

HOUSEHOLD ANALYSIS REVIEW GROUP:

Minutes for the meeting of 28 January 2009
Room 1/G/9, Ladywell House, 2:30 – 4:30 pm

Present:

Esther Roughsedge (Chair)	GROS: Household Estimates and Projections Branch
Adele Trainer	North Lanarkshire Council
Aisha Ahmed	GROS: Household Estimates and Projections Branch
Alistair Harvey	Edinburgh Council
Allison Craig	North Ayrshire Council
Cecilia Macintyre	GROS: Population and Migration Statistics Branch
Charles Brown	SG: Centre for housing market analysis
Dorothy Watson	GROS: Household Estimates and Projections Branch
Jackie Wilkins	SG: Housing Supply Unit
Jan Freeke	Glasgow Council
Jonathan Davidson	SG: Statistical support for local government
Kirsty MacLachlan	GROS: Head of Demography Division
Lisa McNeill	GROS: Household Estimates and Projections Branch
Martin Macfie	GROS: Household Estimates and Projections Branch
Paul McNamara	Stirling Council
Tom Snowling	Aberdeen Council
Tony Jenkins	Dundee City Council

Apologies:

Andrew White	GROS: Population and Migration Statistics Branch
Ashley McCormick	Liverpool University
Claire Boag	SG: Communities ASD
Nicola Hay	SG: Planning
Sarah Longley	North Ayrshire Council
Tammy Brown	Clackmannanshire Council

Agenda Item 1: Minutes of last meeting

- 1.1 The minutes of last meeting were briefly mentioned. The main topics for discussion had been Household Projections and Household Estimates and Dwelling Counts publications.
- 1.2 Jan Freeke queried whether there had been any progress under item 3.7. This stated that the Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG) were reviewing the methodology used for the household projections for England and Wales as well as whether this work should be transferred to another Department. Esther replied that Experion had been commissioned to undertake a methodology review (the results are available from <http://www.communities.gov.uk/publications/housing/optionsfuturemodel>), and the 2006-based household projections should be published in March, using the existing methodology. Discussions are ongoing as to whether ONS will produce these projections in future.

Agenda Item 2: Investigation of the Electoral Register as a possible replacement source of household statistics

- 2.1 Martin Macfie talked about the main findings from the HARG 2009 (1) paper. This was on the investigation of the Electoral Register as a possible replacement source of household statistics, in light of the proposed abolition of Council Tax.
- 2.2 A summary of Martin's findings were:
 - Overall, there is a very strong positive relationship between the number of households included in Council Tax systems and the Electoral Register, but where there are differences the number of households on the Electoral Register tends to be lower.
 - There appear to be lower proportions of households included on the Electoral Register in urban areas, and in areas with more deprivation. There is also substantial variation in the proportion of households included on the Electoral Register within different local authority areas.

HARG members discussed this analysis and were happy with progress.

- 2.3 Tom Snowling was interested to understand why Aberdeen City had the lowest match between the number of households included in Council Tax systems and the Electoral Register. Martin explained that this may be due to the way in which addresses were structured on Aberdeen City's Electoral Register. He had found that there were instances of all flats within a tenement block being listed under one address. Tom also offered to investigate their Corporate Address Gazetteer as a further check. **ACTION: Tom**
- 2.4 There was a discussion on the developments in the National Gazetteer project. This is a project which incorporates each local authority's address lists. Local authorities have assigned Unique Property Reference Numbers to each address, and they are adding a flag to record which addresses are residential.

GROS could potentially calculate statistics on dwellings using this method, though the gazetteer contains no information on which dwellings are occupied or vacant. Some local authorities are further ahead in the use of address gazetteers than others.

