

CONFIDENTIAL FILING

The 1981 Census

The 1991 Census

HOMG AFFAIRS

PT1: August 1979

PT2: October 1987

Referred to	Date	Referred to	Date	Referred to	Date	Referred to	Date
29.10.87.							
6.6.88							
20.6.88 ⁸²							
27.6.88							
4.7.88							
11.8.92							
2.9.92							
PART CLOSED 1.5.97							
PREM 19/3786							

SERIES CLOSED

**END OF
CONSERVATIVE
ADMINISTRATION**

1 MAY 1997

NSM
CCPO

The Rt. Hon. Tim Sainsbury MP
Minister for Industry



The Rt Hon Virginia Bottomley MP
Secretary of State for Health
Richmond House
79 Whitehall
LONDON
SW1A 2NS

Department of
Trade and Industry

Ashdown House
123 Victoria Street
London SW1E 6RB

Direct line
071-215 5144

DTI Enquiries
071-215 5000

17 September 1992

Dear Virginia

POSSIBILITY OF A CENSUS OF POPULATION IN 1996

Thank you for copying to Michael Heseltine your letter of 11 August to John Wakeham, proposing that the Government announce that it will not be planning for a 1996 Census. I am replying in his absence.

There would be some advantages both to business which make use of census data, and to my Department, in more frequent Censuses (and more timely publication of the results). But I agree that these would not justify the extra costs, and am content with your proposal to announce a decision without further consultations. I am copying this to the Prime Minister, members of EDH and to Sir Robin Butler.

Tim Sainsbury

PE8141

TIM SAINSBURY

SB.W04

dti
the department for Enterprise





2 MARSHAM STREET
LONDON SW1P 3EB
071-276 3000

My ref:
H/PSO/18234/92
Your ref:

Rt Hon Virginia Bottomley, MP
Secretary of State for Health
Richmond House
79 Whitehall
LONDON
SW1A 2NS

- 2 SEP 1992

Dear Virginia

CONSULTATION ON A 1996 CENSUS OF POPULATION

You wrote to John Wakeham on 11 August to seek agreement that there should not be a centrally financed 1996 Census of Population in England and Wales or in Scotland.

I agree with your judgement that the costs involved mean that any case made by users for a 1996 Census is virtually certain to be rejected. In the circumstances it would be wrong to invite users to prepare a case, and I therefore agree with your proposal for an announcement, in September, that there will not be a centrally financed Census in 1996.

This announcement can be expected to attract considerable criticism from census users, not least the local authorities. There is widespread expectation among users for formal consultation on the need for a 1996 Census; in fact, local authority organisations have been invited to comment on the wording of a consultation paper. It is particularly unfortunate that the delays in processing the 1991 Census results mean that the decision not to hold a 1996 Census will be announced before the implications of those results can be assessed.

Presentation of the decision will therefore need considerable care. In particular, the announcement should acknowledge the pleas made by users, in your recent consultation, for more up-to-date census type data in the intercensal period. If the 1991 results show that the annual population estimates have drifted significantly from the benchmark, the pressure to fill the information gap between decennial censuses will be much greater. Your letter states that the Census Offices will be examining supplementary sources for meeting this need, in their census



development programmes. Announcing this at the same time could help soften the blow, especially if some indication is given of the arrangements for users to make an input to the process.

I am copying this reply to the Prime Minister, to all members of EDH Committee and to Sir Robin Butler.

For me

Michael



MICHAEL HOWARD



cc/s

Nbpm



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Oddi wrth Ysgrifennydd Gwladol Cymru

The Rt Hon David Hunt MBE MP

From The Secretary of State for Wales

CT/9112/92

2nd

September 1992

Zear Virginia

POSSIBILITY OF A CENSUS OF POPULATION IN 1996

I refer to your letter of 11 August to John Wakeham concerning the above.

I am content for you to proceed as proposed and announce the Government's decision not to finance a 1996 census before Parliament reassembles.

/ I am copying this letter to the Prime Minister, members of EDH and to Sir Robin Butler.

Yours ever

The Rt Hon Virginia Bottomley JP MP
Secretary of State for Health
Department of Health
79 Whitehall
LONDON
SW1A 2NS





QUEEN ANNE'S GATE LONDON SW1H 9AT

01 SEP 1992

nbpm

The Virgin,

Thank you for copying to me your letter of ¹¹ August to John Wakeham, seeking agreement that there should not be a centrally financed 1996 Census of Population in England and Wales or in Scotland.

The Home Office has a particular interest in the results of the ethnic group question which was asked for the first time in the 1991 Census. There would be some merit in holding a Census in 1996 in order to update ethnic information before 2001, but for the reasons set out in your letter, I do not feel the expenditure involved can be justified in the present circumstances. I am therefore content for an announcement to be made before Parliament reassembles that the Government will not finance a 1996 Census.

I am copying this letter to the Prime Minister, to all members of EDH, and to Sir Robin Butler.

[Handwritten signature]

KENNETH CLARKE

The Rt Hon Mrs Virginia Bottomley, MP
Department of Health
Richmond House
79 Whitehall
London SW1A 2NS

HOME AFFAIRS : Census Pt 2



SANCTUARY BUILDINGS GREAT SMITH STREET
WESTMINSTER LONDON SW1P 3BT
TELEPHONE 071-925 5000

The Rt Hon JOHN PATTEN MP

ccp

nbpm

The Rt Hon Mrs Virginia Bottomley JP MP
Secretary of State for Health
Richmond House
79 Whitehall
London
SW1A 2NS

The Virginia:

27 August 1992

will attach Presd.

POSSIBILITY OF A CENSUS OF POPULATION IN 1996

Thank you for copying me your letter of 11 August to Lord Wakeham concerning the possibility of a Census of Population in 1996.

I agree that there should not be a centrally financed 1996 Census of Population in England and Wales or in Scotland. I am content with your proposal to announce, before Parliament reassembles, that the Government will not finance a 1996 census. I am quite convinced that a census every ten years is sufficient.

I am copying this letter to the Prime Minister, to all members of EDH and to Sir Robin Butler.

Yours, J.P.

JOHN PATTEN





add
nbpm

Treasury Chambers, Parliament Street SW1P 3AG

071-270 3000

Fax 071-270 5456

The Rt Hon Virginia Bottomley JP MP
Secretary of State for Health
Department of Health
79 Whitehall
London SW1A 2NS

24 August 1992

Dear Virginia

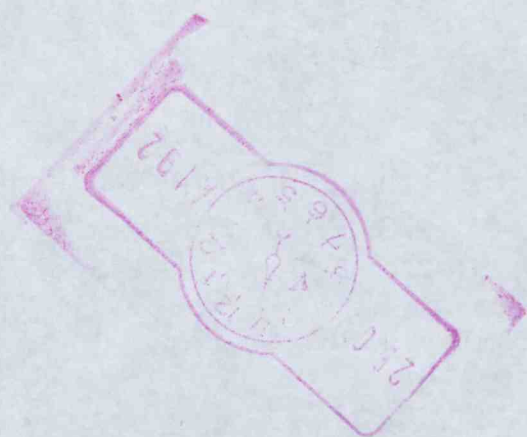
POSSIBILITY OF A CENSUS OF POPULATION IN 1996 *Step-*

Thank you for copying me your letter of 11 August to John Wakeham seeking agreement to your decision not to finance a 1996 census.

2. I fully support your decision and an early announcement in September to that effect.

3. I am copying this letter to the Prime Minister, to members of EDH, and to Sir Robin Butler.

Yours ever
Michael.
MICHAEL PORTILLO



CCPV



1/2/92

The Rt Hon The Lord Wakeham
Lord Privy Seal
Lord Privy Seal's Office
68 Whitehall
LONDON
SW1A 2AT

Richmond House
79 Whitehall
London SW1A 2NS
Telephone 071 210 3000
*From the Secretary of
State for Health*

// August 1992

D. John

POSSIBILITY OF A CENSUS OF POPULATION IN 1996

I am writing on my own behalf and that of Ian Lang to seek your and EDH colleagues' agreement that there should not be a centrally financed 1996 Census of Population in England and Wales or in Scotland. I understand that the position in Northern Ireland is being considered separately.

Censuses of Population are normally held at 10 year intervals, although a sample census was held in 1966 and a full census was planned for 1976 but abandoned for financial reasons. In 1983 the Government announced that it would not be planning for a 1986 census.

Preparatory work for a 1996 census would need to start early in 1993. Census users are expecting to be consulted very shortly about the case for such a census, with a view to Government decisions at about the end of the year.

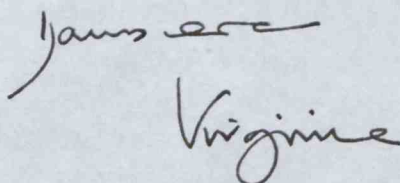
If we held a 1996 census it would need to be a full one. A sample would not provide the reliable local information which is now the chief reason for censuses. A census similar to that held in 1991 would cost at least £150 million, spread over about 8 years starting in 1993-94. Even a basic population count by age and sex would cost about £100 million. Neither Ian nor I can believe that, in present financial circumstances, we would decide to spend sums of that order, whatever case might be advanced by users. If that is the case, it seems to us better not to waste official and user time on a consultation process which would be meaningless except in the extremely remote contingency that external bodies proved willing and able to provide the necessary finances.

To proceed as we propose could leave us open to criticism from census users, such as local authorities and health authorities, that we have made the decision without consulting them, and before all the basic results from the 1991 census are available and the value of those results assessed. We should, however, be open to even greater criticism if users put forward a strong case - as they very well might - and we then rejected it.

I should add that the Census Offices have recently consulted on future needs for census type information, and options for producing it. Users indicated general satisfaction with the traditional form of census as the primary source, though many respondents made a plea for more up-to-date census type data in the intercensal period. The Census Offices will be examining supplementary sources for meeting this need, in their census development programmes, which will also look at improving ways of collecting, processing, and disseminating information using a broadly traditional type of census.

Because of users' expectation of early consultation, a decision that the Government will not finance a 1996 census would need to be announced before Parliament reassembles. I would propose to do this during September. I should therefore be grateful if you and other EDH colleagues would let me know by the end of August whether you are content.

I am copying this letter to the Prime Minister, to all members of EDH, and to Sir Robin Butler.

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Virginia Bottomley".

VIRGINIA BOTTOMLEY



NR/PM

Dominic Morris

1991 CENSUS

Cabinet Office suggested that, in view of the Prime Minister's earlier interest in the timing of the Census, you might like to have a copy of this letter to H.

Reed Clark
Private Secretary

4.7.88

Tel: 210 5094



DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND SOCIAL SECURITY

Richmond House, 79 Whitehall, London SW1A 2NS

Telephone 01-210 3000

AR4282p

From the Secretary of State for Social Services

The Rt Hon John Wakeham MP
Lord Privy Seal and Leader of the
House of Commons
Lord Privy Seal's Office
Whitehall
LONDON
SW1A 2AT

July 1988

THE 1991 CENSUS

I undertook to let H Committee know the criteria for selecting a 1991 Census date.

Every Census since 1931 has been held in April. This has considerable advantages for the temporarily recruited field staff in delivering and collecting forms; that is, reasonable climate, light evenings with BST starting at the end of March, and before substantial numbers start their summer holidays. An April date also accords with a European Community Directive calling on member states to hold a Census between March and May 1991.

The choice of a Sunday for the Census day maximises the number of the people present at home on Census night and allows enumerators to start collecting on a Monday with a further 4 clear days before the next weekend.

