Havering
LONDON BOROUGH

Briefing Note

Subject	Population Estimates and Projections: Understanding Their Appropriate Use
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Date	23 October 2026
Submitted to	All Partners

Summary

This briefing summarises the main population estimates and projections available for Havering and their appropriate use in service planning, needs assessment and resource allocation. **Population estimates** provide the best available measure of the population at a particular point in time, while **population projections** indicate how the population may change under assumptions about fertility, mortality, migration and, in some models, housing growth. They should therefore be selected according to their intended purpose.

The **Office for National Statistics (ONS) Mid-Year Population Estimates (MYEs)** provide the official annual estimate of Havering's resident population. The latest estimate presented in this briefing is **280,787 residents in mid-2025**. MYEs should generally be used for official population denominators, public health indicators, funding, benchmarking and comparison with other areas. Havering's **GP-registered population was 302,840 in June 2026**, but this measures registered patients rather than residents and may include cross-boundary registrations and people who have moved without de-registering.

For future planning, projections are available from both the **ONS** and the **Greater London Authority (GLA)**. ONS Subnational Population Projections provide nationally consistent trend-based projections. For most London planning purposes, however, the GLA recommends **housing-led projections**, which incorporate anticipated housing supply alongside demographic change. For local authorities, the recommended model is the **10-year migration, central fertility, housing-led projection**.

The latest GLA housing-led projections indicate that Havering's population could increase from **279,620 in 2026 to 322,006 by 2041**, an increase of approximately **42,400 people (15%)**. The most substantial change is expected among older residents: the **65+ population is projected to increase from 49,211 to 65,527, around 33%**. The **25–64 population** is also projected to grow by around **17%**, while the under-18 population is expected to decline initially before increasing slightly towards 2041. These demographic shifts have important implications for future health, social care, housing, education and wider council services.

The Havering School Organisation and Place Planning team uses a more specialised methodology to project future school place demand, combining **ONS birth data, school census information, housing development forecasts and cohort-survival modelling**. Havering has also benefited from bespoke GLA **Borough Preferred Option (BPO)** projections based on locally provided housing trajectories, offering a tailored evidence base for service planning and future demand assessment.

Recommended approach

There is **no single population dataset suitable for every purpose**. Havering should use:

- ✓ **ONS MYEs** for the current official population, rates and national benchmarking.
- ✓ **Census and ONS MYEs** for JSNA demographic profiles.
- ✓ **GLA housing-led projections** for future health, social care and wider service demand.
- ✓ **GLA housing-led or BPO projections** for local plan and infrastructure planning.
- ✓ **GP registration data** for primary care service planning.
- ✓ **School roll projections** for education place planning.

A consistent approach should be adopted across the Council, with reports clearly identifying the population source used and recognising differences in methodology when interpreting figures.

1 Introduction

This briefing note provides an overview of the population estimates and population projections available for Havering. Understanding the size and characteristics of the population is important for planning services, allocating resources and assessing future demand across the borough.

The note explains how population estimates are produced, outlines the main population projection models available from the Office for National Statistics (ONS) and the Greater London Authority (GLA), and summarises how the data are used locally, including for school place planning.

Population estimates and population projections serve different purposes and are produced using different methodologies. Estimates seek to provide the best measure of the population at a particular point in time using the latest demographic evidence. Projections represent a future scenario based on assumptions regarding fertility, mortality and migration. As a result, projected figures for a specific year will not necessarily match subsequently published population estimates.

2 Population Estimates

The Office for National Statistics (ONS) uses the latest Census as the baseline population estimate. Following each Census, the population is adjusted for any undercount and becomes the starting point for future estimates.

Annual mid-year population estimates are then produced using the cohort component method, which updates the population by accounting for:

- Births (added)
- Deaths (subtracted)
- International migration (added or subtracted)
- Internal migration within the UK (added or subtracted)

The estimates are published annually and are widely used for service planning, funding allocations, public health analysis and population projections. The further away from a Census, the greater the uncertainty, particularly in areas with high levels of migration or population turnover. Estimates are rebased when a new Census becomes available.

Key point: Current population estimates are not based on a new count of residents each year; they are derived by updating the Census population using administrative data on births, deaths and migration. The current latest ONS estimate for Havering is Mid-Year 2025 giving a population of 280,787.

