1. Introduction

1.1 This submission by Cornwall Council is subsequent to the August 2017 meeting between Cornwall Council and the Office for National Statistics (ONS). That meeting focussed on the Council’s request for a tick-box within the national identity section of the 2021 Census for the Cornish to identify as Cornish, replacing the current ‘write-in’ option. Discussion also centred on the correlation between ‘deprivation’ and those who identify as Cornish living in Cornwall and those who do not. The ONS agreed to accept further representation on this issue. This submission has been approved on behalf of the Council, by Cllr Julian German – Deputy Leader of the Council and Portfolio Holder, Cllr Jesse Foot, Chair of the Cornish Minority Working Group and the group members.

1.2 We will detail the following five arguments for a ‘Cornish’ tick-box:

- The lack of a ‘tick-box’ option underrepresents those who identify as Cornish thus impairing the quality of the census data;
- The lack of a ‘tick-box’ option fails to afford the Cornish parity of UK national minority status, and undermines the Government’s ability to meet its monitoring and reporting requirements under the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities;
- The lack of a ‘tick-box’ option inhibits our understanding of the relative deprivation suffered by the Cornish, including housing and labour market, health, and educational inequalities;
- The lack of a ‘tick-box’ option inhibits our ability to maximise and measure the economic impact of cultural initiatives.
- Granting a Cornish ‘tick-box’ option still allows for a principled distinction to be drawn between those minorities with and those without a ‘tick-box’.

1.3 Whilst the first consideration may apply to other ethnic groups who lack a tick-box option, we believe that the subsequent considerations are unique or particularly pronounced in the Cornish case. We directly address the concern that granting a Cornish ‘tick-box’ will initiate a proliferation of such claims from other minorities in section 6.
2. The lack of a ‘tick-box’ option underrepresents the Cornish

2.1 In the 2001 Census, which lacked a ‘tick-box’ option for ‘Welsh’, 14.4% of Welsh residents self-identified as ‘Welsh’ using the ‘write-in’ option. Subsequent to the inclusion of ‘Welsh’ as a tick box option in the 2011 Census, that increased to 66.6%.\(^1\)

2.2 Evidence strongly suggests that the Cornish case is very similar to the Welsh case. In all resident surveys undertaken by Cornwall Council, a higher percentage of respondents have ticked the box describing their ethnic origin as ‘Cornish’ than did so when it was a ‘write-in’ option in the Census. For example, in the 2016 Residents’ Survey, 27.5% of the 1,992 respondents expressed their identity as Cornish.\(^2\) The Council has recently conducted the same survey, but on a much larger scale, which received 11,247 responses – with a confidence level of +/- 1%.\(^3\) The results of the survey reveal the number of respondents describing their ethnic origin as Cornish (either White or otherwise) has increased to 30.5% (3,434 of 11,247).

2.3 One of the headline findings of the survey is the statistically significant and profound difference between the characteristics possessed by the residents identifying as White-English compared with White-Cornish. For example:

- Residents who identified themselves as White-English were significantly more likely to say their quality of life has increased compared to 12 months ago (22%) compared with those who identified themselves as White-Cornish (17%).

- Residents who identified themselves as White-English were significantly more likely to agree that their local area is a place where people from different backgrounds get on well together (64%) compared with those who identified themselves as White-Cornish (56%).

2.4 The results of the survey clearly demonstrate the statistical merit of the 2021 Census including the Cornish so that an even more comprehensive range of socio-economic data and information can be acquired so the Government and public services can develop policies and offer services based on high quality evidence. Crucially, it will help to identify the extent and nature of difference and disadvantage of the Cornish, not just within Cornwall – which the residents’ survey reveals - but also across the UK.

2.5 Additional corroborative evidence is provided by the January 2017 Department for Education School Census data, in which 51% of pupils in State Maintained Schools in Cornwall identified as Cornish. Whilst it is often the parents, especially of young children, that completed the forms on behalf of their children, this further evidences the underrepresentation of Cornish self-identifiers in the national census data.

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\(^1\) “Why Should the Cornish be recognised as a National Minority Report” Cornwall Council
\(^2\) [https://www.cornwall.gov.uk/media/21805696/2726_cornwall_report_vfinal_050916.pdf](https://www.cornwall.gov.uk/media/21805696/2726_cornwall_report_vfinal_050916.pdf)
3. The lack of a ‘tick-box’ option fails to afford the Cornish parity of UK national minority status.