- 2.5 It was agreed that even if Council Tax is maintained, the Electoral Register data should also be utilised for quality assurance purposes. It was also confirmed that the Electoral Register data that we use is from the full Electoral Register and not just the subset of those people who have agreed for their names to be kept on the public list. It was pointed out that there are likely to be fluctuations in the completeness of the Electoral Register over time, with greater coverage being achieved nearer to elections.
- 2.6 Esther commented that GROS are looking for a robust way to impute figures in the Electoral Register in areas where there are shortfalls between the Electoral Register and Council Tax data. There should be time to develop this before Council Tax data becomes unavailable.
- 2.7 Allison Craig mentioned the Citizen's Account as another potential source of data for the future. Martin is looking into the potential to use this as a source of data on households. However, at the moment it mainly covers pensioners and young people and does not include all age groups within the population.

Agenda Item 3: Report on progress with small area household estimates

- 3.1 Esther Roughsedge described the quality assurance work that she has been carrying out in preparation for the publication of small area statistics on occupied and vacant dwellings.
- 3.2 Esther illustrated some checks that are made, using North Ayrshire as an example. This type of information is sent to local authority contacts, for quality assurance purposes.
- Comparisons were made against Finance Statistics 'Ctaxbase' return.
 - A graph compared the total number of dwellings in each data zone against the previous year's data. This produced a straight line graph demonstrating a good match between the variables.
 - Another graph plotted the total number of dwellings recorded in each data zone in the Assessor's Portal against the Council Tax system. Again this demonstrated a good match for North Ayrshire.
 - A further check showed a map illustrating varying concentrations of second homes, and maps are also produced to show other information such as concentrations of vacant dwellings.
 - Esther also showed a further graph plotting the total number of dwellings recorded in each data zone in the Assessor's Portal against the Council Tax system for Highland Council. This time the graph showed a less clearly defined linear relationship and this highlighted the problem Highland have with missing postcodes on Council Tax systems.

Esther welcomed any comments.

HARG members were content with these checks and publication. In addition:

- 3.3 Tony queried the use of small versus large user postcodes in Council Tax data. Esther confirmed that she used the postcode to identify the correct data zone, and she included both small and large user postcodes, so both types should be matched correctly.
- 3.4 Jan queried data coverage as GROS had been unable to publish data zone figures for a small number of local authorities, last year. Esther explained that this was due to some software issues and she hoped that more data could be published for these local authority areas for 2008.
- 3.5 Cecilia suggested that a note could be made in the publication regarding the missing postcodes for Highland.
- 3.6 The timescale for the publication was queried. Previous publications have been in May of each year to coincide with the update of data zone information onto the Scottish Neighbourhood Statistics website. However, it is now possible to upload data to the Scottish Neighbourhood Statistics website on a weekly basis, and so the publication is now only dependent on when dwelling counts are completed. Esther aims to have the publication ready for the beginning of May at the latest, and it may be possible to publish earlier, this year. A draft will be sent out for comments before this is finalised.

Agenda Item 4: Quality Assurance of Small Area Dwelling Counts. Comparisons with Small Area Population Estimates and other measures

- 4.1 Martin Macfie gave a presentation to summarise the HARG 2009 (3) paper. This was on the quality assurance of small area dwelling counts and comparisons with other data sources such as population estimates. The following areas were covered in the presentation:
- 4.2 Martin highlighted key findings for changes in the estimated population and number of dwellings, between 2003 and 2006 for data zones in Scotland.
- 4.3 Martin showed a graph which compared the percentage changes for small area population estimates and dwelling counts for all data zones in Scotland between 2003 and 2006. Some data zones with unusual or extreme trends in population or dwellings were indicated. These data zones were investigated in more detail in the HARG 2009 (3) paper.
- 4.4 Quality assurance focussed on data zones which had an absolute change of at least 25 dwellings from 2006 to 2007. Martin outlined the steps taken to explain these changes in each data zone. These included looking at past trends in GROS-published dwelling counts as well as comparisons against population trends.

HARG members were happy with this process and the following points were made.

