

New housing and the Green Belt

CPRE North East, along with several local campaign groups, have been seriously concerned at the high level of housing provision being put forward in the current generation of Core Strategies across the region, in many cases leading to proposals for significant deletions from the Green Belt. CPRE has consistently argued that local planning authorities (LPAs) are double-counting the demand, with the shire unitaries providing against continuing local in-migration trends, while the metropolitan authorities are proposing housing levels intended to reverse the trend. Now, at a very late stage in the process, with the 2011 census data available and all proposed housing numbers published, we have been able to carry out a quantitative analysis.

The local planning authorities variously draw on the Office of

National Statistics (ONS) Subnational Population Projections (SNPP), past building rates and complex economic models linking Gross Value Added (GVA) growth, job creation and demand for housing to come up with overall housing requirements. CPRE North East's analysis uses SNPP data across the twelve LPAs of the North East to give a clearer understanding of likely changes due to natural population growth and to in-migration into the region. Combining the data across the authorities in this way eliminates changes due to local in-region migration, in a way that the individual LPA analyses do not. ONS has published population projections based on 2010 data (SNPP 2010) through to 2031 and projections based on 2011 Census data through to 2021 - which some LPAs have extrapolated to 2031.

	NE LEP Area	Tees Valley	North East
2011 SNPP	Pop change	28900	126800
	% Pop Change	4.36%	4.88%
to 2021	Net In-Migration	5700	67900
2010 SNPP	Pop change	21500	89200
	% Pop Change	3.14%	3.43%
to 2021	Net In-Migration	-1100	32700
2010 SNPP	Pop change	39100	174400
	% Pop Change	5.57%	6.72%
to 2031	Net In-Migration	7500	88600

The doubling of the net predicted in-migration between the 2010 to the 2011 estimates to 2021 can be attributed to a dramatic increase of international migration predicted into the urban areas of the region, particularly Newcastle.

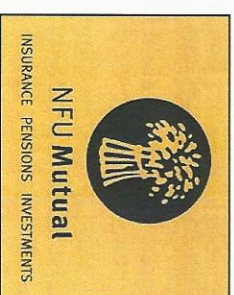
However, the total new housing provision in emerging Core Strategies across the North East is just over 149,000 or 13.1% of total housing stock. (North East Local Enterprise Partnership [NE LEP] nearly 115,000, 13.4% of total housing stock; Tees Valley over 34,000, 12.1% of total housing stock). At a modest average household size of 2.24 (currently average is 2.28) this would represent a population increase for the region of over 286,000 (11.0%). The natural population increase ([births]-[deaths]) for the North East as a whole through to 2031 (according to SNPP 2010) is 85,800. So, the combined housing provision requirement implicitly assumes around 200,000 people moving into the region over the next 20 years. This is 126% more than the SNPP 2010 projections predict and - as far as we

know - would represent a rate immigration unprecedented since the coalmining boom of the late 19th century.

At present, we cannot see economic strategy for the North - or the North East Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) or Tees Valley areas - which will generate such dramatic increase in people moving to the North East, or justifying building houses for them.

Under the provisions of the National Planning Policy Framework councils must make an objective assessment of its requirements market and affordable housing must question whether the application of north east councils has been objective.

If we are correct that the number of houses being allocated all the North East Core Strategy exceeds an "objective assessment" then this may well relieve some of the pressure currently being placed on the Green Belt. If our approach is correct and accepted, it may save all the proposed deletions it could help to reduce them.
Nic Best, Richard Cowen



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