

MINUTES OF THE POPULATION AND MIGRATION STATISTICS COMMITTEE (SCOTLAND): 2 June 2005

Present:

Peter Scrimgeour	GROS, Chair
Jenny Boag	Falkirk Council
Richard Belding	Aberdeenshire Council
Jan Freeke	Glasgow City Council
Laura MacDonald	East Dunbartonshire Council
Gordon McAdam	Communities Scotland
Tim Riley	EDINA
Alistair Harvey	City of Edinburgh Council
Paul Boyle	St Andrews University
Scherie Nicol	Highlands and Islands Enterprise
Andrew Stuart	East Lothian Council
Anne Douglas	Shelter
Joy Dobbs	ONS
Robert Williams	Scottish Executive
Frank Thomas	GROS
Ian Máté	GROS
Cecilia Macintyre	GROS
Esther Roughsedge	GROS
Paula Lopez	GROS
Ganka Mueller	GROS
Bryan Cunningham	GROS
Esta Clark	GROS, Secretary

1. Introductions and membership**(a) Apologies**

1.1 Apologies were received from: Catriona Hayes Scottish Executive, Julie Wilson Scottish Executive *represented* by Robert Williams, Ross Brown Scottish Enterprise, Jennifer Bishop ISD and Katrina Carmichael SE.

(b) New Members

1.2 Peter Scrimgeour welcomed everyone to the meeting and introduced the two new members: Scherie Nicol and Anne Douglas.

2. Minutes of the PAMS meeting held on 2 December 2004 – PAMS (04) 15

2.1 The previous meeting's minutes were approved.

3. Update on action points from the last meeting - PAMS (04) 16

3.1 Action point 2.1: Graham Jackson to pursue work with ONS to agree recommendations for appropriate use of SMR's. Ongoing: discussions were held with ISD in early 2005 and it was decided that this was a wider issue. It is planned to produce a paper later in the year on some aspects of age standardised rates.

Action Graham Jackson

3.2 Action point 6.3: It looks as if the data for 1991 could be available in a few weeks time, but a more definite statement on progress will be given later in June. Frank Thomas to pursue this issue.

Action Frank Thomas

3.3 Other action points from the previous meeting had been completed.

4. SCOTSTAT**(a) Board meeting update (7th meeting 19 January 2005) - PAMS (05) 01**

4.1 Jenny Boag (the PAMS representative on the SCOTSTAT board) presented her report from the last SCOTSTAT board meeting. She mentioned that the usual issues were discussed: National Statistics, the SE website, Freedom of Information, Statistical Developments, Atkinson review etc. She said that there was an excellent presentation from Peter Scrimgeour on Scottish Demography and an interesting paper on accessibility, though not immediately relevant to PAMS. All these items were noted in her paper.

4.2 Jenny also reminded the group that a report may need to be prepared for the next board meeting which was thought would be held sometime in June.

4.3 Richard Belding asked in reference to point 10 in Jenny's paper about any scenario planning which was being carried out in the Scottish Executive. Peter Scrimgeour explained that there were various groups looking at "scenarios" which have been interpreted in different ways. Cecilia Macintyre mentioned that GROS were currently working on producing a paper on the variant projections, which have already been produced by GAD, to try and answer questions posed by policy colleagues in the SE. She confirmed that this work would be at a national level only.

(b) Population Statistics – Geography – PAMS (05) 02

4.3 Jenny Boag introduced her paper and explained that this topic came from a discussion which took place at the Small Area Population Estimates (SAPE) working group a couple of weeks previously. She highlighted the main points from the paper and the additional comments from the meeting of LA contacts which took place that morning:

