2026

Development Strategy
Initial Proposals
September 2009

Background Paper 1:
Population &
Household Projections

Executive Summary

Official statistics for Ealing Borough seriously underestimate our population size. This means that our current population estimates and projections for the future are unreliable. We have recently worked with the GLA to obtain improved Ealing projections based on council tax data and revised development plans. However, a minimum of 13,000 households is not included in these projections.

We have used administrative data to validate official figures and demonstrate their inadequacies, but our knowledge of the current population could be made considerably more accurate through a comprehensive linking of administrative sources to residential properties. Better knowledge of our current population allows a better ability to accurately project into the future.

Our knowledge of households living in irregular dwellings, such as houses in multiple occupation (bedsits and studios), shop studios and illegal outhouses is particularly weak. Options for research to resolve this are detailed in section 8(c).

An independent consultant could be commissioned to validate and link local administrative sources (eg. council tax, electoral register, housing benefits, schools census, GP register), improve our address records, and ascertain a 'confirmed minimum population'. An initial investment to carry out this work is likely to reap dividends in the future.

The Council has a duty to confirm household addresses for the 2011 census in Autumn this year. Households not included on this address list are unlikely to be enumerated in the census. Analysis of current data has led to the conclusion that without further research at least 13,000 Ealing households will not receive a 2011 census questionnaire.

This could have negative implications for both the Council and the PCT's revenue support grants (amongst other funding streams) until 2021. For each person uncounted, the Council loses around £500 per annum in RSG alone; the PCT loses £1,400. Not counting these people will also limit our coverage in the most comprehensive dataset available to local government. In 2006, Slough estimated that over a five year period they would lose £15m in formula grant alone due to an underestimation of their population.

Schools services have highlighted their particular concerns around planning provision. Using GLA projections they had planned to expand provision by 12.5 reception classes over the next 5 to 10 years. However, latest birth data suggests we require an additional 7.5 reception classes, meaning major expansion in primary schools is required at very short notice.

Without some investment into a comprehensive piece of research, it will continue to be difficult to provide appropriate services to our current residents, and even harder to plan for the future.

List of Contents

1. Why population figures matter

- Population estimates and projections are essential for planning services and infrastructure. If they are too low, levels of provision are likely to be insufficient.

- Official population estimates are a central component of grant funding per capita. If population figures are lower than reality, local residents lose out.

- Official population figures are used to calculate performance. If the population figure is inaccurate, dependent indicators will be skewed. For example, the indicator monitoring percentage of residents claiming job seekers allowance would be smaller if the official population figure were higher.

- We cannot communicate effectively with residents for whom we do not have accurate addresses. This includes receipt of the Around Ealing magazine, as well as consultations – major and minor.

- Residents for whom we do not have accurate addresses are unlikely to be captured in the 2011 Census enumeration. This will limit knowledge we hold about residents for the next 10 years. It will also impact on our revenue support grant allocation for the next 10 years, not to mention a multitude of other grants based on resident demographics and deprivation.

Schools services have highlighted their particular concerns. Based on GLA/ONS projections, schools have proposed to expand provision by 12.5 forms of entry over the next 5 to 10 years. The Council has recently received 2008 actual birth data which shows 5,500 actual births in just one year. As a result of this we may require an additional 7.5 forms of entry, meaning major expansion in primary schools is required at very short notice.

2. Where do our population estimates & projections come from?

Ealing's official population is gauged by mid year population estimates produced by the Office for National Statistics (ONS). In brief, estimates are comprised of birth and death registrations, as well as UK and international migration figures. Migration within the UK is gauged by GP records. International migration is harder to measure. For international migration, ONS estimates depend on the International Passenger Survey (IPS) and Annual Population Survey (APS), neither of which were designed to estimate small populations, and neither of which have a sample size which could make estimations of local authority populations robust. As a result, local authorities with high international migration have low confidence in official population estimates.

The GLA provides London boroughs with high and low population projections which are based on the ONS mid year population estimates, our development plans and other data (such as household size taken from the decennial census). GLA projections are therefore also unable to reflect the number of international migrants in the borough.

Another fundamental assumption of all these projections is that past trends will continue: none of the available estimates and projections allow for changes in trends or policies since 2001.

3. How accurate are Ealing's population estimates & projections?

The ONS estimates show Ealing borough to have had the smallest population growth of any London borough since the 2001 census. Ealing is also one of the four London boroughs that are estimated to have seen a decline in residents between June 2006 and 2007.

We can use administrative data to validate official figures. Official population estimates and projections seriously underestimate the number of people living in Ealing borough as demonstrated below.

COUNCIL TAX

Recent work has revealed that the number of households[1] paying council tax in the borough is consistently higher than the GLA's high projections.

