MINUTES OF THE POPULATION PROJECTIONS WORKING GROUP: 14 September 2007

Present:

Celia Macintyre	GROS (Chair)
Gillian Fegan	NISRA
Allison Craig	North Ayrshire Council
Cameron Thomas	Highland Council
Stuart Booker	Fife Council
Jan Freeke	Glasgow City Council
Richard Belding	Aberdeenshire Council
Alistair Harvey	City of Edinburgh Council
Chris Carr	Argyll & Bute Council
Lesley Mann	North Lanarkshire Council
Fred Nimmo	Grampian Health Board
Katya Lisiankova	Herriot Watt University
Kirsty MacLachlan	GROS
Esther Roughsedge	GROS
Anneli Lyon	GROS
Ashley McCormick	GROS / University of Liverpool
Andrew White	GROS (Minutes)

1. Introductions

1.1 Apologies were received from David Hurst (Scottish Government), Alan Lambie (South Lanarkshire Council), Emma Arnell-Smith (Welsh Assembly Government), Jack Winchester (Aberdeen City Council), Richard Pereira (ONS), Jillian Evans (Grampian Health Board) and Jenny Boag (Falkirk Council)

1.2 The chair, Celia Macintyre welcomed everyone to the third Population Projections Working Group (PPWG) meeting and asked everyone to introduce themselves for the new faces.

2. Minutes of the Previous Meeting – PPWG (06) 11

2.1 There were no comments on the minutes from the last meeting.

3. Action Points from the Previous Meeting – PPWG (07) 01

3.1 Celia ran through the action points. Two were complete and progress on mortality scaling factors for different age groups was to be reported later in the meeting. The status of the remaining action point – work on using economic factors in projections in England – was unknown. Members had no comments on the paper.

Post meeting note: GROS has since contacted Richard Pereira. His follow up research has indicated that the use of economic factors in projections is not straightforward and there is nothing that can be directly implemented.

4.   Work Plan Update – PPWG (07) 02

Celia ran through the main points of the updated work plan. These included:

- Background data from work on chapter 2 of the annual report (available on web) suggests that differences in mortality rates between councils diminishes with increased age. GROS will look to introduce 2-3 broad age groups for local mortality scaling factors. Fertility is likely to be more difficult and is seen as less of a priority.

- Sub-national projections will be produced for a few variant projections. The results will be published after the initial publication. It was mentioned that high and low migration variants might prove difficult and Jan Freeke suggested that it would be useful to look at the distribution of A8 migrants in order to decide how to vary the assumptions at sub-national level. Celia commented that these variants would reflect high or low levels at a national level but would not involve redistribution of migrants at sub-national level.

- A meeting between GROS and the (then) Scottish Executive concluded that introducing economic factors into projections would not necessarily improve projections. No further work is planned but this may change depending on Richard Perreira's feedback on any work being undertaken on the subject in England.

- GROS are likely to take on board new ONS methods of estimating migration at a national level but work is ongoing looking into how they will be distributed. Additionally CHI data, rather than census data, will be used to determine the age distribution of out-migrants in the 2006 sub-national projections.

The remainder of the work plan was considered later in the meeting.

5.   Scottish Population Projections: POPGROUP

5.1   Katya gave a very interesting presentation on her work using POPGROUP to try to reproduce the GAD/GROS population projections. She showed that POPGROUP had been largely successful in replicating the GAD/GROS projections, particularly at a national level.

5.2   Fred Nimmo made the general point that it would make more sense to use net zero migration in the long term projections as there is uncertainty over future migration patterns. Celia Macintyre pointed out that GROS projections are consistent with those produced by ONS and Andrew White mentioned that the proposed sub-national variant projections might help with this in that they are likely to include a zero migration variant.

5.3   Richard Belding pointed out that Aberdeen City and Aberdeenshire's migration is cyclical and that the 5 year average used to inform GROS migration assumptions will either catch a peak or a trough meaning that projected population would change from one projection to the next. However Celia Macintyre and Stuart Booker suggested this would not necessarily be the case in other areas and was unlikely to be measurable. Richard Belding also commented that Aberdeen City and Aberdeenshire use largely employment led forecasts.

5.4   Celia Macintyre explained that part of the thinking behind looking into POPGROUP was that GROS might provide figures in an appropriate format for Councils to input into

POPGROUP so that they could produce their own projections. She asked Katya what this would involve. Katya replied that she had written instructions to produce 4 excel files for Councils to plug into POPGROUP and that she thought it would take someone 1 week (full-time) to prepare this the first time but that subsequently it would be done automatically.
Action: Celia will write around Councils to see who wants what and when

5.5   Richard Belding asked to what extent GROS change migration figures based on the consultation. Andrew White mentioned that GROS had limited scope to make changes as they had to agree with ONS at Scotland level and Celia explained that one of the main purposes behind GROS developing files for input to POPGROUP was to allow Councils to produce their own projections.

5.6   Chris Carr said that she would like to receive migration inflows and outflows at small area level as this was needed for POPGROUP. Celia suggested that it might be possible to provide this at some sort of aggregate level. Katya explained that there is a way of getting round POPGROUP's need for both in and outflows (treat net migration as inflow).

5.7   Chris also mentioned the need for information on the long term impact of A8 migrants and expressed particular interest in the number leaving Scotland. Celia explained that UK figures exist but are not available at any lower geography.

5.8   Jan Freeke tentatively summed up some of the discussion by saying that, as GROS are limited by ONS they are unable to do many scenarios but Councils could do their own scenarios in POPGROUP. Cameron Thomas pointed out that the Councils represented at the meeting had the ability to do this but others may not. GROS providing appropriately formatted data may help.

6.   Scottish Demography – Local Perspectives

6.1   Celia Macintyre briefly described the data found in chapter 2 of the Registrar General's Annual Report and the background data available on the web and mentioned that this could be presented in further detail during Council visits. The group were enthusiastic about the availability of the data.

Annual report: http://www.gro-scotland.gov.uk/statistics/publications-and-data/annual-report-publications/rgs-annual-review-2006/index.html

Background data: http://www.gro-scotland.gov.uk/statistics/publications-and-data/annual-report-publications/rgs-annual-review-2006/list-of-figures-chapter-2.html

7.   Any Other Business

7.1   Celia drew the meeting to a close and said that a summary of what GROS plan to do next will be provided with the minutes (see below). And will also be sent out to Councils not represented at PPWG.
Action: Andrew White to summarise GROS next steps and ask Jenny Boag to circulate

7.2   The possibility of annual projections was also mentioned. Updated assumptions would not be available but it might be possible to use a similar approach to that used by

Local Government Finance which involves re-basing the projections and using the same assumptions.
Action: Celia Macintyre to look into this

8. Date of Next Meeting

8.1 To be held after publication of sub-national projections. A wider event will also be held in March.

GROS next steps

Action	Possible Completion date
Use different local mortality scaling factors for different age groups in 2006-based sub-national projections	Dec 2007
Replace census data with Community Health Index (CHI) data in calculation of age distribution of migrants at Council area level	Dec 2007
Sub-national projections to be produced for 25 rather than 20 years	Jan 2008
Produce output in an appropriate format to allow Councils to input into POPGROUP	Feb 2008
Hold a 'what we're doing' stakeholder event	Mar 2008
Produce some sub-national variant projections	July 2008