
Ed Humpherson, Director General for Regulation

Dawn Hudd
Strategic Services Director, Guildford Borough Council
(By email)

10 May 2021

Dear Ms Hudd

Review of Population Estimates and Projections produced by ONS

Thank you for your letter on 10 February 2021 regarding your concerns about Guildford's population estimates and projections. I am pleased to let you know that we have [published our findings today](#) concerning the population estimates and projections produced by the Office for National Statistics (ONS).

It is not within our remit to regulate operational decisions made by government or local authorities, nor to form judgements on decisions made about government policy. Therefore, this review has solely focused on the population estimates and projections produced by ONS in the context of the principles in the [Code of Practice for Statistics](#).

Our review considered the population estimates and projections independently of the specific issues that were raised to us by individual areas. During our review, we conducted our own research and spoke to a number of expert demographers, academics and representatives from local government. We found that the population estimates for some cities such as Guildford, did seem to be inconsistent with, and potentially higher than, local evidence would suggest. This also appeared to be the case in a number of smaller cities with large student populations. Our review expands on this point further and also on our other findings. ONS has tried to tackle the limitations around data on highly mobile groups such as students and have acknowledged that there are issues.

We expect ONS to report back to us with its plans for addressing our findings in July 2021. We hope that ONS will work with you as it continues to develop new population estimates through its transformation programme.

Yours sincerely



Ed Humpherson
Director General for Regulation