

HOUSEHOLD ANALYSIS REVIEW GROUP:

Minutes for the meeting of November 22nd 2005
Council Chambers at Old Viewforth, Stirling, 2-4pm

Present:

Esther Roughsedge (Chair)	General Register Office for Scotland: Household Estimates Branch
Stephen Fraser	North Lanarkshire Council
Jan Freeke	Glasgow Council
Alistair Harvey	Edinburgh Council
Paul McNamara	Stirling Council
Margaret Skinner	North Ayrshire Council
Tom Snowling	Aberdeen Council
Jan Young	Scottish Executive Development Department Analytical Services Division
Paula Lopez	General Register Office for Scotland: Household Estimates Branch

Apologies:

Duncan Gray	Scottish Executive Development Department Analytical Services Division
Cecilia Macintyre	General Register Office for Scotland: Demography Branch
Gordon McAdam	Communities Scotland
Blair Melville	Homes for Scotland

Agenda items 1 and 2: Introductions and minutes of the last meeting

- 1.1 Esther Roughsedge welcomed everyone to the meeting and noted the apologies received.
- 1.2 The minutes of the meeting in May were considered an accurate record and Esther gave an update on the completion of the recorded action points. Some of those action points were discussed later in the meeting. It was agreed that action point 3.4 would be pursued further and results would be presented at the next HARG meeting. **ACTION: GROS to investigate the consistency between Council Tax-based household estimates and population-based household estimates for 2001-2004.**

Agenda item 3: Population estimates and projections – update from GROS demography branch

- 2.1 Paula Lopez presented the update on recent work on population statistics provided by GROS Demography Branch. This update was based on a paper prepared for the PAMS meeting to be held on 23rd November 2003 (PAMS (05) 19), which will shortly be available on the GROS website (<http://www.gros-scotland.gov.uk/statistics/pams/index.html>). It covers: the creation of the National Statistics Centre for Demography, mid-year estimates, small area population estimates, population projections, quarterly population estimates, 90+ estimates, marital status estimates, life tables, international migration review and migration data on GROS website.
- 2.2 Regarding the consultation process on migration assumptions, Paul McNamara asked whether GROS Demography branch usually informs Local Authorities about the extent to which their comments have or have not been incorporated into the assumptions and commented that it would be useful to know in advance to the publication of the figures. It was agreed that **Esther would mention this concern to GROS Demography Branch. [Action: GROS]**
- 2.3 Tom Snowling asked whether the new National Statistics Centre for Demography was going to subsume GROS and Esther explained that this was not the case. The creation of this new centre will improve co-ordination amongst demographic statistics providers across the UK, but population and household projections for Scotland will continue to be produced by GROS.

Agenda item 4: Household estimates publication

- 3.1 Esther Roughsedge presented the paper HARG 2005(11), asking the group to comment on the draft 2005 household estimates publication, which had been prepared following the format agreed for the 2004 household estimates in the HARG meeting in May. She also mentioned that any comments on the publication of 2004 household estimates would be welcome. As a new attachment to the publication, the group was presented with a map

showing the percentage of empty and second homes in each Local Authority in Scotland and was invited to comment on this too.

- 3.2 Stephen Fraser suggested that having information on the average household size would be very useful as it is a figure appreciated by policy departments. **Esther agreed to investigate whether it would be possible to include any information on changes in average household size. [Action: GROS]**
- 3.3 Several comments in favour of including the map in the publication were done, stressing the visual impact of it, and **it was agreed that the inclusion of the map in the publication would be welcome. [Action: GROS]**
- 3.4 Jan Freeke said that he had noticed that no clear conclusions were included in the publication regarding changes in the number of vacant and second homes. Esther explained that GROS opinion was that it was too soon to draw conclusions about the causes behind the decline but welcomed any feedback from HARG members about the cause of any changes.
- 3.5 Alistair Harvey mentioned that he had noticed that the change in the number of dwellings in Edinburgh was consistently and significantly lower than the number of houses built. Demolitions were mentioned as a possible explanation of those differences. After some discussion about the possible causes, it was suggested that this could be explained by demolitions. **Esther offered to send Alistair Council Tax based household estimates since 1996, for Alistair to do further checking. [Action: GROS].**
- 3.6 Stephen Fraser commented that he had observed some fluctuation in vacancy levels for North Lanarkshire and Esther explained that as second homes are included in Council Tax figures if they are let out commercially for less than 140 days per year, but in the Valuation Roll if they are let out for more than 140 days, this can lead to some fluctuation between years.
- 3.7 Tom Snowling mentioned that the table that might cause more confusion could be Table 4 (occupied dwellings) and that maybe more explanation was needed regarding the differences between households and occupied dwellings. Esther explained the four reasons that had been identified as possible causes of differences between those figures and also some work that has been done to try to examine each Local Authority's case. **She agreed to add a further explanation of the differences between occupied dwellings and households, and the differences in dates, to try to make it clearer. [Action: GROS].**
- 3.8 Jan Freeke also suggested that, to improve consistency between tables, it would maybe be better to present the **change between 2001 and 2005, instead of the change between 1991 and 2005, in Table 1.** It was agreed that GROS would do that. **[Action: GROS].** He also asked whether any comments on the figures had been received from Councils, as some of them showed quite big changes in some tables. Esther said she had received two responses so far.