A key criterion in fixing Census day is the timing of public holidays, in particular the date of Easter. Forms are delivered in the week-end before Census day, and advance leaflets informing householders about the Census are sent round two weeks before Census day. For the 1991 Census, local authorities have also argued that the Census should be held in term-time because they need information about the households and housing in which students live.

Some dates in 1991 are shown below with comments:

24 March (and earlier)

To be avoided because of poorer weather and dark evenings

31 March

Easter Sunday

E.R.

7 April	To be avoided as forms would be delivered over Easter weekend
14 April	Field staff would have to carry out duties over Easter weekend, recruitment difficulties
21 April	Some students at term-time addresses some not
28 April	Most students at term-time addresses but close to local elections
5 May	May bank holiday.

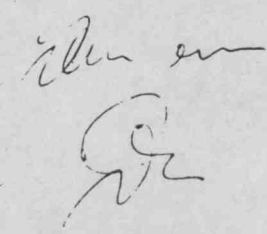
The date of 28 April 1991 was initially proposed in order to maximise the count of students at their term-time addresses. Since Easter Sunday is the 31 March 1991, it is estimated that by 28 April all universities in Great Britain will be in term-time, whereas only about half may be in term-time a week earlier. The new question on the term-time address of students will enable students to be counted in the correct place for population estimates purposes, but it will not yield information on student households and housing for those still on holiday.

Colleagues, however, shared my concern that 28 April 1991 is only 4 days before major local elections to be held on 2 May. Holding the Census on 28 April could cause public confusion between census field activity and election canvassing, and census publicity could interact with election publicity. Also enumerators would have to collect completed forms in a period disrupted by the elections. All this poses a risk that the census operation would be impaired. These disadvantages either do not apply to 21 April or apply to a lesser degree.

On balance, therefore, despite the wishes of Local Authorities, I have concluded, and Malcolm Rifkind agrees, that 21 April should be the proposed date, to be published in the White Paper.

Members will also wish to know that I am proposing to publish the White Paper on 19 July, rather than the original date of 13 July.

A copy of this letter goes to members of H and to Sir Robin Butler.


JOHN MOORE



DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND SOCIAL SECURITY

Richmond House, 79 Whitehall, London SW1A 2NS

Telephone 01-210 3000

From the Secretary of State for Social Services

Dominic Morris Esq
Private Secretary
No 10 Downing Street
London SW1A 2AA

→ cc PAS
JP
(seen by DM)

/ July 1988

Dear Dominic

1991 CENSUS WHITE PAPER

Thank you for your letter of 27 June about the ethnic question for the 1991 census. H agreed to the inclusion of the question in the census test and I now attach a final proof copy of the White Paper itself. My Secretary of State now proposes to publish this on Tuesday 19 July by means of a written answer accompanied by a press conference and press release. I also attach a copy of the proposed written answer.

In addition to the issue of the ethnic question and its form, there is likely to be press and parliamentary interest in the confidentiality of individual information, particularly in relation to community charge registers, the exclusion of additional questions from the census for which there is demand and the use of census statistics for marketing and other commercial purposes. I will let you have further briefing shortly.

A copy of this letter goes to private secretaries to other cabinet members and to Trevor Woolley.

Yours sincerely
Rod Clark

ROD CLARK
Private Secretary

SUGGESTED PARLIAMENTARY QUESTION AND ANSWER TO ANNOUNCE PUBLICATION
OF CENSUS WHITE PAPER

Question

To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services when the White Paper on the 1991 Census of Population will be published.

Answer

The Government's proposals for a Census in Great Britain on 21 April 1991 are published today in the White Paper, Cm [], which I have presented to Parliament in conjunction with my right honourable and learned Friend the Secretary of State for Scotland.

The Government believes that the topics to be included in the Census should be those most needed by central and local government, businesses and the professions. It also considers it essential that the Census should be generally acceptable to the public and should not be an unreasonable burden on them. The proposals are based on these principles.

The proposed content is broadly similar to that of the successful 1981 Census but with four additional questions. They are on central heating, long term illness, hours worked and the term-time address of students. These will not add greatly to the time taken to complete the form and will provide important information. Other new features compared with 1981 include making a detailed count of dwellings, entering the postcode of each household address to the computer and asking people in households who were absent from their usual address on census night to complete a form from that address on a voluntary basis when they return. These changes will improve census coverage and make the results more useful.

A final Census Test will be held in April 1989. The main aim of the test will be to make sure that the procedures for delivery and collection of the forms will be effective. It will also be used to make a final assessment of the reaction of the public to the proposed questions and the effectiveness of publicity about the Census. The areas to be included are Duns, North Berwick and parts of Edinburgh, Birmingham, Scarborough and the London Boroughs of Merton and Wandsworth.

In its reply (Cm 9238) to the Home Affairs Committee Report on ethnic and racial questions in the Census, the Government recognised that the Committee had made a good case in principle for inclusion of a question on ethnic group. Subsequent consultations with government departments and local and health authorities have confirmed the need for the kind of information such a question would provide for local areas. To do this, a question must be formulated in an understandable and acceptable way. OPCS has, through a series of tests and discussions organised with the help of the Commission for Racial Equality, developed a form of question it believes to be the one most likely to meet these criteria. The question is set out in the White Paper. The Government proposes to include this question in the Census Test in April 1989 and to study the public response before deciding whether the question should be included in the final plans for the 1991 Census.

The Census Act 1920 lays down strict safeguards of census confidentiality. The Government will not use the information gathered in the 1991 Census about identified individuals for administrative purposes and will ensure that no organisation or person outside the Office of Population Censuses and Surveys and the General Register Office for Scotland has access to census information about identified individuals.

The British Computer Society has accepted an invitation to review the data protection, confidentiality and security arrangements for the 1991 Census and the Data Protection Registrar has expressed support for this independent review. The findings will be published before the Census.

The government intends that, as in previous Censuses, results from the 1991 Census should wherever practicable be made available in a convenient form to meet users' needs, with a commitment where necessary by users to meet the costs. The particular priority will be to make key results for all local authorities available by May 1992 so they can be used in the revenue support calculations that year. Priority will also be given to results for health authorities.

After evaluation of the April 1989 Test results, the Government will prepare a draft Order in Council and will lay it before Parliament for approval in accordance with the Census Act 1920.

Proof—For Official Use Only

GALLEY NUMBER 1 (of 20)

1991 Census of Population

Presented to Parliament by the Secretary of State for Social
Services and the Secretary of State for Scotland by Command of
Her Majesty
July 1988

LONDON
HER MAJESTY'S STATIONERY OFFICE
£00.00 net

Cm 0000

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1991 CENSUS OF POPULATION

I

INTRODUCTION

1. The Government has decided that, subject to Parliamentary approval, a Census of Population should be taken in 1991: the proposed date being Sunday ~~26~~ April. ⁽²¹⁾ The Census will be the nineteenth in a series carried out every 10 years in Great Britain since 1801, except in 1941. This White Paper sets out Government proposals for the Census in Great Britain. Separate, but broadly comparable arrangements are being made for the Census in Northern Ireland.

GALLEY NUMBER 3

2. The White Paper is being published now because the Government believes that there should be the time for public discussion of proposals that affect every person in the country. Towards the end of next year the Government will prepare a draft Order in Council embodying proposals for the Census and lay it before Parliament. This timetable ensures that there will be time to plan the Census properly and organise the work efficiently. The enumeration and processing procedures must be fully tested in advance so that census results can be prepared and put to use as quickly as possible after Census Day.

Meeting the need for information

3. If they are to conduct many of their activities effectively, Government, local and health authorities, businesses and the professions need reliable information on the number and characteristics of people and households. This need is met by holding a population census every 10 years and up-dating the population figures in the years between censuses using information from registration of births and deaths and estimates of migration.
4. The Government needs this kind of information to form policy, to plan services for specific groups of people and, in particular, to distribute resources effectively to local and health authorities and to enable them to direct resources to those in greatest need. The information must be authoritative, accurate and comparable for all parts of the country. Other users of population information have similar needs. Only a census can provide the information on a uniform basis both about the country as a whole and about individual areas in relation to one another.
5. The need for information is shared by the European Community and a directive calling on member countries to hold a population census in the second quarter of 1991, or for equivalent statistics to be prepared by other methods, was adopted on 26 May of 1987 (*Official Journal of the European Communities*, 3 June 1987). The United Kingdom is playing a full part in discussions to ensure harmonisation of the statistics produced by the different countries of the European Community.

B
~~The~~ broad principles ~~for the Census~~ and characteristics

6. The Government proposals for the 1991 Census are based on five broad principles.
 - First, a census must only ask for information where there is a demonstrated need, where it has been shown to be feasible to collect the information in a census, and where there is no adequate and accessible alternative source.
 - Second, because a census is compulsory and everyone in the country is required by law to take part, it must be generally acceptable to the public and limited in its overall demands.
 - Third, the confidentiality of the information provided by the public in a census must be safeguarded.
 - Fourth, the results must be made available quickly and efficiently.
 - Fifth, a census must be taken with a carefully managed and economical use of resources.

The last Census in 1981 was based on similar principles and the Government considers that to be a good model on which to build the policy for the 1991 Census.

7. In summary:
 - the 1991 Census will include everyone in the country and enumerators will call on each household to deliver a form for the household to complete and later collect it; communal establishments such as hotels and hospitals will be similarly enumerated; help will be available to anyone who may have difficulty in completing the Census form;
 - there will be a broadly similar number of questions to answer as in the 1981 Census;
 - ~~the~~ additions proposed are a question on central heating, a question on long-term illness, a question on hours worked and a question on the term-time address of school-children and students;

GALLEY NUMBER 4

- each question included in the proposals meets a demonstrated need and is suitable for a self-completed form; previous censuses or tests have shown the questions to be generally acceptable to the public, but the acceptability of all questions will be subject to a further check in a census test in April 1989;
- the Government proposes to include a question on ethnic group in the 1989 census test and to study the results of the test before deciding whether to include such a question in the final plans for the Census;
- the confidentiality and security of the information gathered in the Census will be maintained at the same high standard as in the 1981 Census;
- there will be publicity to convey to the public the purpose and value of the Census and the confidentiality with which information is treated; and
- the statistical reports on the Census will be designed to meet user requirements and speedy production will be a priority so that the value of the Census is fully realised.

Cost and financial control

8. On the basis of present planning assumptions, the estimated cash requirements for the Census, over and above relatively small contributions from the on-going parts of the Office of Population Censuses and Surveys and the General Register Office (Scotland) (The "Census Offices") are as follows:

£ million				
1986-87	1987-88	1988-89	1989-90	1990-91
0.8	2.0	4.5	8.4	26.1
1991-92	1992-93	1993-94	1994-95	1995-96
70.5	10.0	3.1	1.7	1.1

Provision for the cost of the Census has been made up to 1990-91; provision for later years will be included in Public Expenditure White Papers. Costs of the Census operation will be closely controlled and monitored. Particular attention will be given to the efficient division of the country into areas to be covered by the 120,000 or so individual enumerators and to the efficient conduct of the field operation itself. About half the cost will go on planning and carrying out the Census field operation and half on planning and carrying out Census processing and disseminating the results. About one-third of the total Census cost is to temporary field staff who will deliver and collect the forms and about one-fifth is to pay and accommodate the temporary staff who will prepare the data for entry to the main computer.

