

Alresford Population Projection Correction

This report provides more detail on the population projection error that was first publicised on 6 November 2014. It is intended to provide further information for relevant councillors, Needs Groups, residents and other interested parties. It has been produced by the Head of Strategic Planning at Winchester City Council and Keith Barrett, the Alresford resident responsible for identifying the error. We have compromised over many of the figures herein to enable us to present a coherent agreed statement, although we do not necessarily agree over the application and import of some of them.

Nature of the error

The identified error relates to a set of New Alresford population projections that were provided to the town's Needs Groups in January 2013, as part of the Local Plan Part 2 process. These were based on information used for the 'Blueprint' consultation process in 2010. Winchester City Council produced Parish-level projections by applying District growth rates, as there were no Parish-level projections that extended beyond about 7 years into the future. It was in calculating the projected future housing level for Alresford in 2016 that an arithmetical error was made and this had implications for the subsequent housing projections, as follows (erroneous figures in brackets, corrected figures in bold):

Table 1

Year	Age 0 - 4	Age 5 - 15	Age 16 - 44	Age 45 - 64	Age 65 - 74	Age 75+	TOTAL	DWELLINGS
2001	257	680	1604	1433	533	595	5102	2282
2011	276	631	1657	1594	591	661	5410	2476
2016	277	640	1780	1675	710	751	5833	(2518) 2741
2021	304	739	1773	1728	733	877	6154	(2662) 2897
2026	299	758	1814	1726	738	1049	6384	(2797) 3046

The population projections in Table 1 are correct (for the corrected levels of housing), but these only extend to 2026. The Alresford Needs Groups had asked for estimates of the population at 2031 arising from the proposed level of new housing and the dataset at Table A of the Appendix was provided to the Needs Groups prior to the Local Plan Part 1 Inspector's Report (at this stage the housing requirement proposed was 400-500 dwellings).

This projection repeated the error in the housing figures to 2026 and produced a 2031 estimate of housing and population by extending the rate of growth from 2011 to 2026 through to 2031. This table was used by the Employment Needs Group.

When the Local Plan Part 1 Inspector's Report was received the housing increase from 2011 to 2031 was 'fixed' at 500 dwellings (rather than a range) and a revised projection was produced to reflect this (see Table B of the Appendix).

However, what wasn't realised at the time was that the housing figures in both sets of projections to 2026 were too low and the result was that the number of dwellings and population were **increased** to arrive at the required 2031 level of housing. When account is taken of the error, it can be seen that the figures should have been **decreased** (for housing from 3046 to 2976) to arrive at a proper

projection for 2031. **The basis of the error was that the 2026 population figures were mistakenly increased to arrive at a 2031 projection, when they should have been decreased slightly.**

Corrected figures

The 2031 population projections are referenced in a number of the Needs Groups reports. Using the corrected housing figures (table above) results in a decrease of 2.3% in the housing projection from 2026 to 2031. If this is applied to the 2026 population projection the figures should have shown:

Table 2

Year	Age 0 - 4	Age 5 - 15	Age 16 - 44	Age 45 - 64	Age 65 - 74	Age 75+	TOTAL	DWELLINGS
2031	292	741	1772	1686	721	1025	6237	2976

It must be said that, apart from the fact that these are projections so inherently have a potential margin of error, the above figures rely on various assumptions being applied. Their reliability, especially at the level of individual age groups, therefore needs to be treated with considerable caution. This was highlighted by 'health warnings' in those Needs Groups reports that referred to the figures and these 'health warnings' need to be repeated.

Another possible method of projecting population levels at 2031 is to apply assumptions about household size, which has fallen steadily. The effect of such an approach would be to produce a slightly lower population estimate at 2031 (see Appendix Tables D).

The difference in total population estimated at 2031 is 472 (6709 – 6237 = 472). This could increase to 685 (6874 – 6189 = 685) using the alternative method in Appendix Table D, hence the reference in the Information Release of 6 November 2014 to a population over-estimate of 470 – 680 people.

Table 3 below shows the difference that the corrections make to the figures that were provided to the Local Economy and Employment Needs Group, based on the method originally used (Table 1 above):

Table 3

2031	Age 0 - 4	Age 5 -15	Age 16 - 44	Age 45 - 64	Age 65 - 74	Age 75+	TOTAL	DWELLINGS
Original (Table A)	307	800	1866	1770	787	1178	6709	2904
Corrected (Table 2)	292	741	1772	1686	721	1025	6237	2976
Difference	-15	-59	-94	-84	-66	-153	-472	
Working age Population	-	-59	-94	-84	-66	-	-303	

Implications

Housing Requirement

Blueprint formed part of the process of identifying the need for housing and establishing the housing targets for the larger settlements in the District. The Blueprint 'Parish Profiles' illustrated the implications of 2 possible levels of housing development and the error was in one of the projections for Alresford, resulting in a lower housing figure being shown than should have been the case.

