

STATES OF JERSEY



CENSUS 2006: PROVISION (P.116/2005) – COMMENTS

Presented to the States on 5th July 2005
by the Policy and Resources Committee

STATES GREFFE

COMMENTS

Introduction

Proposition P.116/2005 proposes that a Jersey Census be carried out in 2006. The Policy and Resources Committee does not support this proposition on the basis that reinstating the Census will not improve the accuracy of key statistics, but conversely will immediately curtail plans to improve the range and coverage of statistics available to the States. It therefore asks the States to support the decision, reported in the Statement made to the House by the President of the Committee on 1st February 2005, that the next Jersey Census be conducted in 2011 and that existing professional resources continue to be used to improve the scope and timeliness of social and economic data.

At the heart of this decision are the following factors:

- the Statistics Unit now produces an annual estimate of the population to the same accuracy as the census – as is accepted by the Report accompanying the proposition;
- using existing administrative data and a new annual social survey we will have accurate annual estimates of census variables such as economic activity, unemployment, and household size (as set out in the attached table);
- the information we have on essential social issues including health, disability, transport, use of public services and pension provision is currently inadequate; by reallocating professional resources to run a new social survey we can have accurate and timely information on these important social issues, and on others in subsequent years,
- this information will allow us to make more informed policy decisions, allocate resources accurately and fully understand how we are doing against the aims set out in the Strategic Plan;
- we now have improved economic data, but we still lack data on crucial areas such as trade (not even with the U.K. and France) and investment;
- increasing the time between censuses means that professional resources can also be redeployed to more fruitful areas so that we will have the fundamental information necessary to enable us to be better able to understand our economy;
- we will still have census data every 10 years, by which we can cross-check the validity of our information.

The decision has been taken on the professional advice of the Head of Statistics on what key information is required and how to best use the statistical resources we have available.

If Proposition P.116/2005 is approved such a program is not possible. Approval of this proposition results in the same limited set of data only being available on the 5 year timescale of a census instead of far more comprehensive data being available annually.

Purpose and limitations of a Census

A major goal of any population census is to measure the total resident population. During the past 2 years the Statistics Unit has developed a methodology (which is published on the Statistics Unit website) for producing an accurate annual estimate of the Island's resident population from administrative sources, specifically registration data on births and deaths, and from effective censuses of education, health and manpower sub populations. In this regard, a primary aim of a population census has already been addressed on an annual basis.

A census is more than just a count of the population; a census aims also to collect a limited set of other

information. However, the key point in moving to a 10 year Census cycle is that it will free up professional statistical resources for the development of greatly expanded social and economic information, at a far more detailed level than that provided in a census.

Central to this theme of more detailed and more timely information will be the launch of two new initiatives: an annual social survey^[1] and a bi-annual business inquiry.

The annual social survey will be the primary vehicle for collecting timely social information from households. This survey is a cross-departmental initiative designed to collect the data necessary for the development of informed social policy. Modular in design, the survey will incorporate a core set of topics every year with other topics being rotated in and out depending on the needs of particular departments. Topics planned for inclusion in the first round of the survey include healthcare, disability, transport, leisure activity, diet, smoking and gambling. These can be examined in greater depth than could be possible within a census.

Crucially from the perspective of monitoring structural changes in demographics and employment status, a core sub-set of questions from the census will be included in every round of the annual Social survey. As a result, robust information on economic activity, age profile, place of birth, household size and length of residency will be available on an annual basis rather than on the 5 or 10 year period of a census. The attached table shows in full how census variables will be updated between 10 yearly censuses.

The experience of the Statistics Unit in running recent major surveys completely in-house (for example the Household Expenditure Survey and the Housing Needs Survey) will make it easier to collect reliable information from traditionally hard to reach demographic sub-groups. As such, the incorporation of sampling and estimation techniques based on international best practise means that the results of these initiatives will be both robust and accurate.

Coupled to the development of social statistics by survey will be a parallel initiative to make more use of the wealth of administrative data already existing in the Island. In this regard, as indicated previously, health and education data already play an important role in the annual estimate of the total resident population. Particularly significant for monitoring structural changes in age and gender profiles and of migration flows will be the increased use, for statistical purposes, of aggregate data held by the Employment and Social Security Department.

From the perspective of economic statistics, moving to a 10-year Census cycle will also enable professional statistical resources to be devoted to addressing current gaps in this area. Last year, the Statistics Unit developed a methodology, based on international standards, for determining the magnitude of economic activity in Jersey, overall and by sector. The next step in this regard will be the introduction of a business inquiry to facilitate a deeper understanding of the Island's economy, particularly the compilation of trade data, which are currently weak for an island economy such as Jersey, and the development of a more comprehensive National Accounts framework.