- 4.5 Kirsty raised the question of the time lag between data collections. Small Area Population Estimates data is from the middle of each year whilst data from the Assessors' Portal is obtained at the start of January. This can sometimes cause discrepancies between the data sets. Differences can also often be explained by other data sources such as those on vacant dwellings from the GROS Small Area Household Estimates.
- 4.6 It was noted that the number of people counted within a data zone is becoming more variable. However, there are no immediate plans to redraw any data zone boundaries.

Agenda Item 5: Proposal for producing household projections for Strategic Development Planning Authorities (SDPAs)

- 5.1 Dorothy Watson gave a presentation summarising the HARG 2009(4) paper on the calculation of household projections for new Strategic Development Planning Authorities (SDPAs).
- 5.2 The main points were as follows:
- The SDPAs only focus on the areas around the four largest city regions in Scotland
 - Ministers want Strategic Development Plans to be prepared and reviewed on at least a 5-yearly basis, so that plans can effectively lead and manage change.
 - As with other household projections, the SDPA projections require the following four sets of inputs: population projections / household estimates / communal establishment rates and headship rates.

HARG members discussed and agreed with the approaches used for the SDPA projections.

- 5.3 Tony said that the project manager for the TAYplan SDPA had made their estimates and projections for population and households, using information obtained from the CAGs for Angus, Dundee City, Perth and Kinross and part of Fife.
- 5.4 Andrew White in the GROS Population and Migration Statistics branch is currently working on the population projections for SDPAs, and GROS aims to publish these in Spring 2009. Tony suggested that future publication could be timed with the 5-year SDPA reviews. This may not be feasible as the SDPA projections are dependent on UK national population projections, but GROS agreed to consider the timings of future SDPA projections (**ACTION – Cecilia/Esther**).
- 5.5 Jan asked whether the household estimates for SDPAs will appear in the "Estimates of Households and Dwellings, 2008" bulletin, which will be published

in the spring. **ACTION – Esther/Martin** to calculate SDPA statistics for households and dwellings for this publication.

- 5.6 At the moment, it seems likely that 2008-based SDPA projections will be produced in spring 2010, although these are dependent on the UK national population projections, which should be published this October.
- 5.7 Tom said that Ludi Simpson of Manchester University had produced population and household projections for Cairngorms National Park, and the figures were similar to GROS-published projections.

Agenda Item 6: Description of the work of the SG Centre for Housing Market Statistics

- 6.1 Charles Brown introduced himself. Charles is a new member of HARG, working as an assistant statistician in the recently formed SG Centre for Housing Market Analysis (CHMA).
- 6.2 Charles described CHMA's role in the Scottish Government's Communities Analytical Services division. CHMA was formed following the Firm Foundations consultation that supported setting up the centre.
- 6.3 The main role and remit of CHMA is to support local authorities in their strategic planning of housing in Scotland. There is a focus on helping local authorities to undertake Housing Need & Demand Assessments (HNDAs). HNDAs are the evidence-base which local authorities use to build the right houses in the right places in the long term.
- 6.4 Charles stated that his reasons for joining HARG are to:
- Learn more about the data which the GROS Household estimates and projections branch produce, and in particular, any new developments which are underway.
 - Raise awareness of CHMA among local authority stakeholders
 - Feedback to HARG with the views of CHMA stakeholders
 - Ensure that HNDA Guidance remains up-to-date
- 6.5 Charles advertised the CHMA website and provided contact details.
Website: www.scotland.gov.uk/chma
Mailbox: chma@scotland.gsi.gov.uk

Charles also mentioned that the CHMA will be providing various training events throughout the year.

HARG members welcomed the contribution of the Centre for Housing Market Statistics to the group.

