

PROGRESS ON BUSINESS CASES FOR CENSUS QUESTIONS

Advisory Group members are invited to:-

1. **Note the current situation**

PROGRESS ON BUSINESS CASES FOR CENSUS QUESTIONS

- 1 The first draft of the business cases for possible questions from most of the main census users was prepared for the Content Working Group meeting on 27 June. The Group noted the good response from users in providing initial material for the business cases, and during the discussion clarified various points about how the cases will be developed further and assessed.
- 2 Following the meeting of the Working Group bilateral meetings have been held with Department of the Environment, Transport and the Regions (DETR), Department of Health, Department for Education and Employment, the Home Office, and parts of ONS and the first draft has been revised considerably as a result. GRO(S) have met Scottish Health Service and are planning to meet the Scottish Office. A revised case has been received from the representatives of the English and Welsh Local Authorities. Cases for the remaining users have been added, to produce the second draft which covers the requirements of all of the main users. Copies of the second draft are available on request from the Secretary.
- 3 The second draft is now being used as the basis of a wider consultation to bring in local authorities and health authorities directly. The sections covering Local Authorities and the DETR will be sent out to all LAs in England and Wales shortly; different arrangements will apply in Scotland where the LAs have already made their input to the second draft. The sections covering health will be sent to English and Welsh HAs. GRO(S) will similarly consult the Scottish Health Boards. In addition Professor Philip Rees is organising a round of consultation within the academic community. The Census Offices are considering what other bodies should be given the opportunity to comment at this stage.
- 4 The results of this wider consultation will feed into the third draft which will be prepared during November. It is intended that the third draft will be the final version, but it is always possible that further changes may be needed during the assessment, or as a result of changes in government policy. Such changes could affect the balance of benefit from including one question as opposed to another, but are not expected to affect the list of possible questions or the classifications of the responses.

- 5 It is planned to begin assessing the business cases in December, when the Census Offices will be drawing up options in the form of alternative packages of questions for further consideration.
- 6 Advisory Group members are asked to note the current situation.

John Dixie
Data Needs Project
September 1997