

OUTLINE WORK PROGRAMME FOR 2001/02

INTRODUCTION

1. Paper 2001/1 set out the proposal that the group develops (and reviews annually) a work programme. The local authority members of the Scottish Census Advisory Group requested at their last meeting that a work programme was drawn up. This paper sets out a proposed work programme for 2001-02, which was drawn up in consultation with Stephen Fraser and Jan Freeke. **Members are invited to comment on this proposed work plan.**

2. Any work programme has to be realistic in relation to the Scottish Executive and other resources needed to deliver it. It is proposed that the group regularly reviews the work programme and priorities throughout the year as available resources may change over time. Annual review of the programme and priorities will be necessary since requirements and available sources of data are likely to change over time and methodologies will need to adapt to these changes.

WORK PROGRAMME FOR 2001/02

3. The following three phases of work are proposed for 2001/02

- Phase 1: Initial review of the ways in which household estimates and projections are used
- Phase 2: Assessment of the household estimates and methodology
- Phase 3: Assessment of the household projections and methodology

Phase 1

Initial review of the ways in which household estimates and projections are used

4. It is important that priorities are set based on an understanding of the uses made of the estimates and projections. In order to gain a full understanding of the current uses made of the estimates and projections, it is proposed that a review of uses is carried out fairly quickly. If members are content that such a review is carried out, it will be discussed in more detail at item 7 of the agenda. However, the following are the sorts of questions which would need to be considered in deciding how best to take forward this review.

- Should the review cover needs as well as uses?
- Should we go wider than just local authority needs/ uses?
- Should we ask about perceived weaknesses in the estimates and projections?
- How will we organise this? Will LA representatives co-ordinate the LA responses?
- What should the output be?
- Over what timescale should this run?

Phase 2

Assessment of the household estimates and methodology

5. It will be necessary to have the outcome of the review of use of the estimates before completing any assessment of the present methodology. However, the assessment can **begin** before such a review has been completed. Following on from the proposed general purpose of the review group, the purpose of the assessment would be to reach an agreed view on the quality/ reliability of the present estimates and any key limitations on their interpretation and use. It is proposed that the initial work programme in phase 2 covers the following 3 areas:

- Review/ assessment of the data inputs to the current methodology.
This would include confirmation of the definition of terms and description of sources of input data with assessment of quality/ reliability.
- Assessment of estimates provided by current methodology against other sources of information.
Other sources would include the Council Tax Base data and GROS' Population estimates.
- Updating the source data and methodology to incorporate information from the 2001 Census, the Post Census Survey of Vacant Properties and other available data.

Phase 3

Assessment of the household projections and methodology

6. As with the estimates, it will be necessary to have the outcome of the review of use of the projections before completing any assessment of the present methodology. However, the assessment can **begin** before such a review has been completed. As above, the purpose of the assessment would be to reach an agreed view on the quality/ reliability of the present projections and any key limitations on their interpretation and use. It is proposed that the initial work programme in phase 3 would cover the following three areas:

- Technical implementation of the present methodology.
This would include the choice of periods over which to fit the trend curve and the mechanics for adjusting projections to fit credibility criteria.
- Methods for assessing the quality/ reliability of projections.
This would include identification of data sources which might be used to assess household formation rates as well as ways/ data sources which might be used to provide credibility checks (e.g. 'adult feasibility' consistency with population projections).
- Possible approaches to developing/ changing the methodology. [*Note this seems likely to be longer term. The priority might change if the identified requirements cannot be met from the present methodology*]
This could include a comparison with DETR's methodology and reviewing the choice of type of trend curve.

Timetable

Members are invited to comment on the following initial outline timetable for the year:

Early March 2001:	Initial meeting of reconvened group
April – May 2001:	Review uses of household statistics Begin review of estimates and methodology
Early June 2001:	Group meets to review detail of work plan for rest of the year based on the results of the review of the uses
July-August 2001:	Complete this year's review of estimates and methodology Begin review of projections and methodology
Early September 2001:	Group meets to finalise and agree method to be used for 2000 household estimates
October-November 2001:	Complete this year's review of projections and methodology
Early December 2001:	Group meets to finalise and agree method to be used for 2000-based household projections
January-February 2001:	Any outstanding work – including taking forward possible longer term developments
Early March 2002:	Group meets to review progress, agree work plan for 2002/03

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