



Welsh Government
Consultation – summary of responses

Statistical Outputs on Population and Household Estimates and Projections

September 2016

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introduction

This report presents a summary of the responses to the Welsh Government consultation on *Statistical Outputs relating to Population and Household Estimates and Projections* which ran from 29 February to 23 May 2016.

Population statistics are some of the most important of all official statistics. They provide a basis for resource allocation and future planning at a local and national level, and they help in the understanding of a changing society.

Within Wales sub-national population and household projections are used extensively in the planning process. They provide an insight into the likely trends in population size and household composition in areas within Wales over the next 20 to 30 years.

Updated National Park population projections for Wales were published in October 2015, and National Park household projections in March 2016. This represents the end of the last cycle of projections which began with the publication of 2011-based local authority projections using 2011 Census data as a base.

The next cycle of population and household projections will be started later in 2016 and it was considered to be an appropriate time to seek feedback from users of population statistics on the related outputs, methodology, and timetable.

the aim of the consultation

The consultation was seeking feedback on the Welsh Government statistical outputs relating to population and household statistics, which are described below. In general to aim was to get feedback openly about the experience of users in using these statistical outputs and how this can be improved in future.

There is also a proposed timetable for the next round of population and household projections and views are being sought on this and future timing.

background

Across the UK a range of population and household statistics are produced which inform future planning of (for example) housing need, public service provision, and retail investment. They are also used for resource allocation; for example, the local government settlement.

Responsibility for producing population estimates and projections for Wales is divided between the Office for National Statistics (ONS) and the Welsh Government. ONS is responsible for undertaking the Census of Population in England and Wales, producing the annual mid-year estimates of the population and producing national population projections (for the UK as a whole).

The Welsh Government currently uses the information published by ONS to produce a statistical bulletin on mid-year estimates of the population. The ONS data is also used as a basis for calculating sub-national population projections for Wales, which are produced for local authority and national park areas.

Statistics for households in Wales are also produced to provide users with data on changes in household formation and composition to inform (for example) decisions around house building. The following household statistics are produced: annual household mid-year estimates for Wales, local authority household projections for Wales, and National Park household projections for Wales.

consultation questions

statistical outputs

The consultation asked for views on three aspects of the statistical outputs described above:

- Presentation of the statistics – does it meet your needs and how it could be improved?
- Methods used to produce the statistics – do you agree with the current methods?
- Finding data on websites – do you know what you can find, and where?

timetable

It was proposed to start work on new projections for the 22 local authorities and 3 national park authorities during the first half of 2016. The aim is to begin to publish results from the autumn of this year, with on-going outputs up to early 2017. The aim is to publish local authority population projections in September 2016.

- Do you agree with this timetable?
- What are your future needs for projections?
- How frequently should they be produced?

The UK Statistics Authority have proposed that the Welsh Government should work with ONS and other UK administrations to align the base year for sub-national and national projections where possible.

- Do you agree with this approach?

publication of mid-year estimates bulletin

Each year ONS publishes population estimates for Wales and local authorities in Wales, and the Welsh Government publishes a bulletin presenting the data together with a commentary. In an earlier consultation, it was concluded that, to eliminate duplication with other statistical producers, StatsWales tables would be updated when ONS publish and users made aware that there is new data.

- Does this proposal cause you any difficulties?

summary of responses

respondents

There were 18 responses to the consultation.

The 18 responses were from the following kinds of organisation:

- 9 from local authorities
- 3 from National Park Authorities
- 2 from the NHS
- 4 from other public or third sector organisations

There are three National Park Areas in Wales. In response to the consultation the three Areas submitted a joint response: this response was treated as if there had been three separate, identical responses.

The organisations which responded are listed at the end of the report (page 22).

outputs

Most organisations used the mid-year population estimates for Wales, the household estimates, local authority population projections, or the household projections (usually several of them). The National Park projections were not used much outside the National Park Authorities.

The most common reason for using the outputs was for planning or geographic comparisons.

Apart from one comment that the projections did not give equality data (the methodology does not allow them to be produced for that purpose) respondents were wholly or partly (generally wholly) satisfied with the presentation of the statistics and the level of data. Respondents said that the commentary helped the understanding of the statistics.

All respondents said that there was enough quality information.

Apart from one comment that the projections did not give equality data, respondents said that the geographical breakdown of the estimates and projections wholly or partly met their needs. Of those who were partly satisfied most would have liked statistics for smaller geographical areas.

methods

There was uniform satisfaction with the method used to produce the local authority and National Park population estimates, and the local authority and National Park household estimates.

timing

Most respondents thought that sub-national population projections and household projections should be produced once every three years. The National Park Authorities preferred them to be produced every other year.

Respondents were evenly divided on whether household estimates should be produced annually.

data and analysis

Most respondents said that they did not use the mid-year estimates for Wales statistical bulletin (apart from the data published by ONS), although around a third did (sometimes to use the bullet points as official quotes). If in future the bulletin were discontinued and only StatsWales tables updated when ONS publish new data all respondents (apart from one) said that this would not cause them problems provided users are told when ONS have published the data.

Most respondents said that they could find the data they need easily and that it was clear what information is available. There were some comments that the StatsWales website could be difficult to use. It was suggested that household estimates and projections data should be with population data (not with housing data). There were several comments relating to improving the links between differing datasets.

future work

It was pointed out that work on new projections for the 22 local authorities and 3 national park authorities had been planned for the first half of 2016. The aim was to begin to publish results from the autumn of this year, and with on-going outputs until early 2017. The aim is to publish local authority population projections in September 2016. There was uniform agreement for this timetable.

