

## BARNSELY METROPOLITAN BOROUGH COUNCIL

This matter is not a Key Decision within the Council's definition and has not been included in the relevant Forward Plan

Report of the Director of Core Services

### 2017 Census Test

#### 1. Purpose of report

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to notify Cabinet that the Office for National Statistics (ONS) has selected seven areas across the Country to conduct a large-scale test in April 2017 and Barnsley is one of their chosen areas.

#### 2. Recommendations

- 2.1 It is recommended that Cabinet supports the mandatory Census Test and encourages residents to complete the Census Test questionnaire and return it to ONS.

#### 3. Introduction

- 3.1 As part of the planning and testing programme for the 2021 Census, the Office for National Statistics (ONS) will be conducting a large-scale test in April 2017, covering 100,000 households across seven local authorities in England and Wales. This will allow them to test systems as they aim to conduct the 2021 Census online and to try out proposed new questions, for example, the effects of including a question on sexual identity.
- 3.2 Seven Local authorities across England and Wales have been selected to ensure a mix of rural and urban areas; some areas with a substantial student population; areas with a range of broadband coverage; some areas with concentrations of ethnic groups; and some multi-lingual areas. The mandatory areas are:
- Barnsley
  - Blackpool
  - Powys (selected LSOAs in North)
  - Sheffield
  - South Somerset
  - Southwark
  - West Dorset

3.3 350 staff will be required for the test and will be recruited, paid and trained by Brook Street on behalf of, and to the requirements of ONS. The recruitment site will go live on 11 January 2017.

#### **4. Proposal and justification**

4.1 Barnsley has been selected because of the following characteristics:

- Mix of urban and rural areas
- Area with lower broadband coverage
- Mix range of mobile connectivity
- Mining Heritage & Manufacturing
- Population Turnover
- Close proximity to Sheffield

4.2 Census Test vacancies will be promoted through our vacancy website to encourage local people to apply for these short term employment opportunities.

4.3 ONS will select a sample from the seven areas of around 100,000 households. 14,000 of which will be from Barnsley. The sample will be balanced to give adequate representation of the “hard to count” drivers we are likely to encounter, alongside the new digital inclusion element. It must also ensure sufficient sample within each area to get the representation required.

4.4 ONS will provide the communication materials at the end of January and we will support ONS by using their communication materials to communicate with Barnsley residents via radio, press and social media to encourage them to complete and return the questionnaire.

4.5 Key dates for the Census Test are:

- 20 March onwards – internet access codes sent out to households
- 9 April – Census Test Day
- 13 April – field follow up of non-responders starts
- 17 May – field follow up finishes

#### **5. Consideration of alternative approaches**

5.1 ONS will carry out the Census Test with or without our support.

#### **6. Implications for local people / service users**

6.1 The Census Test will create 37 short term employment opportunities within the area and will provide them with useful skills in preparation for the Census 2021.

6.2 Local people will be recommended to complete the Census questionnaire within the required timescale and return to ONS.

#### **7. Financial implications**

7.1 There are no financial implications to us other than officer time.

**8. Employee implications**

8.1 The Communications and Marketing team will support ONS by using their communication materials to communicate with Barnsley residents. Research and Business Intelligence Team will provide the link between the Council and ONS.

**9. Communications implications**

9.1 Communication materials will be provided by ONS at the end of January and will be used to communicate information to residents to encourage them to complete the questionnaire via radio, press and social media.

**10. Consultations**

10.1 ONS are consulting with the seven local authorities that have been selected as test areas. SMT has been made aware that this test is due to take place in April 2017.

**11. Glossary**

11.1 ONS – Office for National Statistics.

**12. Background papers**

Details of background papers can be obtained through the Research and Business Intelligence team on the contact details below.

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Date: 09/01/17

Financial Implications /  
Consultation .....

