

Extraordinary Full Council – 5 October 2022

Written question from Mr Dominic Hicklin to the Chairman

The Social Care and Education Departments of this Council use the 2021 census as the starting point for their policies, but the DIPS uses 2014 predictions that have proven entirely inaccurate. How can this be justified when using 2021 data has been proven to be acceptable by the planning inspectorate?

Response

Local Planning Authorities are directed to use the governments standard methodology to calculate housing need (unless exceptional circumstances are apparent – see response to PQ35 above), and this standard methodology uses 2014 household projections as part of the calculation. There has been no change to national planning policy as a result of the publication of the Census data.

As far as the Council is aware, there are no examples where the 2021 census data on population growth that was published in June 2022 has been shown as acceptable to the Planning Inspectorate when considering the soundness of the calculation of housing need during a local plan examination. If specific examples can be provided then the Council can investigate.

Two local plan examinations were referred to at the recent Cabinet meeting, however the hearing sessions of the local plan examination for Northumberland National Park Authority took place in January 2020 and those of the examination for New Forest National Park Authority took place in November 2018 and March 2019, both examinations occurring prior to publication of the Census data in June 2022.

Both examples cited are also National Park Authorities, who are directed to not use the standard methodology to determine their housing need, however one did in fact use the 2014 household projections as a starting point to generate a higher housing number (Northumberland NPA).

Paragraphs 23 to 52 of the Full Council report [IPS Full Council Report 210922 final draft v2.pdf \(modern.gov.co.uk\)](#) provide detailed information on this issue.