

HOUSEHOLD ANALYSIS REVIEW GROUP: SMALL AREA HOUSEHOLD ESTIMATES**Introduction**

1. This paper outlines a proposal to collect and publish small area household estimates, based on information from council tax billing systems.
2. Members are asked to comment on whether they agree with the proposed approach.

Background

3. Household estimates are published annually. These statistics show the total number of households in each local authority, based on changes in the amount of housing stock since the last Census – the paper HARG 2005(2) provides more details. Information is not currently published on the type of household, and statistics are not available below local authority level.
4. Developing household estimates at the neighbourhood level, as part of the Scottish Neighbourhood Statistics project, would allow trends to be monitored in the number of households in areas of interest. It would also provide a basic household denominator for other data, such as the number of households receiving key benefits. Figures would be published for each data zone, which contain an average of 750 people.
5. There are a number of recent developments which would allow us to develop estimates of households (or near equivalents) at the neighbourhood level:
 - a) Secondary legislation has been introduced, which allows councils to provide non-personal data from **council tax billing systems**. This could provide information on the number of occupied dwellings, and some further information on household type.
 - b) The development of the **Assessors' Portal** allows information to be obtained on the number of dwellings at neighbourhood level, as well as information on the council tax band, number of rooms and degree of attachment of the dwelling (e.g., semi-detached, flat, etc).
 - c) The GROS demography branch is developing **small area population estimates** for each data zone in Scotland, which will include information on age and sex.
 - d) GROS is trying to identify sources of data on residents of **communal establishments**, at the neighbourhood level (more information on this is included in the paper HARG 2005(5)).
6. Information from these sources could be used to provide estimates of the number of households at neighbourhood level, and some information on the type of household. The results of the 2001 Census can be used to test possible methodologies for linking information on population, households and dwellings. Sources such as the Scottish

Household Survey may provide a way of identifying trends in household types between Censuses, for Scotland as a whole.

Next steps

7. In order for this work to progress, we will need to develop systems to obtain information on council tax billing systems at neighbourhood level. GROS is planning to take this forward, as follows:
 - a) Decide whether to request information at the postcode unit level or ask councils to aggregate data to datazone level, providing lookup tables to show the postcodes in each datazone. We will need to investigate what information is available, but an example of the information we would aim to collect, for each data zone or postcode is:
 - Number of dwellings
 - Unoccupied exempt (empty properties)
 - Occupied exempt (dwellings occupied solely by students, halls of residence, barracks, and dwellings occupied by visiting forces)
 - With no discounts (dwelling occupied by more than one adult)
 - With one discount (will generally contain only one adult, i.e. will generally either be a single person household or a one parent household)
 - With two discounts (unoccupied – i.e. no person's sole or main residence – includes second homes)
 - b) The IRRV (Institute of Revenues Rating and Valuation) is the professional body for local taxation, benefits and valuation. We will write to them, summarising what we propose to collect and the information we would require, and asking for comments on these proposals.
 - c) Write to each council, explaining what we are planning to collect and why, to identify any problems/development costs which may arise.
8. While this is progressing, GROS will develop ways to use this data, and the other information sources available (as outlined in paragraph 5), to generate estimates of household *type* at neighbourhood level.

Conclusion

9. HARG members are asked whether they agree with the proposed approach for collecting and publishing household estimates at the neighbourhood level.

GROS: Household estimates branch
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