

Mr. Anthony Burrows

This is my response to the NHDC's answers to Her Majesty's Inspector's questions ED194 21.1, 21.2 and 21.3. Unfortunately I have been unable to load it onto NHDC's relevant website.

"21.1.

NHDC's response appears to be based upon the projection by Opinion Research Services (ORS) whom NHDC has paid (I assume) to produce a Report which, because NHDC is fixated upon receiving as much future income from New Homes Bonus as possible (which Bonus incomprehensibly applies to our poor old England only!), appears to be distorted for that purpose.

The distortion is obvious in that, given that the ONS projections of OAN into the future vary from Low Net Immigration into NHDC's territory, to High Net Immigration, ORS appears to take as the basis of its sole projection the highest possible ONS projection and, unsupportedly, adds various factors, such as hidden (or suppressed) households, which it is reasonable to assume are included in ONS's Principle Projection, which is, in a sense, the one which ONS considers most likely and that was before the present COVID-19 crisis. I respectfully submit that Her Majesty's Inspector should take that crisis into account, otherwise this Examination enters cloud cuckoo land.

As regards "hidden households", there is a serious question as to the extent to which they exist. I refer to page 6 of the Report "Tackling the UK housing crisis: is supply the answer?", issued by UK Collaborative Centre for Housing Evidence (UKCCHE) and somewhat debunking that issue. The URL is: <https://housingevidence.ac.uk/wp-content/uploads/2019/08/20190820-CaCHE-Housing-Supply-FINAL.pdf> . That Report was issued in August 2019 and is thus reasonably up-to-date but was obviously unable to take account of the pandemic.

For ORS to present Her Majesty's Inspector with just one projection (based upon the highest of various possible projections by ONS), I can only think of as ridiculous and unworthy of the enormous amount of time and effort which the participants, including H.M. Inspector, have put into the Examination, many of us losing income thereby, but for what we believe to be right for our District.

Even in April 2020, the date of ORS's Report, the potential serious future effects of COVID-19 were becoming known, and yet the Report nowhere mentions the pandemic, as if its authors lived on another planet! How on Earth did ORS think in April 2020 that e.g. the self-isolation required for some people for three months from March 2020 and the furloughing would have no effect whatsoever on its figures? It is thus totally worthless for consideration in the present Examination.

Any real statistician would consider it worthless because it does not give a range of possibilities for projections based upon ONS's various projections which were themselves based upon statistics from 2018, obviously before the pandemic crisis and thus too optimistic. Such factors as reduced real incomes and even significant unemployment likely to result from the crisis (see Institute for Fiscal Studies – "Covid 19 and the career prospects of young people", referring to its introductory paragraph- URL: <https://ifs.org.uk/publications/14914>) have not been taken into account. That reference, dated 3 July 2020, is particularly relevant to the UKCCHE reference above and more generally because it is very up-to-date compared with anything produced by ONS, ORS or NHDC.

Even if ORS were to assert that the present crisis is a short-term blip, it has not presented any evidence that that is highly probable.

The representations by Mr. Reg Morgan and by Save The First Garden City Group have demolished in detail the Report by ORS, largely through that Report's totally and inexplicably ignoring the present COVID-19 crisis.

What upsets me is that our District Council should waste our money on a Report by ORS which I believe is worth less than the paper it is written upon; a Report which refers to various projections by ONS, takes the most extreme one and even adds to it various factors which ONS appear already to have taken into account in calculating that extreme one; a Report which does not even have the courtesy to help other participants by giving a range of projections for OAN based upon the various projections made by ONS; and a Report which ignores the COVID-19 crisis developing when it issued the Report.

21.2. Yes.

21.3 Yes, to use as a basis ONS's Low Migration Projection and make deductions from it to take account of the fact that the covid-19 virus was obviously unknown at that point in time and the fact that its past and present effects are obviously seriously adverse and their future effects up to 2031, while clearly adverse, are presently unforecastable.

NHDC proposes that a decision should be taken upon a provisional basis and then reviewed at some future time. Even if that were to be fair on Representatives like myself, which it clearly is not, is it legally permissible? If H.M. Inspector decides to proceed in that manner, I respectfully submit that a decision according to what I propose in the preceding paragraph should be taken now and, if future effects of the pandemic turn out to be less than experts presently predict, the OAN can be increased at a future stage.

Anthony Burrows