The UK Statistics Authority has proposed that the Welsh Government should work with ONS and other UK administrations to align the base year for sub-national and national projections where possible. All respondents agreed with this.

consultation follow-up actions

The plans to discontinue the *Mid-year Estimates for Wales* statistical bulletin will carry on. The StatsWales tables will be updated when ONS publish new population estimates for Wales, and the related Welsh Government webpage will be updated so that users will be aware that ONS have published the latest data, and a link to the ONS data will be given.

(This is in line with a previous consultation where some outputs were stopped because they duplicated publications of other statistical producers.)

The Welsh Government plan is to produce sub-national population projections and household projections every three years (including those for National Park areas). It is recognized that there is some demand for more frequent projections but, taking all responses into account, it is considered that the planned frequency is a reasonable balance between user need, the resources available to meet it, and the usefulness of more frequent projections given their inherent uncertainty. The principal projections will continue to be given prominence in any reports on the projections, but the use of variant projections and their implications will be made clearer. The variant projections will be published at the same time as the principal projections.

The Welsh Government will work with ONS and other UK administrations to align the base year for sub-national and national projections as far as possible. Currently the planned publication frequencies for the Welsh Government and ONS are different (three years and two years respectively), so user needs will be considered ahead of each projections cycle. If there is an overwhelming user need for projections on a different base year to the national projections (as was the case for our 2011-based projections) this will be considered and any decision explained to users.

The possibility of producing the data for smaller geographical areas will be considered, within the constraints of statistical robustness. While the preference for small geographical areas expressed by some respondents is recognized, this has to be balanced with the requirement of publishing only technically sound statistics. Consideration will be given to the production of equality data in the context of the projections and the organisation requiring this data will be contacted.

Household estimates will be produced annually (probably around three months after the mid-year population estimates are published). The mid-2015 household estimates are scheduled for publication on 27 September 2016. Household projections will be produced alongside the population projections, and the production of 2014-based household projections is planned before the end of this financial year.

The feedback relating to StatsWales (the Welsh Government on-line archive of statistical data) suggested that some users thought that it could be made easier to use. It is likely that the approach that will be taken will be to improve the online training for the existing StatsWales (possibly by links to online training videos) rather than making substantial changes to it.

the detailed responses

The responses and comments are given for each question.

- The responses are in the order in which they were received. They are presented verbatim (apart from corrections to obvious typos).
- One person did not complete the consultation form but commented that training in StatsWales was needed.
- One person did not complete the consultation form but commented on the timing and some technical issues.
- One person did not complete the consultation form but commented about Welsh language issues.
- One person did not complete the consultation form but commented about planning issues in general.

Which of the following Welsh Government statistical outputs do you use?

mid-year population estimates for Wales (the WG bulletin, not the ONS data)	10
household estimates for Wales	10
local authority population projections	11
household projections for Wales (includes LA household projections)	10
population projections for National Parks	4
household projections for National Parks	4

For what purpose do you use these outputs?

resource allocation	7
planning services and estimating future need	11
policy development	8
as denominators in rates (for example, birth rates)	8
weighting surveys	3
geographic profiling, comparisons, or benchmarking	13
other – please specify in the box below	3

comments

- Other uses - producing our own alternative projections and other demographic data for all North Wales UAs. Sense checking our administrative data (e.g. households on Council Tax register). As denominators in performance indicators (both national and local).
- We use the population estimates for our own internal purposes such as consultation responses and sources of information for project funding bids. In addition we also use this information to help support our members in the completion of their Equality Impact Assessments, policy reviews and analysis of equality monitoring/customer profiling data. In addition to this we highlight these sources to our members for their own additional requirements.
- Strategic and service-based population/needs/well-being assessments, including current national requirements. Contextualising the Council's administrative and performance data. The Council also uses the WG LA population and household projections as the starting point for deriving the housing requirement for the Local Development Plan (LDP), in-line with Planning Policy Wales.

Does the presentation of these statistics meet your need?

Consider the way the reports are written, the level of detail included within them, the use of the Welsh Language, the inclusion of tables, charts and infographics along with the use of social media.

yes, wholly	10
partly	3
not at all	1

comments

- The reports are generally clear and helpful in explaining the topic. Infographics are useful at giving 'at a glance' overviews.
- Fine for an overview, but I'd normally look at the data in more detail to fit our local requirements.
- Presentation of statistical data is often a challenge when those who do not usually work within the field of Statistical Analysis and this is something which we have found to be the case within the sector also. It is often difficult for people to manipulate and interrogate data sets to get the information they need. Offering training to the sector on the use of statistics and interrogating statistical outputs would be really useful and this is something Tai Pawb would be willing to discuss with you to see how we could support this. Production and dissemination of further guidance in relation to the standardisation of equality categories across data sources would also be extremely useful for the housing sector as a whole.
- The statistical releases which provide the mixture of commentary, charts, tables etc provide a good overview but having access to interactive data in StatsWales tables is particularly useful
- From my perspective, generally yes - in terms of communicating effectively what is currently produced and available.

