



The Scottish Parliament
Pàrlamaid na h-Alba

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BY E-MAIL

Dear Paul,

SCOTLAND'S CENSUS

On behalf of the Committee, I would like to thank you and your colleagues for your evidence to the Committee on the postponement of the Scotland's Census to March 2022.

The Committee discussed with you the issues of variances in response levels, including from specific groups and geographical areas. The Committee welcomes your commitment to provide a paper on the level of variance in response rates to the census. In this regard, the Committee would welcome information on how response rates to the census have varied over time and how response rates, including with regard to the level of variance by geography, compare to other jurisdictions in the UK. The Committee would also welcome further information on how census data is quality assured in order to provide assurance with regard to the robustness of the census data.

The Committee also looks forward to receiving more information on NRS' s re-planning exercise including detail of any extra resources required as a consequence of the decision to postpone the Census. More generally, the Committee would welcome regular progress updates on the delivery of the 2022 Census including details of Delivery Confidence Assessments provided to the Census Programme Board and of any concerns raised regarding deliverability.

In regard to differences in access to certain types of data between NRS and ONS, the Committee would welcome detail on the specific datasets that ONS have access to that NRS do not which are assisting ONS in delivering the Census in 2021. Further to this, the Committee would welcome your view on whether there are any restrictions on access to datasets that NRS experiences arising from the division of devolved and

reserved responsibilities and whether potentially a Section 30 Order in this area could help address gaps in data that NRS experience in this regard.

Lastly, in evidence to the Committee, you confirmed that you have written to Professor Paterson and Professor McVie recently to clarify that the Committee does not have any locus in approving the Census' guidance. As a courtesy, the Committee would welcome a letter from you confirming this and also a copy of your recent correspondence with Professors McVie and Paterson on this issue.

The Committee would welcome a response to the issues raised in this letter by Monday 12 October 2020.

Once again can I thank you and your colleagues for your assistance in our scrutiny of Census related matters and reiterate our joint ambition for the successful delivery of the Census.

Yours sincerely,

Joan McAlpine MSP
Convener, Culture, Tourism, Europe and External Affairs Committee