II

CONSULTATIONS AND CENSUS TESTS

Consultations

9. The Census Offices have consulted widely before making their recommendations for the 1991 Census. There were many helpful responses. The Departments of State were consulted to determine needs for topics to be included and the strengths of the cases. Local and health authorities were similarly consulted through advisory committees convened by the ~~Registrar General~~^{Registrar General}. To enable others, including those in the commercial and academic spheres, to give their views, it was announced that submissions on the Census would be welcomed from any source with or without invitation, and an information paper was issued. All views have been carefully considered. Consultations also covered the drawing of geographical boundaries for enumeration and for the areas for which results are to be available. Consultations on the forms of statistical information from the Census are continuing.

Census Tests

10. The Government proposals also take account of tests of census forms. These tests are voluntary and the Government is most grateful for the co-operation

Registrar General for England and Wales and the Registrar General for Scotland

GALLEY NUMBER 5

given by members of the public in them. A major test of census procedures took place in April 1987 in seven locations in Britain, and tests of some proposed new and revised census questions were held in the autumn of 1987.

11. A final test will be held in April 1989. The aim will be to make sure that procedures for delivery and collection of the census forms will be effective. The test will also be used as the final opportunity before the laying of a draft Order in Council to assess the reaction of the public to proposed census questions and the effectiveness of publicity about the Census. The test will cover some 85,000 households—the same number as in the test in April 1987. The areas to be included will be representative of varying circumstances found in Great Britain: for example, an inner city area, a holiday area, a rural area and an area with many students. Duns, North Berwick and parts of Edinburgh, Birmingham, Scarborough and the London Boroughs of Merton and Wandsworth have been chosen.

III

TOPICS COVERED BY THE CENSUS

12. ^{Introduction} Each decennial census has covered all the people in Great Britain, and this is proposed for the 1991 Census. Each household will be given a census form to complete, and the form will contain questions relating to each person in the household as well as to the household as a whole. People in communal establishments, such as hotels and hospitals, will be given individual forms, as will people who are living rough. Some of the census information required will be recorded directly by the enumerators.
13. Everyone will be counted at the address where they are present on Census night: ~~The date of 28 April 1991 chosen for the Census will be within the term time of most places of education and this will have an effect of lessening the number of households that are away when the Census is taken. School children and students will be included in the statistics about people present in an area, thus giving an indication of the numbers requiring local services in university towns and similar areas.~~ The return for a household where someone is present on Census night will also include anyone normally resident there who happens to be away on Census night, whether in Great Britain or abroad. This makes it possible to produce statistics on the number of people usually living in an area which are the basis of the population figures used in calculating Government grants to local and health authorities. Because of the importance of making these figures as accurate as possible, people in households entirely absent on Census night will be requested to complete a census form on a voluntary basis when they return. This may result in some people having to complete a second census form, but by doing so they will be helping to provide more complete Census figures about the usual residents of their local area. People will, of course, be counted as usually resident in one area only.
14. The topics proposed for the Census are those most needed by central and local government, businesses and professions. In each case, no other adequate and accessible source of the information is available. Consideration has been given to the public acceptability of topics and to whether questions can be asked in a way that produces reliable answers. The cost of processing the answers to questions has also been assessed in relation to the usefulness of the results. Finally, the overall length and appearance of the Census form has been considered and the Government considers that answering a Census form containing questions on the topics proposed will not be an unreasonable burden on the public.
15. The topics included in the proposals for the Census are ^{mutually supporting} ~~inter-dependent~~; that is, each one will make others more useful. This is a particularly valuable aspect of a census, where information on a range of topics is collected simultaneously for the whole population to form a single source from which important relationships covering more than one topic can be analysed. Answers from the individual people forming households and families can be combined to provide valuable information on the number and characteristics of households and families of different types, for example, the number of single parent families where the parent is employed and the children are of specified ages.
16. In summary, the Government proposes ³ that questions on the following topics should be asked in the 1991 Census:

GALLEY NUMBER 6

At all addresses

- the address of the household or establishment
- the names of people present on Census night and, in households, people who usually live in the household but are absent on Census night

For each household

- type of accommodation and extent of sharing
- tenure
- number of rooms
- availability of bath and WC
- central heating
- number of cars and vans available
- lowest floor level of accommodation (in Scotland only)

For each person

- sex
- date of birth
- marital status
- relationship in household
- whereabouts on Census night
- usual address
- term-time address of schoolchildren and students
- usual address one year ago
- country of birth
- long-term illness
- whether working in the week before the Census, etc.
- hours worked weekly
- occupation
- industry
- address of place of work
- means of travel to work
- higher qualifications
- Scottish Gaelic (in Scotland only)
- Welsh language (in Wales only)

17. Some of these questions are proposed for inclusion in a census for the first time. They are: availability of central heating; term-time addresses of schoolchildren and students; and long-term illness. A question on hours worked was asked in the 1971 Census, but was not asked in the 1981 Census. All other topics were included in the 1981 Census. However, it is proposed that the separate question on the availability to a household of an outside WC asked in the 1981 Census should be omitted in 1991.
18. Questions on all the topics listed in paragraph 16 will be included in the Census forms to be used in the April 1989 census test. Subject to this final test the Government intends to include them in a Draft Order in Council to be laid before Parliament next year.
19. The topics proposed for questions to households and persons are described in the following paragraphs in the order in which they are likely to appear on the census form. This is not an indication of the rank or importance of a topic.

20. Questions to be asked at all addresses

Names and addresses

20. The first job of the census enumerator before issuing census forms at each address will be to ask preliminary questions to make sure that everyone at each address is counted and that separate households are correctly identified.

The name of the person responsible for completing the form and the full postal address of the household will be put on the form by the enumerator after checking with a person in the household. Neither names nor addresses will be entered into the computer. The address helps ensure the correct handling of the forms by the field staff, for example, when calling back with an incomplete form, and it enables the Census Offices to check the receipt of those forms that may ~~by-pass~~ pass the field staff.

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The person responsible for completing each census form will enter the name of each person to be included on the form. These names will not be entered into the computer. They ensure that the enumeration is complete and enable queries to be directed to the right people when it is necessary to call back to ensure that the information on the form is correct.

The postcode of each address of enumeration will be recorded and entered into the computer. This will enable areas used for the presentation of census statistics to be described in terms of postcodes and used in conjunction with other data organised on a postcode basis. There will also be the possibility of defining areas as groups of postcodes for the production of census statistics to suit users with special geographical requirements.

The ^{de}postcode is an increasingly widely used common geographic base for information collected for otherwise incompatible areas. By including postcodes in the Census, one of the recommendations of the Chorley Committee will be implemented (*Handling geographic information*: report to the Secretary of State for the Environment, HMSO, 1987).

Each postcode covers only a small number of addresses, and the choice of areas which could be built from postcodes is consequently wide. However, in order to preserve the confidentiality of census data for individual people and households, statistics would be released only for sufficiently large aggregates of households.

2. Questions to be asked of each household

- 2.1. Some questions will be asked about each household as a whole. Where accommodation is vacant or is occupied but no-one is present on Census night, the enumerator will record a few basic facts that will be used to augment the information collected from occupied accommodation.

Information on the number of households in Great Britain, and in each part of the country, is used in the planning, financing and management of services supplied to households as a whole. In addition, a wider range of census statistics about people, households and housing will aid decisions on urban and inner city policies, particularly to define areas with multiple problems of deprivation, and to enable policies to be directed to areas with special needs.

21.1 Questions about housing

The Census will provide information about the accommodation occupied by each household. It will also provide a count of dwellings, including vacant dwellings, and of dwellings shared by two or more households. This will show the way in which the housing stock is being used and provide a firm basis for assessing current and future demands as the number and type of households change. No other source of statistics gives such comprehensive information on housing stock at both national and local level.

At local levels, the Census is the only source of nationally comparable information on housing and is used widely in calculations of grant entitlements to local authorities. Measures of inadequate housing and overcrowding are used in allocating the Housing Investment Programme and to help target the Urban Programme.

The following questions will be asked about housing:

Type of accommodation and shared accommodation

This will be used to identify separate dwellings and the characteristics of the accommodation in buildings shared by two or more households. Households accommodated in caravans and other temporary structures will be identified. In Scotland, as in 1981, a question on the lowest floor

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level of accommodation will provide a measure of households and people living in potentially unsuitable accommodation, for example, households with young children living several floors above the ground.

Tenure of accommodation

This will show how much of the housing stock in each area is in owner-occupation and whether it is subject to purchase by mortgage, or is local authority housing, privately let furnished or unfurnished accommodation, or held by other types of tenure.

Number of rooms

This will help show, together with the number of people in each household, the degree to which accommodation may be overcrowded.

Availability of bath or shower and WC

Households with one or both of the amenities will additionally be asked whether the amenity is exclusive to the household or shared with other households. Absence or exclusive use of basic amenities remains an important indicator in the allocation of resources.

Central heating

This will provide an additional measure of housing standards, and will be used particularly to distinguish between accommodation which is provided with a bath and WC but lacks central heating and accommodation which has all amenities.

21.2 *Questions about household transport*

Availability of cars and vans

The question will ask whether or not a household has a car or van available for use, and, if so, whether it has one, two or three or more. It will show the areas where private transport makes the most demand on road space and will indicate the areas where people are likely to be most dependent on public transport. The statistics will also be used in making projections of future levels of car ownership, studies of road transport and appraisals of the need for future investment in public transport.

22. *Arrangements for communal establishments*

22. The Census will also enumerate all people present on Census night in communal establishments, classified by type. Statistics on those who are usually resident in establishments and those who are short-term visitors will be prepared for each type of establishment. Communal accommodation is becoming increasingly widely dispersed in small units difficult to cover in sample surveys. The Census provides a comprehensive and authoritative count of the population living in communal establishments which is not available from other sources.

authoritative

23. *Questions to be asked of each person*

About two thirds of the questions will apply to everyone; the remaining questions will apply mainly to those adults in a job and will not be asked of children under 16.

23.1 *Questions about basic population characteristics*

One of the most important tasks of the Census is to give an accurate and authoritative figure of the number of people in Britain and to show where they usually live and so provide a new and up-to-date base for annual population estimates for local areas.

In the years after a census, the population estimates are updated by using

data from registrations of births and deaths, and estimates of migration based on sources such as changes in the electorate, patient registrations with doctors and material from sample surveys. However, over time, these estimates become inaccurate. Pre-census 1981 population estimates based on the 1971 Census results for local authority areas differed by two per cent on average from 1981 Census counts. The estimates for some 20 authorities in England and Wales differed by five or more per cent from 1981 Census counts, and in one or two extreme cases the differences were around 12 per cent. Errors for particular groups such as elderly people were considerably higher in some areas. Without the corrective effect of a census, the annual population estimates would become progressively less reliable.

Long-term policies in government and elsewhere need to take account of future populations. Population estimates revised in the light of the census will be the basis for making projections for future years, used to assess likely demand for housing and for goods and services in both the public and private sectors.

The number of people classified by sex, age and marital status provide a new basis for actuarial tables ~~on which many billions of pounds are managed for pension, health care and life assurance.~~ Analyses of persons in households by combinations of age, sex, marital status and relationship will give information on different types of household, for example, households comprising two persons of pensionable age, and also enable statistics to be produced on separate family units.

The following questions will be asked:

which allow trends in life expectancy to be monitored and which are used for a variety of purposes including

Sex, date of birth and marital status

Apart from serving the essential needs for national and local population statistics described above, this key information will be used to estimate the demand for local authority services, such as facilities for the young and old. The data are fundamental to the major statistical series giving age and sex specific rates for morbidity, mortality, fertility, marriage and divorces. They will also be used together with other census information to estimate, for example, the numbers and ages of those who are working and the types of jobs they hold.

