

POPULATION AND MIGRATION STATISTICS COMMITTEE (SCOTLAND)

Population and Social Statistics System Plan and Proposed Seminar

1. I seek members' views on the contents, timing and audience for the proposed Scotstat seminar on an Integrated Population and Social Statistics System. The seminar follows from the Paper by Rob Wishart to the Scotstat board (5/04) which covers statistical change and modernisation¹
2. The seminar will cover the areas laid out below with the purpose of promoting a discussion on changes to statistics in Scotland which will affect the Census, Social Surveys, Administrative data and Neighbourhood Statistics, in effect bringing them closer.

A. Background to changes across the world.

Over the last 30 years the trend among census-taking countries is towards a mix of administrative and survey systems to replace periodic expensive censuses. Censuses are becoming viewed as out of date as they are published and increasingly suffer from problems of biased over and under enumeration or even uncertainty to the extent of bias. This has led to a discussion about the future of the Census in the UK. The ONS model has plans for 1 more Census in 2011 to which other sources and survey data would be linked – then providing a replacement for the Census.

B. Statistical Modernisation Projects

In effect there are two major projects – each with several sub projects which in themselves are of considerable importance.

- *The potential to create a new population and social statistics system – encompassing sample population surveys, the Census, Neighbourhood Statistics, administrative data, developments in population and personal address registration, and related estimation systems.*
- *The new economic statistics system – effectively creating a set of Scottish economic accounts, building on the work already in hand and supported by developments that should ensue from the Allsopp review.*

D. Changes elsewhere in the UK

- (a) ONS plan to integrate a range of personal surveys which have UK coverage into a single survey known as the Continuous Population Survey and their recent investment in technology and modernisation is starting to have its effect;*
- (b) There is the prospect of enhanced **population registration** and developments in **unique property referencing**;*
- (c) Developments in **population and migration estimation** methods using the above are occurring in England in response to concerns about the accuracy of the 2001 Census.*

¹ http://www.scotland.gov.uk/stats/scotstats/board/meetings/scotstat5_04.pdf

3. The conclusion to these developments in ONS is planned to be a continuous population survey linked in the first place to the 2011 Census but also to administrative databases; both survey and administrative data would be linked, the former to add extra socio-economic dimensions not available from administrative sources and, potentially, to QA other sources.

C. Specific areas of development in the SE

*(a) **Neighbourhood Statistics** – which has seen a substantial growth in the availability of data at a very small area level frequently updated and with improved access systems.*

*(b) developments in the use of **administrative data and other personal data sets** to provide a much greater range of information, at smaller geographical level and to do so more efficiently and timeously.*

(c) better co-ordination of surveys through the Scottish Population Survey Co-ordinating Committee.

D Key Developments for the coming year

We must bring all these strands together in Scotland – in tandem with UK developments. Our aim must be to modernise the way we collect, manage and produce statistics on people and society. In effect this is the next stage of the Neighbourhood Statistics project, though as can be seen from the above, it now brings in a series of related developments, and it is not just aimed at generating small area data.

Neighbourhood Statistics

The new Index of deprivation will be produced in 2004 using improved data and capable of being updated on a frequent and consistent basis rather than every ten years from the Census – leading to much better information and analysis of the progress in tackling area deprivation.

We now have for the first time a fixed small area statistical geography (data zones) which will greatly improve the scope for joining up data on different issues and for analysing changes over time, as well as providing regular data for smaller and more suitable areas than before. Its uses will be taken forward during the year.

Continued development of new data in health, care, housing, access to services, community well-being, and the environment.

Developments in personal data

The collection and analysis of pupil level data through the ScotXed project will continue.

DWP are developing a Work and Pensions longitudinal database which has the potential to provide immensely powerful data on poverty and the transition to and from work and the incomes, all on a longitudinal basis and with better small area estimation.

Survey co-ordination and integration

We are currently engaged, through the Scottish Population Surveys Co-ordinating Committee, in a process of improving co-ordination and harmonisation of the personal surveys currently carried out within Scotland.

G. Key Issues

1. Do we integrate some or all Scottish Surveys into the UK integrated survey? Do we manage integration across Scottish surveys in parallel with and in collaboration with ONS or do we continue as at present?
2. Does Scotland need to assume control of the Scottish element of the UK household surveys? Or is consistency with the rest of the UK too important to risk consequential divergence – or is divergence inevitable?
3. How will the integration of the UK household Surveys affect Scotland?
4. Do we plan for a continuous population survey (CPS) within Scotland to partner and replace Censuses? Should we plan the Census to lead into the CPS so Census investment in field management and recruitment, field equipment, FMIS, scanning and data capture and coding equipment and know-how is not lost?
5. How do we manage the advent of banks of longitudinal data from administrative sources?
6. How will we resource the required bureaucratic, technological and security infrastructure to meet our protocol and DPA obligations and provide the necessary privacy safeguards and retain the public's trust while matching and linking personal administrative and survey data?

Action Points

PAMS is invited to comment on the matters raised in this paper and in particular to offer suggestions:

- a) For refining the issues to be discussed at the seminar;
- b) Extending the audience for the seminar beyond PAMS members;
- c) The best timing and location for a seminar