

Population Projections

Health and Wellbeing Board

7 May 2014

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Wards: All
Locality Affected: All
Parishes Affected: All

1. Purpose and Reasons

- 1.1 To provide an overview of the population projections work undertaken by the Strategy & Research Team, including methodology and results, and gain approval from the Board to make the projections available to the Council and its Partners for use in forward planning;
- 1.2 To gain approval of the Board to make available the attached summary report on the projections to the Council and its Partners (see Appendix One).

2. Recommendations

The Board is recommended to:

- 2.1 Adopt the projections as the best fit for Swindon until such time as they are updated, subject to final testing of the results against ONS sub-national trend-based projections due to be published at the end of May 2014.
- 2.2 Promote the projections through publication on the JSNA section of the Council's website.
- 2.3 The estimates upon which the projections are based are regularly revised. Given that ONS produce a set of trend-based projections at sub-national level every two years the Board is recommended to agree a similar pattern for the production of more locally sensitive policy-based projections for Swindon.

3. Detail

- 3.1 Population projections form part of the evidence base for the Council's forward planning. They are used for a variety of purposes, most notably to establish future demand for public services, and there are a variety of users within the Council and beyond.
- 3.2 Population projections are constructed using the internationally recognized customer-cohort method. Estimated trends in births, deaths and migration are applied to a population base by age and gender and continued into the future:

$$\text{Population} + \text{Births} - \text{Deaths} \pm \text{Migration} = \text{Future population}$$

Such projections are known as 'trend-based' and are produced by ONS at national and subnational level every two years.

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- 3.3 Trend-based projections are not directly influenced by local policy, for example, they do not take into account a Local Authority's plans for housing or employment growth. Projections that take into account these plans are known as 'policy-led' projections and are undertaken by local authorities and other bodies to provide a more locally sensitive projection.
- 3.4 Policy-led projections are particularly pertinent in areas where significant housing change is planned. The supply of new housing, or the demolition of existing housing, can have a significant impact on the size and age structure of the population. In Swindon, where an additional 25,000 new homes are planned by 2026, it is relevant that the Authority considers the impact of additional homes on its population.
- 3.5 The projections presented here are policy-based taking into account the LA's plans in respect of housing growth. Annual housing targets from the Local Plan are input into the model alongside assumptions about future births and deaths having the effect of driving the migration element of the projection.
- 3.6 In the case of Swindon, the result of inputting housing targets into the projection model results in a higher estimate for 2031 than the 2008 and 2010 trend-based projections from ONS. Although ONS 2008 and 2010 trend-based projections for Swindon used data on migration that has since been revised upwards, it is anticipated that the ONS 2012 trend-based projection, which will use more up to date migration estimates, will be lower than our policy-led projection.

4. Alternative Options

- 4.1 An alternative to using and promoting this set of policy-led projections would be to use the ONS trend-based sub-national population projections due to be released at the end of April 2014. However, as set out above, these do not take into account Swindon's planned housing growth and could result in an under-estimate of the population by 2031.
- 4.2 Although ONS trend-based projections need to be considered by the Authority and its Partners, they should be done so alongside projections that take Swindon's housing plans into account.

5. Implications

- 5.1 Population projections are not predictions and will never be 100% accurate. Proper management and control of the projections can mitigate the risks associated with their use and it is recommended that requests are made to the lead officer who can also advise on their caveats.

Financial and Procurement Implications

- 5.2 None.

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Legal and Human Rights Implications

5.3 None.

All other Implications

5.4 None.

6. Consultees

6.1 The projections have been overseen and agreed by a Technical Advisors' Group made up of officers within the Council with specialist knowledge of demographic methods.

6.2 The projections have been presented to and discussed by the JSNA group at their meeting in March.

7. Background Papers

7.1 None

8. Appendices

8.1 Appendix 1: Swindon Borough Council Demographic Projections 2014 (Policy-led)