- 3.9 Jan Freeke explained that he had not yet been able to discuss the figures for Glasgow with the Council Finance Department and that he would pursue it **to try to allow for a set of 2005 household estimates to be agreed before the production of household projections**. Esther explained that the latest GROS could wait for comments from Glasgow would be the 6th of December, but if the comments implied a big change, the 6th of December would be very tight. **[Action: Jan Freeke]**
- 3.10 Jan Young commented that from the policy side, it would be very useful to separate vacant from second homes. Esther explained that so far, only an incomplete set of data is available because some Local Authorities are not able to breakdown their figures, but if requested, the breakdown can be given for those Council Areas that are able to provide the split.
- 3.11 As a final question, Esther asked HARG members whether they thought that the change in vacant dwellings in their Council Areas seemed reasonable and no negative responses were expressed.

Agenda item 5: Developing small area household estimates - progress

- 4.1 Esther Roughsedge presented a paper providing HARG members with an update on the progress in developing neighbourhood-level household estimates from Council Tax systems (HARG 2005(12)). A letter has been sent to each lead council representative for each software supplier (31st October), explaining the background, the information required and the data specification, and asking them to contact their software supplier to produce a report that allows them to extract the required information. **Esther will be contacting the lead council representatives soon to ask how this work is progressing [Action: GROS]**, but she asked HARG members for comments on the data specification, stressing that this was the moment to do those changes.
- 4.2 Alistair Harvey asked whether there were going to be time series data showing past figures and Esther confirmed that it was very unlikely that this would be feasible, and this was accepted by the group. However, once this data collection has been set up, figures will be published annually which will lead to the production of time series from this date onwards. Jan Freeke raised his concerns about the data as the result of some analysis he had carried out. This suggested that in Glasgow, the aggregate figures are adjusted to include City-wide information on discounts, and it may not be possible to apportion this to data zones. He asked whether any other council had noted the same thing, and Esther said they had not, though a number of councils recorded that they are not able to separately identify second homes and vacant dwellings.
- 4.3 It was also asked when the test mentioned in the paper was planned to start, and Esther explained that **GROS needed to get in touch with the Councils to ask for offers to take part in the pilot exercise. [Action: GROS]**
- 4.4 No other comments were given regarding the data specification. GROS stressed that the users interested in these data were mainly Councils and that there was some money available to help them fund this work. **Paul McNamara offered to speak to the**

**Finance representative at Stirling council, to check what progress was being made.
[Action: Paul McNamara]**

- 4.5 Esther also informed the group about the related project carried out by Ruth Harris, from the Scottish Executive, to investigate the potential to develop small area estimates of tenure. A report summarising the findings of this work is available and HARG members expressed their interest in seeing it. **GROS will ask Ruth Harris to send HARG and PAMS members a copy of her tenure report [Action: GROS]**

Agenda item 6: Communal establishments

- 5.1 Paula Lopez gave an update on the progress made in completing the set of alternative sources for data on Communal Establishments (CE) and in the comparisons between the alternative sources available and 2001 Census data (HARG 2005(13)). The group was asked to comment on any aspect of the progress made so far but, in particular, on which period of time should be taken as reference for residents in Adult Care Homes to be considered residents in a Communal Establishment (6 weeks or 6 months) and on whether they would be happy for GROS to use the alternative sources available so far to produce numbers of residents in CE for the next set of household projections or whether they recommended further investigation.

