

## HOUSEHOLD ANALYSIS REVIEW GROUP NEIGHBOURHOOD STATISTICS

### Introduction

1. This note, for the information of members of HARG briefly sets out the background to the Neighbourhood Statistics development and its possible impact on the work of the group.

### Background

2. The Scottish Executive is providing funding of £7m over the 2001 to 2004 period to support the development of Neighbourhood Statistics in Scotland. A key aim of the project is to transform the production, dissemination and use of data **at local level** with a particular emphasis on social justice. This development is a response to the recognised need for local data to support policies and programmes on social justice and area regeneration, and to respond to the needs of rural areas and minority groups.

3. The objective of the neighbourhood statistics development is to provide local information on health, education, poverty, unemployment, **housing, households**, population, equalities and social/ communities issues. This information will be collected wherever possible on a unit post-code basis. Neighbourhood Statistics will be made available to a wide range of users through the Web and other means and tools to assist users to analyse the information will be provided.

### Taking the development forward

4. A steering committee, chaired by the Chief Statistician, with representatives of the main stakeholders has been set up and has had an initial meeting. A team will shortly be set up in the Chief Statistician's Central Statistics Unit with the responsibility to take the development forward. It should be noted that the initiative includes the possibility of providing support to users, including possibly consultancy funding for local authorities and others to develop the use of specific sources.

5. On the housing statistics side we have been allocated some staff resources to assist in developing neighbourhood statistics on household numbers and the housing stock. A key, initial development will be to explore the use of council tax information to provide basic dwelling and household counts. A separate paper to HARG explains some of the potential differences in coverage between council tax valuation list and billing information, and the Census based definitions used in the official stock and household estimates.

6. Clearly, with proper interpretation, the information held in councils' council tax billing systems could provide a useful contribution to the Neighbourhood Statistics dataset. **The views of members of HARG are sought on the best ways of taking this forward.** For example it might be sensible to set up a demonstration pilot in one local authority, perhaps using a consultant to examine the technical issues associated with obtaining the information and processing it into a format which is fit for purpose.