

LONDON BOROUGH OF SOUTHWARK OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY SUB COMMITTEE

IMPS/ Task Force Revisions to population estimates

Summary

High profile lobby campaigns conducted by councils have criticised the accuracy of migration population figures. There have been three Parliamentary select committees that have called for improvements to migration estimates including advice and direction given to government from influential bodies such as the former Statistics Commission; Bank of England and the Commission on Equalities and Human Rights.

This lobby pressure has galvanised the Office for National Statistics (ONS) into accelerating migration statistics improvement plans.

Intermediate revisions have already been implemented by the ONS in 2007 that had significant effect to London's predicted future population growth reducing future migrant numbers by some 60,000 people.

The ONS is bringing forward more revisions to its methodology that will affect the population of Southwark. It is therefore recommended that the council monitor, engage and where appropriate lobby against any short term revisions to population projections that are likely to adversely affect the borough's population estimates.

Recommended immediate actions for the Council

- Engage ONS and find out more detail about plans and consequences to Southwark of the IMPS programme
- Build technical case reviewing these revisions and engage allies and challenge changes if necessary

1. What are the proposed improvements?

The ONS is bringing forward a package of measures to improve migration population statistics. It is important to note that these are being timed to coincide with the next three year funding settlement and will directly influence the Revenue Support Grant that Southwark Council receives.

It is also intended that these changes to migration estimates will be retrospective and alter the council's population figures as far back as 2002.

The package will include the following elements that will directly affect the council's population estimates used in the next three year funding settlement:

1.1 Proposed improvements

- The ONS will introduce statistical modelling to improve the distribution of migration within London. New immigration models will make use of administrative data such as National Insurance registrations and GP registrations and other sources to determine how many migrants each borough will receive in London
- For the first time the ONS will introduce emigration models to determine how many people it estimates are leaving each London borough. This work will be quality assured by Southampton University

- The ONS will use Higher Education Statistics Agency (HESA) data to improve the distribution of students moving within England & Wales and between the constituent countries of the UK.
- The ONS is looking to increase the sample sizes it uses to determine migration into and out of the country through a survey called the International Passenger Survey (IPS).

Issues and actions for Southwark

1. What are the administrative data sources being used to drive the models estimating immigration and emigration? How will these affect the council's population flows?
2. Why has new modelling been introduced which was not part of previous ONS work programmes?

1.2 Proposed improvements which do not directly affect population estimates used for next three year settlement:

- The ONS will produce for the first time estimates of short-term immigration (migrants staying in the UK for between 3-12months) at local authority level
- The ONS will publish 'migration indicators' at national and local authority levels. It is not known what is meant by 'migration indicators'
- The ONS will report on the development of quality measures around mid-year estimates. For the first time it seems there will be an analysis of how accurate estimates are for each local authority.

Issues and actions for Southwark

1. London attracts a considerable amount of short term migration. The council should consider if Southwark also attracts migration of this nature and lobby for the inclusion of these in any future funding settlement.
2. The council needs further information concerning migration indicators
3. What quality assurance measures will be used to sense check estimates?

2. Other improvements

Some further improvements to migration estimates are contained within a government Interdepartmental Task Force report of December 2006. They include long-term ambitions such as the roll out of e-boarders (scanning each individual in and out of the UK) and a national ID card to short term improvements such as increasing sample size of current surveys such as the International Passenger Survey and the use of a new Integrated Household Survey (IHS) to provide updated information on the movement of people to and within the UK.

The Task Force work plan focuses on five main areas:

- Improving the data available on numbers entering and leaving the United Kingdom;
- Making effective use of new and existing administrative and survey data sources;
- Improving local population estimates and projections used in allocating resources and developing services;
- Improving the public reporting of population and migration statistics;
- Establishing a wider range of timely indicators and analysis to inform the evidence base on migration and its impacts on policy and public services.

The five working groups report to the Migration Statistics Improvement Programme Board which also receives input from government departments, the Local Government Association, and the devolved administrations. The work of the board is

overseen by a new Ministerial Group, jointly chaired by John Healey, the Minister for Communities and Local Government, and Liam Byrne, the Minister for Borders and Immigration.

The main areas of concern for the council are the short term revisions which may be used in the next three year settlement, these being:

- Port survey review (international Passenger Survey)
- Short term migration
- Administrative data sources

2.2 Port survey review (International Passenger Survey)

The International Passenger Survey is conducted at a number of ports of entry and samples only 0.2% of what is believed to be all passengers arriving in the UK. (250,000 people).

Of these 250,000 interviews only 2,900 were identified as migrants in 2004 (1.2%). The number of emigrants leaving the country is determined on an even smaller sample of just 750 in 2004. For example, the estimates for Pakistan, quite an important source country, were based upon 231 interviews of immigrants and 6 interviews of emigrants.

In 2005 things didn't get much better. Of these 250,000 interviews only 2,965 were identified as migrants in 2005 (1.2%). The number of emigrants leaving the country is determined on an even smaller sample of just 781 in 2005. The estimates for A8 countries, a critical source area, were based upon 78 interviews of immigrants and 19 interviews of emigrants.

