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Yesterdays statistical analysis from the ONS makes interesting reading. There was somewhat of a furore about a year ago when the ONS published – for the first time having taken over the statistical responsibility from MHCLG – the [2016-based Household Projection figures](#). These updated figures were interpreted by many to mean that fewer homes needed to be built than was previously thought. In particular, those arguing for lower levels of housebuilding saw the numbers as justification to scale back housing plans.

However, this approach risked undermining the government’s pledge to prioritise housebuilding and the overall national target of 300,000 new homes built every year. As a result, Government quickly stated that when calculating housing need, the previous

[2014-based Household Projections](#) should be used. The primacy of the 2014-based figures was re-confirmed in [updates](#) to the Planning Practice Guidance earlier in the year.

Given that today’s analysis concludes that the difference between the 2014 and 2016 figures were as a result of methodological improvements informing the latter, the issue looks likely to be a continued bone of contention between Local Authorities, developers and the government. Notwithstanding this, at least for now the 2014-based figures look likely to be the first port of call for the majority of base-line housing need calculations.