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[1] Broadly speaking a household is a set of people living in the same dwelling. A dwelling might consist of a house, an apartment or other group of rooms, or a single room. According to the Census, a household comprises one person living alone, or a group of people (not necessarily related) living at the same address with common housekeeping - that is, sharing either a living room or sitting room or at least one meal a day.

GLA household projections compared with council tax payments , 2001-2009

Year	2001	2006	2007	2008	2009
GLA Low projections[2]	118,000	120,400	121,600	122,800	124,000
GLA High projections	118,000	121,900	123,000	124,200	125,400
Council Tax payments[3]	119,445	122,503	124,119	125,356	126,417

The GLA's figures are more than 1,000 households lower than the number paying council tax. We would actually expect GLA projections to be higher than council tax figures because not every household is required to pay council tax. One significant example of households with a legitimate reason for not paying council tax is the case of houses in multiple occupation (HMOs). The broad definition of an HMO is a converted house containing a number of studios/bedsits which share a kitchen, bathroom or toilet. Any HMO contains a number of households, but the landlord pays one singular council tax fee for the whole property.

Regulatory Services have identified around 3,875 HMOs, using electoral services data (approximately 900 of which have been confirmed). There are a further 150 properties being investigated following information received from the public, other departments or outside agencies. Known HMOs contain an average of four households and five residents. It is therefore estimated that around 4,000 HMOs would contain approximately 16,000 households. Some 12,000 households are therefore likely be uncounted by total council tax payments.

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[2] GLA figures are for mid-June.
[3] Council tax figures are 31st March, except for 2009 figures which are for 9th March.

Another set of households which are not included in estimates or projections are illegal outhouses. It is speculated that there are at least 1,000 such properties currently unaccounted for.

We would therefore expect GLA projections (and certainly their high projections) for 2009 to be in excess of 126,417 + 12,000 + 1,000 (139,400). As shown in the table above, GLA high projections for 2009 are actually 125,400.

GP REGISTRATIONS AND NATIONAL INSURANCE NUMBER REGISTRATIONS

We know that some (but not all) new migrants from outside the UK register with GP surgeries. Not all migrants register with a GP, and we would expect the actual number of migrants to be higher than that recorded by any singular administrative source. However, Ealing GP surgeries have recorded eight thousand more new migrants since 2001 than shown in ONS population estimates.

There are questions about the reliability of GP patient records. GPs do have an interest in maintaining large lists, as this is a key element in their formula grant. However, when considering *new* arrivals, list clearance is not so much of an issue. In 2007[4], we asked 1,200 residents whether they were registered with a GP in Ealing borough, or anywhere in the UK. We learnt that 85% of Ealing residents are registered with a GP in the borough, and that 6% are not registered with a GP anywhere in the UK; a further

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[4] 2007, Continental Research: Ealing Communities Survey. Representative sample of 1,200 residents

2% did not know. This is a far lower result than elsewhere in London: also in 2007, Wandsworth Council found that 22% of their residents were not registered with a local GP[5].

Ealing actually has more new migrants registering for national insurance numbers (NINo) than it has registering with a GP[6]; and NINo registrations only count those registering to work (not their dependents). Unfortunately we do not know how long any of these migrants will stay, and there are no known records showing when people leave.

SCHOOLS CENSUS

2006 mid year population estimates show 36,625 residents aged 5-15 years old. In this year, Ealing has records for 35,226 pupils resident in the borough in this age range attending a state school. This does not account for 5-15 year olds living in Ealing and attending independent schools. Our best estimate is that 10% of 5-15 year olds living in Ealing attend a school in the independent sector. This would suggest a population figure of 39,000 would be more accurate. That's 2,400 5-15 year olds unaccounted for in the ONS estimates.

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS FROM ADMINISTRATIVE SOURCES

All available administrative sources show Ealing borough to have one of the highest migrant in-flows in London, alongside Newham and Brent. Ealing actually appears to have one of the highest numbers of migrants in the country; and one that is substantially higher than that estimated by ONS.

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[5] 2007, Wandsworth Council: Housing Re-Survey
[6] In 2005/06 the number of National Insurance Number registrations exceeded the number of new GP registrations by 4,500 residents

4. What data can we use to inform us about the size of the population?

The Council has access to a range of administrative data that informs us on population and migration flows. A key advantage of administrative data is that it uses actual counts. Furthermore, the data we possess is current. In some instances, we must use the official data supplied by ONS (eg national performance indicators). However, this can always be supplemented with survey and administrative data that we have more confidence in.

At present, the Research & Consultation team advises services to use the end of financial year Council tax figure as a proxy for the number of households in the borough[7].