3.1. The UK Government has given official recognition to the Cornish as a protected national minority under The Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities (FCNM) – with recognition for the Cornish as a national minority granted in 2014. It is also a signatory to the European Charter for Regional and Minority Languages – with Cornish added as a Part II language in 2003 – offering further recognition of the Cornish language (Kernewek). Both the Charter and the Convention are monitored by the Council of Europe. As a signatory to both, the UK government has an obligation to send compliance reports to demonstrate how they are meeting requirements. The ONS has stated that “the UK demonstrates this compliance through existing legislation, primarily the Equalities Act 2010.” However, it should be noted that while this may be the case the UK also demonstrates compliance through a range of non-legislative policy actions in order to meet the required standards, not just legislation.

3.2 In respects of a ‘tick-box’ option on the Census, the lack of parity between the Cornish and other national minorities violates the spirit of these commitments. The articles of the Framework mandate equivalent ease for the Cornish to declare their ethnicity or national identity as a recognised UK national minority. Further considerations also apply to the addition of a Cornish language tick-box option, in addition to a Cornish national identity tick-box. Under Article 7 of the European Charter for Regional and Minority Languages (ECRML), the UK Government undertook to base its policies, legislation and practice on a set of principles to safeguard and promote the Cornish language, and to eliminate "any unjustified distinction, exclusion, restriction or preference relating to the use of a regional or minority language and intended to discourage or endanger the maintenance or development of it.”

3.3 As the Census provides the only UK-wide survey, its omission of the Cornish language from the language options would appear to create ‘an unjustified distinction.’ Moreover, the monitoring and reporting requirements consequent of this recognition further augments the case for a ‘tick-box.’ First, as part of the reporting cycle for the Charter, the Council of Europe requires data on the number and distribution of Cornish speakers. While Cornwall Council can commission surveys of speakers, these will be self-selecting and limited in scope. The Census thus provides a more adequate response to this reporting need.

3.4 Second, as the United Kingdom Government is the signatory to the above international agreements, it is the state government that is responsible for monitoring the state of the nation’s indigenous languages. Although Cornwall Council is proactive, willing and enthusiastic about supporting, promoting and winning equality for all aspects of Cornish culture and heritage, monitoring of indigenous minority languages is not a local authority function and Cornwall Council does not have resources to carry out such monitoring. Crucially, as not all Cornish language speakers reside within the administrative area of Cornwall Council, a separately
commissioned language survey would need to be distributed and advertised nationally.

3.5 The cost of providing a Cornish language tick-box to the Census language question would be negligible, and would obviate the need for separate publicity and distribution, and provide more reliable data (nationwide sample and not self-selected). The addition of a Cornish language 'tick-box' would thus, not only ensure compliance with the commitment to its protected status, but would also provide the best means of ensuring that the monitoring and reporting requirements of such recognition are met.

4. The lack of a 'tick-box' option inhibits our understanding of the relative deprivation suffered by the Cornish.

4.1 We know that there are areas of deprivation across Cornwall, and also that these are traditionally areas in which more residents identify as Cornish. This evidence comes from various sources, such as housing and parish plan surveys, and partial data from the 2011 Census. Anecdotal evidence, in particular, suggests that in terms of housing, cultural provision, education and employment opportunities in Cornwall, the Cornish fare worse than the non-Cornish. For instance, the China Clay Area exhibits a higher than average proportion of Cornish self-identification according to the 2011 census – as much as 22% in St. Dennis - and greater than average support for opportunities to use the Cornish language. Yet the area also suffers from high levels of deprivation – the constituent LSOAs being identified as amongst the worst 20-30% nationally of the IMD – and some of the lowest levels of resident satisfaction in the most recent residents’ survey.

4.2 Further analysis of the 2017 Resident’s Survey demonstrates that amongst those who identify as White Cornish:

- The proportion of 'White-Cornish' respondents who fall into the category 'Financially Stretched' is 6.7 percentage points higher than for all respondents (29.1% vs. 22.4%, respectively).
- The proportion of 'White-Cornish' respondents who fall into the category 'Affluent Achievers', is 5.3 percentage points lower than for all respondents (19.8% vs. 25.1%, respectively).

The overall message, therefore, is that many of the less affluent households, especially within the 'Financially Stretched' category, are over represented by those who identify as 'White-Cornish.'

4.3 Whilst there is a paucity of robust large-scale evaluation of the issue, as Husk (2011) notes:

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4 Department for Communities & Local Government, English Indices of Multiple Deprivation
"...the Cornish are more likely to be over-represented in the manual classes; earn significantly less; and suffer worse housing conditions."

