

Email from Alan Young (Strategic Planning Manager, Sefton Council) to Bob Garland (Chief Statistician, Department for Communities and Local Government): 10th March 2015

Dear Bob,

We have to brief chief officers on the latest household projections very soon and it would be very helpful if you could offer any advice about the latest household changes for Sefton and importantly (which is question we will inevitably be asked), could we have anticipated them?

Also reading the document "Household Projections 2012-based: Methodological Report" I infer from it that the latest household projections are based on only partial Census and other information and further household projections could be published later in the year. Is this a correct interpretation please?

Thank you for your continued help with this difficult matter for Sefton.

Kind regards,

Alan

Email response from Bob Garland (DCLG) to Alan Young (Sefton Council): 16th March 2015

(The particular sentence referred to in the report is in paragraph 3 of this email and is underlined for ease of reference)

Dear Alan,

I have looked into the likely reasons why the latest (2012-based household projections) show a higher rate of household growth in Sefton than the 2011-based ones. I have also included some comments from policy colleagues by way of general guidance on how local authorities take account of new projections.

Comparison of the two sets of projections at the national level shows very similar household growth despite lower population growth in the 2012-based ones. This is because, based on the best information available, the latest projected household formation rates are generally higher.

The change in Sefton is more counter-intuitive and would not have been possible to predict. The latest projected population growth in Sefton is lower but despite this the projected household growth higher. This is because the lower population growth is more than offset by the higher projected household formation, This is revealed in the lower projected average household size in the 2012-based projection. There may be an additional effect in Sefton due to a change in the projected structure of the

population which would be revealed by analysis of the two sets of population projections.

For general guidance about how to take account of the new projections, colleagues in planning policy advise: new projections are part of a continuing process of updating the evidence base for Local Plans, particularly on housing needs. Planning guidance sets out that Local Plans should be kept up-to-date, and a meaningful change in the housing situation should be considered in this context. Wherever possible, local needs assessments should be informed by the latest available information, but guidance is clear that new projections do not automatically mean that previous assessments of housing needs are rendered out of date. We have made this clear in published planning guidance http://planningguidance.planningportal.gov.uk/blog/guidance/housing-and-economic-development-needs-assessments/methodology-assessing-housing-need/#paragraph_016 .

Councils should have the opportunity to reflect on new data and consider carefully how it impacts on their housing need. Further analysis of household formation rates as revealed by the 2011 Census will continue during 2015, however this does not mean that Local Plans should be delayed.

Household projections are the starting point for assessing housing needs in drawing up local plans. Local planning authorities will continue to take into account local circumstances in assessing housing need.

Best regards,

Bob

Neighbourhoods Analysis
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