5. What has Ealing done to improve official population estimates and projections?

On at least two occasions the Research & Consultation team have, along with other boroughs, written to the ONS to highlight the inconsistencies between our administrative data and the ONS mid year estimates in the attempt to bring about more accurate official figures, or at least to enable more reliable variant projections that we could have confidence in. Alongside the majority of London boroughs, we have urgently requested that the ONS investigate use of administrative data in thier population estimates. In recent years, the ONS have tested the suitability of some administrative data for use in population estimates. However, the ONS say further work needs to be undertaken before any changes in methodology, and there are no real signs that estimates will be improved in the short term.

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[7] This is not the complete picture of households, with Houses in Multiple Occupation paying just one council tax fee but containing a number of households.

6. What has Ealing done to improve local population estimates?

(a) We have worked with the ONS and GLA, London Councils and the Local Government Association to improve official estimates.

(b) We have investigated a number of administrative sources. In particular, we have used administrative data and local survey data to produce migrant estimates. We have compared:-

- numbers on the GP register plus the proportion of Ealing's population who are not registered with a GP,

- numbers of babies born to mothers of different nationalities, numbers of new school pupils from other countries, and numbers of national insurance number registrations from overseas plus estimated proportion of dependents,

A comprehensive assessment of these data sources was last undertaken in June 2007[8] and a new assessment is currently underway. In 2007, we deduced that the ONS 2005 mid year estimates underestimate our migrant population by an absolute minimum of 3,000 people.

(c) We have also used survey data to supplement administrative sources. We asked residents how long they have lived in the UK through the 2007 Ealing Communities survey.

- 50% of residents had lived in the UK all their lives
- 4% had lived in the UK said all their lives, but had lived in another country for at least one continuous year
- 15% had lived in the UK for 21 or more years
- 5% had lived in the UK for 6 to 20 years
- 8% had lived in the UK for 2 to 5 years

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[8] Ealing Council, 2007: The Impact of Migration

- 4% had lived in the UK for 1 to 2 years
- 4% had lived in the UK for less than a year.

(d) We have asked service areas to collect migration data from their clients since 2007.

(e) Most recently we have obtained special projections from the GLA. Unlike the usual projections, these are based on council tax figures from 2001 to 2009. They also incorporate revised development data – actual and planned from 2001 to 2026. Unfortunately households not counted by council tax payments are still excluded from these projections. They also remain dependent on estimates of household size which we are not yet able to validate.

The following tables compare official projections from CLG and GLA with special projections produced by the GLA and Ealing Council this month.
- Ealing Central projections have been revised to assume 14,121 additional homes between 2010 and 2026,
- Ealing High projections assume 19,000 additional homes.

Changes in the current economic situation have led Ealing Planning team alongside other London boroughs, to revise development quantums. It is now considered likely that we achieve 14,121 additional homes between 2010 and 2026, and Central projections overleaf assume this is achieved.

19,000. We therefore advise that the Central projections are used for planning purposes, and that the high and low figures are used as variant possibilities.

In the table below, the new special projections are shown against official projections from Communities & Local Government (CLG), the Greater London Authority (GLA) and the Office for National Statistics (ONS).

NOTE: Based on council tax figures, these projections do not include HMOs, illegal outhouses or any households living in community establishments that do not pay council tax.

Household projections for Ealing borough

Year	CLG '08	GLA Low '08	GLA High '08	Ealing Central '09	Ealing High '09
2001	118,000	-	-	119,400	119,400
2006	120,000	120,400	121,900	122,500	122,500
2011	123,000	126,400	127,700	127,800	127,800
2016	128,000	131,000	132,000	132,000	133,600
2021	132,000	134,600	137,100	136,300	139,500
2026	137,000	138,000	142,600	140,500	145,400

Population projections for Ealing borough

Year	ONS SNPP '08	GLA Low '08	GLA High '08	Ealing Central '09	Ealing High '09
2001	-	-	-	-	-
2006	306,400	307,200	311,000	312,400	312,400
2011	311,500	320,200	324,500	323,600	323,600
2016	317,500	326,900	330,800	329,800	334,100
2021	323,800	331,200	338,700	335,900	344,200
2026	329,600	335,600	347,600	342,100	354,100

These tables represent a summary of results. Annual projections to 2031 are available by sex and single year of age.

7. What have other London Boroughs done to improve their population estimates?

Most London boroughs have, like Ealing, lobbied ONS and analysed their own administrative data. Some have also hired consultants to provide a fuller independent assessment of analysis of local data:-

Brent, Enfield, Hackney, Newham, Tower Hamlets (and Slough) have recruited Mayhew Associates Ltd to match a variety of validated administrative sources and draw conclusions about household and population size, eliminating duplicates and ascertaining a 'confirmed minimum population'[9].

Hounslow, Kensington & Chelsea, Westminster, Lewisham, Lambeth and Southwark have recruited LG Futures to compare administrative sources with ONS data and establish the cost of population undercount. Total undercounts ranged between 3,400 and 20,000 people for these London boroughs. In 2006, Slough estimated that over a five year period they would lose £15m in formula grant alone due to an underestimation of their population. Total losses for other London boroughs have been estimated to range between £3m and £18m.