Subsequent analysis was conducted of the 2001 Census data by Husk (2012)5, which found that:

"A preliminary examination of the un-weighted Census data (sourced from the Office for National Statistics, 2010) showed that there was some evidence of a link between Cornish ethnic affiliation and social exclusion. There were statistically significant differences between the Cornish and non-Cornish populations across key variables such as employment, housing and education... The application of the derived weights strengthened the statistical significance of these results as well as resulting in the emergence of other significant variables. More detailed analyses were not undertaken due to the aggregate nature of the existing Census data...”

4.4 Whilst Husk goes on to establish countervailing considerations to this preliminary analysis, he ultimately notes that the limitations of the study prevent the results from being generalised throughout Cornwall. This further emphasises the need for more reliable large-scale data in order to properly evaluate the issue. Moreover, use of any locally collected data will be only effective if there is baseline Census data for comparison and context. Such data would assist the Council and other bodies in understanding the impact of policy and the deprivation characteristics of the indigenous population. A richer understanding will help us to ensure that the needs of those who identify as Cornish are accurately assessed, and that resources such as housing, education, social services and health are properly targeted. It would also help to enable the Council to meet statutory requirements under the Equality Act and the equality and opportunity monitoring activities.

4.5 The desire to see census data adequately serve ‘user need’ by enabling informed decision-making is explicitly acknowledged in the Census transformation Programme Topic Report, Ethnicity and national identity May 2016:

“data to the lowest possible geographical level is therefore useful for local authorities to have a clear understanding of the makeup of the inhabitants of their area so that they can make informed decisions on providing particular services or initiatives. The data are also used to support fairer funding from central government based on the particular level of need within a local authority.”

Only with clearer census data on those who identify as Cornish can we fully understand the apparent relative deprivation suffered by the Cornish, and thereby tailor policy interventions to meet their needs.

5 Dr Kerryn Husk: http://www.socresonline.org.uk/17/2/9.html
4.6  Housing and labour market inequalities:

4.6.1 In the early 1990s Professor Malcolm Williams (then at Plymouth University, now Cardiff) produced an analysis of each census of population from 1971 to 1991, tracking an anonymised sample of individuals over the three censuses of population. The study found that those originating from Cornwall or those that lived in Cornwall for longer, were likely to suffer disadvantage both in the housing and labour markets. There is a stronger likelihood that those who fall into these two categories would self-identify as Cornish, and these effects may be more pronounced amongst the Cornish. Plausible mechanisms for these effects are ascertainable from features of the local context. Because of the geographical nature of the Cornish peninsula there is not the same 360 degree access to housing or employment opportunities that may be enjoyed by many other parts of the UK. This is coupled with a high self-contained labour market due to limited choice, commuting ability and productive economic functionality of urban areas proximate to Cornwall. Arguably, this helps to protect Cornish identity because of a lack of mobility, but it means that access to skills and higher grade employment opportunities could be an issue.

4.6.2 The lack of reliable reporting of Cornish self-identification in the Census data, however, impairs our ability to easily investigate these hypotheses. Moreover, this specifically inhibits our ability to measure the impact of specific policy interventions. For example, the Cornwall Council Local Plan is seeking to provide at least 38,000 jobs and 52,500 homes by 2030. The 52,500 homes represents an increase of 5,000 homes on the original Local Plan figure to take account of the amount of housing that was forecast to be taken out of stock for holiday and second homes. However, without a ‘tick-box’ for the Cornish there is no reliable or comprehensive way to evaluate whether these interventions adequately cater to the ability of the Cornish to access housing, and how it is linked to the principle of local need and tiered local connection qualifications.

4.7  Health inequalities

4.7.1 Data from the Community Network Health Profiles in Cornwall for 2017 reflect summary information on health and wellbeing issues across Cornwall. By way of example, 3 specific areas - China Clay, West Penwith and Camborne, Pool Illogan and Redruth – exhibit far greater health and wellbeing challenges according to a range of health indications, when compared to areas such as Wadebridge and Padstow or Truro and the Roseland. In those more deprived areas one in four residents live in the 20% most deprived neighbourhoods in England and are known to suffer bad health outcomes. However, the contrasting figures for Wadebridge and Padstow show that no residents live in the 20% most deprived neighbourhoods in England, and in Truro and Roseland the figure is one in seventeen. In the areas of West Penwith and Camborne/Redruth there are

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6 ‘Movers and Stayers’ published by Plymouth University, 1993.
7 http://www.cornwall.gov.uk/localplan/cornwall
also higher instances of fuel poverty, families with low incomes or on benefits and children receiving free school meals.