- 5.2 Regarding Adult Care Homes, it was agreed that it seemed more reasonable to use the 6 month period, as it was more consistent with the other sources of data considered and with the definition that was used in 2001 Census.

- 5.3 Regarding the use of these alternative sources in the production of the next set of household projections, it was agreed that GROS could use a mixture of 2001 Census data for those types of establishments for which no comprehensive information was still available, and the data coming from alternative sources for the rest (Hospitals, Children's Homes, Adult Care Homes and Prisons). Given the information available, this was thought to be the option that would produce the most accurate set of data. As in the production of previous household projections, **each Council Area will be consulted on the figures for residents in Communal Establishments in their area and any issues with the data should be raised then. [Action: GROS]**

- 5.4 Some comments were made on some of the figures, for example, that the comparison of the number of establishments seemed to be more problematic than the comparison of the number of residents, but it was thought to be reasonable, as one establishment with different parts could easily be counted as one in one source and two or three in a different source. This is not of much concern for the household projections, as it is the number of residents, not the number of establishments, that is used. A point was raised too on the differences between the Census figures and the Care Commission figures for Children's homes. But Esther explained that the Care Commission figures were thought to be more reliable, as many children's care homes are very small, with fewer than six residents, so might not have been identified as Communal Establishments in the Census. Additionally, the figures that were being compared were different in that Census figures presented actual residents while the Care Commission figures presented registered places.

5.5 Jan Freeke suggested that, for those CE types for which alternative data were available for 2001 and 2004, it would be useful to have **an idea of the change in numbers between those two years according to those sources**. [Action: GROS]. Additionally, he asked for confirmation from which sources age/sex information was available (Hospitals, Adult Care Homes and Prisons; for Children's Homes was not available, but some estimates could be prepared using 2003-2004 information from the Scottish Executive Children's statistics). Jan stressed the importance of **linking with GROS demography branch** in this work and mentioned that **comments** from them would be useful **for the next HARG meeting** [Action: GROS]. He also offered to check the addresses of the Communal Establishments in Glasgow for which alternative sources that provided address information were available. It was agreed that **GROS would look into this to prepare a file with address information on Communal Establishments that could be checked, if the data providers agreed to it and there were no confidentiality issues that would prevent this**. [Action: GROS and Jan Freeke]

Agenda item 8: Household projections

7.1 Esther summarised the outcome of the Population and Household Projections seminar organised by GROS and held on the 9th November in Edinburgh. Areas where potential for improvement in household projections was reinforced were: household types, period covered, CE information, geographies provided (it would be useful to have building blocks that could be added to form new geographic areas such as National Parks and housing market areas or city regions).

7.2 HARG members who attended the seminar expressed their satisfaction with the seminar and their preference for the simplicity of the Scottish methodology against the complexity of the methodology used in England and Wales. Stephen Fraser asked whether projections at Local Authority level would still be produced when geographies were changed, which was confirmed by Esther to be the case. Jan Freeke asked whether any of the new geographies would be available with the 2004-based projections, but Esther replied that only data for Local Authority (and Structure Plan Areas) would be produced. Tom Snowling asked about the possibility of introducing different scenarios and Esther explained that the option of producing variant projections might be considered.

7.3 Esther presented the group with comparisons between previous household projections' headship rates and 2001 Census headship rates, as suggested by HARG members in the last meeting (HARG 2005(14)). **It was suggested that it would be useful to have the same for each Local Authority, adding 1991 Census headship rates too, but ignoring age breakdowns**. [Action: GROS] It was also suggested that when changing the methodology to produce household projections, it would be useful to take into account the results of the investigation done by Northern Ireland (household membership rates, size of households). **It was agreed that GROS would circulate the Northern Ireland's report on their household projections review** http://www.nisra.gov.uk/statistics/financeandpersonnel/DMB/publications/household_project.pdf [Action: GROS]

7.4 It was confirmed that the main changes likely to be included in 2004-based household projections were new information on residents in CE and longer period covered.

Agenda item 10: Date of next meeting

8.1 It was agreed that the next HARG meeting would be held at the end of February in Edinburgh, unless any member of the group contacted GROS to suggest a different location. **GROS will contact the group members to agree an exact date [Action: GROS].**

GROS: Household estimates
November 2005