Does the level of data (available through spreadsheets and StatsWales) meet your need?

yes, wholly	9
partly	4
not at all	1

comments

- Data are gathered which is not available. For example data are collected on private rents but only limited data offered and at a county level. Data at a more detailed level would be useful.
- StatsWales is useful but does some things in a way that could be better. For example, when you want single years of age, the retention of the age band total is unnecessary and means additional steps are required to remove the totals once the data are extracted.
- I need to understand the ages driving household projections in order to identify the types of properties needed. I.e. Different types of one bed provision would be required depending on the ages of the household members. This is not available on Stats Wales directly, only through the HouseGroup Wales software previously provided by WG. I would welcome continued support of HouseGroup Wales.
- Generally speaking there is little to no equality data which is up to date and useable contained within these sets. So while we can get broad headline data figures specific information relating to each of the protected characteristics is lacking. This information is needed by ourselves and our members especially for the completion of robust and appropriate Equality Impact Assessments. Currently our members can rely on what data they have in relation to their current tenant base however, it is not possible to make correlations with wider population sets. Household projections (Wales) This data set can be used to indicate indicative household need (size and type of housing) and could be used as part of a local housing needs assessment. However, the lack of equality based data makes it difficult to use for mapping the need of specific types of housing or service provision. Household Estimates - the most recent of this information is 2014 - for our

purposes and that of our members this is now getting to be quite out of date, There is no equality data included within this data set which makes it of very limited use for our purposes and that of our members. It would be helpful if this data could be cross tabulated / compared with equality data (household demographics) where possible and ensuring this information would not identify individuals. Local authority population projections This data set is of more practical use as it contains information on gender and age, however, it would be improved for the purposes of Tai Pawb and our members if it included information on all of the protected characteristics listed within the Equality Act (2010) (where this would not identify individuals). CORE - we understand that as the data sets produced currently relies on data collected by other agencies and organisations it may not always be possible to provide equality information. We would recommend that consideration is given to re-instating the CORE data collection where this information and other useful information to the sector could be recorded and utilised. One of the benefits of CORE is the standardisation of equality information collected and categories used, this makes cross analysis with external sources, benchmarking and analysis between common allocation partners easier. The last Equality data for social housing tenants release was in 2012 and we would like to see a more regular release.

- We could not meet our needs in this area just by using WG outputs, but in combination with other sources (e.g. ONS outputs) our most urgent, regular data needs are catered for.

Does the commentary help you understand and explain the trends shown in the statistics?

yes, wholly	8
partly	5
not at all	

comments

- We only use the data, not the associated documents.
- The previous population and household projections should have given more emphasis to the fact that the projections were adversely affected by the economic downturn and were therefore lower than previous projections. From the planning perspective, it was necessary for the Welsh Government to issue a letter to local planning authorities urging caution on the use of the projections for planning purposes.
- This is of particular importance as our members would look to use this information to support an Equality Impact Assessment. If they are not clear on the quality of the statistics use it is possible they could face legal challenge in relation to the Equality Impact Assessment and the information used through no fault of their own.
- In general, I feel that the commentary is successful at picking out the key issues. Clearly, WG will not have the resources to pick out every issue or trend, for every area of Wales, but I would like to somehow see a greater two-way information flow / exchange between WG and LAs, e.g. where new data reveals something particularly interesting - but I accept we are equally responsible for that.

Do we provide an appropriate level of information about the quality of our statistics to meet your need?

yes	14
no	

comments

- This is of particular importance as our members would look to use this information to support an Equality Impact Assessment. If they are not clear on the quality of the statistics use it is possible they could face legal challenge in relation to the Equality Impact Assessment and the information used through no fault of their own.
- I've no indication that anything is missing here.

Does the geographical breakdown of the estimates and projections meet your need?

If you have need for any other geographies, please list them in the comments box and tell us what you would use them for.

yes, wholly	6
partly	7
not at all	1

comments

- Sometimes information at postcode level would be useful.
- A local authority breakdown is undoubtedly useful, which can be used to plan to meet housing need from a supply side perspective. However, as whole LA data can mask widely divergent population characteristics within LA areas requiring different policy responses, it would be useful to have statistics available at sub local authority level (whether that be ward level or groups of wards) to help determine future small scale projections to more effectively plan to meet housing need. For example, if one part of the authority is projected to have a growing proportion of older people in the coming years, we can ensure that future developments and care services are appropriately planned. Conversely, if another area is demonstrating a growing number of younger single person households, we can plan more age appropriate developments within the vicinity.
- Small area population estimates are produced at a very low geography (OA level at 5 year age groups and LSOA at single year of age). These provide good building blocks for creating our own geographies. and Welsh Government should do all it can to ensure the production of this small area population data continues – ONS are currently consulting on discontinuation of some small area data, including population estimates, and WG should lobby on our behalf to.
 - Projections for sub-UA geographies are commonly requested by both policy makers and service planners within our own organisation, and by partners across all sectors. The Well-being of Future Generations Act, which encourages forward planning for at least 50 years, is likely to increase the number and frequency of such requests, as it places a duty for small area locality planning on public service boards. Even if Welsh Government is unable to produce sub-UA projections itself, it should consider providing guidance on how to produce small area projections, both to help researchers with this new duty under the WFG Act, and potentially to provide some direction around standardisation/comparability across Wales when sub-UA projections are produced independently.
- Again equality based information is missing from these data sets.
- It would be good to have a facility to have data at a level lower than LA area
- We probably now use sub-LA data (e.g. ward, LSOA, MSOA) more than LA level in our day-to-day work, but for the estimates side, as long as suitable data is available somewhere (currently via ONS/Nomis), we are happy. As for projections, LA level is clearly more fundamentally important. However, there are occasional demands for some sub-LA breakdowns; whilst it may be difficult for regular outputs on this basis to be prepared/published (I don't believe this is published anywhere in the UK), it may be useful for some sort of (one-off) statistical article on this issue - noting the potential, the pitfalls, possible methods, etc.
- I receive a number of requests for estimates and projections to ward level.