The development of economic statistics is the mechanism for ongoing monitoring and evaluation of the policies for economic growth encapsulated by the Strategic Plan and detailed in the Economic Growth Plan.

Summary

In summary, conducting the next Jersey Census in 2011, and not in 2006, will not result in any loss of accuracy in the recording of population statistics. However it will allow statistical resources to be devoted to gathering more meaningful and up-to-date information which will improve our understanding of fundamental social and economic issues. Pertinent data would be collected and analysed annually, a more timely fashion than could be afforded by a census, and with the necessary rigour so as to continually inform debate. Conducting the next Jersey Census in 2011, coupled with new annual surveys, facilitates the principle of robust data providing the basis for evidence based policy development.

Conducting a Census in 2006 will result in these initiatives ceasing and hence result in the loss of timely information necessary for proper policy making. The Policy and Resources Committee, therefore, does not

support the proposition to conduct a Census in 2006.

APPENDIX: Sources for existing census data

Census data	Update to Census measure available	Alternative sources of information and comments
Population		
Total population	Yes	Annual population updates published by the Statistics Unit every June, using births & deaths, employment data, education and health records.
Population density	Yes	From annual population estimate.
Population by Parish	Partial	Housing/Planning data on new completions will inform change, along with additional information which may be available through rates system and electoral roll.
Gender & Age breakdown	Partial	Can roll forward census data
Place of birth	Yes	Update using information collected by Jersey Annual Social Survey.
Marital status	Yes	Additional information from Education and Health Departments. Can also construct estimates and projections using life tables (incorporating mortality rates).
Residential qualifications	Yes	Will be collected via Jersey Annual Social Survey - to observe trends.
	Yes	Will be collected via Jersey Annual Social Survey - to observe trends.
	Yes	Marriages and divorce information from Family Division, States Greffe.
	Yes	Will be collected via Jersey Annual Social Survey - to observe trends. Will also be covered in future by new migration policy registration scheme.
Households		
Number of households	Possibly	Updates may be possible using Housing and Planning Dept data. Housing Needs Survey and Jersey Annual Social Survey provide information on hidden households (e.g. lodgers).
Numbers in communal establishments	Yes	Available from administrative sources.
Number of people per household	Yes	Data from Household Expenditure Survey will provide an update. Will also be covered in Jersey Annual Social Survey - to observe trends.
Tenure	Yes	Will be covered in Jersey Annual Social Survey as key classification variable.
Amenities/computing	Yes	Household Expenditure Survey data will provide an update. Could be covered in future rounds of Jersey Annual Social Survey.
Motor vehicles	Yes	Household Expenditure Survey data will provide an update. Will be covered in first round of Jersey Annual Social Survey. Additional information from DVS records.

<p>Housing (Dwellings) Housing data- number, type and size of households/dwellings, dwellings by tenure, etc</p>	<p>Yes - partial</p>	<p>Census information could be updated using data from Planning applications and Housing and Planning data. Detailed survey carried out every 3 years on future housing needs. Running household surveys in general is a means of finding out information about vacant properties etc.</p>
<p>Education Qualifications</p>	<p>Partial</p>	<p>Secondary education qualifications available annually from Education Dept. Could be collected by Jersey Annual Social Survey - to observe trends.</p>
<p>Professional qualifications</p>	<p>Partial</p>	<p>Data available from Skills Need Survey (IFF Research). Could be collected by Jersey Annual Social Survey - to observe trends. Skills are likely to be a key area for the new business inquiry.</p>
<p>Employment</p>		<p>In general employment data collected via a census has only limited value for economic analysis as a 5 or 10 year census can take place at any point in the economic cycle. Such data does provide benchmarks which can then be used alongside more timely indicators.</p>
<p>Economic activity rates</p>	<p>Yes</p>	<p>Trends monitored via Jersey Annual Social Survey.</p>
<p>Full/part time working</p>	<p>Yes</p>	<p>Detailed information available from six-monthly Manpower Survey.</p>
<p>ILO unemployment</p>	<p>Yes</p>	<p>Will be possible to monitor trends via the Jersey Annual Social Survey and thus to construct a model so that ILO unemployment can be estimated from monthly data on "registered" unemployment.</p>
<p>Occupation classification</p>	<p>Partial</p>	<p>Data collected via Household Expenditure Survey. Could be covered by Jersey Annual Social Survey.</p>
<p>Hours worked</p>	<p>Yes</p>	<p>Will be covered in first round of Jersey Annual Social Survey.</p>

The above table indicates alternative sources for census variables. For most purposes, 10-yearly data from a census is sufficiently robust.

Frequency of surveys: Jersey Annual Social Survey: annually
Household Expenditure Survey: every 4 to 5 years; current survey is underway; next round in 2009.
Housing Needs Survey: every 3 years; last round in late 2005.

[1] The Jersey Annual Social Survey, JASS.