

# POPULATION AND MIGRATION STATISTICS COMMITTEE (SCOTLAND)

## SETTLEMENTS UPDATE

### Introduction

This paper summarises the recent work on settlements statistics. PAMS is asked to note the paper and other comments. Written comments will also be welcome to [Cecilia.macintyre@gro-scotland.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:Cecilia.macintyre@gro-scotland.gsi.gov.uk)

### Settlements

Since 2001, GROS have annually produced settlement population estimates. Settlements are defined as a contiguous group of high density postcodes with a population of 500 or more. A postcode is defined as "high density" if one or more of the following three threshold conditions are met:

1. The number of residential addresses per hectare exceeded 2.1
2. The estimated population per hectare exceeded 5.
3. The number of non-residential addresses per hectare exceeded 0.1.

To produce the 2004 settlement population estimates, the 2004 small area datazone population estimates (SAPE), the Postcode Address File (PAF) household count and 2001 Census communal establishment figures were used.

Calculation of conditions 1 and 3 was straightforward, using the Postcode Address File. To calculate the estimated population per hectare, for condition 2, an estimate of the population at postcode level is calculated, by dividing the 2004 SAPE population estimates into postcodes using the PAF household count (having adjusted for communal establishments). Postcodes with communal establishments have been dealt with slightly differently since 2003 settlement publication, otherwise the methodology has been kept the same.

Once the postcodes were defined as high or low density, the population estimates in contiguous postcodes were joined together – where the population was 500 or more, the area was defined as a settlement.

The 2004 Settlement population estimates will be published on 13<sup>th</sup> June 2006.

### Localities population estimates

GROS break down the larger settlements into smaller localities and publish population estimates for these areas. It had been noted in a previous PAMS meeting that councils would prefer settlement and localities population estimates to be published together. However, due to a requirement for the 2004 settlement population estimates, it was not possible to produce the locality estimates in time for publication of the settlement figures.

### Future Plans for Settlement and Localities

During the process to calculate the 2004 settlements population estimates, a number of issues arose highlighting various anomalies with the settlement boundaries. These anomalies are largely due to changes in postcode boundaries and the impact of changes to settlement boundaries. GROS are considering postponing the production of 2005 settlement and locality population estimates, to concentrate on reviewing these issues, as well as examining the definition of a settlement/ locality and to provide guidance on the use of settlements/ localities.

PAMS members are asked to comment on this proposal.

### Postcode Population Estimates

As detailed in the settlements methodology above, GROS do produce some form of postcode population estimates for use in the settlements work. However, quality assurance was only carried out on the small number of postcode population estimates which affect the settlement population (for example postcodes on the edge of settlements). A large number of datazones fall wholly within or outwith settlements – clearly there was no need to carry out quality assurance on these postcodes for the settlement work. In addition, whilst the postcode

population estimates are considered fit for purpose in estimating the population at a large area such as settlements, from the limited quality assurance work which has been carried out, GROS have concerns about using these population estimates to estimate the population in small areas such as postcodes or census output areas. Therefore, due to the lack of quality assurance carried out on most of the postcodes, and concerns about the robustness of the estimates, GROS do not recommend their use for other purposes. We have no plans to spend time on producing better quality population estimates for use at postcode level.

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