The housing targets for Alresford and other settlements were not based only on the Blueprint exercise or the projections that informed it. These were one factor used to establish the broad scale of development needed at different levels of the settlement hierarchy. The targets themselves were derived by disaggregating the District total down to its component parts (e.g. the 'MTRA' area) and then breaking this down to fit the settlement hierarchy. This was informed by the Blueprint work, the Housing Technical Paper, work on settlement sustainability and hierarchy, etc, rather than the precise figures in the projections.

Therefore, the error does not affect or undermine the Local Plan Part 1 housing target for Alresford (or other settlements). In any event, this is now established in Local Plan Part 1 and would require a substantial review of that Plan to change.

Employment

The population projections formed part of the evidence base that was used by each of the Needs Groups. The correction may have implications for the outcomes of those Needs Groups and it could influence the conclusions of the Local Economy and Employment Needs Group in particular.

Working age population

The correction means that the 2031 working age population (Aged 16 – 74) may be 303 lower than the projection that the Employment Needs Group used. This could result in a smaller increase in the working population between 2011 and 2031 (from 641 in the Employment Needs Group report to 303).

The Infrastructure Needs Group report refers to the revised figures (Appendix Table B) which produced a 2031 working age population (Aged 16 – 74) of 4,533. The downward revision means that this is now believed to have been a slightly larger over-estimate, although it was the Employment Needs group that developed the target for employment land.

Infrastructure

The Infrastructure Needs Group report refers to the revised projections (Appendix Table B). The over-estimate of the 2031 population is likely to mean that this Group may have over-estimated the impact of the proposed housing on infrastructure. They may, therefore, have adopted a 'worst-case' scenario but they should be invited to consider whether the corrections affect their conclusions.

Housing

Elderly population

The proportion of the population aged 75+ is also now projected to be lower than was previously the case. The Infrastructure Needs Group report assumes that 1207 (18%) of the total population would be 75+ by 2031. The correction lowers that figure by 153 (16% of total population).

Housing mix

The total requirement of 500 homes for New Alresford, as set out in Local Plan Part 1, is unchanged by this correction (see above). The Housing Needs Group took account of a number of sources of information and its recommendations on the proposed housing mix do not appear to rely on the erroneous projections, although they may wish to consider whether their conclusions are affected.

Open space

The Open Space Needs Group appear to have used two different methodologies to identify the future open space requirements of the town. One of these was based on applying open space standards to the projected 2031 population. The other looked at the needs of particular local clubs and activities. While its conclusions appear to be based more on the latter, there was reference to the erroneous population projections and the group may therefore wish to review its conclusions.

Conclusion

The erroneous population estimates were available to all the Needs Groups but appear to have been more relevant to the conclusions of some groups than others. It is recommended that all the Needs Groups be invited to examine whether and how the erroneous population projections may have influenced their findings and that modified conclusions should be presented, if necessary. It is recommended that any meetings of the reconvened Needs Groups should be open to the public, including Mr Barrett and his colleagues, in the same way as the original Groups' meetings.

Steve Opacic - Head of Strategic Planning, Winchester City Council

Keith Barrett - Sun Hill Action Group and the Nursery Road Residents Group

December 2014

Appendix

Table A – 2031 Projection Originally Provided to Needs Groups

Year	Age 0 - 4	Age 5 - 15	Age 16 - 44	Age 45 - 64	Age 65 - 74	Age 75+	TOTAL	DWELLINGS
2001	257	680	1604	1433	533	595	5102	2282
2011	276	631	1657	1594	591	661	5410	2476
2016	277	640	1780	1675	710	751	5833	2518
2021	304	739	1773	1728	733	877	6154	2662
2026	299	758	1814	1726	738	1049	6384	2797
2031	307	800	1866	1770	787	1178	6709	2904

Table B – 2031 Projection Revised to Reflect 500 Dwelling Requirement

Year	Age 0 - 4	Age 5 - 15	Age 16 - 44	Age 45 - 64	Age 65 - 74	Age 75+	TOTAL	DWELLINGS
2001	257	680	1604	1433	533	595	5102	2282
2011	276	631	1657	1594	591	661	5410	2476
2016	277	640	1780	1675	710	751	5833	2518
2021	304	739	1773	1728	733	877	6154	2662
2026	299	758	1814	1726	738	1049	6384	2797
2031	315	820	1912	1814	807	1207	6874	2976

Table C - Projected Household Sizes (estimated for 2031):

2011 – 2.18 persons per dwelling
 2016 – 2.13 persons per dwelling
 2021 – 2.12 persons per dwelling
 2026 – 2.10 persons per dwelling
 2031 – 2.08 persons per dwelling

Table D – Alternative Projection Based on Estimated Household Size

Year	Age 0 - 4	Age 5 - 15	Age 16 - 44	Age 45 - 64	Age 65 - 74	Age 75+	TOTAL	DWELLINGS
2031	283	738	1722	1633	726	1087	6189	2976