

Using and Improving Population and Household Statistics

Friday 30th October 2009

Workshop 2: Centre for Housing Market Analysis

Workshop leader: Murdo MacPherson, Housing Systems Analyst, Centre for Housing Market Analysis

1. Background and Presentation

- Murdo gave a short introduction on the work of the Scottish Government's Centre for Housing Market Analysis (CHMA). The purpose of the CHMA includes providing national support and advice to local authorities and other key stakeholders to aid strategic planning of housing in Scotland.
- The CHMA was born out of Firm Foundations (2008) which aimed to help increase housing supply across Scotland. The CHMA therefore in particular provides support to local authorities and stakeholders undertaking Housing Needs and Demands Assessments (HNDAs)
- An HNDA is the evidence-base compiled by local authorities and is used to determine:
 - How many houses to build;
 - What type of houses to build; and
 - Where to build these houses.
- HNDAs are heavily reliant on robust statistics. Data sources used include household and population estimates and projections. CHMA and GROS can give advice on the best data available.
- The slides for the presentation can be accessed here: [\(Workshop Presentations\)](#)

2. Discussion points and Questions and Answer session

- A new Questions & Answers section has been published on the CHMA website providing help with commonly asked queries to the CHMA team. The Q&A is regularly updated.
- It was stated that the CHMA are happy for local authorities to use their own projections and estimates instead of GROS methods in their HNDA as long as the local authorities' stakeholders are confident that the data they use is robust and can be justified.
- Caution was expressed that the building of new houses may alter housing demands. With an increase in affordable new housing, lower wage workers will gain aspirations to purchase houses. Current and future housing needs should be expressed within a range of different scenarios.
- Concerns were raised about the possibility that double counting may be taking place in some instances of a HNDA. Murdo MacPherson assured attendees that as far as possible the HNDA guidance attempted to ensure that there was no double-counting.
- It was stated that although the Housing 'needs' area of the HNDA was more straightforward as local authorities were more familiar with this, the Housing 'demands' section was a bit more difficult. Murdo said that it would likely be helpful to use local knowledge and speak to as many relevant people as possible such as lawyers and estate agents.

- Also, the Housing Needs/Demands of 'particular household groups' was an area that local authorities were finding problematic. It was stated that it was hard getting information for special needs groups. Murdo suggested census data was the obvious starting point particularly given small numbers. However, it would also be helpful to consult with National and/or Local Specialist Groups/Experts.
- Murdo MacPherson stated that training can be arranged for any local authority or group of local authorities in relation to undertaking their HNDA or on any particular aspect of their HNDA.
- Concern was raised due to the Homelessness Bill which will come into effect in 2012. This likely to have an impact on statistics, as people may move local authorities as a result of the legislation.
- Concerns were raised that although it was reasonably straightforward to estimate gypsy and traveller numbers, it was more difficult to estimate the housing needs of travelling show-people. Murdo said that it should be possible to find out details of when these shows would be taking place in a specific area by contacting the Scottish office of the Showmen's Guild.
- Each local authority should undertake an HNDA once every 5 years, although once undertaken these should be kept under review.