

## **TRANSPORT TOPICS IN THE CENSUS**

### **1. Introduction**

1.1 The purpose of this paper is to allow members of the Transport and Travel Statistics Advisory Committee to comment on the current General Register Office for Scotland (GROS) understanding of the user requirement for transport data to be gathered in the 2011 Census.

1.2 This paper gives background, summarising the general reasons for including a topic in the Census and then summarising what was collected in 2001. We then review the feedback from users and other stakeholders collected to date in previous consultation exercises and state the current plans for inclusion in the 2011 Census.

1.3 Members of the Committee are invited to comment.

### **2. Background**

2.1 The next Census in Scotland will be in 2011. The General Register Office for Scotland is currently looking to finalise topic content for the 2011 questionnaire and we welcome input from experts in each of the key topic areas to help with this process. GROS starts the legislative process required for the Census in early 2008. This includes drafting of the white paper which includes details on content. We seek to have topic content finalised at this time.

2.2 As it covers the entire population, the Census has a number of features that are not available from other data sources. In particular, the output is available at a very low level of geography and small populations are measured more accurately than is possible in a sample survey. There is significant pressure on the available space on the form for different topics of interest and Census topics must meet a number of criteria before they can be considered for inclusion. The lack of alternative sources, the requirement for small area or small population outputs, continuity with previous Censuses, the ability of Census to capture reliable data and the harmonisation of Census output at a UK level must all be considered.

2.3 The 2001 Census involved a household form with 20 pages. There was an single page of questions about the household and dwellings space and 3 pages of individual questions for 5 people.

2.4 There were two transport topics included in the 2001 Census. In the household section of the form, a question on the number of vehicles available to the household was asked. In each set of individual questions, there was a question about the address of the main place of work or study, followed by a question on the mode of travel to the main place of work or study.

### **3. Available Vehicles**

3.1 The question on the number of vehicles available to the household was asked on the page of household questions. It asked "How many cars or vans are owned, or available for

use, by one or more members of your household?” with an instruction “Include any company car or van if available for private use”.

3.2 The response options were “None”, “One”, “Two”, “Three” and “Four or more, please write in number”. The question is reproduced in the appendix to this paper.

3.3 This question was identical on the 2001 Census form in England and Wales.

3.4 The Driver and Vehicle Licensing Agency database was identified as a possible alternative source but is not currently considered adequate. Fleets of company cars are often registered in the DVLA system at the post code of a central company office even though these vehicles account for a proportion of those available for private use.

3.5 The data from this question is also a useful indicator of affluence and is especially important in this regard in rural areas.

3.6 In interpreting responses to previous consultation events, GROS believe that there is still a user requirement for this question and we expect that it will be a strong candidate for inclusion in the 2011 Census. This situation is similar in England and Wales.

#### 4. **Travel to Work or Study**

4.1 The topic of travel to work or study is addressed by two questions in the individual pages of the 2001 Census questionnaire. In the Scottish form, question 10 asks “What address do you travel to for your main job or course of study (including school)?” with instructions “Answer for the place where you spend most time for work or study. If you report to a depot, write in depot address.”.

4.2 There are three response options that do not require specification of an address “Not currently working or studying”, “Work or study mainly at or from home” and “No fixed place”. The remaining two options are “Work on offshore installation” with the instruction “please use the address panel below to write in where you travel offshore, for example “ABERDEEN”” and “the address below” with instruction “please write in”. The address is captured in four lines of constrained write in boxes.

4.3 Question 11 on the individual pages of the form asks “How do you usually travel to your main place of work or study (including school)?” with the instructions “tick one box only, tick the box for the longest part, by distance, of your usual journey to work or study.”

4.4 The response options are: “Underground, tube, metro or light rail”, “Passenger in a car or van”, “Train”, “Motor cycle, scooter or moped”, “Bus, minibus or coach (public or private)”, “Bicycle”, “Taxi or minicab”, “On foot” and “Driving a car or van” and “Other”.

4.5 Respondents who answered “Not Currently working or studying” or “Work or study mainly at home” to question 10 are routed past this question. The questions are reproduced in the appendix to this paper.

4.6 In England and Wales in 2001, the two questions analogous to these did not refer to place of study and asked only about address and travel to the main place of work.

4.7 In interpreting responses to previous consultation events, GROS believe that there is still a user requirement for these questions in some form and we expect that it will be a strong candidate for inclusion in the 2011 Census.

4.8 The consultation responses did point to some concern that including both work and study in the same question may have an impact on data quality. Some respondents suggested asking about the workplace and place of study addresses separately.

4.9 The number of students who also have a workplace address is expected to have increased in number since 2001. As address questions take up a large amount of space and have associated high respondent burden, it is extremely unlikely that this suggestion will be incorporated.

## 5. **Conclusion**

5.1 Members of the Committee are invited to comment on GROS's current plans for the Transport questions for inclusion in the 2011 Census.

5.2 Should any Member of the Committee wish to raise any points *after* the meeting, they may do so by contacting Tim Norwood at GROS:

- e-mail [tim.norwood@gro-scotland.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:tim.norwood@gro-scotland.gsi.gov.uk) or
- telephone (direct line): 0131 314 4221.

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