

HOUSEHOLD ANALYSIS REVIEW GROUP:

Minutes for the meeting of February 21st 2005
Room 1/G/9, Ladywell House, 2-4pm

Present:

Esther Roughsedge (Chair)

Stephen Fraser

Jan Freeke

Alistair Harvey

Paul McNamara

Margaret Skinner

Duncan Gray

Peter Scrimgeour

Cecilia Macintyre

Paula Lopez

General Register Office for Scotland:

Household Estimates Branch

North Lanarkshire Council

Glasgow Council

Edinburgh Council

Stirling Council

North Ayrshire Council

Scottish Executive Development Department:

Analytical Services Division

General Register Office for Scotland:

Statistics Division

General Register Office for Scotland:

Demography Branch

General Register Office for Scotland:

Household Estimates Branch

Apologies:

Tom Snowling

Blair Melville

Aberdeen Council

Homes for Scotland

AGENDA ITEMS 1 AND 2: INTRODUCTIONS AND BACKGROUND TO TRANSFER OF WORK TO GROS

- 1.1 Esther Roughsedge welcomed everyone to the meeting. She asked them to introduce themselves and to tell the group about their experience in household statistics, as it had been one year since HARG last met and some changes in the composition of the group had occurred.
- 1.2 Esther Roughsedge explained the background to the transfer of responsibility for household statistics from the Development Department in the Scottish Executive (DD) to the General Register Office for Scotland (GROS). A new branch has been created in GROS to review household statistics methodology and link these statistics more closely with population statistics. Housing statistics will continue to be produced by the DD, which will continue to be represented on HARG.

AGENDA ITEM 3: HARG MEMBERSHIP AND TERMS OF REFERENCE

- 2.1 A paper with the scope, purpose, remit, frequency of meetings, reporting arrangements and membership of HARG was presented by Esther Roughsedge (HARG 2005(1)). The purpose of this paper was to review what HARG does and how.
- 2.2 Jan Freeke suggested that a reference to the Scottish Neighbourhood Statistics household estimates could be added to the paper. [Action: GROS, Household Estimates].**
Apart from this, the content of the paper was considered appropriate.
- 2.3 The membership of the group was considered appropriate and it was stressed that the attendance of Homes of Scotland would be very useful.
- 2.4 The links between BESAC, PAMS and HARG were discussed and Stephen Fraser expressed his interest in becoming a member of BESAC [Action: Stephen Fraser will write to Duncan Gray, the BESAC chairman].**

AGENDA ITEM 4: POPULATION ESTIMATES AND PROJECTIONS – UPDATE FROM CECILIA MACINTYRE

- 3.1 Cecilia Macintyre explained to the group future plans regarding population estimates and projections, which can be summarised as follow:
- 2004 mid-year population estimates are planned to be published at the end of April 2005 for Scotland and at Local Authority and Health Board levels.
 - 2004-based national population projections, prepared by GAD, are planned to be published in October. In June GROS will be consulting with Scottish users on the key assumptions for the national population projections.

- Sub-national population projections will be produced following the national projections. Cecilia's team is responsible for the consultation with Scottish users on the migration assumptions for these projections.
- Cecilia's team is working on the implementation of some of the suggestions that came from the PAMS survey on the users of sub-national population projections and they will report to PAMS. This branch is also planning to look at how to assist Local Authorities who are producing their own population projections.
- 2004 Small Area Population Estimates are planned to be published in October. Interim estimates for 2003 are also planned to be released. Jan Freeke suggested that it would be welcome to have the 2003 interim estimates released as soon as possible. That would give an early indication of the kind of output available in October.