These studies are expensive but do provide boroughs with substantial evidence on the reality of their population.

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[9] 2009, London Collaborative: An overview of work on population estimates and flows in and across London boroughs

8. Future Steps/ Options

(a) Linking administrative datasets.

Recruiting a company to validate and verify, then match our main administrative datasets could provide us with a database where we knew the number of people, their ages, disability status, benefit status, language, school the child(ren) attend, GP, council tax band etc etc, for every residential property in the borough. We would need to ensure that such a database was well-maintained and that updates were regularly fed into the database.

(b) Improved data collection/ administration

Service areas should not assume that official estimates are more accurate than information they can collect themselves. To improve understanding of their clients, service areas can monitor (a) country of origin, (b) length of stay in UK to date. Frontline staff require training on why postcode data needs to be accurately recorded, and to be able to do this.

(c) Improved data collection/ surveys

The ONS and GLA use an estimate of household size (number of people per household) based on the last few censuses. We can find out the sizes of households in Ealing in the next annual Ealing residents survey.

(d) <u>Research into Houses in Multiple Occupation and Illegal outhouses</u>

None of the available projections, including Ealing's latest projections adequately account for the number of HMOs and outhouses in the borough. Regulatory services have conservatively estimated that there are around 1,000 illegal outhouses in the borough currently unaccounted for. We have already used Acorn lifestyle data to show which parts of the borough are most likely to have HMOs to enable targeting of such areas in small scale research. There are a number of ways we could further improve knowledge of HMOs<u>:</u>

- Encourage council staff to report HMOs/ outhouses
- Use arial photography, thermal imaging survey to identify outhouses
- Use Acorn lifestyle data to find areas where HMOs are most likely to be
- Task staff with walking streets to identify HMOs/ outhouses
- Match administrative datasets

(e) <u>Improvements to Ealing Council address records</u>

Matching of administrative datasets can provide a much fuller understanding of our population. The location and street naming/numbering of both commercial and residential properties is managed by the Local Land Property Gazetteer (LLPG) custodian. Information from Planning & Building Control, Council Tax and the Electoral Services is fed into the LLPG.

Currently the LLPG cannot distinguish between residential and commercial properties, nor can it record vacancy. However, a recent review of the standard (BS7666) has led to the introduction of a code that records occupancy. This is to be populated across the Ealing borough dataset later in 2009. When this change takes place, the LLPG will be able to provide the number of residential

properties. This could supersede the number of council tax registered properties as a proxy for number of households in the borough. Using the LLPG as a proxy for number of households would also have the advantage of providing up-to-date information on the number of households at lower geographical areas of choice.

9. Conclusions

There are clear discrepancies between official population figures and our more reliable administrative data. Underestimates of Ealing's population are seriously disadvantaging local residents:-

- Ealing Council is not receiving the right amount of funding to support all borough residents
- The Council's ability to plan services, development and regeneration is seriously jeopardised by poor knowledge of basic demographic information

There are a number of steps we can take to improve the quality of our local information. The method most conducive to producing reliable results involves verification and linking of local administrative datasets. Data can be linked back to local address records providing a composite database including location, gender and age of household members, language, date of arrival in UK, benefit status and theoretically anything already contained in a comprehensive dataset. This path could enable service planning to be conducted with far greater sensitivity.

In addition to this work, it is recommended that the Council take steps to systematically locate HMOs and illegal outhouses in the borough.

These steps will allow Ealing to plan more accurately for development and regeneration of the borough. They will also improve enumeration for the 2011 census, with the probable result of achieving greater funding for every year between 2011 and 2021. In addition, households living in properties not recorded by our current systems might receive council communications, and be engaged in consultation and research of relevance.

In the meantime, it is advised that planners use the 2009 Central Ealing projections to plan provision and infrastructure, carefully noting their shortcomings, in particular that they account for only a quarter of houses in multiple occupation, and for none of the irregular dwellings that do not pay council tax. T

he special projections anticipate that in 2026 there will be 140,500 households, and a population of 342,100. This represents a growth of 6.6% in households and 13.4% in population between 2009 and 2026.

10. References

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2009, Mayhew, Harper Associates Ltd: Making Use of Local Administrative Data For Population Estimates And Service Planning

2008, ONS: Improved Methods for estimating international migration

2008, ONS: Subnational Population projections

2008, GLA: Low and High post London plan projections

2008, CLG: Household projections

2008, ONS: Quality Assurance for Implementation of Migration and Population Statistics Improvements

2007, GLA: Greater London Demographic Review 2007

For further copies of this document or any of Ealing's local development framework documents, please contact:

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