Population estimates for England and Wales - Office for National Statistics

3 GP Registered Population

In addition to the ONS population estimates, GP registration data is available and provides an alternative measure of the local population. However, GP registration counts are based on patients registered with GP practices rather than residents living within Havering. As a result, some people registered with Havering GP practices may live outside the borough, while some Havering residents may be registered with practices elsewhere. GP registration data is also generally considered to slightly overestimate the population, as patients do not always de-register when they move away. As of June 2026, the Havering GP population was 302,840.

Patients Registered at a GP Practice - NHS England Digital

4 Population Projections

Several population projection models are available for Havering. The principal projections used locally are produced by the Office for National Statistics (ONS) and the Greater London Authority (GLA), which develops London-specific projection models using ONS demographic data.

4.1 ONS Principal Projections

The ONS "best estimate" scenario is based on its central assumptions for:

- Fertility
- Mortality
- International migration

This is the projection most used nationally for planning and benchmarking.

UK population projection explorer - Office for National Statistics

The latest Subnational Population Projections (SNPPs) are the 2022-based projections, published by the Office for National Statistics (ONS) on 24 June 2025. Using Havering's 2022 population of 264,675 as the baseline, the population is projected to reach 278,958 by 2030, an increase of 14,283 people (5.4%), and 292,620 by 2040, an increase of 27,945 people (10.6%).

4.2 GLA Projections

GLA Demography produces a range of population projections which are used to help inform planning and policy work within the GLA and across London.

The two main types of population projection are *trend-based* projections, which are based on a cohort component model that uses past trends in births, deaths and migration to project future populations, and *housing-led* projections, which reconcile future population growth with available housing supply by incorporating a housing supply trajectory.

The production of these variants has been driven by the desire to meet the needs of a wide range of users. The GLA recommends that for most purposes users should choose housing-led projections. For local authorities GLA recommends use of the 10-year migration central fertility housing led version.

Population and household projections | London Datastore

Detailed methodology documentation is published alongside the population projections which can help users decide which set of population projections is most appropriate for their needs.

Population projections documentation | London Datastore

Table 1 presents the latest GLA 10-year migration, central fertility, housing-led population projection for Havering. It shows projected population change over the next 5, 10 and 15 years, together with projected changes in the population age structure.

Table 1: Havering population projections and percentage change 2026 – 2041

Age Band	2026	2031		2036		2041	
	Population	Population	% Change	Population	% Change	Population	% Change
Under 18	61,963	60,245	-2.8%	59,167	-1.8%	60,720	2.6%
18–24	20,059	22,104	10.2%	23,790	7.6%	22,758	-4.3%
25–64	148,387	150,904	1.7%	160,148	6.1%	173,001	8.0%
65+	49,211	53,601	8.9%	59,680	11.3%	65,527	9.8%
Total	**279,620**	**286,854**	**2.6%**	**302,785**	**5.6%**	**322,006**	**6.3%**

4.3 School Roll Projections

As strategic commissioner, the London Borough of Havering has a statutory responsibility to monitor the supply and demand for school places and ensure there is sufficient capacity to meet demand by planning for growth.

The School Organisation and Place Planning team is the council's service area that ensures that Havering meets this function. The team has the statutory responsibility for long-term planning for early years, primary & secondary, post-16, SEND and alternative provision places in Havering.

The team produces a school planning data pack annually as well as a four-year rolling plan which sets out the principles and guidelines as to how additional education places within Havering will be managed and commissioned. The latest versions for both documents can be found via links below:

School Planning Data Pack - Autumn 2026

Children and Young People Education Place Planning Plan | London Borough of Havering

Havering's school place projections for primary and secondary are based on ONS actual birth data, school census information and housing development forecasts, using a cohort survival methodology that tracks how pupils move through the education system over time. Where actual birth data is not available projected birth data is used.

Primary projections are calculated separately for seven planning areas by analysing the relationship between births and Reception intake five years later, while secondary projections use historic transfer rates from Year 6 to Year 7 within four secondary planning areas. Post-16 forecasts for school sixth forms are based on historic staying-on rates from Year 11 to Years 12 and 13.

The impact of new housing is incorporated through child yield estimates, with projected pupils phased in over several years to reflect gradual occupation of new developments. Projections are reviewed annually against actual school census data, updated to reflect changes in birth trends, housing delivery, cross-border pupil movements and parental preferences, and are refined through consultation with schools and neighbouring local authorities to maintain accuracy.