Do you agree with the methods and sources used to produce the local authority household estimates?

yes	12
no	

comments

- n/a as we don't use them.
- The simple change of base year from which to project the number of expected new households - from 2008 to 2011 - resulted in a reduction of 50% or more in the number of projected additional households for half of local planning authorities in Wales. In other words, the number of projected additional households can change dramatically depending on the trends occurring in the preceding five years. That simple task of identifying the houses required in your area during the next 10 years just became a little bit more complex." "The problem here comes back to the nature of the household projections themselves. The answer to this problem may lie in developing household projections for land use planning purposes over longer time frames. In other words, planning for the longer-term should be based on data that 'smooths out' the highs and lows of population and household change, and also recognises the distinctive character of land use planning as a longer-term activity. Effective planning is based on looking further back into the past as basis for trend projection, but also engaging in the interesting work of considering alternative futures that may unfold. The recent patterns of international migration occurring across Europe, for example, present a fresh challenge for planners in the United Kingdom identifying housing requirements in their plans. It is clear that projections of the past only get us so far in planning for the future of our communities."
- They seem tried and tested, and I have no reason to doubt that there is any better way.

Do you agree with the methods and sources used to produce the local authority and National Park household estimates?

yes	11
no	

comments

- n/a as we don't use them.
- In terms of them being trend-based, and that the trend has to be based on something both understandable and consistently applied.

Do you agree with the methods and sources used to produce the local authority and National Park population estimates?

yes	12
no	

comments

- This refers to LA only as we do not use the National Park data.
- General comment on the work around sources/methodology – my view may be biased as a member of the working groups that look at our sub-national projections, but I do feel our collaborative consultation model works better than the more arms-length consultation seen in ONS's projections work. The opportunity for expert users to periodically review methodologies and share best practice helps to make the sub-national projections as fit-for-purpose as is possible, and leads to a more informed and included user base.
- Of particular relevance to this consultation, there is a recommendation to explore the development of local authority level household projections using longer-term trend data to better reflect the character and purposes of the planning system. This recommendation suggests that Welsh Government explores the practicality of preparing a set of Welsh

Government local authority level household projections specifically for the purposes of land use planning that utilise longer-term trend data on which to base the projected figures and should include the possibility of developing household projections for National Park Authorities.

- Same as previous question. However, it is important to keep our overall approach under review at the start of every projections round, e.g. to see whether the assumptions used for the 'headline' and variant projections are still valid.

It is proposed to begin work on new projections for the 22 local authorities and 3 national park authorities during the first half of 2016. The aim will be to begin to publish results from the Autumn of this year, and with on-going outputs until early 2017. The aim is to publish local authority population projections in September 2016. The timing will be subject to appropriate data being available and any methodological issues that may arise, and users will be kept informed.

Do you agree with this timetable?

yes	14
no	

comments

- (I presume you are now aware that, following the consultation, ONS have reverted to a 2 year cycle of projections).
- It would be useful to clarify when the household projections would be released.
- While we would like more regular updates and feel that this would be of use both to ourselves and our members we fully understand the constraints faced in relation to the availability of data from other sources which you are reliant upon.
- Agree, although September does seem quite close now. The challenge for local planning authorities is to ensure that the evidence base on population and household change is kept up-to-date as the plan-making and examination process continues, including responding to additional release of Welsh Government household projections. It is recognised though that all LDPs have their own timeframes and are at different stages so the production of the statistics will never completely dovetail with all LPAs.

What are your future requirements for sub-national population and household projections following this round of projections?

comments

- Just for updated figures to be available at regular intervals (eg 2-3 years)
- My county is quite diverse with extremely rural and more urban areas and having county-wide information is not especially useful in looking at future planning. Ward level at the least and preferably down to LSOA would be useful.
- National Park Authorities primarily use population and household projections for the development of policy and strategy. Local Development Plans are reviewed on a 4 yearly cycle, this cycle is the primary driver for our future requirements for projections.
- Ongoing updates to inform the Local Housing Market Assessment and LDP Review.
- Projections are a key dataset, particularly as forecasting future needs and potential outcomes becomes a greater priority in the evidence needed to inform work around the Well-being of Future Generation Act needs assessments and forward plans. Welsh Government's population and household figures form the denominators for much of that forecasting work.
 - Alongside this, ongoing monitoring of housing needs through LDPs and local housing strategies (both overall figures and within definitions of social/affordable housing) need regularly produced projections to help with sense checks of local evidence gathering, and to monitor how population and household formation dynamics are changing.

