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Rt Hon Francis Maude MP

Minister of State
Cabinet Office
70 Whitehall
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Date: 13 DEC 2013

Dear Francis

Beyond 2011: Future of the Census

We are pleased to be responding to the *Beyond 2011* Consultation, and to be doing so with the unified London voice of the Greater London Authority and all the London Boroughs. Our detailed views are contained in our individual responses (copies enclosed), but given the potential significance of an exercise examining the future of population statistics to our city of 8 million people, we would like to raise two particular issues with you.

First, despite progress, we consider that the case for using existing government administrative data as a methodologically sound replacement of the Census remains inconclusive. Whilst it may be the case that in time, administrative data will match the accuracy and detail at the small area level provided by the traditional census approach, this is not the case now. Nor does the proposed annual sample survey provide the necessary granularity of data required across London government. Our strong view is that, while administrative data might provide a more up-to-date population count, this approach runs the significant risk of diminishing the detailed picture of population characteristics so important in the planning of services and allocation of resources to London's complex and varied communities.

Second, we consider the decennial online census to be the only option able to deliver the statistics required to meet the needs of London government. Whilst technological changes make possible new and more efficient ways of carrying out the Census, it will be vital that traditional forms of enumeration are also available. This will mean close cooperation between ONS and London government coupled with additional resources on the ground to enable enumeration of London's hard-to-reach communities. In addition to improving the accuracy of the future census baseline, we would also stress, as a priority, the need to improve the methodologies for inter-census population estimates and projections.

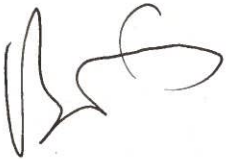
London's population continues to grow significantly and is more complex than ever before. By 2021, there will be over 9 million people in the city. It is critical, therefore, that we concentrate our efforts on a detailed understanding of London's population so that we may plan for the future.

We are all keen to ensure progress towards the next count in 2021, and indeed to continue with the investigation and trialling of administrative data as an effective means of describing population characteristics.

We also want to play our part in encouraging a full participation in a changed collection approach which will remain an important part of London and national life.

Both London Councils and the GLA are committed to working closely with the ONS and other stakeholders in developing improved population estimates for the capital and we would welcome the opportunity to discuss how we could best take this forward. This could be for example, through a London Census Board with representation from relevant stakeholders.

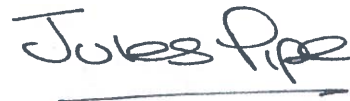
With best wishes,



Boris Johnson
Mayor of London



Darren Johnson AM
Chair of the London Assembly



Mayor Jules Pipe
Chair of London Councils

Encs.

Cc: Jil Matheson, National Statistician