



## Case Study: Cardiff Council Population Health-Check

### Requirements

In the development of its Local Plan, Cardiff Council was required to prepare and consult on a range of strategic housing options for the local authority.

A critical input to the strategic options was the likely levels of population and household change that were expected over the planning period to 2026.

The Council identified considerable concern over the benchmark, trend-led, population projections published by the Welsh Government, which suggested unprecedented levels of growth in Cardiff over the 25-year forecasting horizon.

Cardiff Council was seeking to underpin its Local Plan with growth targets that were both realistic and achievable. It sought to commission independent experts to scrutinise the available demographic evidence, particularly the official population and household estimates and projections.

The scrutiny process was to provide key intelligence to inform Local Plan strategic options and to support future consultation with external stakeholders.

### Solution

A thorough 'Health Check' of Cardiff's population statistics was the key component of the project, scrutinising and adjusting official statistics to account for any mis-estimation of data inputs and assumptions.

In addition, the scrutiny process included: an evaluation of the scale and distribution of housing completions and the relationship to future development; the analysis of alternative economic growth forecasts and their inter-relationship with population growth and housing development; recognition of the impact of alternative growth scenarios upon the wider South Wales sub-region.

International migration estimates were recalculated for the city, resulting in a significant reduction in Cardiff's trend-led growth projection, equivalent to approximately 10,000 fewer households by 2026.

The new data was used as the basis for a suite of trend, housing-led and employment-led scenarios, providing a range of population and housing growth outcomes for Cardiff's Local Plan period.

A recommendation was made on the most appropriate population and housing growth trajectory for Cardiff Council to consider as the starting point for further consultation on a range of strategic options for the city.