

**POPULATION AND MIGRATION STATISTICS COMMITTEE (SCOTLAND)****Small Area Population Projections****Introduction**

1. This paper provides PAMS members with a summary of the current status of the work being carried out by the General Register Office for Scotland (GROS) on small area population projections. PAMS is asked to note this paper and the accompanying annexes. Written comments and other feedback can be sent to the Population and Migration Statistics branch, via the GROS website [Contact Form](#), before Monday 28 June 2010.
2. The main purpose of this work is to provide local authority users with the means to produce their own population projections at different small area levels of geography.

**Background**

3. GROS publishes population projections at national and local authority (council and health boards areas) level every two years. In addition, projections are published biennially for Strategic Development Plan Areas and National Parks. There is a growing demand from local authorities for population projections at a variety of small area levels. It is not practical for GROS to publish population projections for every possible small area and local authorities do not have access to data that will enable them to produce projections of a good quality.
4. The work carried out by GROS looked at how feasible it would be to provide demographic data at data zone level to users to run population projections for small areas using POPGROUP (or any other suitable software) and to identify the data that would be needed to give robust results.
5. The Centre for Census and Survey Research (CCSR) at the University of Manchester has produced population projections for the multi-member wards in Fife, based on data supplied by GROS and Fife Council, using POPGROUP. Assumptions were made about future fertility, mortality and migration rates in the production of these population projections.
6. GROS then ran some alternative scenarios with different assumptions about fertility, mortality and migration using some data that was available to GROS but not to Fife Council (for example, using the age of the mother GROS was able to calculate more detailed age-specific fertility rates). The results of the GROS projections were compared with those for Fife Council to determine the impact that the alternative assumptions had on the projected population of each ward.
7. There are three main outputs from this work that PAMS members are invited to comment on:
  - A Report on the results of the investigation - Annex A.
  - A Users Guide to assist POPGROUP users in Scotland to produce small area population projections – Annex B.

- A Data Specification that describes the data that will be made available, on request, to local authority users – Annex C.

Please note that the annexes to this paper have not been finalised and, at this moment, are not available for general circulation.

8. In addition, we plan to set up a POPGROUP Users Group with CCSR to allow users to meet on an annual basis to exchange ideas and discuss any issues. We are thinking of holding the first meeting in September and would welcome your views on having the meeting at this time of year.
9. If any local authority is planning to do small area population projections in the near future and would be willing to test the User Guide and provide GROS with feedback please let us know.

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