

Chapter 4

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Chapter 4

POPULATION

Introduction

4.1 Predicting population change is notoriously difficult because, of necessity, it is based on a number of assumptions. It is not a precise art or science. How many people will be born; how long they will live; whether they will 'migrate'; are all factors that affect both the size and characteristics of the population.

4.2 However, it is necessary to have some understanding of what is likely to happen to the City's population over the next decade, because of the implications for land-use planning. The provision of adequate housing and employment opportunities; the need for leisure and recreational facilities; schools, shops, roads; all generate requirements for land, and are all determined by the needs of the population they serve.

Past and Future Change

4.3 One factor that is of considerable value in determining likely future changes, is what has happened in the past. The population of Plymouth has in fact grown steadily over the past 20 years. The rate of growth has been quite modest, and the principal component of change has been migration. In other words, the 'usually resident population' has grown very little as a result of natural change (i.e. the difference between births and deaths), but has grown principally because of the number of people moving into the City in search of perceived job opportunities, and because of the superb environment, that the City has to offer.

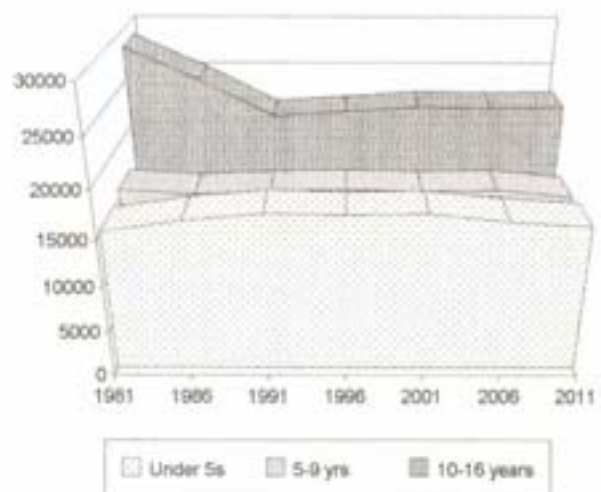
4.4 However, set against this are possible population changes resulting from the relocation of Armed Forces personnel from local bases. In forecasting terms, such policy decisions cannot be predicted. Their impact on the other hand can be considerable, and they may involve not only the Services personnel but also their dependents. In the event of such changes, an adjustment will be required to the demographic assessment which follows.

PROJECTED POPULATION CHANGE

4.5 If Plymouth continues to attract net immigration at the same level as it experienced between 1981 and 1991, the population could increase from an estimated current (1995) level of 257500, to 263100 by the year 2001. This level of growth is by no means uniform across all age groups.

4.6 Since the start of this decade, the decline in the number of schoolchildren experienced in the 1980's has been reversing. The level of growth is not expected to be as high as originally predicted. Rather, it is likely that the numbers of secondary school children will increase steadily until the end of this decade. Below this age, within the under 5s and the primary school age groups, only minor fluctuations are likely to occur.

FIGURE 4.1 NUMBER OF CHILDREN IN PLYMOUTH



4.7 The growth in the numbers of young adults, i.e. under 30s, experienced between 1981 and 1991 is likely to be more than offset by the anticipated fall over the current decade. The greatest fluctuation is likely to be seen in the under 25 age group. The fall in numbers experienced in the first half of this decade is likely to stabilise in the subsequent five years, and this will have an impact on the number of

trainees that will be coming into the labour market. That trough will then work its way through to affect the 25-30 age group in the latter half of the decade.

4.8 The projections indicate an increase in the population in the older working age groups. Increases in the numbers aged 30-39 and 50-59 are likely to be significant, with a growth of around 25% in the decade to 2001. This has implications for the job market and will increase the importance of retraining schemes, particularly in the use of new technologies, to provide a suitably skilled labour pool to meet the requirements of existing and potential new businesses.

4.9 In overall terms the total number of retired persons is likely to increase. Within the very elderly sector of the population (aged 85 and over) the increase is significant (averaging 2% per annum), and this growth rate will continue into the next millenium. This has obvious implications for the demand for nursing care and supervision in conjunction with residential care, and for organisations involved in the provision of health care and other services for the elderly. The population in the 75-84 age group is likely to continue to increase at a modest rate, whereas the 60-74 age group will experience a decrease in their numbers until the end of this decade, when subsequently this trend will reverse.

FIGURE 4.2 NUMBER OF ADULTS OF WORKING AGE

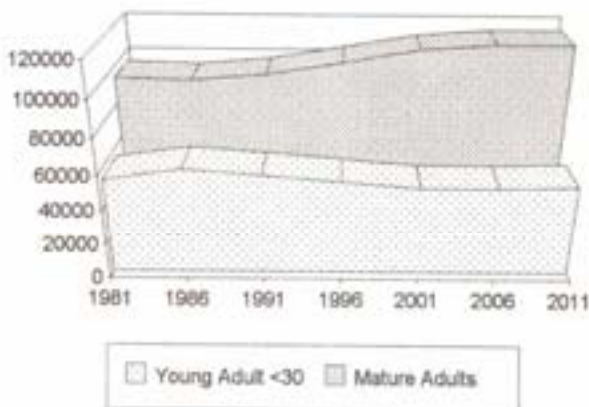


FIGURE 4.3 NUMBER OF PEOPLE OF RETIREMENT AGE

