

Inspectors Note Use of the 2016 Household Projections

On 20 February 2019 the Government produced its response to its recent technical consultation on updates to national planning policy and guidance. The consultation included comments on, and questions about, the use of the 2016-based household projections.

The consultation is relevant to plans that use the standard method to calculate their housing requirement. The Government's response to question 2 states "We are specifying in planning guidance that using the 2016-based household projections will not be considered to be an exceptional circumstance that justifies identifying minimum need levels lower than those identified by the standard method".

As a transitional plan being examined against the 2012 NPPF, the housing requirement in the Guildford Borough Local Plan is not based on the standard method. The Council's most recent calculation of the housing requirement takes the 2016-based household projections as a demographic starting point, but these projections do not ultimately dictate the housing requirement because the methodology makes a range of significant adjustments to allow for factors such as household formation rates, jobs-related growth and other local issues. As such, the Council's approach is an up to date assessment of housing need based on several inputs, not just household projections, does not amount to a lowering of housing need in relation to the standard method, and does not conflict with the Government's response.

The Government's response was not available at the time of the hearings last week, but all participants were fully aware of the consultation, and the issues in respect of the 2014 and 2016-based household projections were comprehensively discussed.

I am not inviting any further comments or representations as a result of the Government's response. My conclusions on the housing requirement will be set out in my report

Jonathan Bore
Inspector
22nd February 2019