2 The sources of population information that could be used to check and challenge Census figures and Government Mid Year Estimates include the Electoral Register, Births and Deaths (from Registrar), Higher Education Students, the School Pupil database and GP Patient Registers. However the ability to produce accurate and reliable information locally is dependant on a commitment to information sharing both within the Authority and from external organisations.
- 3.4.3 It is particularly the case that closer and joint working across the Authority is necessary for the successful development of the local population count model. The Board wants to see the use of Council databases to ensure all residential properties receive 2011 Census forms and the production of accurate population counts. It was noted that successful challenges to underestimated Census were made by Local Authorities with developed property record and integrated information systems.
- 3.4.4 With regard to internal information the Authority held information across its departments and the careful use of information from Registrars, Electoral Registers, Schools, Council Tax, and Housing Benefit etc. would enable the development of a local population count. The Board acknowledged that some sharing of information already exists. It was acknowledged that there were limitations to some of this data, for example the Electoral Register will not include foreign nationals, those registered elsewhere or below voting age etc. unless consideration is given to utilising the annual electoral register canvass for wider purposes to support the calculation of a local population count. The Board supported the establishment of a 'citizen's register'. The use of existing information and any link with such a register would have to be legally assessed prior to use to ensure, for example, that there was appropriate consent to use that information for such a purpose.
- 3.4.5 Local population counts and the underlying database would be of great value to many external bodies/partners, for example:
- Police – preparation of crime statistics, criminal investigations, person tracking
 - Fire Service – emergency incident planning and management
 - Other Central Government Departments – wide ranging possibilities from statistical use through to fraud investigation
 - ONS – assisting in the identification of properties and households for enumeration of the 2011 Census.
- 3.4.6 The Authority will need to explore the possibility of information sharing with other agencies (overcoming any barriers) and the value of the data towards the achievement of a local population count, for example with the Local Health Board, Higher Education institutions, Police, Government Agencies, Job Centre, and others who hold resident data. Particular problems were acknowledged with enumeration of the often highly mobile student population.

3.5 The engagement of communities is crucial to the achievement of accurate population counts and evidence suggests that knowledge and awareness of the purpose of the Census and population counts is mixed and that negative perceptions exist.

3.5.1 The achievement of accurate population counts is dependant on participation of everybody in the process and it was acknowledged that there were sections of the community, who for various reasons, Census forms may either not reach or be returned by. There is a commonly held view that that the current level of UK population is much higher than officially recorded.

3.5.2 There is a particular need to engage with and ensure that the 2011 Census accurately captures ethnic minority communities and other traditionally hard to reach groups. It is widely accepted that the level of migrant population is not always accurately reflected in official statistics, not least as a result of the difficulties in tracking and enumerating 'new' European Union (EU) citizens.

3.5.3 The Board engaged with community groups representing relevant ethnic and faith communities in this study to raise awareness, gather views and experiences, identify issues or thoughts on any weaknesses of the 2001 Census and invite suggestions as to how a better response might be generated in the 2011 Census, given their local knowledge and reach to communities. The Board also had the opportunity to test the effectiveness of ONS's community liaison to date. The community representatives outlined ways in which they access and use Census data and the importance of accurate data for their own organisations. They then outlined potential ideas for promoting and educating the communities they represent about the importance of the completion of the Census forms and ways in which assistance that some may require can be provided.

3.5.4 The Board heard many good points from the community representatives that gave evidence in respect of Census awareness and participation of minority ethnic communities, for example the need to work within communities through community centres or existing community and support networks, informing communities of the importance of the Census, and the provision of advice. It was suggested that engagement with community leaders and organisations would provide assistance to help engage difficult to reach communities (e.g. Black & Ethnic Minority younger generation, Eastern European), particularly where there were language or literacy issues, and promote completion of Census forms. A word of caution was expressed with regard to problems with translation of forms and lack of use of written ethnic languages amongst some communities. The role of the family leader in completing forms was stressed. It was also suggested that there may be funding available for citizenship activities to promote Census. The Board heard enthusiasm for using BME community representatives as Census enumerators.