- Concerns from LAs that only datazone population estimates were being produced rather than Ward or postcode sector, as had been produced in the past;
- A need for estimates and projections for old district areas, especially projections;
- Future changes to health board boundaries;
- "Slivers" between health board and council area geographies;
- Datazone geographies do not match "useful" geographies and LAs are concerned at how datazone population sizes have diverged from mid-2001 to mid-2004 viz. now from over 2,000 to below 500;
- Settlements and locality estimates were suddenly produced for mid-2003. Frank Thomas pointed out that estimates for settlements and localities have been published for previous years: this geography was not new for 2003;
- Locality estimates were thought to be better than settlement estimates but there were issues to do with boundaries and some large areas needed to be split. Frank Thomas said that he was happy to look at these areas on request;
- Jenny finished off by mentioning the list of issues at the end of her paper and by saying that LAs would prefer that settlement estimates were not published but that locality estimates were (as they get requests for these areas). She thought that datazones were perhaps a wider issue which could be discussed at the SCOTSTAT board and ideally she would like postcode population estimates with look up files to other geographies.

4.4 Peter Scrimgeour thanked Jenny for her paper and noted that there was probably enough material to talk about over three PAMS meetings. He suggested that Frank Thomas should say something about settlement and locality estimates, Cecilia Macintyre about estimates and projections and Robert Williams about datazones.

Settlements and Localities

4.5 Frank Thomas explained that there were other people who needed both settlement and locality population estimates. For example, settlements are used in the "Rural Scotland" definition, they are required for the Land Reform Act, for reducing shop rates (for those shops in areas of more than 3,000 people), used to produce the Scottish Household Survey's six and eight fold urban rural classification, etc. There is a demand for estimates at these geographies. He went on to say that with hindsight GROS should probably have published the 2003 locality and settlement estimates at the same time and suggested that perhaps some of the issues were to do with how they were presented. Frank said that it was of general interest that "Glasgow" sprawls across central Scotland and he argued that GROS should publish this information. Frank said that he would welcome local authority input into how to divide localities and their boundaries. Jenny Boag replied that some councils might want to do this.

Action Members

Estimates / Projections

4.6 Cecilia Macintyre mentioned that there was also a requirement for datazone population estimates for the Index of Multiple Deprivation. She then went on to explain that the production of small area estimates was constrained by the agreement with the Directors of Public Health for the provision of anonymised Community Health Index (CHI) data. She stressed that in order to produce a lower geography a new method for producing population estimates would have to be introduced. Production of ward population estimates in addition to those for datazones could give rise to disclosure issues. For population projections she informed the group that it was planned to hold a seminar in the autumn which would look at various methods and possibly available software, and that these issues could be discussed more fully there. Jenny Boag agreed that these issues could be discussed at the seminar and pointed out that the other issue was getting data to support local authorities in their own projections. Cecilia said that this was also an aim of the seminar to explore this possibility.

datazones

4.7 Robert Williams said that he had already responded directly to Jenny Boag with detailed comments on her paper. He explained that the SE had consulted very widely in Scotland on datazone areas. He said that the main

constraint to producing estimates for other areas was the disclosure issue to do with overlapping areas; the other was a resource constraint - they cannot produce estimates for all requested geographies. Robert explained that datazones were smaller than Wards and provided a finer grain geography for aggregating to larger areas. He said that the use of Wards was disappearing and that different people are using different Wards e.g. 1999, 1996, 1998 and 2001, as well as postcode sectors. He said that the issue was where we draw the line as there is only a finite resource to do this work. Robert stressed that throughout the UK there were similar solutions to the datazones produced for Scotland. He added that in Scotland datazones were smaller than the Super Output Areas in England and Wales. He went on to mention that work was in progress with GROS, SE, ONS and DWP looking at most of the issues Jenny had highlighted. Robert explained that they would be consulting more widely when the GROS SAPES were available e.g. large and small datazones, "postcode creep", have we missed any areas, is there any tidying up to do? etc. Robert pointed out that continuity was still better for datazones than some other small area geographies. He said that work would be carried out to look at whether some datazones would need to be changed but he thought this would not be an issue as it would be easy to map from one set of datazones to another. He said that users needed to remember that the datazone estimates were only estimates i.e. best fit, and there was a misconception that they were 100% accurate. There was always going to be error in any population estimates produced. To summarise Robert said that he did not want to re-open the debate and that datazones were still new and that we should give them a chance. He pointed out that depending on who you spoke to in an LA you got a different view about datazones.

