

# 2006 MID YEAR POPULATION ESTIMATES FOR HIGHLAND

May 2007

## Summary

- Highland has seen strong population growth for the fourth year in a row.
- The number of births in Highland has risen slightly for the fourth year in a row but is still outnumbered by deaths.
- Our population growth is due to sustained high levels of estimated net migration.

## Introduction

Briefing Note 19 presented the results of GROS Small Area Population estimates for 2005. This Briefing Note 20 updates the Highland population to mid 2006: we expect GROS to publish Small Area Estimates in late autumn 2007, and also 2006 based future population projections.

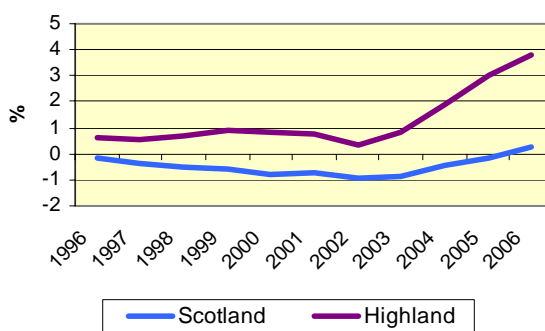
## The population of Highland

Figures released on 26<sup>th</sup> April 2007 by the General Register Office for Scotland (GROS) estimate the population of Highland to have been 215,310 on 30<sup>th</sup> June 2006, an increase of 1,720 (0.8%) over twelve months and an increase of 6,390 (3.1%) since 2001. At mid-2006, it was estimated that 18.3% of the population were aged under 16; 64.0% were aged 16-64 and 17.7% were aged 65 and over. The respective figures for 2005 were 18.5%; 63.9% and 17.5% showing that even over a 12 month period the ageing of our population is evident. The gender balance is unchanged with more females (51.1%) than males (48.9%) in Highland.

## Population change 2005-06

Between 2005 and 2006, 19 of the 32 Scottish Councils saw an increase, one was stable and 12 saw a decline (see Figure 3).

**Figure 1: Cumulative Percent Population Change 1996 to 2006**



Highland had the 9th highest percentage growth. The largest percentage increases were in Aberdeenshire (1.4%), Edinburgh (1.2%) and West Lothian (1.2%) while the largest declines were in Inverclyde (-0.7%), Shetland (-0.5%) and East Dunbartonshire (-0.5%). The population of Scotland as a whole increased by 22,100 people (0.4%).

## Population change 1996-2006

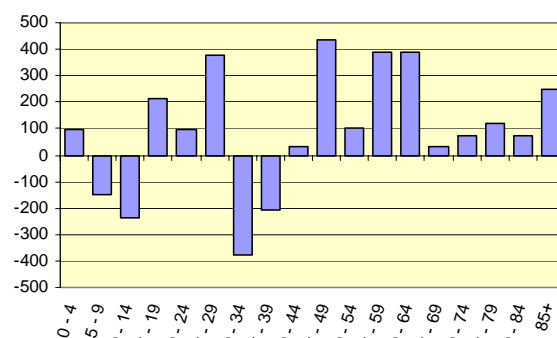
Over the decade since 1996 the population of Highland has increased by 3.2%. This is a larger long term increase than Scotland as a whole which saw an increase of 0.5% over the same period. The cumulative population change in both Highland and Scotland since 1996 is shown in Figure 1.

## Changing age structure of Highland's population

In the twelve months to June 2006 it is estimated that there are 201 fewer 0-15 year olds, 1,364 more 16-64 year olds and 557 more 65+ year olds in Highland. The figures for 2004 to 2005 were -90, 1,471 and 869 respectively, again confirming our ageing population.

Figure 2 shows the change in population between 2005 and 2006 by five year age group. The age groups showing a decline are the 5-14 year olds and those in their thirties. Population has risen in all age groups above 40 for the second year in succession, as has number of young adults aged 20-30. The latter is particularly encouraging as they have an important role to play in the future of the Highland economy and in some recent years we have not been particularly successful in

**Fig 2: Population change (number) by 5 year age band, Highland 2005-06 (GROS)**



attracting inward migrants in this age group.

### Factors contributing to population change

Three factors influence population change – births, deaths and migration. Over the past few years Highland’s population has been in a state of “natural decline” with more deaths per year than births. This means that without migration the Highland population would be in a state of decline. The past year has been no exception, with 2,306 deaths and only 2,226 births (although the number of births has risen for the fourth year in a row).

However, during 2005/06 1,720 more people (plus an additional 80 servicemen and prisoners) are estimated to have come to Highland to live than have left (net migration). This is a slightly lower

net migration figure than the previous two years (2,573 and 2,323) but continues the trend since 2001 of strong inward migration. It is also the fourth highest level of net migration anywhere in Scotland after Edinburgh (4,775) Aberdeenshire (2,862) and Glasgow (2,100). For comparison, The Wellbeing Alliance population projections assume a long term net inward migration figure of 700 annum.

### Further Information

The full GROS 2006 Population Estimates report and tables are available to download from:

<http://www.gro-scotland.gov.uk/statistics/publications-and-data/population-estimates/mid-2006-population-estimates-scotland/index.html>