Relationship in household

In households of two or more people, the question will ask the relationship of each person to the first person entered on the form. This will provide statistics of households analysed by family composition. These will be used by organisations that provide services to families and need to know how many families there are and what changes are taking place over time. Applications include planning accommodation and services for the elderly and assessment of the potential demand for housing from young families.

Whereabouts on Census night/Usual address

These questions will ensure that statistics can be prepared not only on the numbers actually present in each area on Census night, but also on the numbers of people usually resident in each area.

schoolchildren and

Term-time address of schoolchildren and students

The annual estimates of population for local and health authority areas include students at their term-time addresses. ~~This particular need will be met partly by carrying out the Census within the term-time of most places of education, but a question on term-time address is required so that~~ those students who are not at term-time addresses on Census night. ~~The information will provide a sound basis of the numbers of students to be included in population estimates.~~

so that can

the correct areas in the

Migration—address one year ago

The question will ask the usual address of each person one year before the Census. Where different from usual address at the Census, statistics will be compiled to give the numbers and characteristics of people and households who have moved out of and into each area. The number of

moves by type of person and household between each area and region of the country will also be given. The figures will show arrivals from outside Great Britain, but not those leaving Great Britain, in the year before the Census.

This information is important since about one person in ten changes his or her address during a year and migration accounts for much of the growth or decline of the populations of districts between censuses. The information collected in the Census will give a sample of all migration moves between censuses, from which inferences can be made about moves in either earlier or later periods, and it is most important that a complete count of moves is made in Census year. The Census is the only source of reliable migration data for small areas, and the analyses of migrants by age, sex and employment provides more information on this important group of people than is available from any other source.

The information forms one of the basic elements in the preparation of migration estimates for the annual population estimates, and in the preparation of assumptions about migration in future years for the calculation of projections of local populations.

Country of birth

This will provide information on people in Great Britain born either in England, Wales, Scotland or Northern Ireland or in an overseas country. The information will be used with data from surveys showing the relationships between country of birth and nationality to make estimates of the numbers by nationality. It will also provide estimates of the number and circumstances of people who have come to Great Britain from various countries and the number of non-UK nationals working in Great Britain.

23.2 *Question about health*

Long-term illness

This will ask whether each person has any long-term illness, health problem or handicap which limits his or her daily activities or the work he or she can do. Problems which arise from old age will be included.

The information will be used as a measure of the need for health and personal social services to the long-term sick at national level, health and local authority level, and around particular local facilities, either existing or planned, for the sick. The Census will be the only nationally consistent source for the information at local level. It will also provide statistics on the households in which long-term sick live, for example, whether they live alone, and will provide analysis by age which will be important as the number of elderly increases. The information will also be of value to the private sector for marketing services to the sick and disabled.

23.3 *Questions about employment*

The Census is a primary source of information about socio-economic characteristics of the population and is the most comprehensive source at local level. It provides statistics about the ages, occupations and qualifications of workers in the different industries. These statistics are presented both by place of residence and, for those in work, by place of work. It also provides statistics about other groups over school-leaving age, for example, students, housewives or the retired.

The Census is also an important source of information about groups not covered by some other routine sources of employment statistics. For example, the Census provides detailed statistics on the self-employed for small areas; these are not available from the Census of Employment or from the Labour Force Survey.

The Census provides statistics on the pool of labour and the potential reserves of labour in all areas. Particular applications include projections of the future labour force, use by local authorities in drawing up structure plans and use by firms wishing to locate operations in areas where there is a

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potential reserve of labour.

The questions refer to a person's main employment in the week before the Census, or, for those not in a job, to the most recent job, if any, and are:

Activity last week

This will be asked of everyone aged 16 or over to determine whether he or she was

- in work for pay or profit and, if so, was an employee or self-employed
- seeking work
- on an employment or training scheme or programme
- a student
- a housewife
- retired
- prevented from working because of sickness or disability ^{new line} This is the basic classification for analysis of economic activity.

Hours worked weekly

This will add to the basic distinction between full and part-time workers. The numbers of people with very short working hours will be identified. The information will help give an understanding of the changes in working patterns that are taking place, particularly changes in women's work, part-time work, and how this applies to particular occupations and industries.

Occupation

By asking people their full job title and main things done in the job, it will be possible to obtain detailed and important information to reflect the very wide range of work done in Great Britain. A new occupational classification is being prepared and it is intended that this will be applied in the coding of the 1991 Census data.

The statistics on occupations will be used in analyses of the labour forces of various industries at sub-regional level, in analyses of the occupations of the unemployed at sub-regional level, and in studies of occupational mortality.

Employment status, that is, whether an employee or employing or supervising others, combined with occupation will provide the basis for the classification of people and households by broad occupational groups and socio-economic groups which are used generally and in analyses of specific groups.

Industry

This will be determined by asking people the name of their employer and a brief description of the employer's business. The name of the firm or organisation is asked solely as an aid to the accurate coding of the type of industry by reference to a list of large employers already classified by type of industry. The name of the individual firm or organisation is not taken into the census computer records. Information on the type of industry in which a person is working, or worked, also assists the accurate coding of occupation.

The figures on occupation and industry provide important information on the structure of the economy. Information on the number of the self-employed by industry will be used in monitoring programmes for encouraging new businesses. The statistics will also be used in studies in local labour markets and the contributions made by various industries to local economies.

23.4

Questions about workplace and journey to work

The question on economic activity together with the question on usual

address will provide information about the number of those in work who are resident in an area. The numbers with workplaces in an area will be given by a question about address of place of work. The Census will therefore show both where those who live in each area work, and where people with workplaces in each area live. This information is the basis for measuring commuting patterns and assessing the balance of housing and jobs. The census also adds to the value and usefulness of many routine employment statistics which are based on area of workplace, rather than residence.

Census statistics on where employed people live and work are used by the Department of Employment in defining "Travel to Work Areas". These areas represent approximations of self-contained labour markets and are the smallest for which unemployment rates are published. ~~In turn, Travel to Work Areas are used by the Department of Industry in defining which of these areas should qualify for regional assistance.~~ The Department of the Environment uses unemployment information for small areas such as wards in defining areas within the major cities to which additional resources should be directed.

The following questions will be asked:

Address of place of work

This will show the destination of individual journeys to work in relation to the usual address which will normally be the origin of the journey, and will provide information on the numbers travelling to work from particular origins to particular destinations.

Main means used for journey to work

This will show the means normally used for the longest part, by distance, of the journey. The detailed analyses of specific commuting flows by the main means of travel will be used in planning for public transport and in planning of facilities for private transport.

23.5 *Questions about higher educational and professional qualifications*

The information will be used, together with information from other questions, to show how many people with higher qualifications there are amongst workers in different industries and occupations. Local variations in the proportions of people with higher qualifications will be used in planning education and training. It will also show the reserves of qualified people among, for example, housewives and the out of work, including those not currently seeking work.

Qualifications

The question will ask whether the person has obtained any of the following qualifications: HNC or HND; university degrees or diplomas; teaching qualifications; nursing qualifications; graduate or corporate membership of professional institution. For those without these qualifications a simple "no" will be ticked; those with qualifications will be asked to give the title, major subject(s), year and awarding institution in order to classify the qualifications according to the level and subject.

23.6 *Questions on the Welsh and Scottish Gaelic language*

The Census will ask questions on language in Wales and in Scotland where it is the primary source of information about speakers of Welsh and Scottish Gaelic and the change over time in the distributions of speakers of the languages.

The following questions will be asked in Wales (Welsh) and Scotland (Scottish Gaelic) of everyone aged three years or over:

Does the person speak Welsh, or read Welsh, or write Welsh? This will be used to measure the change in the use of the language and to monitor the effect of support for the language provided by the Welsh Office. The results will also be used to assess the development of bilingual education, and the demand for media in Welsh.

Can the person speak Scottish Gaelic and can he or she read Gaelic? The question will be unchanged from that in the 1981 Census to allow measurement of change. The answers will be used in the planning of bilingual education, and monitoring the effect of support for the language by the Scottish Office.

23.7

Ethnic Group

The Government proposes to include a question on ethnic group in the census test in April 1989 and to study the results of this test before deciding whether to include such a question in the final plans for the 1991 Census. In proposing this course, the Government has given very careful consideration to the following factors:

- (i) ⁽¹⁾ The House of Commons Home Affairs Committee recommended in its report on 1 May 1983 (Ethnic and racial questions in the census: Vol 1 Report together with proceedings, HC 33-1) that questions on racial or ethnic origin should be asked in future censuses, subject to adequate reassurances on confidentiality and to the clear objective being to improve existing, and develop new, programmes against racial discrimination and disadvantage. The Government accepted in its reply (Cmnd 9238) that the Committee had made a good case but pointed out it would be several years before a final decision could be taken.
- (ii) ⁽²⁾ Tests carried out by the Registrars General in 1985 and 1986 at the Government's request showed that the great majority of people in all ethnic groups would be content to respond to a question on ethnic group but that such a question was unlikely to be fully acceptable to a small number who objected in principle to the inclusion of any question of this kind in a census (Ken Sillitoe, "Developing questions on ethnicity and related topics for the Census". OPCS Occasional Paper 36, and Ken Sillitoe, "Questions on race/ethnicity and related topics for the Census". Population Trends 49, Autumn 1987, pages 5-11). Subsequent discussions between the Census Offices and ethnic minority groups, organised by the Commission for Racial Equality chiefly through Community Relations Offices, have borne out these findings. These discussions also showed that members of ethnic minority groups who supported the question in principle did not always agree on the form of question to be asked and that no single form of question would completely satisfy everyone.
- (iii) ⁽³⁾ The Census Offices' consultations with Government departments, local authorities, health authorities and other census users have confirmed that there is a need for authoritative and reliable information about the main ethnic minority groups. A question in the Census on ethnic group would provide statistics, for example, on the housing, employment, higher education qualifications and age structure of each group. Such information would enable central and local government and health authorities to allocate resources and plan programmes taking account of the special needs of the ethnic minority groups. The information would also help the Government and local authorities carry out their responsibilities under the Race Relations Act 1976. It would provide data which would act as a benchmark against which employers and others could measure the success of equal opportunities policies. At present, much information on ethnic minority groups, particularly at a local level, is based on the country of birth of the head of household. The inappropriateness of such information is increasing as larger proportions of people in ethnic minority groups are born in Great Britain.
- (iv) ⁽⁴⁾ The opposition of even a small minority of people to an ethnic group question could impinge on the census generally and seriously degrade the quality and usefulness of census information on all topics. The potential advantages of having census information on ethnic groups therefore have to be weighed against the risk that including such a question could damage the value of the census as a whole.

Extensive trials and discussions have indicated that the following form of

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question is the one most likely to prove acceptable to the public as a whole and provide useful information. Accordingly this is the form of question proposed:

Ethnic Group

- Please tick the appropriate box
- | | | |
|---|--------------------------|--|
| 1 | <input type="checkbox"/> | White |
| 2 | <input type="checkbox"/> | Black |
| 3 | <input type="checkbox"/> | Indian |
| 4 | <input type="checkbox"/> | Pakistani |
| 5 | <input type="checkbox"/> | Bangladeshi |
| 6 | <input type="checkbox"/> | Chinese |
| 7 | <input type="checkbox"/> | Any other ethnic group (please describe below) |
-
.....

One of the features tested and rejected in the course of developing this question was inclusion of the categories Black British and British Asian. Some people welcomed the opportunity to describe themselves in these terms, but, in practice, the categories were found to cause confusion and give unreliable results. A separation of the Black category into West Indian, African and others was also tested. This would, in theory, give extra information but was found to be unacceptable to some people in these categories who regard themselves principally as British. These and other aspects of the tests are described by Ken Sillitoe in "Developing questions on ethnicity and related topics for the census" OPCS Occasional Paper No 36 and "Questions on race and related topics for the census" Population Trends 49, Autumn 1987 pages 5-11.

