
Ed Humpherson, Director General for Regulation

Sir Andrew Watson
Chair, CPRE Warwickshire
(by email)

3 December 2020

Dear Sir Andrew

Thank you for your letter of 13 November 2020 regarding the population projections and mid-year population estimates for Coventry.

We note that you have concerns around housing allocations resulting in the unnecessary loss of countryside within and around Coventry, which are based on decisions that you feel are mis-informed due to perceived inaccuracies of the population estimates on which the household projections and subsequent housing need are based.

In light of the matters raised within your letter we have decided to undertake a review of the population projections and population estimates produced by the Office for National Statistics (ONS) and how they are used.

It is not within our remit to regulate operational decisions made by government or local authorities, nor to form a judgement on decisions about government policy. The scope of our review will be formed around the principles within the [Code of Practice for Statistics](#) and will include ensuring that the official statistics are used appropriately, and that they can bear the weight put on them where they are used in decision making. To support this, we will review some of the methods and data that underpin the population projections and estimates in line with the Code.

We are aware that with the next [Census](#) taking place in March 2021 and the recently closed consultation from the Ministry for Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) on [changes to the planning system](#), which includes proposed changes to the standard method for assessing local housing need (LHN), a different picture may emerge of the housing need across England. We will therefore be looking at what broader lessons can be learnt on how these data are used to support decision making.

As part of our review, we will be engaging with ONS and MHCLG as well as speaking with other parties we have identified as being key stakeholders in this matter. We would also be very interested in meeting with yourself and your colleagues. We aim to share an update with our progress in early 2021 and will be in touch in due course.

I am copying this letter to Iain Bell, Deputy National Statistician and Director General for Population and Public Policy at ONS; Rich Pereira, Deputy Director Centre for Ageing and Demography at ONS; Sandra Tudor, Head of Profession for Statistics at MHCLG; and Scott Dennison, Deputy Director, Housing and Planning Analysis at MHCLG.

Thank you for bringing this matter to our attention.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Ed Humpherson', enclosed in a thin black rectangular border.

Ed Humpherson

Director General for Regulation