- Population projections inform many aspects of service planning – as well as land-use issues such as employment land requirements and housing need, they also give indicators of growing social care needs, potential changes in demands on waste collection services or provision of energy and water and form the basis of calculations around prevalence of illness or disease.
- It would be beneficial for the population and household projections to be published at the same time as, from a planning perspective, it is the household projections that are the starting point for assessing housing requirements. The delay between the publication of the two sets of projections has the potential to cause uncertainty in the preparation of development plans.
- As stated previously we would like to see the inclusion of equality data within these sets
- In general terms, the current frequency and arrangements work well. Following adoption of Swansea's LDP, anticipated in late 2017, in-line with national planning guidance the Council will prepare an annual monitoring report (AMR) on the Plan. LDP review is required 4-yearly but with the option of a selective review depending on the findings of the AMR. Updated Welsh Government local authority household projections will be a key consideration. We value the production of the official variant local authority household projections in addition to the principal projection. They provide a basis for testing the demographic trends on which the projections are based in line with national planning policy guidance, for example the effects of using longer term trends. The Council has taken forward the higher variant 2011 based projection in its LDP. Recent research undertaken by the RTPi recommended that Welsh Government explores the possibility of preparing local authority household projections specifically for the purposes of land use planning which consider longer term trends; a good practice guide on the use of household projections in preparing LDPs; and skills training. See link to the report here: http://www.rtpi.org.uk/media/1653688/rtpi_research_report_household_projections_in_wales_full_report_13_january_2016.pdf
- The projections are a key dataset for planning future requirements of services, housing and for change. The projections is used as evidence to inform the local development plans and this will be implemented in accordance with their own monitoring review schedule, this data should be given a high priority to enable LAs to review data in accordance with their review. In addition to the Principal projection (based on the short term - 5 years) a Medium Term Projection (based on 10 Years data) should be released alongside the Principal projection, this medium term projection could be an essential element for comparison of trends and to smooth out the highs and lows of the components used and enable direct comparison to the short term.

How frequently do you think sub-national population projections and household projections should be produced, taking into account the need to prioritise Welsh Government statistical work?

once every two years	4
once every three years	8
once every four years	
other - please specify	2

comments

- The frequency depends on the accuracy, which will diminish as the projection horizon approaches. Therefore if annual evaluation indicates that the projection for that year is a good match to the actual estimate, then there is little need for it to be revised. If the evaluation indicates important deviation, and or a deviating trend, then revision becomes necessary.
- As mentioned above the primary use of projections for National Park Authorities (and other LPAs) is for LDP development. A release cycle of 2 years would give all LPAs access to recent figures for housing and population when preparing their deposit plans. It would also be helpful if the projections for Local Authorities and National Park Authorities were done concurrently as this would enable more discussion and joint working.

- Local Authorities are required to produce a biennial Local Housing Market Assessment. Whilst a new set of projections would be welcomed every two years, I do not feel that the frequency should be elongated beyond a three year period to help ensure that the most recent projections are considered when calculating housing need.
- ONS will be keeping with the 2 year publication cycle (for both NPP and SNPP) at the present time.
- Projections need to be released to a time table that is sufficiently responsive to changes in population growth and household formation (particularly with reference to that most volatile and impactful element of change, migration), without causing too much friction for the longer term planning processes they are primarily used within. Two yearly updates are too frequent for strategic land-use planning processes for example, and can cause considerable upsets within the LDP development programme if (when!) there are significant differences between the old set and new set of official sub-national projections which are produced during the LDP consultation period in particular.
 - Four years may be too long to provide a timely analysis of drivers of population change for shorter term planning (responding to changes in need for provision of care for the elderly for example, in areas which see high levels of retirement age migration).
 - A three yearly update sits well with the use of projections in the RSG/SSA calculation, which currently runs to a three yearly cycle. Perhaps look to align the timetable more closely with this cycle? The case for how often projections should be produced is better made if tied to one of the key applications of the data rather than to resource constraints.
- As above, the two sets of projections should be published at the same time.
- As per ONS data releases
- The current intention mentioned above for figures to be updated once every three years appears a reasonable compromise between keeping projections up to date, the practicalities of achieving all the work involved in their preparation, and the balancing act of not rendering Council plans out of date at a very early stage. Two years seems too short a period, and four seems too long - whether for planning policy or other, wider policy areas.
- With LAs required to review LDPs every four years following adoption and as LAs will have different review dates, a timely release of the projection is essential. The time lag that has occurred since releasing the 2011 LA projections does raise concerns in planning for services. As the National Parks projections were based on 2013 data, it would seem sensible to use the latest available data for the next set of LA projections. I support a 3 year cycle as this would correspond to the RSG cycle, therefore a timetable alignment with the RSG may be beneficial. Although I believe a three year period should give LAs sufficient data for the LDPs to be reviewed it is also important to ensure that projections are produced using a Census date for the base Year.

The UK Statistics Authority have proposed that the Welsh Government should work with the Office for National Statistics and other UK administrations to align the base year for sub-national and national projections where possible – this is the current working proposal unless there is a clear user need for a different base year in Wales (as we with the 2011 Census where the need for updated projections in Wales was prioritized ahead of waiting for 2012-based national projections).

Do you agree with this approach?

yes	13
no	

comments

- As long as this doesn't adversely delay production.
- Generally a reasonable approach to try and align output timetables between constituent countries of the UK. However, need to be sure to avoid our timetables being dictated by English (or other nations') priorities. And will need assurance that aligning timetables will not be a first step to aligning methodologies/outputs.

