

# TONBRIDGE & MALLING BOROUGH COUNCIL

## CABINET

16 June 2010

### Report of the Information Technology Manager

#### Part 1- Public

#### Matters for Information

#### 1 2011 CENSUS

##### Summary

The purpose of this report is to provide Members with information relating to the 2011 census and its preparations including assistance being provided by the Council.

#### 1.1 Introduction

1.1.1 The next census for England and Wales will take place on Sunday 27 March 2011. The Office for National Statistics (ONS) runs the census but needs the help and support of local authorities to provide local knowledge and experience and to promote the census within their communities.

1.1.2 The 2001 census achieved an overall 94% return rate but as low as 80% in some areas and a number of local authorities felt that their populations had been underestimated and that this had affected the amount of Central Government funding allocated to them. The 2011 census and its preparation include a number of initiatives intended to help boost the return rate and address areas of low response. The support of local authorities is one of those initiatives. The census will also be conducted via post-out/post-back questionnaires with centralised tracking to enable intensive and targeted follow-up activities. An online questionnaire will also be available for completion.

#### 1.2 Councillor Handbook

1.2.1 Attached to this report as **[Annex 1]** is a copy of a Councillor Handbook produced by ONS. This handbook provides a helpful briefing on the census and ONS have supplied a copy for distribution to each of our councillors. Copies will also be supplied to parish councils. Additional information can be found online at [www.census.gov.uk](http://www.census.gov.uk). The handbook also includes some of the areas of assistance requested of councils and councillors which is covered in more detail below.

### **1.3 Local authority actions**

1.3.1 Attached as **[Annex 2]** is a summary list of actions requested of local authorities by ONS to help support the census in each local area. The actions span a period of over two years and commenced some 12 months ago. Members should note that census activities and support to ONS within Tonbridge & Malling are being coordinated by the following officers:

Census Liaison Manager – Alan Burch, IT Manager

Assistant Census Liaison Manager – Dave Partridge, IT Development Manager

1.3.2 Activities carried out to date in support of the census include:

- Assisting ONS to create an accurate address database of properties within the borough;
- Providing ONS with contact details for local champions and organisations;
- Advertising census jobs via our website;
- Providing census information on our website;
- Considering/responding to consultation documents;
- Creation of a Census Task Group of officers within the Council to action required tasks and produce a Census Local Partnership Plan in conjunction with the ONS Census Area Manager;
- Creation of a Kent-wide Census Group to share knowledge and coordinate actions where appropriate;
- Briefings are arranged for the Parish Partnership Panel and Tonbridge Forum in September to increase awareness and seek assistance if required.

### **1.4 Legal Implications**

1.4.1 None

### **1.5 Financial and Value for Money Considerations**

1.5.1 Census population estimates underpin the planning and funding of public services and Central Government uses census data to help determine the financial support available for local authorities. It is therefore in the Council's interest to assist ONS to obtain accurate data and a high response rate to the census from within the borough.

## **1.6 Risk Assessment**

- 1.6.1 Inaccurate data or a low response rate to the census from within the borough creates a risk of the Council being underfunded by Central Government in future years.

Background papers:

contact: Alan Burch

Nil

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