In short, the Government recognises the need for information of the kind that would be provided by a question on ethnic group and proposes to include such a question in the final plans for the Census if the response of the public in the 1989 Census test indicates that this can be done without significant risk to the census as a whole. The yardstick for this decision will be the readiness of the public, particularly in ethnic minority groups, to accept and respond to the question and to this extent the decision is in their hands. To simulate actual census conditions as closely as possible, the Census Offices will arrange suitable publicity to let people know why this question is being tested and to allay any mistaken doubts or fears they might have about its use in a census. The Census Offices would particularly welcome participation of ethnic minority group organisations in these arrangements.

As the 1989 test, though substantial, will cover only a small fraction of the country, the Government would also welcome views direct from members of the public or representative bodies on whether they would be prepared to answer the question in a census. Comments should be sent to the Registrar General for England and Wales (Office of Population Censuses and Surveys, St Catherine's House, 10 Kingsway, London WC2B 6JP) or to the Registrar General for Scotland (General Register Office, New Register House, Edinburgh EH1 3YT) by 31 March 1989.

and features

24. Topics considered but not included in the Government proposals

14. The Government considers that each topic included in these proposals satisfies the criteria set out in paragraph 14 and also ensures that the questions taken together form an acceptable package which will not place an unreasonable burden on the public.

Many other topics were considered but not included because the case was not considered strong enough, or because tests showed that the quality of information obtained from a census question would not be good enough, or because the questions would place too great a burden on the public. The topics considered included questions on age of buildings, access to a telephone, receipt of social security benefits, income, main language spoken in home and ability to speak English, the speaking, reading and writing of Celtic languages throughout

Great Britain, the means of travel to place of education, address five years before the census, qualifications obtained at school or through experience, occupation one year before the census, second jobs and smoking. The Census Offices have carefully evaluated all the suggestions made. The Government is grateful to all those who made suggestions and regrets that it has not proved possible to include more of them.

The Government also considered whether it would be possible to carry out a census fully in terr-tine to meet local authorities' need for information about the households and housing in which students live but this would have put the census too close to the local elections in early May 1991.

IV

CONFIDENTIALITY

25. The Census must collect information from each person and household in the country. But it is not concerned with facts about individuals as such. It is taken to provide facts about the community, and groups within the community, as a whole. The public have a right to expect that their confidences will be respected. The Census Act 1920—the statute under which the Census is taken—ensures this in two ways. First, under the Act, the results of the Census may only be compiled into statistical reports, laid before Parliament, or, at the discretion of the Registrars General, into other statistical abstracts. Second, the Act provides legal penalties for unlawful disclosure of census information at any stage of the census operation.
26. In previous censuses, assurances have been given to the public that all the information given will be treated in strict confidence by the Census Offices. Similar assurances will be given about the 1991 Census. There is a well established tradition of maintaining census confidentiality which the Government intends to uphold. The Government will not use the information gathered in the 1991 Census about identified individual persons, families, households, communal establishments or any other identifiable entity in administrative dealings with those individuals. It will also ensure that organisations or persons outside the Census Offices do not have access to census information about identified individuals and that steps are taken to prevent such disclosure.
27. The following principles will govern the treatment of the information given in the Census returns:
 - (i) In most cases one form will cover all members of the household and it will be collected by the enumerator; but people will, if they wish, be able to give personal information in a way that will not reveal it to others in their household or establishment or to the local enumerator.
 - (ii) All members of the census organisation will be given strict instructions about confidentiality, and will be liable to prosecution for any breaches of the law.
 - (iii) The physical security of census documents containing personal information held in the Census Offices will be strictly observed.
 - (iv) The computer system handling census data will have safeguards that prevent unauthorised access to the information held; names and addresses will not be entered into the computer.
 - (v) Information from the census will be used solely for statistical purposes. As in the past, the Census Offices will not pass information about identified persons or households to other government departments or to anyone else outside the census organisation. Moreover, in releasing statistics from the census, all possible steps will be taken to prevent the inadvertent disclosure of information about identifiable individuals.
 - (vi) The returns themselves and the information they contain will not be made available to the public until 100 years have elapsed, when the confidentiality of the information is held to have expired. This period of closure of the returns was prescribed in an Instrument of the Lord Chancellor in 1966 under the Public Records Act 1958.
28. There are only two circumstances in which the Government consider that information from a census return may be made available during the 100 year period. First, if a person is prosecuted under the Census Act 1920 for failing to return a properly completed form, the inadequately completed form may have to be produced as evidence in court. Second, in certain circumstances, a limited

amount of information on a person, may be released to that person (or, if the person has died, to his or her immediate relatives and descendants), to help, for example, establish entitlement to a pension or an inheritance. Even in such circumstances the information would never be less than 50 years old.

29. At the time of the 1981 Census, the confidentiality arrangements, so far as they related to computing, were considered by the British Computer Society, who reported favourably on the procedures for conversion, processing and storage of the information and for making output available to users, and noted that particular emphasis had been placed on designing the system to make breaches of confidentiality extremely unlikely (*1981 Census of Population: Confidentiality and Computing*, Cm 8201.) The Census Offices aim to maintain this standard of security for the 1991 Census. The British Computer Society has accepted an invitation to review the data protection, confidentiality and security arrangements for the 1991 Census and the Data Protection Registrar has expressed support for this independent review. The findings of the review will be published before the Census. Data from past censuses held on the computers at the Census Offices have been registered under the Data Protection Act 1984 as held for statistical and research purposes and data from the 1991 Census will be similarly registered.

V

THE CONDUCT OF THE CENSUS

Introduction

30. The Census will be taken in the way that has previously proved acceptable and helpful to the public in Britain and has ensured completeness of coverage with a reasonable use of resources. Temporarily recruited enumerators will identify and visit every address and household in the country to deliver a census form before Census day and then collect it as soon as possible after Census day. This gives the enumerator an opportunity to explain the Census to the householder, to answer any queries and to provide help if necessary. Most householders welcome this personal contact, but means will be provided for a householder if he or she wishes to make a return that is not seen by the enumerator.
31. Each enumerator will be responsible for taking the Census in a clearly bounded local area—these "enumeration districts" will cover the country without overlap or omission of any area so that nowhere is missed, and the enumerator will visit every part of his or her district so that no building or household is missed. The definition and mapping of areas for enumeration is a most important preliminary to the Census, and has now begun.
32. Although the Census will be taken generally in the traditional way, the Census Offices plan to introduce changes that will improve the efficiency of the census operation, and will continue the development of services to help the public. For example, special measures will be introduced to assist the enumeration in the inner city areas and other places where householders are difficult to contact, perhaps because they work unusual hours or are often away from home. Also, there will be continuous monitoring of the progress of the enumeration so that extra assistance can be quickly deployed where necessary.

Temporary Census staff

33. The delivery and collection of forms will be carried out by some 105,000 enumerators in England and Wales and 13,000 in Scotland. In England and Wales, senior temporary field officers will be recruited at three levels. There will be some 2,200 Census Officers, each responsible on average for 50 enumerators, themselves each responsible for enumerating 400-500 people, and they will be helped in the day-to-day work by 6,600 Assistant Census Officers. Some 110 Census Supervisors will each be responsible for the recruitment, training and general over-sight of some 20 Census Officers. In Scotland the structure will be similar, with some 350 Census Officers, 1,050 Assistant Census Officers and 19 Census Supervisors.
34. Temporary census staff will be expected to have the skills to deal with the public and to be able to handle the information that they collect with complete confidentiality. Staff will be recruited where possible from those out of work who are suitably qualified. The temporary staff will be responsible for training the

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levels below them through the use of comprehensive material provided by the Census Offices.

35. All temporarily recruited census staff will have to sign an undertaking that they will not, without lawful authority, divulge or make use of any information acquired in the course of their duties. They will be liable on conviction under the Census Act to imprisonment or a fine, or both, for any contravention. Staff employed in the Census Offices are bound by the provisions both of the Census Act and of the Official Secrets Act. It is particularly important to guard against inadvertent disclosure, and all staff will be warned against this.
36. Care will be taken to avoid, as far as practicable, employing enumerators in areas where they are known personally. But it is impossible to guarantee that an enumerator will never know, or be known to, a householder, especially in sparsely populated areas. Where this does happen, enumerators will be instructed to offer the householder an envelope in which the completed form may be sealed so that it can be passed direct to the Census Officer or Assistant Census Officers and not be seen by the enumerator.

Delivery and collection of census forms

37. Census forms will be delivered and collected by enumerators except in special cases such as large hotels and hospitals where the Census Officer will make the arrangements with the proprietor or manager. Similar arrangements will be made to enumerate groups such as the crew and passengers of civilian ships, or members of the armed forces. The person in charge will be responsible for issuing and collecting forms and for completing the form where an individual is unable to do so, as may be the case, for example, in hospitals for the mentally ill or mentally handicapped.
38. At the collection stage the enumerator will check that each form is complete, make good any omissions with the help of the people concerned and will give any other help required. Experience has shown that this is generally welcomed. Enumerators will resolve queries by telephone if the householder has indicated a willingness to be approached in this way.
39. However, a householder who does not want the completed form to be seen by the enumerator, even if they are not known personally to one another, will be able to ask for an envelope in which the form can be sealed. The envelope will be passed unopened to the local Census Officer who, with the Assistant Census Officers, will then be responsible for checking it and having any omissions made good.
40. Moreover, any adult member of a household who does not wish other people in the household to see his or her census answers may ask for a separate form and an envelope in which to seal it to be passed to the enumerator. The householder will be required to enter on the main household form only the name and position in the household of anyone making a separate return and to indicate whether that person was present at the address on census night.
41. In hotels, hospitals, prisons, and similar establishments, a separate form will be issued to each person. A supply of envelopes will be given to the manager or other person responsible for the enumeration of the establishment so that anyone who wishes may make a return without disclosing it to the manager. This will apply equally to the staff of the establishment and other persons present.
42. In all cases the obligation to make a return will not be discharged until a fully completed form is received by the census organisation.

Surveys to check the quality of enumeration

43. There will be voluntary sample surveys following the Census to check the accuracy of the information. These are wholly distinct from the checks for completeness made by enumerators or other census officials when census forms are collected, and are not concerned with amending individual returns. There will be surveys of two kinds:
 - (i) Checks on the quality of the information given in the Census in which small samples of households in different parts of the country will be interviewed soon after the Census by trained interviewers (who will be part of the census

GALLEY NUMBER 18

organisation) to see how well questions were understood and whether the answers were accurate.

- (ii) Checks on the completeness of coverage in which the returns from a sample of enumerators will be independently verified to assess the extent of any under-enumeration due to, for example, omission of buildings, or of whole households within buildings, or of persons within households. Small samples of households will be visited soon after the Census to check that all persons present on Census night were recorded on their census forms. Small samples of accommodation recorded as vacant or as occupied by a household absent on Census night will also be visited and checked.

The results of the surveys will be laid before Parliament and published as quickly as possible after the Census for the benefit of those using the Census statistics. The results of the surveys will not, however, be used to amend the published results of the Census.