4.7.2 It is extremely difficult to assess deprivation in dispersed rural populations such as Cornwall, due to the socially and economically polarised nature of rural communities, and therefore, these figures could be understated. As stated previously, we know from anecdotal evidence, resident and educational surveys that these deprived areas record a far greater than average proportion of people who identify as Cornish. Whilst unclear from facts such as these alone, these cases suggest the possible existence of systemic health inequalities suffered by those identifying as Cornish. Only with more accurate Census data on the Cornish can we robustly diagnose such systematic health inequalities, and thereby avoid the associated risk that we lack adequate insight to facilitate the design of remedial policy interventions.

4.8 Racial Disparities Audit

4.8.1 The shortcoming of the census data with regards to the Cornish does not just impact upon the effectiveness of local initiatives, but also on national inequality exercises. For example, census data forms the evidence-base of the Prime Minister’s efforts to tackle racial inequalities, who upon taking office declared that:

"The UK government is committed to creating a fair society in which all people of whatever ethnic origins or background are valued and able to participate fully and realise their own potential."

4.8.2 This aim was reiterated within the UK Government’s response to the FCNM. To realise the Government’s commitment to creating a fair society, the Prime Minister subsequently announced an audit of racial disparities in public service outcomes. The audit aims to:

- "Review Government data to identify racial inequalities in outcomes from contact in public services, and to identify any gaps in data collection;
- Publish all data in a single place so that the public can search the data to isolate inequalities by geography, age or social economic category."

4.8.3 However, given that the data used for the audit will ONLY derive from the results of the national census, this yields two problems:

- The data presently underrepresents those who identify as Cornish, owing to the lack of a ‘tick-box.’ As such, the audit may thereby fail to accurately represent the relative deprivation of those who identify as Cornish;

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• At present it appears that even the census data generated from those who self-identified as Cornish through the ‘write-in’ option has not been reflected in the audit.

4.8.4 The reliance on the census data thereby challenges the validity of the audit by undermining both of its aims, and inhibits the full realisation of the Prime Minister’s motivating ambition. These deficiencies can be avoided in future audits, however, by ensuring that the dataset adequately reflects those who identify as Cornish. Without the precise data afforded by accurate reporting of those who identify as Cornish, tackling ethnic and cultural disparities in public service outcomes in Cornwall at best is very difficult, and at worse impossible.

5. The lack of a ‘tick-box’ option inhibits our ability to maximise and measure the economic impact of cultural initiatives.

5.1 Cultural expression is part of the social fabric of Cornwall and an economic driver that cuts across sectors. It supports around 12,000 jobs (around 5% of all jobs in Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly) with a business turnover of some quarter of a billion pounds; and has relevance to Cornish branded sectors such as food and drink which accounts for around one third of the output and employment of the Cornish economy.¹⁰

5.2 Cornwall Council and its partners need statistical tools and recognition in order to measure the economic impact of cultural initiatives, and to lever Cornish identity to secure greater resource and investment. The economic value of “Cornishness” can be variously illustrated:

• Since 1999 Arts, Entertainment and Recreation has been the second fastest growing sector in Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly, supported in part by the introduction of superfast broadband which has helped stimulate the creative economy.¹¹ This is driven by both cultural events and celebrations highlighting, for example, Cornwall’s historical past in the mining industry and the use of Cornish distinctiveness in marketing and branding campaigns (such as Kelly’s ice cream TV advert in 2016 filmed entirely in Cornish).

• Parts of Cornwall have enjoyed over a decade of World Heritage Status (WHS), resulting in over £100m in capital investment for heritage led regeneration. This has delivered an average 20% uplift in income for those tourism businesses that work closely with the WHS Partnership.¹²

• Minority languages are linked strongly to identity and can help support a sense of place and cohesion amongst communities. Cornwall is the only

¹⁰ Research undertaken by the Economic Growth Team, Cornwall Council to support submission to the Digital Culture Media and Sport Parliamentary Select Committee ‘Counties of Culture’ consultation 2015
¹¹ Analysis of Gross Value Added data by Economic Growth Team Cornwall Council and Superfast Broadband with Plymouth University investigation into the impact (including by sector and business) of Superfast broadband in 2015
¹² Research undertaken by the Economic Growth Team, Cornwall Council
part of the UK with an indigenous language with inhabitants who have national minority status, but who lack the statistical ability to lever resource on the back of that recognition. The language theoretically stands with Welsh and Gaelic as protected. However, in 2016, the government cut, with immediate effect, a yearly funding of £150,000 that Cornwall had received for a number of years in support of the Cornish language, after it was recognised under the Charter for Regional and Minority Languages in 2003.