Concluding remarks

4.8 Peter Scrimgeour thanked everyone for their comments and gave Jenny Boag the opportunity to reply. Jenny said that she welcomed the opportunity to discuss revamping datazones and would like to be involved in it. She said that she had recently been at a conference where DWP spoke and several people from English LAs had said to her that they had an issue with datazones too, and that more experienced users of datazones did not feel that they met their needs. She asked who are datazones aimed at? And questioned whether members of the public could use the SNS website. She reiterated that ideally she would like a front end application to access detailed information which would block access to disclosive material. Robert Williams said that this would be great, however, we do not yet have the technology for this. Peter Scrimgeour asked whether these issues should be taken to the next SCOTSTAT board meeting. Robert Williams said that perhaps the revamped "Neighbourhood Statistics" SCOTSTAT group would be more appropriate to take this forward. Peter concluded this item by saying there were positive ways forward which were mentioned by Frank and Cecilia and said that this had been a useful discussion, based on a helpful paper. Peter added that GROS would aim to come back with a paper for the next PAMS meeting setting out the GROS strategy on some of the key points raised.

Action: Peter Scrimgeour

5. Census

(a) 2001 Census: Progress Report – PAMS (05) 03

5.1 Frank Thomas introduced this item and referred to the paper and asked for comments. Peter Scrimgeour pointed out that this was probably the last opportunity to question Frank as he would be retiring later this year.

5.2 Richard Belding referred to item 2 a in the paper and asked whether the data would be sent out automatically or would it be on request? Frank replied that as before those who already have the data will automatically be sent the updated version. He said that in the mean time specific tables were available but they just needed to work out the presentation of them. Richard also asked about item 2 c and the data quality review of the 2001 Census as he could not find it on the GROS website anymore. Frank Thomas said that it was on the website and that a link would be included in the minutes. [Evaluation of the 2001 Census:

<http://www.gro-scotland.gov.uk/statistics/census/censushm/censcr02/data-quality/cencr103-2.html>]

5.3 Jenny Boag said that at the LA meeting in the morning she had been asked to say that they liked the old version of the GROS website rather than new version as they could no longer find anything. Frank Thomas replied that this was interesting as only the cosmetics of the site had changed (i.e. it was now purple) and that it was still the same website! Richard Belding pointed out that some of the pages came up as blank screens and that you had to scroll down to the next page to see anything. Jenny Boag said it was hard to find the list of commissioned tables – was it still there? Frank said that it was still there and it was accessible through Census Update 25. He agreed to provide a link for the minutes. [List of tables commissioned from 2001 Census (contained in Census Update 25):

<http://www.gro-scotland.gov.uk/files/commissioned-tables.pdf>]

5.4 Jenny Boag asked whether there were any plans to put up prices after ONS put their prices up vastly. Frank replied that there were no current plans to increase charges which were currently £20 per completed hour (cheaper than ONS). Joy Dobbs from ONS reported that the reason for the ONS price increase was because of the large backlog of requests. The price increase was to help prioritise them to make sure people really wanted the tables. She also mentioned that the backlog had been reduced.

5.5 Scherie Nicol asked when the Gaelic report would be published. Frank Thomas replied that it was in draft form and had been sent to Peter Scrimgeour and Duncan Macniven for comments; however, it would not be published until August/September as time had to be allowed to get the report translated. Frank also took the opportunity to mention that work was also under way on a "Travel" occasional paper using 2001 Census results.

(b) Census Progress

5.6 Ian Máté introduced this item and circulated a short report at the meeting on 2011 Census Progress. He highlighted the following main points:

- They were busy preparing for the 2006 Census Test, for example, household income question versus no income question, hand delivery versus post out delivery, address checking exercise to update the Postcode Address File (PAF), new questions etc;
- Ian highlighted that they had been out meeting and liaising with various communities e.g. Gypsy travellers to discuss things like how to enumerate them, to get community involvement in the question content and also statistical support for communities;
- He was hoping to speak to the BESAC SCOTSTAT committee about questions on housing condition.
- Work carried out by the United Nations indicated that there was no point in asking a language question if you did not know how it will be received.