Other surveys linked to the Census

44. The Census may be used as a source from which to select samples for further more detailed surveys, for example, of people with particular educational qualifications. Response to any such survey would be voluntary. The surveys would be handled by the Office of Population Censuses and Surveys and by the General Register Office (Scotland). Information provided would be treated in the same strict confidence as information given on the main census forms. It is too early to know whether there will be a need for any such census-linked surveys and the topics that might be covered, but Parliament will be informed before the Census is taken about the subject matter of any census-linked survey which it was proposed to conduct following the Census, and all those completing the census forms would also be informed of the possibility of being asked to participate in such a voluntary survey after the Census.

Publicity and information about the Census

45. The Government is fully conscious of the fact that, while every person in Britain is obliged by law to make a census return, it would be impossible to carry out a Census without the willing co-operation of the public. The Census Offices will ~~undertake a publicity campaign~~ ^{arrange} to explain the purpose of the Census, convey assurances of confidentiality and deal with other matters of public concern. The Census Offices will also continue their programme of providing information about the Census to the media and to users of the statistical results through newsletters and direct contacts.
46. The basis of good public relations will be to make sure that enumerators are briefed and trained to be as helpful as possible as they deliver and collect the census forms. An explanatory leaflet will be delivered with each census form and publicity will increase as Census day approaches. A telephone service will be available to answer any queries from the public while the Census is being taken. Welsh language versions of the census form and leaflets will be available in Wales. There will also be special assistance available to anyone who has difficulty with the census form, particularly through language or infirmity. Enumerators speaking both English and other languages will be employed where necessary, and interpreters will be employed in areas where there are concentrations of non-English speaking households. An information leaflet will be available in commonly spoken non-English languages, and will contain translations of the census questions.

VI

THE RESULTS OF THE CENSUS

Introduction

47. The Government recognises that the investment of time and resources in a national census is only justified if the results are made accessible to those who need them and reach them speedily in a clear and usable form. Major improvements were planned and achieved in the way the results from the 1981 Census were processed and disseminated. The Government intend these improvements should be maintained in the 1991 Census and bettered wherever possible.

Processing the Census

48. The amount of information to be processed when the Census forms are returned to the Census Offices, and the short time available to do it, demands the employment of temporary clerical staff and a computer processing system which is fully tested to avoid errors, breakdowns and delays. In England and Wales two or more temporary clerical processing centres will be set up. In order that the staff of these centres should not have access to information about people they know personally, these centres will not process the census returns for the areas in which they are situated. In Scotland the clerical processing will be done at a single centre. Final computer processing will be done centrally for Great Britain. As in previous censuses, results will be disseminated for England and Wales and Scotland separately, but some results will also be available for Great Britain and the United Kingdom as a whole.
49. Statistics for some topics which are expensive to process will be produced using only a sample of the answers where this will provide statistically satisfactory results.

Disseminating the results

50. There are two ways of making the results of a census available under the Census Act 1920: printed reports that are laid before Parliament, and are sold as publications; and statistical abstracts which may be obtained, on request and for a charge, from the Census Offices. The results also fall in two broad types: those which centre on a particular topic, often covering the country as a whole; and those which cover all the census topics for each local area.
51. The Government intends that results from the 1991 Census should wherever practicable be made available in a convenient form to meet users' needs, with a commitment where necessary by users to meet the costs of any output not laid before Parliament in published reports. The main objective will be to design and produce results in a way as to realise the greatest possible benefit from the considerable investment in the Census. The speediest practical timetable, including key target dates, will be established by the Census Offices. To ensure comparability for all parts of the country, a set of local statistics will be produced in a standard form. in such a
52. Preliminary reports of population counts will be published as soon as possible after Census day. The first priority will then be to make key results available for all local authorities by May 1992. This will ensure that the Census results are available quickly for use in the systems for financing local authorities and the health service. The aim thereafter will be to publish subject matter reports as quickly as possible so that the main results are available within some two years of the census date. Summaries of results will be issued for a wider public, and explanatory guides will be issued to help in the use of all types of output.
53. As in earlier censuses, the Census Offices will make provision for any user to request and pay for statistical abstracts. Much of the value of the Census will lie in these abstracts. These may be specially commissioned, but it is intended that a standard base of tables for the main Census reports on local areas will also be available as the source from which to draw the standard statistical abstracts for small areas—the Census Small Area Statistics—and thus give comparability between results for areas of all sizes. The bulk of the abstracts are likely to be supplied on media for use on computers and, in anticipation of a demand for statistics produced quickly to the special requirements of a user, consideration will be given to providing an on-line service. Requests for abstracts in the form of samples of anonymous records for individual people and households—so that users may prepare their own tabulations—would also be considered, subject always to the overriding need to ensure the confidentiality of individual data.
54. The greatest care will be exercised to avoid the inadvertent disclosure of information about identifiable individuals through the statistical results of the Census, particularly those for local areas and those produced to meet special requirements.

VII

THE PARLIAMENTARY PROCESS

55. Following the completion and evaluation of the April 1989 census test, the Government will prepare a draft Order in Council and will lay it before Parliament for approval in accordance with the Census Act 1920. The Schedule to the Act authorises the inclusion in the Census of the following matters in respect of which particulars may be required:
 1. Names, sex, age.
 2. Occupation, profession, trade or employment.
 3. Nationality, birthplace, race, language.
 4. Place of abode and character of dwelling.
 5. Condition as to marriage, relation to head of family, issue born in marriage.
56. All other topics included in the Census will require affirmative resolution in Parliament. As well as the particulars to be stated in the returns, the Order will prescribe the date on which the Census is to be taken, and the persons to whom and about whom the returns are to be made.
57. At a later stage the Secretary of State for Social Services and the Secretary of State for Scotland, who are the ministers responsible for the census, will make Census Regulations and lay them before Parliament; these regulations are subject to negative resolution. Each set of regulations will make detailed provision for the conduct of the Census and contain specimens of the forms to be used.



Home Affairs

1991 CONS D S

Pt 2

E. R.
PRIME MINISTER ²

1991 CENSUS

This is just to report that H agreed that the ethnic question should be included in the 1989 test census with the strong presumption that it would be carried forward into the main 1991 census.

Dch

(DOMINIC MORRIS)

30 June 1988

slw

file



10 DOWNING STREET
LONDON SW1A 2AA

From the Private Secretary

27 June 1988

Dear Alison

The Prime Minister has seen a copy of the memorandum to H by the Secretary of State for Social Services on the 1991 census and the possibility of including a question on ethnic grouping.

She has commented that we really must try to secure inclusion of the question; that it is important to know the information, what the trends have been and what they are likely to be.

I am copying this letter to Geoffrey Podger (Department of Health and Social Services), David Crawley (Scottish Office) and Trevor Woolley (Cabinet Office).

Yours sincerely
Dominic Morris

(D. C. B. MORRIS)

Ms. Alison Smith,
Lord President's Office.

CONFIDENTIAL

OK

mt D.H.

Absolutely right. let us see what she makes of it.

Mr Wicks of Civil Affairs seems about the part with paper last time round, my instincts are still to let her see the pp^r N.C.W. this weekend. I attach a copy of the notes I have done for her.

K01971

MR WICKS

c Mr Woolley

*dm
20/6*

THE 1991 CENSUS

We had a brief word at last week's meeting of Deputy Secretaries about the paper on the 1991 Census which is due to be discussed by H Committee on Wednesday 29 June. Specifically, it was noted that the Prime Minister might have views on the inclusion of an ethnic question, which is the main issue which H Committee will need to address.

As time was short last week, we did not go into details, and I did not bring out that what is at issue is whether the Census test which is due to take place in 1989 should pilot an ethnic question or whether the Government should rule out here and now the possibility of including such a question. If, as seems likely, the test casts at least some doubt on the practicability of asking such a question, that would put the Government in a far stronger position to deal with the inevitable criticism should it eventually decide not to go ahead with an ethnic question. If the test passed off without trouble, on the other hand, then that would be an important consideration in finally deciding what to do. I would expect, therefore, that there will be a number of H members who will argue that the question should at least be tested, as the Home Affairs Committee recommended. Unless you think that the Prime Minister is likely to have strong views on the matter, you may feel that this is something which she would be content to leave to H Committee to resolve.

A/L

A J LANGDON

20 June 1988



PM 9
21. VI



We really must try to include the question. We ought to know these things. Back reaction has

④

PRIME MINISTER

You agreed last year that the 1991 census should be ^{a right to keep} implemented. The possibility of including an ethnic question ^{as soon thereafter} was left unresolved. That is the main issue in Mr. Moore's ^{we must} paper to be taken at H on 29 June. The form of the question ^{know} is at Annex A to the paper. *H(88)7*

He notes that opinion among ethnic groups to such a question has become more favourable since it was last tried and dropped here, a decade ago. But there is still a vociferous, if small, ^{people} minority led by Bernie Grant MP who are opposed to the ^{here,} question in any form. The paper therefore puts a neutral ^{what the} choice to H between a trial of the question in the 1989 test ^{needs here} census, assessing the reaction before deciding whether to ^{and an} include it in the full 1991 census; or deciding now to exclude ^{likely to be.} it altogether. If the decision is to trial the question, the inner city area in which the census test is run is therefore important (the 1979 one was Haringey). The proposal now is to have the test census in Merton/Wandsworth and parts of Birmingham. *not*

You may also care to glance at the draft White Paper itself. The alternative passages on the ethnic question are on pages 24-29.

Overall, the questions in the census are mainly in line with those in the 1981 census (itself substantially reduced and simplified after your intervention). Paragraph 3 of Mr. Moore's paper suggests that four new questions should be asked; these will add £4.5 million to the total costs of the census of £130 million.

Content with Mr. Moore's proposals and the draft White Paper?

DM.
DOMINIC MORRIS
20 June 1988
LO6AUE



Mr Rogers

K01959

MR WICKS

c Mr Woolley
w/o enclosure

1991 CENSUS

At last week's Thursday afternoon meeting you commented that it might be as well if something were done to draw the plans for the next Census to the Prime Minister's attention. I have now checked the papers (relevant documents attached) which show that the Prime Minister did, in fact, approve a 1991 Census last October.

I gather that the DHSS paper on the need for an ethnic question in the Census, which is due to be considered by H at the end of the month, will begin by summarising the scope of the Census and will record that a White Paper will need to be issued about it.

A) L

A J LANGDON

6 June 1988

Re: King



CABINET OFFICE
10392
21 OCT 1987
FILING INSTRUCTIONS
FILE No.

310

10 DOWNING STREET
LONDON SW1A 2AA

From the Private Secretary

21 October 1987

Mr. Langdon

Dear Bruce

1991 CENSUS

31

Thank you for your letter of 16 October. The Prime Minister has seen this, and agreed that the 1991 census should be implemented.

I am copying this note to the Private Secretaries to H Committee members, Sir Robert Armstrong, and Mr. Hibbert at the Central Statistical Office.

*Yours
truly*

P. A. Bearpark

Bruce Calderwood, Esq.,
Department of Health and Social Security.



DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND SOCIAL SECURITY
 Alexander Fleming House, Elephant & Castle, London SE1 6BY
 Telephone 01-407 5522

From the Secretary of State for Social Services

Mr Longdon

Mr P A Bearpark
 10 Downing Street

16 October

Dear Andy

1991 CENSUS

I enclose the note requested in your letter of 30 September. This has been approved by my Secretary of State.

In view of the wide interest in this subject, I am copying this note with the earlier correspondence to the Private Secretaries of H Committee members, Sir Robert Armstrong and Mr Hibbert at the Central Statistical Office.

*Yours ever
 Bruce*

BRUCE CALDERWOOD

Enclosures: Note
 Secretary of State to Prime Minister of 29 September) to copy
 Mr Bearpark's letter of 30 September) recipients only

1991 CENSUS

1 The Census Act 1920 does not require a census to be held every 10 years. So in legal terms postponement for a year or two is an option. In practice however there are strong reasons against this.

