

**POLICY AND REFORM**

**2.10. 2021 census –  
Progress**

The Hon. Member for Onchan (Mr Callister) to ask the Minister for Policy and Reform:

*What progress he has made with the 2021 census?*

**The Minister for Policy and Reform (Mr Harmer):** Prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, initial planning had begun for the 2021 census, with a focus of the census being ‘online by default’, with supporting options for those unable to complete a form online.

However, due to resources being redeployed in response to the pandemic, and the budgetary pressure that is expected to be experienced by Government departments, consideration is currently being given as part of the Budget update that Hon. Members will receive in July, that the 2021 census be delayed by 12 months until 2022.

Due to the planning only having been at a very early stage when it was interrupted, delaying the census by 12 months will allow for the appropriate planning and development time to be dedicated to such an important project. It will also help to ease budgetary pressures for the 2020-21 financial year. It may also lessen the risk of capturing a population in a transition period (either through people leaving or coming to the Island due to the effects of COVID-19).

The 1929 Census Act only limits censuses from being carried out more frequently than every five years and does not require a census to be carried out within a certain time period of the previous one.

In light of this, discussions regarding smaller-scale surveys or studies, that could be run before the postponed census is undertaken, are ongoing. One such study under current investigation is a ‘micro-census’, which is a methodology used by a number of European countries to gather reliable demographic data between their 10-year censuses.