AGENDA ITEM 5: METHODOLOGY FOR PRODUCING HOUSEHOLD ESTIMATES AT LOCAL AUTHORITY LEVEL

- 4.1 Esther Roughsedge explained to the group that household estimates for 2004 had not yet been published as the methodology to produce them has been under review. She described the three methods that have been considered (stock-based, population-based or council tax-based; HARG 2005(2)) and asked the group to express their preferences.
- 4.2 The group agreed that the preferred methodology was the council tax-based approach. This would have the advantage of producing statistics that are more timely than the current, stock-based approach, would not drift between Censuses, and would be consistent with the small area household estimates that are being developed (agenda item 6). Local authorities also have a financial incentive to keep their council tax billing systems accurate and up-to-date, which will help improve the accuracy of household estimates based on information drawn from these systems.
- 4.3 The group discussed whether there would be an advantage to combining this approach with the population-based approach. However, it was decided that the advantages of using the council tax-based approach, particularly producing statistics that are consistent at the local authority and small area level, were strong enough to out-weigh any advantages of incorporating population-based household estimates.
- 4.4 A weakness that will have to be borne in mind and monitored is the impact that changes in the administrative systems could have on the data provided. To manage this risk, Local Authorities should be provided with the draft figures for their own area, prior to publication of household estimates, to check the figures and identify any administrative change they are aware of that could have affected the data.
- 4.5 It was decided that Local Authorities should be consulted regarding the agreed preferred methodology [Action: GROS, Household Estimates] using the PAMS contact list. Jan Freeke asked GROS to do this as soon as possible, as it would be desirable to have household estimates available as close as possible to population estimates (which will be published at the end of April).**

4.6 An interest was expressed in maintaining the graphs comparing the three methods for the next 4-5 years and also **in explaining how the council-tax based estimates were adjusted to anchor the results to the Census [Action: GROS, Household Estimates]**

AGENDA ITEM 6: SMALL AREA HOUSEHOLD ESTIMATES

5.1 Esther Roughsedge presented a paper (HARG 2005(3)) with a proposal to collect small area household estimates based on information from council tax billing systems, and asked the group to comment on it.

5.2 The group agreed that it would be very useful to have household estimates at data zone level. The approach that was presented in the paper was considered appropriate and it was agreed that the next steps would be:

- **To contact the Institute of Revenues Rating and Valuation (IRRV)** summarising what is proposed and the information that would be required, and asking for comments. **[Action: GROS, Household Estimates]**
- **To contact each council** explaining what is planned and why, asking them about the feasibility of doing it. Data protection considerations are expected to prevent this being done centrally by GROS. Assuming feasibility, lookup tables to show the postcodes in each data zone would be provided to the councils. **[Action: GROS, Household Estimates]**

AGENDA ITEM 7: HOUSEHOLD PROJECTIONS METHODOLOGY

6.1 Esther Roughsedge summarised the HARG 2005(4) paper regarding household projections, where some areas of possible change to the household projections methodology were explained. She asked the group to agree the areas that need to be reviewed and to decide the best way of doing it (in-house or commissioning research).

6.2 Jan Freeke suggested that it would be useful to start by presenting how well the current method worked in relation to 2001 Census. Duncan Gray suggested that it would be useful too to compare old sets of projections (for example, 1993-based) with 2001 Census **[Action: GROS, Household Estimates]**

6.3 Jan Freeke recommended investigating how well the projections have done in different areas and whether we could identify different patterns of household change by type of council area comparing 1991 and 2001 Census **[Action: GROS, Household Estimates]**

6.4 Duncan Gray also suggested that finding a reliable way of using the Household Reference Person instead of the Head of Household would be very useful too. Jan Freeke expressed his interest in finding answers to explain why household projections now are lower than pre-Census household projections. The use of the SHS for monitoring changes in household composition was also recommended.

- 6.5 Esther asked whether GROS should consider producing household forecasts, incorporating non-demographic information such as changes in the policy on house building in a particular area, in addition to the household projections which simply project past trends. The group considered that this would not be possible, as it would be too difficult to obtain and incorporate such information in a consistent manner.
- 6.6 The group agreed that this review could be carried out in-house at GROS and that specific research would be commissioned if necessary.

AGENDA ITEM 8: COMMUNAL ESTABLISHMENTS

- 7.1 Esther Roughsedge presented a proposed approach to improve the quality and availability of data on Communal Establishments (HARG 2005(5) paper) and asked the group to express their opinion about it. The proposed approach mainly consists of using the information that the Scottish Executive and ISD (the Information and Statistics Division of NHS Scotland) collect and of finding sources to complete the gaps (mainly, hotels and higher education).
- 7.2 The group agreed that anything that could be done to improve the quality and accuracy of these data would be welcomed. It was also agreed that when summary information is available for each council, the results should be compared to the 2001 Census results, and councils would be consulted to check their accuracy. **Esther confirmed that GROS will continue to investigate the potential sources and the quality issues in order to be able to collect Communal Establishments information on a regular basis. [Action: GROS, Household Estimates]**

AGENDA ITEM 10: DATE OF NEXT MEETING

- 8.1 Given that the next BESAC meeting is planned to be held on May 11th and the next PAMS meeting on June 2nd, it was agreed that the next HARG meeting could be held in May. **Esther Roughsedge will contact the group members to agree an exact date [Action: GROS, Household Estimates].**