- As we recommend that our members use varied sources of data, including the Census, we think that having parity of approach between these would help ensure that there is consistency in the data they use. This would help ensure their equality impact assessments robust and would help them (and Tai Pawb) when carrying out analysis of services against external sources of data.
- This seems logical in principle, but relies on everyone working to a three-year cycle, and I'm not sure this will happen going forward? We should only do sub-national projections in the same timeframe if it suits our purposes, and it isn't just arbitrary - having Wales-level projections to align with the rest of the UK is more important.
- I see this as a reasonable approach to align output but aligning methodologies would be essential.

The Welsh Government plans to publish household estimates annually in September each year.

Do you need household estimates to be produced annually, and if so for what purposes?

yes	6
no	7

comments

- We use the population projections to check and update our local housing market assessment. We will also use the projections to assess our affordable homes delivery plan.
- Biennially would be sufficient.
- Used for possible housing mix discussions with developers (new dwellings); checking single person discounts against our Council Tax; for estimating demand for household waste collection/recycling; denominator for measuring homelessness performance indicators; checking housebuilding completions against estimated increase in household numbers
 - I am able to produce the household estimates myself very quickly using MYE and household membership data within the POPGROUP suite of programs, as there are no issues around methodology change or assumptions to be considered. It should really only be a matter of an hour or so (if that) to produce annual updates for the whole of Wales. If staff resources need to be conserved - publish just the data on StatsWales and don't produce an annual bulletin.
 - ADDITIONAL NOTE: consider publishing 'One person household – aged 65+' (or some combination of 65-74; 75-84, 85+, all of which is available from POPGROUP output files) as a standard with in the StatsWales datacubes as this is very useful when looking at older people and potential care needs.
- Annual publication would help our members with the completion of their equality impact assessments - if this information could also include full equality data
- To me, it seems logical that household and population estimates are both produced annually, and I would hope this can continue, as the estimates are used across a number of service areas in the Council, including planning, housing, revenues (e.g. Council Tax), service planning (at household level), in LA performance indicators, etc. I would also be surprised if this is a very resource-intensive exercise, i.e. inputting the latest data into an established model. We could survive with a much simpler (or minimal) statistical bulletin for this if that would help in resource terms.
- Household estimates are used to monitor annual changes such as average household size and private population.

Does the timing meet your needs?

yes	7
no	

comments

- n/a
- Could be produced closer to the MYE release, as all data needed to produce them is released at that time (late June)
- As noted earlier, annual publication is preferable. Also, in terms of timeliness, it would be useful if the release of household estimates was closer to the annual population estimates.

ONS annually publish population estimates for Wales and local authorities in Wales. Historically the Welsh Government have provided a bulletin presenting the data and summary commentary. In line with a previous consultation, where it was sought to prioritise on outputs that added value by removing duplication with other statistical producers, it is intended in future to only update the StatsWales tables when ONS publish new data and ensure users are made aware that ONS have published the latest data.

Does this proposal cause you any difficulties?

yes	1
no	10

comments

- This does not cause me any problems personally as I am an experienced demographer, and feel confident I am able to interpret the statistics myself, and share this in a meaningful way with my organisation. However, I think it would be a shame to discontinue WG's production of a MYE research bulletin. Though ONS do, indeed, produce their own report, the specifically Welsh aspects are swamped within the larger context. Population data are key outputs for measuring and monitoring the nation, and not producing a national commentary on the official population estimates potentially reduces our understanding of demographic issues, seems to demote the importance of MYE compared to other datasets and would weaken my faith in Welsh Government's in-house expertise around demographic matters.
 - Additionally we need to consider that demographic expertise is unevenly spread across local government in Wales and some UAs (and other public sector bodies) will need considerable guidance when looking at demographic products. Demographic forecasting expertise at the local level in particular seems to be reducing across Wales, which given the increased emphasis on local evidence coming from the Well-being of Future Generations Act, Planning Policy Wales (Jan 2016) and requirements for understanding key demographics in the needs analysis of the Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act seems a risk we should be facing up to as a research community. We should be increasing the profile of demographic data and our inherent expertise rather than demoting it.
- The updating of the StatsWales tables in line with the above does not cause any significant difficulty as long as the communication relating to updates is timely and responsive. We would like to see equality data included in these updates, or links to where this information can be accessed. However, there may be some concern with losing the mid-year update for other reasons (see below).
- Agree. In principle this seems logical when resources are finite - and the data is the most important thing. However, I would not support going from a detailed bulletin to no bulletin in one step, as there are users in Wales that rely on some interpretation and need to be reassured that WG has a good 'handle' on these issues. Perhaps there is another way, e.g. to work with ONS on getting a suitable Welsh dimension in their outputs? After all, they are meant to be the statistical offices serving England and Wales, and at least this might then reduce the direct demands you have for producing products similar to those published by ONS.

- Although I feel confident I am able to interpret the statistics myself I feel it would be a shame to discontinue WG's production of a MYE research bulletin as this is used by many non-experienced demographers. Additionally with the short supply of experienced demographers across LAs, the need for the WG to continue to produce demographic products and give Welsh statistics guidance should remain a high priority.

