

RPG STEERING COMMITTEE MEETING – 25TH OF NOVEMBER 2005-11-14

ITEM NO.3

Report on CSO Population Projections for GDA 2006-2021

Introduction

The CSO published regional population projections in May 2005, following on from the national projections published in April 2005. The projections cover 2006 to 2021, showing projections for the intervening years of 2011 and 2016.

The CSO in the preparation of the national figures give six growth scenarios, of which two were applied to the regional breakdown. Of these, scenario M1F2 is seen as the most likely. M1F2 is a continuation of existing trends, and forecasts a steadying of internal migration from the high of the 2002 Census.

*M1=Immigration continuing at a high level then moderating (higher of two projections).
F2= Fertility levels projected (Total Fertility Rate to decrease to 1.85 and to remain constant thereafter, midrange of three options.)*

A summary of the projections is shown in the table below.

Table 1: Population Projections CSO April 2005

	2006	2011	2016	2021
Dublin	1,186,000	1,281,000	1,374,000	1,440,000
Mid-East	459,000	515,000	572,000	623,000
GDA Total	1,645,000	1,796,000	1,946,000	2,063,000

Projections and the Regional Planning Guidelines

When the CSO figures are compared to the projections in the Regional Planning Guidelines (RPG) (see table 2 below) there is a strong similarity for the projection for the total region and the high projection made in the RPG document.

Table 2: RPG Population Projections. (Table 7.1, page 126)

Population	2002	2010	2016	2020
LOW-total	1,535,446	1,696,581	1,787,450	1,831,992
<i>Dublin</i>	1,122,821	1,235,654	1,301,836	1,334,276
<i>Mid-East</i>	412,625	460,927	485,614	497,716
HIGH-total	1,535,446	1,792,891	1,947,659	2,048,980
<i>Dublin</i>	1,122,821	1,292,689	1,418,519	1,492,313
<i>Mid-East</i>	412,625	482,202	529,140	556,667

The RPGs are written to set out long term strategic Policy from 2004 to 2016. Effectively however, the RPG document will be the subject of a significant review process which will culminate in a published revised RPG in 2010. For this reason this report will address the issue of projections and policy to 2010 only, as a new policy and approach will be in place after this date, based on figures from 2006 Census and trends following the Census date.

When the RPGs were being produced the Low projection seemed the more likely outcome and was consistent with the low projections favoured in the National Spatial Strategy.

In estimating the number of housing required for each county, the low projection was the figure applied.

Table 3: RPG Projections for Housing Demand (Table 7.4, page 127)

Housing (Low)	2002	2010
Dublin	379,372	474,589
Mid-East	128,724	167,011
TOTAL	508,096	641,600

However in setting policy direction for the Region the RPG document significantly increased the number of housing units to be provided by each Authority area for the time period up to 2010. A number of reasons for doing this are set out in the text which are listed below

- To avoid inflation of price through constraint by only providing the minimum
- To allow for lands which though zoned do not come forward in the short term for development
- To allow for second homes, empty units, obsolete stock
- To allow for front-loading of housing from the long term projections to 2016, where extra units enter the supply prior to 2010.
- To allow for the possibility that economic growth exceeded expectations.

Table 4: RPG Housing Unit Allocations (Table 7.4, page 127)

Housing (Low)	2002	2010
Dublin	379,372	507,351
Mid-East	128,724	173,082
TOTAL	508,096	680,433

The possibility of growth exceeding that expected was provided for within the RPG. If the High Projection is carried into Housing based on the same percentage allocation of growth, as has been done below in Table 5, it can be seen that the RPGs have provided for the possibility of high growth within the GDA within the housing allocation up to 2010. Each county has by providing a limited volume of headroom with the County Plans ensured that unused land or empty stock can still be factored in on top of the possibility that the High Projections come to pass.

Table 5: RPG Projections for Housing Demand (Extrapolated from Table 7.2 & 7.3)

Housing (High)	2002	2010
Dublin	379,372	496,010
Mid-East	128,724	174,549
TOTAL	508,096	670,559

GDA as a Proportion of National Figures.

One other issue with the CSO projections in relation to the overall figure for the GDA is that it is projecting from current population trends in the State. The growth which has occurred over the previous years has happened outside of a national planning policy, which will not be the case going forward. In examining the figures presented it is important to consider whether the figure allocated to Dublin as a percentage of overall growth will be affected by the implementation of the National Spatial Strategy which seeks to rebalance growth to the regions, whilst protecting the international competitiveness of Dublin.

The Department of Environment, Heritage and Local Government have indicated they are preparing a paper looking at CSO projections and how these interact with the National Spatial Strategy.

It is intended to do an updating report to this committee following the publication by the Department of their paper.

Conclusion

The revised CSO estimates for the Greater Dublin Area are very similar to the RPG 'high' projections. If current RPG targets are met, there is unlikely to be any significant deficit in supply up to 2010, due to the front loading of growth between 2004-2010 and 2010-2016, which ensured that provision was made for the possibility of high growth.

When the 2006 Census results are published this will provide a clearer picture as to whether growth is in line with CSO projections. If this is the case the update will examine whether higher allocations may be necessary, in light of what each County has already provided for in the County and City Plans.

The CSO projections highlight the importance of implementing the consolidation policies for the GDA Regions and the National Spatial Strategy. As the CSO projects current trends -not taking into account policies which may redirect growth; they

highlight the importance of implementing both policies to ensure that growth occurs in the most sustainable and integrated way.

The balance of growth based on current trends shows the Mid-East region taking a higher percentage of the overall growth than planned for in the RPGs. If current trends continue they could undermine the policies of the RPG to integrate service provision, transport and economic growth with housing.

It is therefore essential that the RPG office monitor regularly the rate of house building, the location of house constructions and the capacity to accommodate future growth so that the Steering Committee can ensure that the Guidelines remain on target to deliver the integrated expansion needed.