Of the 2,965 migrants identified, 2740 were identified at Heathrow leaving just 225 migrants identified at all other ports of entry. The numbers are then apportioned to local authority level using formula based analysis using the 2001 census data on migrants.

As a result of high profile criticism of the International Passenger Survey the ONS has conducted a Port Survey review and is in the process of implementing recommendations. These recommendations include increasing sample sizes at ports of entry, fundamentally changing the survey questions and using administrative data to inform findings.

Changes already undertaken:

- Increased survey sample sizes with migrants (in particular at Stanstead, Luton and Manchester)
- Improved coverage of Short Term migrants using this survey

Issues and actions for Southwark

- How has the introduction of migration filter shifts and larger sample sizes affected the measurement of migration to the UK?
- How has this revision to sample size affected the distribution mechanism throughout the UK?
- How has the identification of STM in the survey changed the stock and distribution of migration within the UK?
- Is the decision to develop the IPS and increase the sample size the right decision? Should a more fundamental change in measurement be pursued rather than pouring resource into this survey solution?

- Can we see the minutes of the Migration Statistics Improvement Programme Board?

Proposed changes underway:

- Survey redesign is being developed with a larger main migration sample instead of the current main tourism sample
- Sample design, questionnaire review, piloting and system development work are in progress during 2008
- Administrative data comparisons are being thought through. Interdepartmental work is under way to specify data that might be drawn from e-boarders and Points Based System.

Issues and actions for Southwark

- What questions are being considered for inclusion in the new survey? How will the survey deal with first onward moves?

2.3 Short term migration (STM)

The ONS has published two sets of 'experimental' data on STM. This data is not considered robust enough to be included as official statistics.

Issues and actions for Southwark

- How are STMs distributed to local authority level? Are there likely to be changes to this methodology and what are they?
- Will STM figures be used in the next three year funding settlement?

2.4 Administrative data sources

Administrative data sources are being used in the new modelling described above. It will be extremely important that the council understands how its local administrative data i.e. National Insurance registrations or GP registrations, will be used in this modelling.

It is also expected that the e-Boarders system will cover 60% of passenger numbers by the end of 2009; 95% by end of December 2010; and 100% by March 2014. The Home Office is researching ways of using this administrative information to improve migration flow estimates.

Issues and actions for Southwark

- How will this information be used by the ONS to inform on the movement of migrants to the UK but also within the UK?

2.5 Integrated household survey (Labour Force Survey)

The Labour Force Survey (LFS) is a quarterly sample survey of households living at private addresses in Great Britain. Its purpose is to provide information on the UK labour market that can then be used to develop, manage, evaluate and report on labour market policies. It is not designed to be a measure of migration.

The ONS itself has identified that certain Household types are under-represented in the Labour Force survey as profiled below. (source – Labour Force Survey User Guide – Volume 1 : Background and Methodology 2003)

Households underrepresented in the LFS are:

- Households in London
- Those rented from Housing Association or with job
- Those in converted or shared accommodation

- Households with three or more cars or vans
- Those comprising only 1 adult, aged 16-19
- Those with head of household aged 16-24
- Those with only single head of household
- Those with the head born in New Commonwealth country.

Although the ONS claim this is a large survey and gives better data than the International Passenger Survey it still only conducts on average 700 interviews with households in Westminster. This is far too small to ensure that migration is adequately measured. Therefore the ONS is proposing to conduct a much bigger survey called the Integrated Household Survey.

We understand that the LFS sample of 55,000 responding households represents only 0.2% of the GB population, and that the ONS is having to boost sample sizes by aggregating London Boroughs. Given the unique nature of Southwark's dynamic population the council is very concerned about how much this cluster will still be representative of the borough.

The ONS is developing the Integrated Household Survey to replace the LFS in January 2009.

Issues and actions for Southwark

- What are the IHS core questions that will be used and how will these affect Southwark's estimates?
- Have any of the concerns raised by other authorities about the Labour Force Survey been taken into account in the new IHS survey?
- Should LBS call for delay in the implementation of further changes?

Appendix A

Lists of subject experts working with the ONS IMPS/Task Force

Professor Tony Champion (University of Newcastle)

Professor David Coleman (University of Oxford)

Professor Danny Dorling (University of Sheffield)

Professor Tony Fielding (University of Sussex)

Mr John Hollis (GLA)

Professor Russell King (University of Sussex)

Professor Marek Kupiszewski (Central European Forum for Migration Research, Warsaw, Poland)

Professor Mike Murphy (London School of Economics)

Professor Philip Ogden (Queen Mary Westfield College, University of London)

Professor Michel Poulain (University of Louvain, Belgium)

Professor Phil Rees (University of Leeds)

Professor John Salt (University College London)

Dr Ludi Simpson (University of Manchester)

Dr Dhananjayan Sriskandarajah (Head of Migration, Equalities and Citizenship, Institute for Public Policy Research)

Dr John Stillwell (University of Leeds)

Professor Paul White (University of Sheffield)

Professor Robert Woods (University of Liverpool)

Professor Robert Wright (University of Strathclyde)