



**RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL**

**CABINET**

**14TH JANUARY 2021**

**2021 CENSUS UPDATE**

**REPORT OF THE SERVICE DIRECTOR, DEMOCRATIC SERVICES AND COMMUNICATIONS IN DISCUSSIONS WITH THE DEPUTY LEADER & CABINET MEMBER FOR COUNCIL BUSINESS**

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**1. PURPOSE OF THE REPORT**

- 1.1 The purpose of the report is to provide an initial update for Members on the planning arrangements for the 2021 Census and the requirements on the Local Authority to work in partnership and assist the Office for National Statistics (ONS).

**2. RECOMMENDATIONS**

It is recommended that the Cabinet:

- 2.1 Agree that the Council provides support to the ONS for the 2021 Census process.
- 2.2 Agree that the support, as in previous years, will be coordinated by the Council's Census Liaison Managers with the support of other departments where identified.
- 2.3 Await further updates leading up to the 2021 Census and a summary of the data post Census in early 2022.

**3 REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 3.1 The information that will be collected during the 2021 census helps to create an in-depth picture of our communities and also identifies important trends that will help Rhondda Cynon Taf Council plan services and allocate funding in the future. By supporting the ONS, the Council can ensure that the Census covers the whole population and provides invaluable data at the national and local level.

## 4. **BACKGROUND**

- 4.1 The Census is a count of people and households. It provides a wide range of data from a national to a local level. The census statistics are hugely important for local authorities, affecting the amount of funding a local area receives and providing essential information about different demographic groups living in the area, which helps with the planning, development and delivery of local services.

### What's new for Census 2021?

- 4.2 A “digital-first” census, the Census 2021 will be mainly online. We know there are people who'll find this challenging. To make sure the census is as accessible and inclusive as possible, there will be a full range of support services.
- comprehensive guidance and support in many languages and formats
  - help in local centres with trained staff and online access
  - a contact centre to provide help via telephone, web chat and social media
  - field staff contacting households that have not yet responded
  - accessible census questionnaires, for example in large print
  - the option to request paper questionnaires
- The ONS will automatically issue paper questionnaires in areas where they've identified residents are highly likely to need them.

### What does the census ask?

- 4.2 The information we collect during the census helps us to create an in-depth picture of society. It will also identify important trends that will help organisations plan services and allocate funding in the future. To achieve this, the census asks questions on a range of topics, including information about:
- individuals, such as their name, age, sex and marital status
  - households, such as family relationships
  - the homes we live in, such as their location, the number of people living there and what facilities they have
- 4.3 It's important that the census sheds light on long-term trends, while also reflecting the changing society in which we live today. The Census 2021 will ask questions on three new topics. These are:
- previous service in the UK Armed Forces
  - gender identity
  - sexual orientation
- 4.4 The UK Armed Forces question will gather information on past service in the UK Armed Forces. This is to help organisations support veterans

in line with the Armed Forces Covenant – a promise between our country and those who have served it.

- 4.5 The questions on sexual orientation and gender identity will give us better information on lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender populations. This will help organisations to combat any inequalities these groups may face and show where services are needed.

How will people complete the census?

- 4.6 Each household in England and Wales will be invited to take part in the Census 2021. As stated above the Census 2021 is “digital-first”, which means that people will primarily be encouraged to complete the census online. Therefore, an estimated 90% of households will receive a census pack in the post. This pack includes an access code that enables online completion of the household questionnaire. The remaining 10% of households will receive a paper version of the questionnaire as part of their pack.
- 4.7 Although online participation in the census is encouraged, anyone can request a paper version of the questionnaire from Census 2021 field staff or via post by calling the contact centre for free. The ONS will automatically issue paper questionnaires in areas where we’ve identified residents are highly likely to need them.

**5. CENSUS 2021 – WHAT IS REQUIRED?**

- 5.1 As in previous Census, the Council will be required to appoint dedicated contacts, and specifically a census liaison manager (CLM – Service Director Democratic Services & Communications) and an assistant census liaison manager (ACLM - Chris Davies) to continue coordinating census activity in Rhondda Cynon Taf.
- 5.2 The roles are responsible for;
- keeping senior management and elected members informed about Census 2021
  - preparing their local authority for the census and ensuring relevant teams understand why they should help
  - helping ensure resources are made available to fulfil any agreed commitments
  - coordinating activity across the authority and acting as a “champion” for the census
  - providing the ONS with information that highlights potential issues or opportunities that could impact census operations

5.3 There are a number of main areas where the Council can support the ONS and the CLM and ACLM are working on a plan to ensure this is successful.

