
Council Meeting

19 March, 2019

Booklet 1

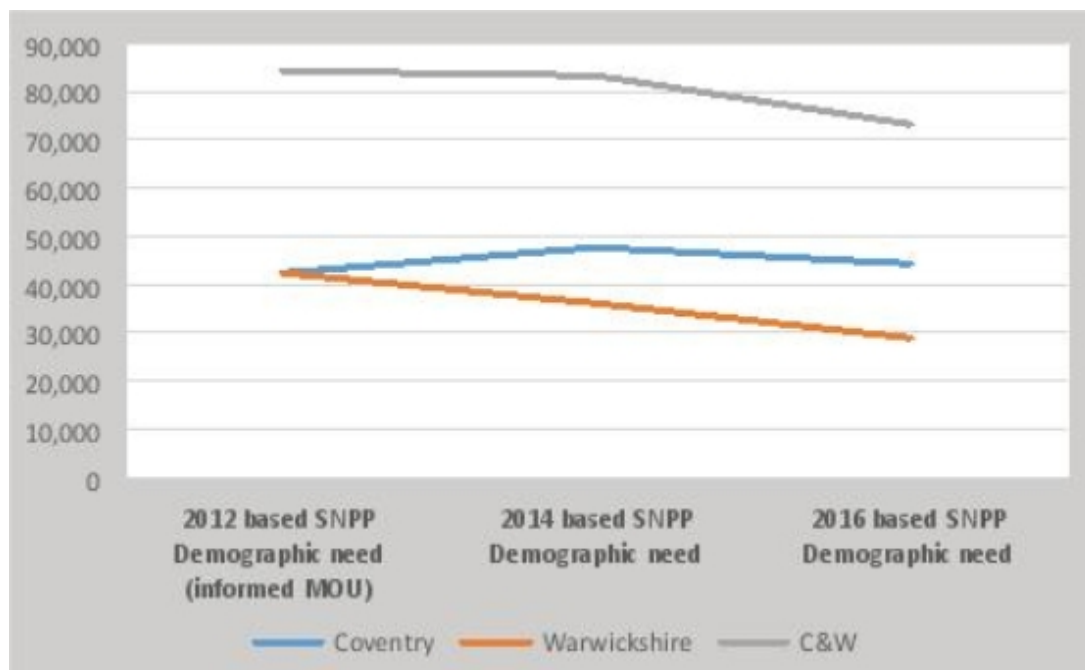
Answers to Written Questions

1.	<p>QUESTION SUBMITTED BY: Councillor M Lapsa</p> <p>TO BE ANSWERED BY: Councillor AS Khan, Cabinet Member for Policing & Equalities</p>
	<p>TEXT OF QUESTION:</p> <p>“I understand that there have been suggestions that, at the next Godiva Festival, Coventry residents could be allowed free entry, but others asked to pay. Can the Cabinet Member please confirm if that proposal is indeed being considered? If so, how will Coventrians be asked to prove their address?”</p> <p>ANSWER:</p> <p>"Charging non-residents is not being considered."</p>

2.	<p>QUESTION SUBMITTED BY: Councillor J Lepoidevin</p> <p>TO BE ANSWERED BY: Councillor E Ruane, Cabinet Member for Housing and Communities</p>
	<p>TEXT OF QUESTION:</p> <p>Can the Cabinet Member advise on what impact the additional 1000 houses at Eastern Green will have on health and air quality?</p> <p>ANSWER:</p> <p>“Such matters are currently under consideration as part of a live planning application. As such the Council remain in discussions with the applicant with a view to potential further consultation on the development proposals. The application is also due to be considered by the Councils planning committee at a date to be confirmed. As such it is premature to respond to this question”.</p>

3.	<p>QUESTION SUBMITTED BY: Councillor G Williams</p> <p>TO BE ANSWERED BY: Councillor J O'Boyle, Cabinet Member for Jobs and Regeneration</p>
<p>TEXT OF QUESTION:</p> <p>“Would the Cabinet Member provide me with a clear diagram of what he believes to be the boundary of Coundon Wedge?”</p> <p>ANSWER:</p> <p>“No. For Planning consideration, all planning boundaries can be found in the Local Plan”</p>	

4.	<p>QUESTION SUBMITTED BY: Councillor G Williams</p> <p>TO BE ANSWERED BY: Councillor E Ruane, Cabinet Member for Housing and Communities</p>
<p>TEXT OF QUESTION:</p> <p>“Is the Cabinet Member aware of new material evidence which shows that the population forecasts in our Local Plan are grossly overstated; and will he now agree to review the Local Plan as a matter of urgency?”</p> <p>ANSWER:</p> <p>“In May 2018 the Office for National Statistics (ONS) issued their new Sub National Population Projections (2016 based SNPP). These were followed by ONS Household Projections in September 2018. This was the first time the ONS had issued household projections having previously been issued by Government directly.</p> <p>When both sets of projections are considered together they do show a lower rate of growth than previously projected which equates to 159,000 additional households each year compared with the 210,000 previously projected nationally (for the period 2011-2031) This pattern is also seen across the Coventry and Warwickshire sub-region although to a slightly lesser extent on average (approx. 12% reduction instead of 24%). The graph below shows the slight decline in housing need across the sub-region based on the demographic projections issued by government to ensure a consistent set of data for comparative purposes.</p>	



