



Information Governance

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1 September 2015

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Dear Sir/Madam

Freedom of Information Act 2000 (FOIA)
Request ID: REQ00303

Thank you for your request for information relating to Coventry Population estimates.

Has population growth figures attributed to student population been included in the 2014 local plan housing projection of 33,220 and has net figures rather than "new intake only" data been used".

The data produced by the ONS to project population change draws on a range of data sources and information to help project future change in population at all ages. This is split into demographic change and migration. In turn the migration category is split in 3 to cover internal migrants, international migrants and cross boundary migrants (within the British Isles).

In terms of student population the ONS modelling was updated in 2012 to specifically target improvements in international migration but also included improved ways of counting the student element of population change. The new ONS methodology has also been backdated, meaning that the most recent population projections (the 2012 based dataset) are the first to contain data and trends that fully use the updated methodology. Key components of the updated methodology were to draw on some of the following areas:

- International Passenger Survey
- Use of Higher Education Statistics Authority data – so monitoring student numbers in closer detail
- Expanded use of patient registers

- Greater consideration of visa applications, especially where these are for longer than 12 months. This includes: the number and type of visas issued; data on applications for British citizenship or permission to stay in the UK; and data on asylum seekers.
- Data from the Home office and Department for Work and Pensions in relation to the issuing of National Insurance numbers. This can, in part, relate to the number of international students that stay in the country for work after studying.

To support this ONS publish a range of information and data around population and migration, how this is calculated and how it forms part of the national and sub-national population projections. This is available via the following link:

<http://www.ons.gov.uk/ons/guide-method/method-quality/specific/population-and-migration/index.html>

Notwithstanding the improvements that have been made, the ONS recognises that care must still be taken when considering population projections, including around international migration data and student population data, especially around the level of resident student population.

As a result, the 6 authorities of Coventry and Warwickshire have undertaken a range of detailed work with its planning consultants GL Hearn through a Joint Strategic Housing Market Assessment. This has included the interrogation of migration data (which inevitably includes student population change), especially that which has informed the 2012 based sub national population projections and found it to be robust. It has explored the issues around Unattributable Population Change (UPC) and considered the extent to which this relates to international migration for Coventry and for the wider Housing Market Area. Although it does generate some variation in projected growth, notably identifying a need below that informed by the 2012 SNPP, other methods such as the use of longer term migration trends can generate needs above the 2012 based SNPP. On balance the 2012 based data offers the most suitable and most robust set of data for use in considering population growth and housing need across Coventry and Warwickshire.

Based on the information available, it is clear that the numbers of students at the city's 2 universities have grown in recent years and are expected to continue growing. This reflects the success of the universities and their high standing on both the national and international stage. The change in student population is however captured within the migration element of the population projections and has benefited from an updated methodology which gives greater consideration to higher education data sets amongst other sources. It is also clear from the Joint SHMA that the city sees both high out-migration as well as high in-migration year on year, albeit with a net gain of population as a result.

As such, it is reasonable to expect that some allowance is made within the ONS projections for both student retention (as students gain jobs after graduation) and also growth in overall student numbers on a rolling basis linked to the growth of the

universities. Any assumptions however would be based on the updated methodology and founded on more robust data sources to help inform projections. As such, there is no evidence available at this time, either within the ONS datasets or identified through the Joint SHMA work that suggests this element of population growth is unrealistic, excessive or placing undue pressure on future housing need.

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Yours faithfully

Business Support Officer
Place Directorate