2 The census provides information about the number and characteristics of people and households at local, regional and national levels. Between censuses some information is available to update this, but estimates get cumulatively more inaccurate. By 1981 population estimates for local authority areas based on the 1971 Census were up to 12% out, and estimates of elderly people in these areas were up to 30% out. This makes it increasingly difficult for central government and health and local authorities to target services, distribute resources and monitor performance effectively. The private sector also needs reliable up-to-date information, eg in planning housing investment.

3 Because of this problem, there has been strong pressure, especially from local authorities, for a census every 5 years. This was resisted in 1986. If the Government were to break with the tradition of 10 yearly censuses (unbroken since 1801 except for 1941), there would be a strong case for making the interval shorter rather than longer. Postponement beyond 10 years would be heavily criticised as Government suppression of important statistical information, needed amongst other things for the good management of many billion pounds worth of public and private sector business.

4 Some £1.5 million per year would be saved on census expenditure in the long run if censuses were held every 12 years. But it would for instance take only a consequential 0.01% reduction in the value for money of local and health authority services to negate this. Such a deterioration might well occur.

5 The EEC also requires certain information from all member states which is cheaply produced as a by-product of a census. A European Community directive therefore calls on member states to hold a census between March and May 1991. We would need to seek a derogation from this directive. A derogation would probably be granted on the grounds that the UK would provide the information 2 years later. If not, we might need to set up some expensive special surveys to collect the information required, which would wastefully duplicate the subsequent census.

6 It was for these reasons that H Committee members unanimously supported the proposal for a census in 1991.

cc Mrs Banks, OPCS - for adna
Mr. Langdon
Mr. Alderson
Mr. Ellis
Mr. Whitehead
} OPCS
- mjo
1/10



10 DOWNING STREET
LONDON SW1A 2AA

30 September 1987

From the Private Secretary

Dear Bruce

The Prime Minister has seen your Secretary of State's minute of 29 September about the 1991 census. She has asked if it is essential that this must be held in 1991, or if there is an option of going longer than ten years with a census, say for twelve years. I should be grateful for a short note on this.

Lewis
Shay

P.A. Bearpark

Bruce Calderwood Esq
Department of Health and Social Security.



PRIME MINISTER

1991 CENSUS

In 1983, when we decided not to hold a mid-term census in 1986, Norman Fowler announced that planning would proceed on the assumption that the next census would be in 1991. The Census Offices have been planning on this assumption but up to now no firmer decision has been taken.

We need now to take a decision on this because expenditure will start to mount from next year. The precise content, assuming we go ahead, and especially the sensitive issue of whether to include an ethnic question, need not be settled yet.

Earlier this year officials carried out a thorough examination of the needs for census type information across Government Departments, and other possible ways of meeting these needs. Malcolm Rifkind and I concluded that the best option would be to hold a census in 1991, broadly on the lines of the successful 1981 Census, but with the possibility of some extra questions funded by departments who wanted them.

With Malcolm Rifkind's agreement, I put these proposals to H Committee in July with the enclosed paper. The Committee has approved these proposals, subject to some detailed comments by members on the funding arrangements. Tom King indicated that he proposes to hold a Census in Northern Ireland at the same time.

If you are content, I will write to Cabinet colleagues informing them of the decision to hold a census and arrange for a suitable Parliamentary Question and Answer.

29 September 1987

PROPOSAL FOR A CENSUS OF POPULATION OF GREAT BRITAIN IN 1991

Background

1. A census of population has been carried out every 10 years in Great Britain from 1801 to 1981 except in 1941. Planning is proceeding on the assumption that there will be a census in 1991, as was announced in a Parliamentary reply in July 1983 (see Appendix). Most developed countries have censuses every 5 or 10 years and a European Communities Directive has recently been adopted, calling on member countries to hold one in 1991.

2. A decision in principle is needed in advance of the 1987 PES on whether Great Britain is to hold a census in 1991. The estimated cost of the type of census proposed would be £90 million at 1986/87 pay and prices, most of it in the years 1990/91 to 1991/92.

The need for information

3. Government, health and local authorities and many commercial firms need reliable information on the number and characteristics of people and households at local, regional and national levels to manage their business effectively. The public sector needs the information to form and evaluate policy, to distribute resources effectively (around £11 billion to local authorities and £13 billion to health authorities annually), to plan and target services in a way that meets the most pressing needs of local populations and to monitor the effectiveness and efficiency of these services using measures such as performance indicators. The information needs to be authoritative, sufficiently comprehensive at both national and local level and comparable for all parts of the country.

4. This need is currently met by holding a census every 10 years covering the whole population and updating the population estimates between censuses using registrations of births and deaths and estimates of migration based on data such as the number of people

changing their general practitioner, changes in the electorate, and other material from sample surveys. However, over time such data accumulates inaccuracies. Pre-census 1981 population estimates for local authority areas were some 2 per cent in error on average and up to 12 per cent out in extreme cases such as Oxford and South Buckinghamshire. Errors for particular groups such as elderly people were considerably higher in some areas. Without the corrective effect of the 1981 census, the estimates would have gone further adrift, in some cases quite rapidly.

Ways of meeting the need

5. OPCS and GRO(S) have examined carefully a wide range of possible alternatives to a full census in 1991 in consultation with user departments, the Central Statistical Office and the Treasury. They have concluded that, although some of these would cost less (at least in the short term), none would produce the full range of required information. The census also provides creditability. If there were no census in 1991, it is likely that some local authorities would collect their own data and use the results to challenge the Government's statistical basis for allocating funds. Postponement or cancellation would also go against the European Community Directive mentioned in paragraph 1 and put us out of step with other developed countries.

6. A full census is therefore recommended in 1991. The Census Act 1920 does not specify the length of the census questionnaire but that in 1981 was short and straightforward. The census met essential government needs without placing an undue burden on the public, was generally acclaimed as a success and is a good model for 1991. A census of the same general size and scope as that in 1981 but with appropriate amendments would cost about £90 million at 1986/87 pay and prices. 75 per cent of this expenditure would fall in the years 1989/90 to 1992/93.

7. It is proposed that:

- a. there should be a decision in principle to take a census of Great Britain in 1991;

b. funding should be primarily by:

i. allocation of sufficient funds to the Census Offices to cover a census broadly equivalent to that of 1981; and

ii. additionally by PES transfers from departments if they require extra items.

This has the support of Treasury officials.

It is proposed to seek agreement to this proposal so that the decision can be taken into account in the current PES round. The precise content of the census would then be considered and a White Paper published in 1988. Final decisions would be embodied in the necessary Order in Council in 1990.



CABINET OFFICE
K 1615
25 AUG 1987
FILING INSTRUCTIONS
FILE No

PRIVY COUNCIL OFFICE
WHITEHALL, LONDON SW1A 2AT

22 August 1987

Dear Sir

1991 CENSUS

Thank you for your letter of 3 July in which you proposed to hold a Census in 1991, broadly on the lines of the previous Census in 1981.

Kenneth Baker, Douglas Hurd, John Major, Peter Walker, Nicholas Ridley, Kenneth Clarke and Tom King have all signified that they agree in principle that there should be a Census in 1991 and Tom King indicated that he proposes to hold a Census in Northern Ireland at that time. John Major confirmed that he is content with your proposals on funding. He indicated that once decisions are taken on the content of the Census he would expect it to be managed within agreed totals and that, for the purpose of the 1987 Public Expenditure Survey, he would assume that that part of the Census funded by the OPCS would exclude the ethnic question. Kenneth Baker expressed some reservations about the proposal that Departments should fund the extra questions that they need, on the grounds that where questions are of interest to more than one Department the division of costs between them could prove both resource consuming and difficult; colleagues will no doubt bear this in mind in discussing the allocations of costs. Nicholas Ridley noted that the Census has traditionally been a major source of information on households and dwellings and that these matters need to be included within the basic core programme for the 1991 Census. Finally, I note that the precise content of the questionnaire, including the issue of an ethnic question to which Douglas Hurd draws particular attention, will be decided at a later date.

The Rt Hon John Moore MP



DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND SOCIAL SECURITY
Alexander Fleming House, Elephant & Castle, London SE1 6BY
Telephone 01-407 5522

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K1414D

From the Secretary of State for Social Services

The Rt Hon The Viscount Whitelaw CH MC
Lord President of the Council
Privy Council Office
68 Whitehall
LONDON
SW1A 2AT

5 July 1987

Dear Sir,

1991 CENSUS

You may remember that in 1983 when we decided not to hold a mid-term Census in 1986, Norman Fowler announced that planning would proceed on the assumption that the next Census would be in 1991. We now need to take a decision on this because expenditure will need to mount from now on and the first major year of spending, 1990/91, comes within the 1987 Public Expenditure Survey. The precise issue of content, assuming we go ahead, and especially the sensitive issue of whether to include an ethnic question, need not be settled yet.

Before the Election officials carried out for Norman Fowler and Malcolm Rifkind a thorough examination of the needs for census type information across Government Departments, and other possible ways of meeting these needs. They concluded that the best option would be to hold a Census in 1991, broadly on the lines of the successful 1981 Census, though with the possibility obviously of some extra questions.

The proposals are set out in the attached paper. I am copying this to other members of H Committee and to Sir Robert Armstrong. If there is general agreement to this, perhaps it might be cleared by correspondence; otherwise we should discuss at the next meeting. Our decision can then be reported to Cabinet, and an announcement made later, perhaps in the context of our decisions on public expenditure.

JOHN MOORE

PROPOSAL FOR A CENSUS OF POPULATION OF GREAT BRITAIN IN 1991

Background

1. A census of population has been carried out every 10 years in Great Britain from 1801 to 1981 except in 1941. Planning is proceeding on the assumption that there will be a census in 1991, as was announced in a Parliamentary reply in July 1983 (see Appendix). Most developed countries have censuses every 5 or 10 years and a European Communities Directive has recently been adopted, calling on member countries to hold one in 1991.
2. A decision in principle is needed in advance of the 1987 PES on whether Great Britain is to hold a census in 1991. The estimated cost of the type of census proposed would be £90 million at 1986/87 pay and prices, most of it in the years 1990/91 to 1991/92.

The need for information

3. Government, health and local authorities and many commercial firms need reliable information on the number and characteristics of people and households at local, regional and national levels to manage their business effectively. The public sector needs the information to form and evaluate policy, to distribute resources effectively (around £11 billion to local authorities and £13 billion to health authorities annually), to plan and target services in a way that meets the most pressing needs of local populations and to monitor the effectiveness and efficiency of these services using measures such as performance indicators. The information needs to be authoritative, sufficiently comprehensive at both national and local level and comparable for all parts of the country.
4. This need is currently met by holding a census every 10 years covering the whole population and updating the population estimates between censuses using registrations of births and deaths and estimates of migration based on data such as the number of people changing their general practitioner, changes in the electorate, and other material from sample surveys. However, over time such data accumulates inaccuracies. Pre-census 1981 population estimates

for local authority areas were some 2 per cent in error on average and up to 12 per cent out in extreme cases such as Oxford and South Buckinghamshire. Errors for particular groups such as elderly people were considerably higher in some areas. Without the corrective effect of the 1981 census, the estimates would have gone further adrift, in some cases quite rapidly.