5.3 A more accurate representation of the Cornish in Census data would help us to better secure its recognition and economic potential, and allow us to better understand the link between a regeneration initiative, spend and what the impact is in former mining areas where we suspect large numbers of the Cornish reside.

6. **Granting a Cornish ‘tick-box’ option still allows for a principled distinction to be drawn between those minorities with and those without a ‘tick-box’**.

6.1 Given the space constraints on the census, and the cost implications of the addition of ‘tick-box’ options, we recognise the strength of the concern that granting a ‘tick-box’ option for the Cornish may be used to justify further claims for tick-boxes from other groups. However, we believe that such appeals would be unconvincing, and that the ONS would retain a strong and principled basis for distinguishing between the Cornish and others such as to avoid the proliferation of further tick-boxes. This is due to the significance of Cornwall’s distinctive status – amongst other minorities lacking a ‘tick-box’ – as a *national* minority. Specifically, then, the Cornish are relevantly distinct from other such minorities in the following respects:

6.2 No other such minority is a national (rather than ethnic) minority in respects of their historic, geographic and political attributes. These include the possession of a distinct language, a distinct territory, a historic parliament, a distinct constitutional status (the Royal Duchy), a nationalist political party, and formal recognition as such by HMG & the ONS.

6.3 Whilst the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities (FCNM) does not define ‘national minority’, and the UK Government has ratified it with reference to racial groups as defined in race relations legislation, the recognition of the Cornish explicitly affords parity of status between them and the UK’s other Celtic people; the Scots, the Welsh and the Irish. This formal recognition is, therefore, to provide parity of status between the Cornish and other UK *national* minorities. This motivates two relevant sub-considerations:

6.3.1 Enabling the UK Government to ensure compliance with specific Articles of the FCNM requires complete, valid, and accurate data on the number of Cornish. For example, Article 16 specifically requires that ‘Parties shall refrain from measures which alter the proportions of the population in areas inhabited by persons belonging to national minorities.’ That cannot
be effected without the provision of adequate data on the relative proportion of Cornish minorities. As has been argued above, however, there is good reason to believe that the ‘write-in’ option underrepresents Cornish minorities.

6.3.2 The FCNM commits the UK Government to ‘undertake to promote full and effective equality’ for recognised groups. In order to be effective, this undertaking must include needs analysis, and the design and implementation of suitable policy interventions. However, as Husk (2011 and 2012) has noted there is a lack of robust research into inequalities suffered by the Cornish – a significant factor here being the inadequacy of the census data in this regard. This issue is particularly urgent in the Cornish case, due to the fact that the formal recognition for the Cornish was without prejudice as to whether it meets the definition of a racial group (that to be determined by case law). As such, the Government’s undertaking under the FCNM in regards to the Cornish can presently only be delivered by non-legislative policy means.

6.4 No such other minority is treated as a national minority in the Census data outputs produced by the ONS. As such, there is a strong case for methodological consistency amongst this group through equivalent data collection approaches. This bolstering of the data quality would ensure that the outputs for nationality were properly comparable.

6.5 These three respects – attributes, the character of the formal recognition under the FCNM, and categorisation by the ONS – constitute a clear sense in which Cornish is a national minority, sufficient to justify its alignment with other UK national minorities in respects of a ‘tick-box.’

7. Conclusion

In summary, we have mounted four positive considerations in favour of granting a Cornish ‘tick-box’ option: under-representation and data-quality; affordance of parity of status with other Celtic national minorities under the Framework Convention for the Protection of Minorities; the need for more accurate data to robustly diagnose and reconcile apparent systematic deprivation; and to maximise and measure the impact of cultural initiatives. Further, we have subsequently countered the concern that granting a ‘tick-box’ will inhibit the ONS from maintaining a principled distinction between minorities to which it affords a ‘tick-box.’ We have demonstrated that user need for more robust data on Cornish identity is required and believe that this amounts to a strong case for the uniqueness of the Cornish request to move beyond a ‘write-in’ option.

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