Agenda Item 7: An update on the research that Ashley McCormick from Liverpool University has been doing to improve household projections

- 7.1 It was originally intended that Ashley would be present to provide an update on his research. Unfortunately, this was not possible but Esther was able to provide an update instead, based on the paper HARG 2009 (5).
- 7.2 Ashley is working to develop 'SCOTSIM' - a Scottish Simulation package. This package will aim to produce projections at an individual level, rather than for groups. It will include attributes such as age, gender, social class (using survey data) and subjects 'synthetic' households to simulated demographic events (births, deaths, marriages etc), using data from GROS and surveys.
- 7.3 We don't have sufficient data to produce microsimulation projections with the detail of our current GROS projections. Therefore, we plan to combine the two and constrain our current projections to the microsimulation results for Scotland.
- 7.4 Other areas that will be included in Ashley's PhD include
- An investigation of alternative 'headship rates', e.g., oldest women, rather than first person on form
 - Variant projections.
 - Projections for different areas (combining data from areas that have similar social and demographic trends, but are not physically connected).
- 7.5 Ashley can be contacted at asmc@liv.ac.uk
- 7.6 Esther commented that Ashley will aim to reproduce our projections first as a check for accuracy.
- 7.7 Jan queried the types of outputs that 'SCOTSIM' would produce. Esther said that these would be the same breakdowns that we are already familiar with. The microsimulation project is more about improving the way that we produce projections but will also be able to provide a greater scope for variants.
- 7.8 Jan expressed an interest in whether the model would include different household structures for migrants. Esther has agreed to check this with Ashley. However, it is known that survey data such as the Scottish Longitudinal Study, Labour Force Survey and the British Household Panel Survey will feed into the transitional data input.
- 7.9 There was also a query regarding milestones for the project and when results would be available. Esther said that the first year of the PhD had been spent on planning, producing and getting the model running, and producing data to feed into the model.

ACTION: Esther to speak to Ashley to answer the questions raised above.

Agenda Item 8: Discussion on the possible ways of identifying and recording second homes, following the introduction of a Local Income Tax

- 8.1 Jackie Wilkins from SG Housing Supply Unit came to speak to the HARG group about policy developments surrounding the proposed replacement of Council Tax with Local Income Tax, and the implications on the taxation and counting of second homes.
- 8.2 Jackie identified three issues regarding the Local Income Tax
- If there is no Council Tax there will need to be some way of accurately indentifying second homes.
 - The tax must be a fair tax
 - It should be easy and inexpensive to collect the tax.
- 8.3 Council Tax data on properties may be maintained for a further 5 years as Scottish Water require this information for billing purposes. If Council Tax was abolished there would be data available on second homes to begin with but it is unclear how changes in the numbers of second homes could be measured beyond this point. Jackie stated that she was keen to work with local authority colleagues to help solve the problem of maintaining an up to date list of second homes. Paul McNamara commented that finance colleagues in local authorities may be in the best position to help with this and said that he would contact Stirling council colleagues.

ACTION: Paul

Agenda Item 9: An update from the Population and Migration Statistics branch.

- 9.1 Cecilia Macintyre provided an update from the Population and Migration Statistics branch.
- 9.2 Publication dates this year will follow the same pattern as normal
- April - mid-year estimates
 - October - 2008-based projections
 - January - sub-national geographies
- 9.3 The Economic Strategy unit and Tayside have been working towards gaining a better understanding of the effects of migration. This includes topics such as service provision and integration. A report is being produced and once feedback has been received from the working group this will be circulated more widely. A likely spin off from this work is that there will be more data readily available on the GROS website and this should appear within the next month or two.
- 9.4 Ludi Simpson has been working to produce population projections at data zone level. In February we should have a new member of staff who will also be able to work on this using "Popgroup".

- 9.5 Further work in the branch has included using Child Benefit and School Census data to improve Small Area Population Estimates.
- 9.6 Work is progressing to produce population projections for Strategic Development Planning areas and there will be a joint publication with Household Estimates and Projections Branch.

Date of Next Meeting: It was suggested that it would be useful to try to organise the next meeting for when Ashley McCormick is next working in Edinburgh. The next meeting is therefore likely to be arranged for September 2009.