Ways of meeting the need

5. OPCS and GRO(S) have examined carefully a wide range of possible alternatives to a full census in 1991 in consultation with user departments, the Central Statistical Office and the Treasury. They have concluded that, although some of these would cost less (at least in the short term), none would produce the full range of required information. The census also provides credibility. If there were no census in 1991, it is likely that some local authorities would collect their own data and use the results to challenge the Government's statistical basis for allocating funds. Postponement or cancellation would also go against the European Community Directive mentioned in paragraph 1 and put us out of step with other developed countries.

6. A full census is therefore recommended in 1991. The Census Act 1920 does not specify the length of the census questionnaire but that in 1981 was short and straightforward. The census met essential government needs without placing an undue burden on the public, was generally acclaimed as a success and is a good model for 1991. A census of the same general size and scope as that in 1981 but with appropriate amendments would cost about £90 million at 1986/87 pay and prices. 75 per cent of this expenditure would fall in the years 1989/90 to 1992/93.

7. It is proposed that:

- (a) there should be a decision in principle to take a census of Great Britain in 1991;

(b) funding should be primarily by:

- (i) allocation of sufficient funds to the Census Offices to cover a census broadly equivalent to that of 1981; and
- (ii) additionally by PES transfers from departments if they require extra items.

This has the support of Treasury officials.

It is proposed to seek agreement to this proposal so that the decision can be taken into account in the current PES round. The precise content of the census would then be considered and a White Paper published in 1988. Final decisions would be embodied in the necessary Order in Council in 1990.

EXTRACT FROM HOUSE OF COMMONS HANSARD

VOL 45

COL 452

14 JULY 1983

Census

Mr. Lester asked the Secretary of State for Social Services if a decision has been reached about whether there will be a mid-term census of population in 1986.

Mr. Fowler: The Government have decided that the case for a mid-term census in 1986 in England, Wales and Scotland is not sufficiently strong to justify the cost and burden on the public which would be involved. Planning will therefore proceed on the assumption that the next census will be in 1991. Further consideration will be given in due course to whether alternative sources might help to provide useful information on population and other matters in the mid-1980s.

CG39

nbpm



DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND SOCIAL SECURITY
Alexander Fleming House, Elephant & Castle, London SE1 6BY
Telephone 01-407 5522

From the Secretary of State for Social Services

The Rt Hon the Viscount Whitelaw CH MC
Lord President of the Council
Privy Council Office
68 Whitehall
London
SW1A 2AT

Oct 29 81

Dear W.M.C.

1991 CENSUS

As you know, after receiving your letter of 22 August confirming H Committee's agreement to the proposals from Malcolm Rifkind and myself for a 1991 census, I sought, and have now obtained, the agreement of the Prime Minister (documented in Mr Bearpark's letter of 21 October to Mr Calderwood). I am accordingly arranging for suitable Parliamentary Questions and Answers to be given in both Houses on 2 November.

at flap

I am copying this to Cabinet colleagues. For those who are not H Committee members, I enclose a copy of my letter to you of 5 July.

JOHN MOORE



DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND SOCIAL SECURITY
Alexander Fleming House, Elephant & Castle, London SE1 6BY
Telephone 01-407 5522

From the Secretary of State for Social Services

The Rt Hon The Viscount Whitelaw CH MC
Lord President of the Council
Privy Council Office
68 Whitehall
LONDON
SW1A 2AT

5 July 1987

Dear Sir,

1991 CENSUS

You may remember that in 1983 when we decided not to hold a mid-term Census in 1986, Norman Fowler announced that planning would proceed on the assumption that the next Census would be in 1991. We now need to take a decision on this because expenditure will need to mount from now on and the first major year of spending, 1990/91, comes within the 1987 Public Expenditure Survey. The precise issue of content, assuming we go ahead, and especially the sensitive issue of whether to include an ethnic question, need not be settled yet.

Before the Election officials carried out for Norman Fowler and Malcolm Rifkind a thorough examination of the needs for census type information across Government Departments, and other possible ways of meeting these needs. They concluded that the best option would be to hold a Census in 1991, broadly on the lines of the successful 1981 Census, though with the possibility obviously of some extra questions.

The proposals are set out in the attached paper. I am copying this to other members of H Committee and to Sir Robert Armstrong. If there is general agreement to this, perhaps it might be cleared by correspondence; otherwise we should discuss at the next meeting. Our decision can then be reported to Cabinet, and an announcement made later, perhaps in the context of our decisions on public expenditure.

John Moore

JOHN MOORE

PROPOSAL FOR A CENSUS OF POPULATION OF GREAT BRITAIN IN 1991

Background

1. A census of population has been carried out every 10 years in Great Britain from 1801 to 1981 except in 1941. Planning is proceeding on the assumption that there will be a census in 1991, as was announced in a Parliamentary reply in July 1983 (see Appendix). Most developed countries have censuses every 5 or 10 years and a European Communities Directive has recently been adopted, calling on member countries to hold one in 1991.
2. A decision in principle is needed in advance of the 1987 PES on whether Great Britain is to hold a census in 1991. The estimated cost of the type of census proposed would be £90 million at 1986/87 pay and prices, most of it in the years 1990/91 to 1991/92.

The need for information

3. Government, health and local authorities and many commercial firms need reliable information on the number and characteristics of people and households at local, regional and national levels to manage their business effectively. The public sector needs the information to form and evaluate policy, to distribute resources effectively (around £11 billion to local authorities and £13 billion to health authorities annually), to plan and target services in a way that meets the most pressing needs of local populations and to monitor the effectiveness and efficiency of these services using measures such as performance indicators. The information needs to be authoritative, sufficiently comprehensive at both national and local level and comparable for all parts of the country.
4. This need is currently met by holding a census every 10 years covering the whole population and updating the population estimates between censuses using registrations of births and deaths and estimates of migration based on data such as the number of people changing their general practitioner, changes in the electorate, and other material from sample surveys. However, over time such data accumulates inaccuracies. Pre-census 1981 population estimates

for local authority areas were some 2 per cent in error on average and up to 12 per cent out in extreme cases such as Oxford and South Buckinghamshire. Errors for particular groups such as elderly people were considerably higher in some areas. Without the corrective effect of the 1981 census, the estimates would have gone further adrift, in some cases quite rapidly.

Ways of meeting the need

5. OPCS and GRO(S) have examined carefully a wide range of possible alternatives to a full census in 1991 in consultation with user departments, the Central Statistical Office and the Treasury. They have concluded that, although some of these would cost less (at least in the short term), none would produce the full range of required information. The census also provides credibility. If there were no census in 1991, it is likely that some local authorities would collect their own data and use the results to challenge the Government's statistical basis for allocating funds. Postponement or cancellation would also go against the European Community Directive mentioned in paragraph 1 and put us out of step with other developed countries.

6. A full census is therefore recommended in 1991. The Census Act 1920 does not specify the length of the census questionnaire but that in 1981 was short and straightforward. The census met essential government needs without placing an undue burden on the public, was generally acclaimed as a success and is a good model for 1991. A census of the same general size and scope as that in 1981 but with appropriate amendments would cost about £90 million at 1986/87 pay and prices. 75 per cent of this expenditure would fall in the years 1989/90 to 1992/93.

7. It is proposed that:

- (a) there should be a decision in principle to take a census of Great Britain in 1991;

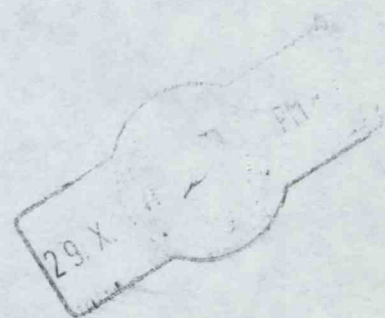
(b) funding should be primarily by:

- (i) allocation of sufficient funds to the Census Offices to cover a census broadly equivalent to that of 1981; and
- (ii) additionally by PES transfers from departments if they require extra items.

This has the support of Treasury officials.

It is proposed to seek agreement to this proposal so that the decision can be taken into account in the current PES round. The precise content of the census would then be considered and a White Paper published in 1988. Final decisions would be embodied in the necessary Order in Council in 1990.

HOME AFFAIRS Census Pt 2



E.F.



file Prim
51
cc B.G.

10 DOWNING STREET
LONDON SW1A 2AA

From the Private Secretary

21 October 1987

1991 CENSUS

Thank you for your letter of 16 October. The Prime Minister has seen this, and agreed that the 1991 census should be implemented.

I am copying this note to the Private Secretaries to H Committee members, Sir Robert Armstrong, and Mr. Hibbert at the Central Statistical Office.

P. A. Bearpark

Bruce Calderwood, Esq.,
Department of Health and Social Security.

ABS



DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND SOCIAL SECURITY
Alexander Fleming House, Elephant & Castle, London SE1 6BY
Telephone 01-407 5522

From the Secretary of State for Social Services

Mr P A Bearpark
10 Downing Street

Yes Mr
16 October

Dear Andy

1991 CENSUS

I enclose the note requested in your letter of 30 September. This has been approved by my Secretary of State.

In view of the wide interest in this subject, I am copying this note with the earlier correspondence to the Private Secretaries of H Committee members, Sir Robert Armstrong and Mr Hibbert at the Central Statistical Office.

Yours ever
Bruce

BRUCE CALDERWOOD

Prime Minister ①
Agree that the H proposal for a 1991 census should be implemented? (You asked whether this might be M&A delayed 2 years).
19/10

Enclosures: Note
Secretary of State to Prime Minister of 29 September) to copy
Mr Bearpark's letter of 30 September) recipients only

1991 CENSUS

1 The Census Act 1920 does not require a census to be held every 10 years. So in legal terms postponement for a year or two is an option. In practice however there are strong reasons against this.

2 The census provides information about the number and characteristics of people and households at local, regional and national levels. Between censuses some information is available to update this, but estimates get cumulatively more inaccurate. By 1981 population estimates for local authority areas based on the 1971 Census were up to 12% out, and estimates of elderly people in these areas were up to 30% out. This makes it increasingly difficult for central government and health and local authorities to target services, distribute resources and monitor performance effectively. The private sector also needs reliable up-to-date information, eg in planning housing investment.

3 Because of this problem, there has been strong pressure, especially from local authorities, for a census every 5 years. This was resisted in 1986. If the Government were to break with the tradition of 10 yearly censuses (unbroken since 1801 except for 1941), there would be a strong case for making the interval shorter rather than longer. Postponement beyond 10 years would be heavily criticised as Government suppression of important statistical information, needed amongst other things for the good management of many billion pounds worth of public and private sector business.

4 Some £1.5 million per year would be saved on census expenditure in the long run if censuses were held every 12 years. But it would for instance take only a consequential 0.01% reduction in the value for money of local and health authority services to negate this. Such a deterioration might well occur.

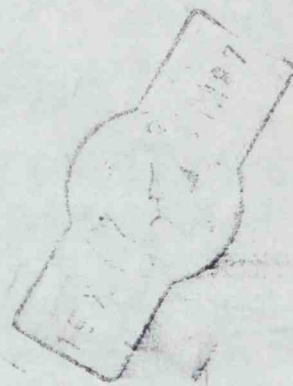
5 The EEC also requires certain information from all member states which is cheaply produced as a by-product of a census. A European Community directive therefore calls on member states to hold a census between March and May 1991. We would need to seek a derogation from this directive. A derogation would probably be granted on the grounds that the UK would provide the information 2 years later. If not, we might need to set up some expensive special surveys to collect the information required, which would wastefully duplicate the subsequent census.

6 It was for these reasons that H Committee members unanimously supported the proposal for a census in 1991.

Home Affairs

1991 census

8/79



PART 1 ends:-

PAB to DHSS 30.9.87

PART 2 begins:-

DHSS to PAB 16.10.87

Grey Scale #13



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