- 3.5.5 The evidence suggests that there is limited knowledge of the purpose of the Census and some negative perceptions of what it is all about. The Board heard that some of the reasons why people did not participate in the Census were because of a lack of knowledge about the purpose of the Census, and what the data was used for or its implication on Local Authority funding, and because of a belief that the information being collected would be used for other reasons such as for tax or immigration purposes and a general wariness of Government use of information by some sections of community leading to a reluctance to provide information.
- 3.5.6 It was clear from talking to the community representatives that community liaison to date has not been effective and to improve participation it was necessary to raise awareness of the need for accurate Census form completion and to highlight the benefits that accurate population counts can bring to the community i.e. in terms of the provision of services to the community e.g. health services.
- 3.5.7 There was agreement that this must be tackled through greater publicity, advertising and targeted awareness-raising to explain reasons behind why it is collected and what the information is used for and promote the benefits of the Census. The more people know what the Census is all about the more likely they are to complete the survey. The purpose of Census and the importance of Census returns must be clearer.
- 3.5.8 For a greater impact the publicity and awareness-raising would of course need to target those sections of the community which are considered to be under represented in Census returns. This would include students and coverage within universities (e.g. notice boards) would be beneficial.
- 3.5.9 It is clear that much work is necessary to ensure that hard to reach groups are included in population counts and to encourage completion of the Census form by groups that otherwise may not do so. However, it is unclear who should take the lead in this engagement and awareness-raising, the Council or ONS and importantly who should pay. Given the mutual benefits of the Census and the fact that both have a stake in its success dialogue on this issue is required. The Board would expect ONS to invest heavily in any community liaison but would equally expect the Authority to assist such efforts.
- 3.6 It is encouraging that the Office for National Statistics intends to liaise and engage more closely with Local Authorities for the 2011 Census and there will be clear benefits from closer working.**
- 3.6.1 Planning for the 2011 Census is well underway and the Council needs to engage with ONS to ensure that mistakes of 2001 are not repeated. The Board heard from Mr Ron May, the Local Authority and Community Liaison Manager for the Office for National Statistics. He

talked to the Board about objectives for the 2011 Census, why it matters to Local Authorities and the benefits from closer working between ONS and Local Authorities. He also talked about the assistance which Local Authorities could give and the important role of Chief Executives and the need for buy-in.

3.6.2 The main thrust of Mr. May's presentation was the need for ONS and Local Authorities to work closely and work together to achieve the best and most accurate population count, given the implication it has on Local Authority funding. In particular Local Authorities have invaluable knowledge, experience and contacts including:

- Knowledge of the profile of local areas and factors that make them hard to enumerate, such as:
 - language problems
 - student accommodation
 - communal establishments
- Key groups within communities (i.e. particularly hard-to-count populations)
- Experience of similar operations such as:
 - electoral registration
 - postal elections
- Contacts with local organisations through Local Strategic Partnerships
 - police, student groups, housing associations
 - religious and community groups
 - postal service providers

3.6.3 ONS conducted a Census Test in 2007 (which included Carmarthenshire) that aimed to test the effectiveness of:

- Liaison arrangements with Local Authorities
- Process for the identification of household addresses
- Methods for the delivery of questionnaires – by post and hand
- Draft questionnaire design and content
- Questionnaire return and collection procedures
- Response rates and the need for follow up
- Data capture and processing systems

3.6.4 ONS is currently considering various options in terms of establishing an effective partnership model and the experience of the approach adopted in the 2007 Census Test. The approach adopted in the Census Test involved:

- the appointment of formal Census liaison officers to act as Census agents
- Census Liaison Managers to act as the prime point of contact within a Local Authority and to champion the process.

- Assistant Census Liaison Managers to provide local intelligence to Census HQ and liaise with local field managers

3.6.5 The experience from the partnership teams working on the 2007 Census Test has suggested that Local Authorities are in a position to provide ONS with a wealth of valuable profile information for local areas, and as a result there is little doubt that both sides would benefit from a better Census if this liaison programme could be fully adopted in 2011.

3.6.6 It is recognised that there are significant operational benefits to be gained from a close working relationship with Local Authorities, and Local Authorities can assist by providing:

- Local knowledge to create area profiles
- Access to current Local Authority address lists
- Access to community groups
- Local media outlets /publicity / communication networks
- Call centre / website support
- Language translation / interpreter provisions for diverse communities within the Local Authority
- Field staff and logistical support (such as the provision of accommodation)
- Access to Local Strategic Partnerships
- Access to local political networks (Councillors)
- Statistical expertise to Quality Assure local results

3.6.7 There were a number of key roles for Local Authority Chief Executives, identified by ONS, which would have benefits for the Census:

- Acting as champions for the Census process within their Local Authority and across Local Authorities.
- Understanding impact of Census, particularly financial implications from a poor quality count
- Providing buy-in and support, particularly in getting a better understanding of the means of improving and agreeing address lists for enumeration
- Agreement and QA of the enumeration approach
- Agreeing the Local Authority's plans for Census engagement and an effective level of monitoring progress e.g.
 - providing the authority and resource for Local Authority Liaison Programme
 - roles for Local Authorities in working with ONS
 - formal links with Census Liaison Managers
 - the provision of LA based data to inform the enumeration process at the local area level
 - encourage staff to serve as Census field staff
- Facilitating any joint arrangements between Local Authorities
- Advising on how best to engage with local Councillors

- Strengthening the business case for the investment put into the Census
- Encouraging a culture of data sharing
- Minimising the risk of dispute over accuracy of Census counts and quality of outputs

3.6.8 The Board had held a 'Corporate Working' session to discuss and gather information about how the Authority could contribute to local population counts and engage with ONS, in particular with those who perhaps have a significant role to play in this (e.g. finance, elections; registrars, housing). Senior Officers from within the Authority gave evidence regarding the role that the Authority has played to date in terms of achieving an accurate population count, and the scope for further engagement with, and assistance to, ONS, with a focus on the 2011 Census.

