

READING BOROUGH COUNCIL

REPORT BY CHIEF EXECUTIVE

TO:	POLICY COMMITTEE		
DATE:	15 FEBRUARY 2021		
TITLE:	CENSUS 2021 - PREPARATIONS		
LEAD COUNCILLOR:	CLLR BROCK	PORTFOLIO:	LEADERSHIP
SERVICE:	POLICY & VOLUNTARY SECTOR	WARDS:	BOROUGHWIDE
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1. PURPOSE OF REPORT AND EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.1 To outline plans for the national Census on 21st March 2021 and the Council's role in supporting these.

2. RECOMMENDED ACTION

- 2.1 To note the report.

3. POLICY CONTEXT

- 3.1 It is a legal requirement for all residents in England and Wales to complete the survey, which gives the most detailed information we have about our society. The Census provides information that government needs to shape policy, allocate resources, plan services and monitor equality.

4. THE PROPOSAL

- 4.1 The Census is a survey run by the Office for National Statistics that happens every 10 years, with the next census taking place on 21st March 2021.
- 4.2 For the first time it will be a digital-first Census, with help available for people who need support to take part online (see para 4.8), although paper surveys will be available for those who need it.
- 4.3 The first outputs will be available by March 2022, with all results available by March 2023.
- 4.4 In the event of a Covid-19 lockdown situation in March, the Census will still go ahead, with support for completion provided by telephone and online. Field officers will still work door to door, in a Covid-secure way.

- 4.5 In order to ensure as many Census returns as possible from the local area, local authorities are asked to help in a number of areas, particularly in terms of identifying more hard-to-reach communities and routes for engagement with those groups, as well as developing a general communications plan.
- 4.6 To facilitate this, ONS have employed Census Engagement Managers to work with local authorities in their areas. Community Advisors have also been employed to work with particular communities - in the Reading area with the Pakistani community.
- 4.7 The Council has a designated Census Liaison Manager (Policy and Voluntary Sector Manager) and Assistant Census Liaison Manager (Senior Policy Officer) who have been meeting with the Census Engagement Manager for the local area (Reading, Bracknell and Wokingham) on a weekly basis.
- 4.8 In Reading, there will be two Census Support Centres, funded by ONS, which will support people to fill in the Census online - run by Reading Voluntary Action at Central Library (if this is open), and by Communicare in East Reading. It is likely that this support will be by telephone.
- 4.9 A briefing note has been circulated to all councillors, including a link to the online [Census Councillor Handbook](#).

4.10 Further information on the Census is also available at: <https://census.gov.uk/>

5. CONTRIBUTION TO STRATEGIC AIMS

- 5.1 The Census provides information on the borough's population that helps to shape policy, allocate resources, and plan services, thereby potentially contributing to all of the Council's strategic aims and Corporate Plan priorities.

6. ENVIRONMENTAL AND CLIMATE IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 Better understanding of Reading's current population and living arrangements, including data on travel to work, will help with the development of the Council's plans for achieving a carbon neutral Reading by 2030, as well as the Reading Climate Emergency Strategy and its associated action plan.

7. COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT AND INFORMATION

- 7.1 The Council is working with the area's Census Engagement Manager to identify more hard to reach communities and routes for engagement, so that as many residents as possible from these communities are able to take part. Community Advisors have also been employed to work with particular communities - in the Reading area with the Pakistani community.

8. EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT

- 8.2 As well as shaping policy, allocating resources and planning services, the Census also provides information that central and local government needs to and monitor equality.
- 8.3 See also 7.1 above.

9. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

9.1 It is a legal requirement for all residents in England and Wales to complete the survey.

10. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

10.1 There are no financial implications to this report.

11. BACKGROUND PAPERS

11.1 None