The local authority receives a bespoke set of population projections from the GLA which are used for elements of education place planning, including early years, SEND, alternative

provision and post-16 forecasts. These bespoke projections are provided by the GLA on request based on the local authorities housing trajectory (See GLA Bespoke Projections below).

4.4 GLA Bespoke Projections

The GLA Demography Team offers a bespoke population projection service to London local authorities. Boroughs can request population projections based on their own choice of assumptions about future housing delivery. These assumptions are submitted to the team via a standard template. The resulting projections are referred to as the *Borough Preferred Option* (or BPO) and are commonly used to help support local planning and service delivery.

GLA population projection service | London Datastore

The GLA does not make the BPO projections and submitted housing trajectories publicly available or share them with anyone other than the commissioning borough. Boroughs wishing to publish BPO projections themselves are free to do so.

This service is offered as an optional, free service to London authorities, and is intended to provide users with an alternative to the standard projections that the GLA publishes

5 Population Data Sources and Recommended Use

Tables 2 and 3 below summarise the main population data sources used by local authorities and their recommended applications. The GLA recommends that, for most London planning purposes, users select housing-led population projections, while ONS mid-year estimates remain the official population estimate for funding, benchmarking and national comparisons.

Table 2: Population data sources and recommended use

Data source	Producer	What it represents	Frequency	Recommended use in local authorities	Key strengths	Key limitations
Census	ONS	Direct count and detailed characteristics of the population at a point in time	Every 10 years	Baseline population profile, deprivation analysis, equalities assessments, JSNAs, neighbourhood analysis, benchmarking	Most comprehensive demographic dataset available	Quickly becomes outdated between censuses
Mid-Year Population Estimates (MYEs)	ONS	Official annual resident population estimates updated using births, deaths and migration from the latest Census base	Annual	Official population denominator for rates, benchmarking, public health indicators, funding allocations, needs assessments	Nationally consistent and widely used across government	Increasing uncertainty, the further away from the Census, especially in areas with high migration
Subnational Population Projections (SNPP)	ONS	Trend-based projections of future population using assumptions about fertility, mortality and migration	Typically, every 2 years	Strategic planning, forecasting future service demand, adult social care, education and housing need	Provides nationally comparable projections for all local authorities	Does not explicitly account for local housing growth constraints or development plans
GLA Housing-Led Population Projections	GLA	Population projections constrained by planned housing delivery and household formation	Annual	Recommended default for most London borough planning purposes, including JSNAs, health and care demand modelling, infrastructure planning and housing assessments	Incorporates planned housing growth and local development assumptions; available at borough, ward and MSOA levels	Applicable only to London boroughs; dependent on housing assumptions
GLA Trend-Based Population Projections	GLA	Future population based on historic demographic trends (births, deaths and migration)	Annual	Scenario testing, sensitivity analysis and comparison with housing-led projections	Produces high, low and central variants to assess uncertainty	May over- or under-estimate growth if future housing supply differs from historic trends

Data source	Producer	What it represents	Frequency	Recommended use in local authorities	Key strengths	Key limitations
GLA Borough Preferred Option (BPO) Projections	GLA with borough input	Housing-led projections incorporating locally supplied housing intelligence	As commissioned	Local plan development, growth strategies and major regeneration programmes	Incorporates detailed local intelligence and development pipelines	Not routinely publicly available; produced only for participating boroughs
GP Registered Population	NHS England / GP systems	Registered patients rather than resident population	Monthly	Monitoring primary care demand, vaccination uptake, screening coverage and service utilisation	Timely and frequently updated	Not a true resident population; can include over-registration and cross-boundary registrations
School Roll Projections	Local authority education planning teams (often using GLA/ONS inputs)	Forecast numbers of pupils requiring school places	Annual	School place planning, capital investment and education commissioning	Specifically designed for education planning	Not suitable for wider population planning

Table 3: Practical recommendation for Havering and other London boroughs

Purpose	Recommended source
Official population size today	ONS Mid-Year Population Estimates
Comparing rates with England and other authorities	ONS Mid-Year Population Estimates
JSNA demographic profile	Census + ONS MYEs
Forecasting future health and social care demand	GLA Housing-Led Projections
Local Plan and infrastructure planning	GLA Housing-Led or Borough Preferred Option
Scenario testing and uncertainty analysis	ONS SNPP + GLA Trend-Based Projections
GP service planning	GP Registered Population
School place planning	School Roll Projections