3.6.9 The Board were informed of the processes under which the statutory annual canvass of properties for the preparation of electoral registers is carried out, with in excess of a hundred staff employed to deliver forms, redeliver and go door-to-door if necessary to obtain the required information. The Board noted in particular that the Election Team and the experience of staff involved in this canvass had not been utilised during the last Census in 2001 and there was no evidence of any approach by ONS to provide assistance. The Board supports the use of experienced election canvassers as Census staff and others with good local knowledge to get involved in enumeration of the 2011 Census.

3.6.10 The Board noted that there is currently no single national definitive source for address information. ONS used the Ordnance Survey Mastermap (Address Layer 2) for the 2007 Census Test but are now considering the use of the National Land and Property Gazetteer as an address source. An address check on the ground revealed that within a sample of 100,000 listed addresses supplied by ONS for the 5 Census Tests, field surveyors failed to locate over 1,100 properties and identified an additional 9,900 new households.

3.6.11 The Board is concerned that the proposed post out of Census forms, as opposed to hand delivery door to door, will result in a poorer rate of return, as receipt of the Census form will depend on the accuracy of ONS's property lists – which as seen from the Census Test are not accurate. It would be beneficial if the ONS make use the Local Land & Property Gazetteer as a source for address lists for the Census.

4. Recommendations

The Board commends Cabinet to consider all issues and ideas raised by this review and, in particular, the recommendations set out below.

The Board recognises that the Authority

- (a) will need to ensure that any subsequent actions are legal and meet the requirements of any relevant legislation;
- (b) has a responsibility to make the best use of limited resources and that any additional costs will need to be considered carefully as part of the annual budget setting process.

The Board has kept these principles in mind in the course of its investigations.

The Board recommends that Cabinet:

4.1 consider the costs and benefits of:

- (a) **pursuing the development of the Authority's own independent City and County wide local population and household estimates and property list information (with the support of Corporate Management and Service Units, using all available datasets within and accessible to the Council) through the Local Land & Property Gazetteer building on the pilot work carried out by the Research & Information Manager, in order to:**
 - **assist in the compilation of property lists for Census enumerators and provide a guide to household numbers**
 - **assist ONS in planning for the 2011 Census and avoid any possible undercount of the area's population**
 - **provide the Council with a source against which to check and challenge (if need be) the accuracy of Census and intervening Government Mid Year population estimates**
 - **support Council service planning, the development of Customer Relationship Management systems, resource allocation and decision-making**
- (b) **utilising the annual electoral register canvass for wider purposes to support the calculation of a local population count.**
- (c) **a sustained educational and promotional campaign of publicity, advertising and targeted awareness-raising (e.g. press releases, road shows) is needed in the run up to the 2011 Census to explain the purpose of the Census and help improve participation and ensure the maximum level of returns.**
- (d) **the introduction of Census education in schools through regular events / workshops for longer term benefit.**

- (e) working with ONS to employ the methods for community engagement described in this report particularly the engagement of local leaders and representatives within communities, voluntary groups and outreach workers (with appropriate training) to act as Census champions, using existing community events to generate interest, and the use of the local knowledge of Councillors.**

- 4.2 explore the potential for sharing population and address data with outside agencies through engagement (including Data Protection Act implications) to assist the calculation of local population estimates.**

- 4.3 undertake pro-active engagement with ONS in the preparation and delivery of the 2011 Census, on all aspects from consultations and preparation of property lists through to the recruitment of enumerators and the return of forms, and agrees a liaison strategy with ONS with clear lines of demarcation to overcome enumeration problems associated with the 2001 Census.**

- 4.4 nominate a Census Liaison Officer within the Council to liaise with ONS and co-ordinate related activities, support and information dissemination within the Council.**

- 4.5 develop a formal Council Strategy for involvement in and the delivery of information from the 2011 Census.**

- 4.6 advise ONS:**
 - (a) that the hand delivery and collection of Census forms should be undertaken or the savings generated from post out should be redirected to publicity and follow up.**

 - (b) that it should utilise the expertise and local knowledge of those involved in the electoral register canvass as Census enumerators.**

- 4.7 designate the Council's Contact Centre a first stop for Census advice, and assistance with the completion of forms to help improve the response level.**

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Swansea Carers' Centre
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Jenna Sullivan, Scrutiny Research Officer

Further Information

Agenda Papers and Minutes of the Community Leadership Scrutiny Board
(October 2006 – March 2008)

About the Community Leadership Scrutiny Board

The Community Leadership Scrutiny Board is a body of Councillors who are not members of the Cabinet. Their role is to scrutinise the performance of Council services and to make recommendations about how services can be improved. Community Leadership, one of eight Scrutiny Boards, has responsibility for scrutinising:

- Community planning and strategy
- Overall strategic functions and duties of the Council
- Functions of the Chief Executive's department not covered by another Board

Members of the Board 2007/08

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Cllr. Alan Lloyd

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