This shows that housing need in Coventry has increased slightly since the 2012 based SNPP (which informed the C&W Housing MOU), increasing from approx. 42k to 44,500 homes over the 20 year period. There is however a very slight drop compared to the 2014 based SNPP.

Housing needs in Warwickshire have declined however from approx. 42k (2012 based SNPP) to 29k (2016 based SNPP). This generates the overall decline sub-regionally from approx. 84k (2012 based SNPP) to 73k (2016 based SNPP) between 2011 and 2031.

It is important to note however that such projections represent the starting point of identifying housing needs and have no regard to economic growth pressures, affordability of housing or standard allowances for vacant or second homes. The figures also need to be set in the context of the national housing target of 300k homes a year and the WMCA target of 215k homes across the region by 2031.

In support of the national target, government issued a revised standardised housing methodology for consultation between October and December 2018. This updates the previous methodology issued in September 2017 and continues to focus on increasing levels of demographic based housing needs in response to affordability pressures. This continues to be set in the context of achieving the national housing target of 300,000 homes per year being built across England by the mid-2020s.

Having regard to the information above, it is clear that housing need dynamics across Coventry and Warwickshire are continuing in a similar way to other recent projections, in so far as needs originating from Coventry remain increasing and high whilst needs originating across Warwickshire are decreasing. In terms of overall need, although there is a reported decline based on current demographic projections, we know that ongoing changes with national standardised methodology and overall government housing targets means actual housing need is likely to increase above initial demographic projections. Projections also continue to show a significant increase in housing needs in all areas beyond 2031.

Following the consultation period the government have issued their responses to the consultation comments raised (in February 2019). One of the key issues identified during the consultation was the robustness of the 2016 based projections due largely to their reduced figures compared to the 2014 based projections.

The government's response to this issue is helpful and states:

“Having taken the responses into account, the Government considers that its proposed approach to providing the demographic baseline for the standard method is the most appropriate approach for providing stability and certainty to the planning system in the short-term. This decision has been taken in the context that the standard method does not represent a mandatory target for local authorities to plan for, but the starting point for the planning process. Local planning authorities may decide that exceptional circumstances justify the use of an alternative method, but they will need to identify these reasons and can expect them to be tested by the Planning Inspectorate during the examination of their plans. Local authorities may also not be able to meet their identified housing need in full, for example because of land constraints (such as Green Belt) in their area and it may be that need is better met elsewhere. The proposed approach does not change this.

Over the next 18 months we will review the formula and the way it is set using National Statistics data with a view to establishing a new approach that balances the need for clarity, simplicity and transparency for local communities with the Government's aspirations for the housing market.

A key consideration of the standard method is to provide a degree of continuity between assessments of housing need over time. The changes to underlying assumptions in the population projections and methodological improvements to the household projections had led to significant variations in housing need at a local level, something that needs addressing in the short term. For the avoidance of doubt, the Government is clear that this does not mean that it doubts the methodological basis of the 2016-based household projections. It welcomes the work of the Office for National Statistics (ONS) following the transfer of the projections from the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government and the steps they have taken to explain the projections, for example in their recent blog. The Government looks forward to the further work programme of the ONS to develop even greater confidence in the projections and is committed as the key customer to supporting the ONS ahead of the publication of the next projections.”

The consultation response also goes on to suggest “taking into account these responses, the Government continues to think that the 2016-based household projections should not be used as a reason to justify lower housing need.”

In the context of these responses it is important to note the intentions to continue reviewing methodology with a view to continuing to improve the robustness of projections but setting this in the context of achieving the government's aspirations for the housing market – namely increasing housing delivery and working towards the target of 300,000 homes a year. This implies that although these baseline projections are the “starting point” they are to be perceived very much as a minimum baseline with opportunities being taken to increase housing requirements where possible and appropriate

through local plan making.

Having regard to the above information it is therefore clear that the city's housing needs remain high as do those of the sub region as a whole. The Local Plan for Coventry as well as the Memorandum of Understanding and neighbouring Plans therefore remain a valid and justified platform from which to deliver the homes local people need and demand, including much needed affordable homes.

Members will be aware that the Coventry Local Plan contains a commitment (policy DS1) to review the need to review the Local Plan by March 2021. This will be set out in a report to Council at that time and will feed into the national requirement to consider reviewing local plans 5 years after the date of adoption".