5.7 Peter Scrimgeour mentioned that a press release was issued recently announcing the 2006 Census Test in an effort to raise public awareness. Ian Máté informed the group that he had also been giving talks at schools in Glasgow with a competition for ideas for questions for the 2006 Census Test. The winner would get their question included.

5.8 Paul Boyle asked whether all new questions would be used in the 2006 Census Test. Ian Máté replied that it would be a mixture of old and new questions. Paul said that he had a further two questions. Firstly, that he thought a question on fertility should be included though he recognised that there was an issue about developing decent wording. Paul explained that when a fertility question had been asked in Ireland it had been hard to get accurate information on parity viz. only previous births in marriage were recorded. Jenny Boag said she thought that this question had not been well answered in the past. Ian Máté added that there were issues around adoption. Paul Boyle said that he thought the question was still worth considering. Paul's second question was about having an "economic activity a year ago" question to allow information on why people move i.e. is it for a new job? Anne Douglas who was new to the group asked about the consultation process. Ian Máté explained that a formal consultation took place last autumn for the 2011 Census and that they were just about to report the results of this. However, he stressed that he would welcome input until around 2008. He went on to say that a list of questions was on the GROS website which is updated quarterly. He was also involved in various ad hoc meetings with the aim of there being "no barriers" and he was willing to meet people or give presentations if they rang or emailed him. Ian said he would send Anne Douglas a copy of the consultation paper.

Action Ian Máté

5.9 Paul Boyle asked about the migration question. He said that in New Zealand they asked where you lived one and five years ago. Jenny Boag said that for answering the 5 year question most people's memories were probably not that good. Ian Máté said that he was planning to talk to Cecilia Macintyre about the migration question. Cecilia Macintyre said that GROS generally go along with ONS on the migration question and that she was recently at a UNECE/Eurostat meeting on migration and some of the papers covered questions that had been asked on migration in other countries. Jenny Boag said she would like to see these papers. Cecilia agreed to put together a paper for the next PAMS meeting. Richard Belding suggested that, in the light of current policy initiatives on bringing people into Scotland a question on which year one migrated to Scotland might be useful.

Action Cecilia Macintyre

5.10 Ian Máté continued by saying that internationally there was a requirement for age of house. Paul Boyle said that he thought there was a lot of error associated with these types of questions. Jenny Boag said that they had been rejected in the past. Paul Boyle referred to the questions in the handout and said that he was pleased to see that the income bands went up to £52,000 and over. Ian Máté said that the number of bands and the level of the top band would probably be reduced. Jenny Boag said that there was an interest in the business community in the high income bands so that they could sell things to these people.

5.11 Joy Dobbs said that ONS was launching its formal topic consultation. They were behind Scotland in doing this but their test would be held in 2007 rather than 2006. ONS had received a lot of publicity e.g. on questions on income, sexual orientation, visitors etc. Joy explained that there was a UK Census design working group with four topic groups currently operating: income, ethnicity, population bases definition and labour market and qualifications. Ian Máté is linked into these groups. Joy said that anyone can comment on this work through the ONS website. Joy agreed to send a link to Esta Clark to be included in the minutes. [<http://www.statistics.gov.uk/census/>].

Action Joy Dobbs

5.12 Robert Williams asked whether GROS were managing people's expectations by explaining that there were pressures on the length of the questionnaire. Ian Máté replied that they were. He said there was a three page limit for questions per person and that harmonised questions were being used where possible.

(c) Census Alternatives - PAMS (05) 04

5.13 Ganka Mueller introduced this paper saying that it was a summary of the work her branch had done over the past six months. She explained that they had been looking at various data sources and that the main difficulty had been getting access to some of them. They were also looking at methods to combine various sources together. In addition, they were reviewing work that had been done in the past and trying out new experiments. She asked the group whether they had any questions / ideas.