Do you make use of the mid-year estimates for Wales statistical bulletin (excluding the data itself which will of course continue to exist and be published by ONS) and, if so, for what purpose?

yes	5
no	9

comments

- Sometimes I quote directly from the bulletin - an official quote can have more weight than that of a mere researcher!
 - I also often lift translations of technical terms directly from the WG bulletins, to ensure consistency (and save myself having to wrack my brains to help our in-house translators get it right)
- Tai Pawb recommends that its members utilise the mid-year estimates bulletin. We will highlight information contained within it to our members. The format of the bulletin is easy for those not working in a stats based role to access the information. possibly only relying on the data tables themselves will result in this information becoming more inaccessible for some people.
- To get an overview and summary of the latest position
- Usually around the time of its release mostly, to get the key messages, any particular, important trends/issues in Wales, etc. I feel this is still valuable in some way.
- I use the bulletin to give official quotes but I understand that there are many people who don't deal with statistics it invaluable.

The Statistics for Wales website is used to provide bulletins and methodological information, and StatsWales to provide the underlying data. The aim is to provide clear links between them.

Are you able to easily find the information you want on the Statistics for Wales and StatsWales websites?

yes	11
no	3

comments

- Yes, although I sometimes find it easier to find the information on Statistics for Wales via Google rather than the website itself.
- The site is ok but it could be better and made easier for the users to find the information required.
- We only use StatsWales and can generally easily find what we want though sometimes it is necessary to use the search box as not all datasets are where you intuitively might expect them. For example users may expect QOF data to be in General Medical Services rather than NHS Primary & Community Activity. However, the search function works well.
- A feature that we would like to see on the stats wales website is the ability to query the data in much the same way as you can on the NOMIS website where you can be very specific about the data that is displayed or exported and in what format it is exported.
- Signposts to some external sites could be useful/more prominent
- For those who are not used to manipulating data tables and searching for statistical information this can provide challenging. There is particular difficulty in accessing and making correlations to equality data. Additionally some data sets don't have percentage breakdowns, which can make cross comparison and data usage more challenging for our members.

- Statistics for Wales generally is logical overall, in terms of its organisation by theme. I am getting better at StatsWales generally - although it's taken a while (which may say as much about me as anything else!). Having the StatsWales link on the front page is also important - it was difficult for a while when this wasn't the case.
- links to other statistical data would be useful, such as ONS or Nomis

Is it clear to you what information you can find where (between the Statistics for Wales and StatsWales websites)?

yes	9
no	3

comments

- Not always but I usually find what I need eventually although this may be through Google or trial and error.
- We have not heard of the the Statistics for Wales website. See above comment regarding navigating StatsWales.
- Many of our members will not regularly use the website and often will not work in a statistical based role - although they need to access this information for the completion of Equality Impact Assessments and also service provision development. We would recommend that a series of workshops is provided to the housing sector on 'finding and using statistical data for non-stats roles'.
- For me, yes - but possibly not so much for other, more ad hoc users?
- Although the topic headings are easy to understand the type of data held within the sections could be clearer. I would like to see links between the StatsWales and the Statistics for Wales web pages, an example could be if you are on StatsWales/housing/households - a link across to statistics & research/housing and regeneration/households would be helpful.

The Office for National Statistics also publish population data for Wales.

What improvements could we make to improve the coherence across all our websites to make it as easy as possible for users to find

comments

- Provide links to similar information on the ONS website from the Statistics for Wales and StatsWales sites.
- This has not caused us any problems.
- Stats Wales already does good job of this by providing detailed metadata, which includes weblinks to the related tables and reports on the ONS website. Better coherence could be achieved by ONS linking back to stats wales in a similar fashion. As an example the National Population Projection tables for Wales are on the ONS website, where they are available as an xls download. There could be a link to stats wales where you can just view the data in a web browser.
- I prefer the layout / functionality of Nomis and find it easier to use and navigate.
 - Colleagues have commented that they are still unsure how to navigate around the datacubes on StatWales or change data views - I think some online training was offered (I remember signing up for something along those lines) but I'm not sure if that materialised.
 - Not always clear where some data is held in StatsWales, as it is arranged by policy headings rather than common sense (community safety and social inclusion seem strange bedfellows for example - if they were more bluntly called crime and deprivation you wouldn't lump them together).
 - And my personal bugbear - household estimates and projections data should be in the population theme, not hidden within housing.

- Clearer links to the information - in particular equality information. Clearer explanation of the type of information which is available, clearer links to how to access support to access information which is needed.
- I just think you need to work at providing as much clarity as possible about where to find what, and link between the two (ONS and WG). This should work both ways - ONS should also be encouraged / coerced to do this, i.e. add relevant links from their site to WG.
- Better signposting, Using links to data - an example would be from the projections to components of change, then linking to births data and/or deaths data. Another example would be in the pdf/bulletins links to data e.g. statswales would be useful.

If you have any views on related issues which we have not specifically addressed above, please use this space to tell us about them:

comments

- The National Park Authorities would like to draw attention to a recent research study that RTPI Cymru commissioned the School of Planning and Geography Cardiff University to consider the process for developing robust housing projections for Local Development Plans in Wales. This study is available from: <http://www.rtpi.org.uk/the-rtpi-near-you/rtpi-cymru/policy-in-wales/wales-planning-research-agenda/process-for-developing-housing-evidence-for-ldps/>. The research does highlight some key recommendations that should be taken into consideration when WG publish pop and hhold projections.
 - The need to promote greater use of the variant projections alongside the principal projections in the Welsh Government households projections
 - Exploring the development of Welsh Government local authority level household projections using longer-term trend data to better reflect the character and purposes of the planning system e.g. projections based on a 15 year migration trend as well as the 10 year migration trends.
 - Delivering further training and skills development opportunities so that local planning authorities and other stakeholders can interpret, refine and adapt household projections data.
 - Welsh Government publish papers on variant projections for local authorities, that demonstrate the uncertainties in producing population and household projections but also provide interesting insight. The 10 year migration assumption is of particular interest when producing long term land use strategies. We would like to see variant projections made available for National Park Authorities if possible.
- ONS are planning to follow Scotland's work on variant subnational projections with a research report into producing these for English areas later this year - we've had a number of users expressing interest in subnational variants during our own consultation.
- ONS look to keep the subnational projections for areas in England consistent with the NPP - not sure if this consistency is something you are thinking of revisiting for the Welsh subnational projections
- Hoffem gynnig ambell sylw mewn ymateb i'ch ymgynghoriad ynghylch allbynnau ystadegol ar amcangyfrifon ac amcanestyniadau poblogaeth ac aelwydydd.
 Pryderwn fod yr ystadegau a'u defnydd wedi niweidio'r Gymraeg dros y blynyddoedd gan olygu adeiladau tai nad oes angen lleol ar eu cyfer. Yn benodol mae'r dulliau cyfredol a ddefnyddir i baratoi'r ystadegau yn achosi peth pryder inni.
 - Yn y ddogfen 'Amcanestyniadau Poblogaeth Is-genedlaethol: Adroddiad Technegol ar Amcanestyniadau Poblogaeth Awdurdodau Lleol a Pharciau Cenedlaethol ar gyfer Cymru' a gyhoeddwyd gan Wasanaethau Gwybodaeth a Dadansoddi Llywodraeth Cymru yn Ionawr 2016, nodir bod yr amcanestyniadau cyfunol ar gyfer awdurdodau lleol yn uwch na Chymru yn ei chyfanrwydd. Nodwn fod tudalen 5 y ddogfen yn nodi bod y bwlch rhwng y ddau amcanestyniad dros gyfnod yr amcanestyniadau yn cynyddu i oddeutu 37,000 yn 2020 ac i 54,000 yn 2030.

- Dylid gwneud hynny'n gliriach yn enwedig wrth ystyried eu defnydd mewn penderfyniadau cynllunio. Mae'n debyg bod y data yn awgrymu bod yr amcanestyniad cenedlaethol Cymreig yn gadarnach na'r llall felly dylai fod cafeat eithaf cryf ar yr amcanestyniadau awdurdodau lleol.
 - Mae rhagdybiaeth bod llif mudo statig yn y prif amcanestyniad. Mae hynny'n golygu y byddai disgwyl i fewnfudo hanesyddol uchel gael ei ailadrodd dros bob cyfnod amser wrth fynd ymlaen. Mae tudalen 24 o'r ddogfen a gyhoeddir yn Ionawr 2016 yn gwneud hynny'n glir. Mewn rhai ardaloedd lle does dim twf naturiol yn y boblogaeth, mynegir pryder bod yr amcanestyniadau yn achosi'r mudo, mewn ffordd anuniongyrchol, gan eu bod yn arwain at adeiladu tai nad oes angen iddynt yn lleol. Awgrymwn felly y dylid edrych i mewn i'r mater hwn.
 - O ran dod o hyd i ddata ar wefannau, mae hyn yn gallu bod yn anodd oherwydd cymhlethdod gwefan Llywodraeth Cymru a StatsCymru. Mae hefyd yn siomedig nad yw'r datganiadau ystadegol, fel rheol, yn cael eu cyhoeddi yn Gymraeg. Mae'r Llywodraeth am weld rhagor o ymchwil a dysgu yn digwydd drwy'r Gymraeg ym mhrifysgolion Cymru, ond mae'r arfer o gyhoeddi eu hymchwil eu hunain yn Saesneg yn unig yn milwrio yn erbyn annog myfyrwyr a allai fod yn defnyddio data rhag dewis i ddilyn eu hastudiaethau drwy'r Gymraeg.
 - Why is this questionnaire a spreadsheet? Why not an on-line survey? Or a fillable form in Word? I've had to do a fair bit of fiddling with comment boxes to make all the text visible, and of course spell-checking isn't automatic in Excel (so please forgive any typos).
 - Of particular relevance to this consultation, there is a recommendation to explore the development of local authority level household projections using longer-term trend data to better reflect the character and purposes of the planning system. This recommendation suggests that Welsh Government explores the practicality of preparing a set of Welsh Government local authority level household projections specifically for the purposes of land use planning that utilise longer-term trend data on which to base the projected figures and should include the possibility of developing household projections for National Park Authorities.
 - The email consultation list should be expanded to include more representatives from local authority planning departments as key users of the statistics. I have previously attended validation events and used to receive updated but appear to no longer be on the mailing list.
 - Thanks for the opportunity to comment.
-

the organisations which responded

- City of Cardiff Council
 - Neath Port Talbot local authority
 - anonymous (local authority)
 - anonymous (local authority)
 - Public Health Wales Observatory
 - anonymous (National Park)
 - anonymous (National Park)
 - anonymous (National Park)
 - Office for National Statistics
 - Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council
 - Cymdeithas yr Iaith Gymraeg
 - Conwy County Borough Council
 - Royal Town Planning Institute
 - Caerphilly County Borough Council
 - Tai Pawb
 - anonymous (NHS)
 - City & County of Swansea
 - anonymous (local authority)
-