5.4 Develop an address index to ensure the fullest coverage.

It's vital to the success of the census that our address index contains accurate details of every household and communal establishment (CE) in England and Wales.

5.5 Provide local information to identify and target local challenges.

Sharing information about the local area and the communities within it helps count everyone in the census. Local information allows the ONS to tailor it's approach to enumeration and engagement.

5.6 Identify and share local community contacts.

ONS research has identified the groups in society who are most likely to need additional interactions to take part in the census. These are key population groups (KPGs). They include older people, some ethnic minorities, young people, migrants, students and some faith groups. The Council will work with ONS to create a detailed profile of the local area, including which KPGs live there and what their barriers are likely to be.

5.7 Help recruit field staff.

Publicise census field staff opportunities to local community groups and similar organisations, such as local strategic partners. This could be through a range of channels, including newsletters, social media, emails, libraries, community centres, websites and local events.

5.8 Provide practical support to the field operation

For example, the council may know of, or own: suitable office accommodation where ONS managers could train field staff and hold meetings, secure storage space for ONS materials and equipment car parking, or other facilities that could be used.

5.9 Support online completions and Assisted Digital service.

People who are not confident or do not have access to the internet can go to their nearest centre to get help with accessing the online questionnaire. They'll be located in trusted places within communities, so people can get the help they need as part of their daily routine.

5.10 Support local publicity and media relations activity.

Promoting of the Census 2021 in the media and through social media.

5.11 Provide local data to support quality assurance.

Identify local groups that may need to be approached in different ways when it comes to carrying out the census, community engagement and publicity. Groups include:

- non-English speakers
- faith groups
- older people
- the homeless and rough sleepers

5.12 Raise awareness of the census and encourage people to participate.

There are many ways local authorities can spread the message about the census and ultimately boost census completion. This may include publicising the census through existing communication channels, such as websites, social media, newsletters and council facilities and services.

## **6. SCHOOLS ENGAGEMENT**

6.1 As part of the campaign, the ONS will be running activities that raise awareness of the census in schools. The Council is encouraged to share these activities with our educational leads and encourage participation.

6.2 For Primary schools, “Let’s Count!” is a free, educational resource that aims to drive awareness and excitement for the census among schools and their communities and encourage census completions. The Council is aiming for 50% of all primary schools in England and Wales to take part in the programme. Lesson plans and classroom resources will be available, spanning the curriculum and across age groups. These will be available as physical resources and online downloadable resources. Lesson plans will be ready from January 2021. A competition will see pupils count things in their local area and turn them into colour displays. The winning school will get to announce the official population figures from Census 2021 and win £1,000 worth of equipment.

6.3 Secondary schools have the option to engage with the Census Secondary School programme, which is a free educational resource. It aims to encourage young people aged 11 to 18 years, and their friends and families, with the census and encourage census completion. The ONS aims to encourage at least 40% of secondary schools in England

and Wales to take part in the programme. Activities provide real-world context for young people's learning with lesson plans, a film and a competition, which link to a range of curriculum subjects, such as PSHE, maths and history. These activities are taking place between now and Census Day.

- 6.4 The ONS will also be delivering a student-focused campaign to effectively tailor census messages to students, working closely with university institutions to help raise awareness and rely heavily on digital channels where students are well represented.

## **7. COUNCILLOR SUPPORT**

- 7.1 The involvement and support of councillors will be vital to ensure a successful census in all local authority areas. As a result, the ONS have created a Councillor Handbook. This guide details the ways in which Councillors can help. The handbook will be available at <https://census.gov.uk/downloadable-resources/>

## **8 EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS**

- 8.1 An Equality Impact Assessment is not needed because the contents of the report are for information purposes only.

## **9 CONSULTATION**

- 9.1 There are no consultation requirements, with the exception of internal service dialogue.

## **10 FINANCIAL IMPLICATION(S)**

- 10.1 There are no financial implications aligned to this report

## **11 CONCLUSION**

- 11.1 The 2021 Census will provide an array of valuable information, which will enable the local authority to plan and develop local services, as well as affecting the level of funding that we receive from Central Government. It is therefore important that the Census achieves full geographical coverage across Rhondda Cynon Taf and that the local authority assists the Office for National Statistics in their planning arrangements, as outlined in report.