5.14 Jan Freeke asked whether she was looking at households as well as populations. Ganka replied that they were looking at this with Esther Roughsedge's branch (Household Estimates) and as the work advanced they hoped to look at household structures.

5.15 Peter Scrimgeour asked members to write to or email Ganka if they had any further questions regarding her paper which she would be happy to answer.

6. Non-Census Issues**(a) Population estimates and projections - PAMS (05) 05**

6.1 Cecilia Macintyre presented the paper and highlighted the following main developments:

- The 2004 mid-year estimate was published in April;
- A meeting of the SAPE working group had been held and initial datazone estimates had been sent to council and health board contacts for comment. She said that she was planning on writing to the other members of the group for comments and would welcome suggestions from other people who were interested in helping with the quality assurance process.

Action Cecilia Macintyre and Members

- The 2004-based national population projections would be published on 20 October with the sub-national projections to follow in December;
- Quarterly Population Estimates (QPEs), 90+ estimates and Marital Status estimates had not moved on much since the last meeting;
- Cecilia agreed to send a progress report on the implementation of the International Migration Quality Review and explained that ONS now had more resources to take this work forward. Joy Dobbs reiterated this and said that there was also a research plan in place.

Action Cecilia Macintyre

[**Post meeting note:** The progress report can be found at:

<http://www.statistics.gov.uk/about/data/methodology/quality/reviews/downloads/Progress.doc>

The main page on the quality review (no.23) is here:

<http://www.statistics.gov.uk/about/data/methodology/quality/reviews/population.asp>.

It includes links to the report itself, the implementation plan and the progress report (follow link 'Progress Report - March 2005').]

6.2 Jenny Boag said that there were concerns expressed at the LA meeting in the morning that the 2004 migration estimate had shot up from the previous year. Also, some specific LA figures had raised eyebrows: East Renfrewshire had gone down, Stirling had not changed etc. Alistair Harvey said that he already had the estimates and asked for reassurance that they were ok. Jenny Boag asked what this meant for the 2004-based projections. Cecilia Macintyre replied that GROS had checked the high results and had so far not found a mistake or reason for the increase and asked people to email her with any concerns. Jenny said that she thought that the increase for Falkirk was right. Cecilia added that discussions were currently ongoing about the migration assumptions for the 2004-based national projections and that this was taking place at a UK level and that various meetings of "experts" were taking place as highlighted in the paper.

Action Members

6.3 Jenny Boag reported that some councils had already looked at the datazone estimates circulated for quality assurance purposes and that some councils reported that the net migration figures for datazones did not add up to the published Council area migration. Cecilia said that she would look into this. **Post meeting note:** An email was sent to explain that the net migration figures did not include the unmeasured migration or rounding adjustments which were included in the published LA and health board mid-year estimates. However, the population totals did take these adjustments into account.

6.4 Jan Freeke asked whether any work was being done to produce projections for ethnic groups. Cecilia replied that ONS was doing some work on this for England and Wales but there were no plans to carry out ethnic projections for Scotland. Joy Dobbs explained that she thought ONS were struggling with this work. Cecilia agreed to get an update from the branch in ONS and circulate it to the group.

Action Cecilia Macintyre**(b) Proposal for disseminating migration data – PAMS (05) 06**

6.5 Esta Clark presented this paper and explained that because of the recent interest in migration it made sense to publish available information on the GROS website. She went on to talk about the various example tables proposed for publication which were detailed in the Annex to the paper. Esta mentioned that there may be an issue with releasing the Community Health Index (CHI) based council area matrix but it was thought that disclosure due to small numbers would probably not be a problem as the data was controlled to NHSCR data anyway. The group welcomed these proposals. Cecilia Macintyre added that GROS had sent this paper to ISD and the release of the CHI based data would depend on the outcome of discussions with them.

6.6 Joy Dobbs said that ONS would be replying with written comments in due course about information on the likely errors and variations associated with the overseas migration. Richard Belding asked about how the information would be published. Peter Scrimgeour replied that it would be in low key way as mentioned earlier by Esta. Richard also asked whether the existing historical data would be revised. Peter replied that this would be looked at along with the National Statistics Quality Review on International Migration.

(c) Household estimates and projections update – PAMS (05) 07

6.7 Esther Roughsedge introduced this paper and ran through the main points. She explained that HARG (Household Analysis Review Group) had met recently and that all the papers were available on the SE website. Esther said that HARG had been reviewing the methodology for producing household estimates and that members of the group preferred the "Council Tax" approach as it was timelier and did not rely on results from the Census which become out of date. PAMS members agreed with this overall approach.

6.8 Jan Freeke said that there were two points mentioned at the LA meeting in the morning. Firstly they appreciated that there was now a new team working full time on this as the SE had been very much on/off in the time they devoted to this work. Secondly, the representative from Renfrewshire said that they would prefer to use their own local knowledge to improve the estimates for their area. Ganka Mueller pointed out that this approach would fall over if the person with the local knowledge left. Jan Freeke said that if there was sound evidence (Alistair Harvey thought that there was in this case) then it should be taken into account. Jenny Boag reiterated these comments. Esther explained that it would be preferable to have a consistent approach across Scotland, but agreed to investigate this case further, and consider using Renfrewshire' adjusted figures.

6.9 Laura Macdonald said that the information on the second home discount, obtained from Council Tax systems, could be misleading in that some people may use the discount at the more expensive property rather than the one they lived at. Esther replied that she was not sure that there was a way round this as she did not think it was possible to distinguish these properties. Esther went on to describe work that her branch had done to obtain small area estimates of dwellings from the Assessors Portal, which had now been published on the SNS website. It was hoped to investigate using the same source to identify the type of dwelling and number of rooms, but the Assessors wished to check the consistency of this information first. Esther planned to write to councils' Finance Departments to find out the feasibility of obtaining small area estimates of vacant and occupied dwellings from Council Tax systems. She said that her branch would be reviewing the household projections methodology and had started comparing the results to the 2001 Census. Esther also reported that they were putting together a database of communal establishment information as there was lots of information already collected across the SE and GROS. This would be useful for small area estimates and the next Census. Richard Belding asked when the next household projections would be published. Esther replied four months after the LA population projections, in April 2006.

7. Progress on research on demographic topics, Fresh Talent, Parliamentary Committee evidence, etc – PAMS (05) 08 & 09

7.1 Cecilia Macintyre presented this item and explained that Duncan Macniven, Registrar General for Scotland, and herself had recently given evidence to the European and External Affairs Committee of the Scottish Parliament which was looking into the "Fresh Talent" policy. The background paper presented was in paper PAMS (05) 08. Cecilia also mentioned that the ESRC news release had been circulated to PAMS announcing research into demographic topics. She agreed to send a slightly more detailed update to members which she had received from Katriona Carmichael in the SE.

7.2 Jan Freeke asked whether any research had been carried out in the SE into Asylum Seekers. It was thought that there might have been. Cecilia agreed to find out and get back to Jan.

Action Cecilia Macintyre

8. Progress on the work of the Scottish Population Survey Coordinating Committee (SPSCC)

8.1 Robert Williams gave a presentation on this item and referred to the draft progress report which had been circulated just prior to the meeting. He pointed out that there were links from the SPSCC to the next Census and the Census Alternatives work carried out by GROS.

8.2 Jan Freeke asked whether there was potential to include local authority surveys. Robert replied that this may be possible along with Health Surveys etc but the risks were that it would become very complicated and probably difficult to manage. Laura Macdonald asked about modules for local authorities e.g. rather than having 32 separate surveys to monitor anti-social behaviour. Anne Douglas asked whether combining surveys would allow analysis below local

authority level. Robert Williams replied that there would probably have to be a balance struck between modules and geographies. Ganka Mueller wondered whether it would then be possible to get sample boosts for modules. Robert said that all of these issues would be looked at by the Coordinating Committee.

9. Any Other Business

9.1 No items were raised.

10. Date of next meeting

10.1 The date for the next meeting will be in November 2005. The secretary will consult members in due course.