

# Oxfordshire's population

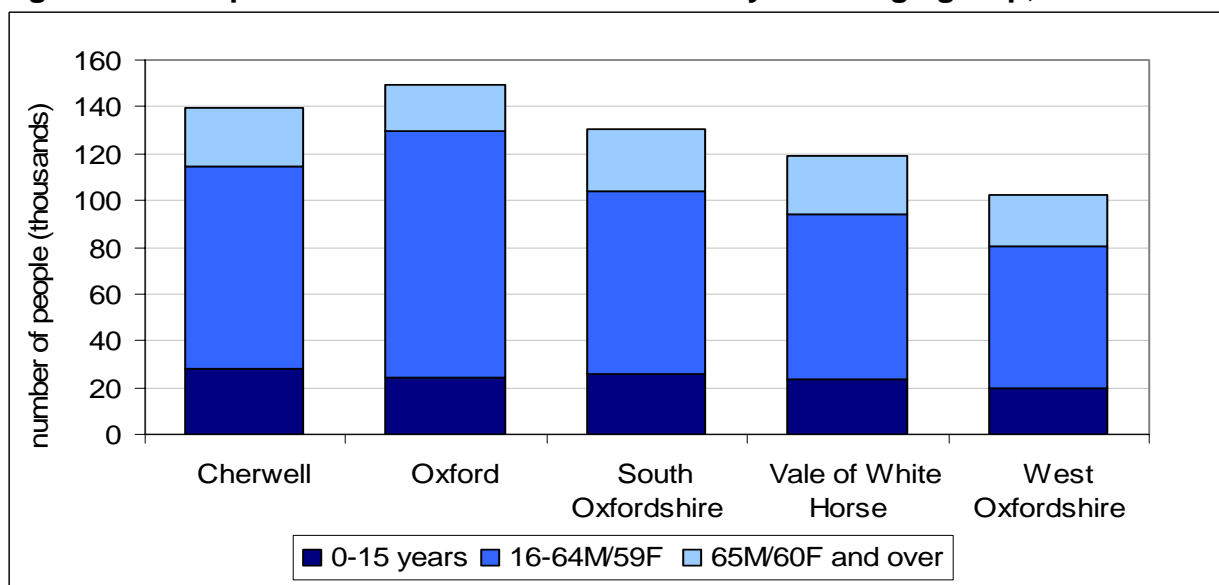
Population estimates and projections published by the Office for National Statistics (ONS) are used by central government to allocate local authority funding. More detailed local population estimates based on anticipated housing stock are used to plan for services.

This briefing highlights the key points from the latest ONS population estimates and projections, reviews the impact of recent revisions and compares ONS figures against local population forecasts.

## 1 Latest ONS population estimates, mid 2009<sup>1</sup>

- It is estimated that there are just over **640,000** people living in Oxfordshire, up from 635,500 in 2008.
- Almost two thirds of the population are of working age (males 16 to 64 years, females 16 to 59 years), 19% (121,000) are under 16 years and 18% (118,000) are of pensionable age. These proportions vary with district (figure1).

**Figure 1 Population of Oxfordshire Districts by broad age group, 2009**



Source: Office for National Statistics, 2010

## 2 Revised ONS population estimates 2002 to 2008

The Office for National Statistics (ONS) has produced the latest population estimates using a new methodology which takes better account of student populations and patterns of migration. They have also revised their estimates for 2002 to 2008 (published June 2010).

<sup>1</sup>Office for National Statistics, Mid Year Population Estimates for Local Authorities, June 2010

## Impact of revision

The new figures estimate that there were:

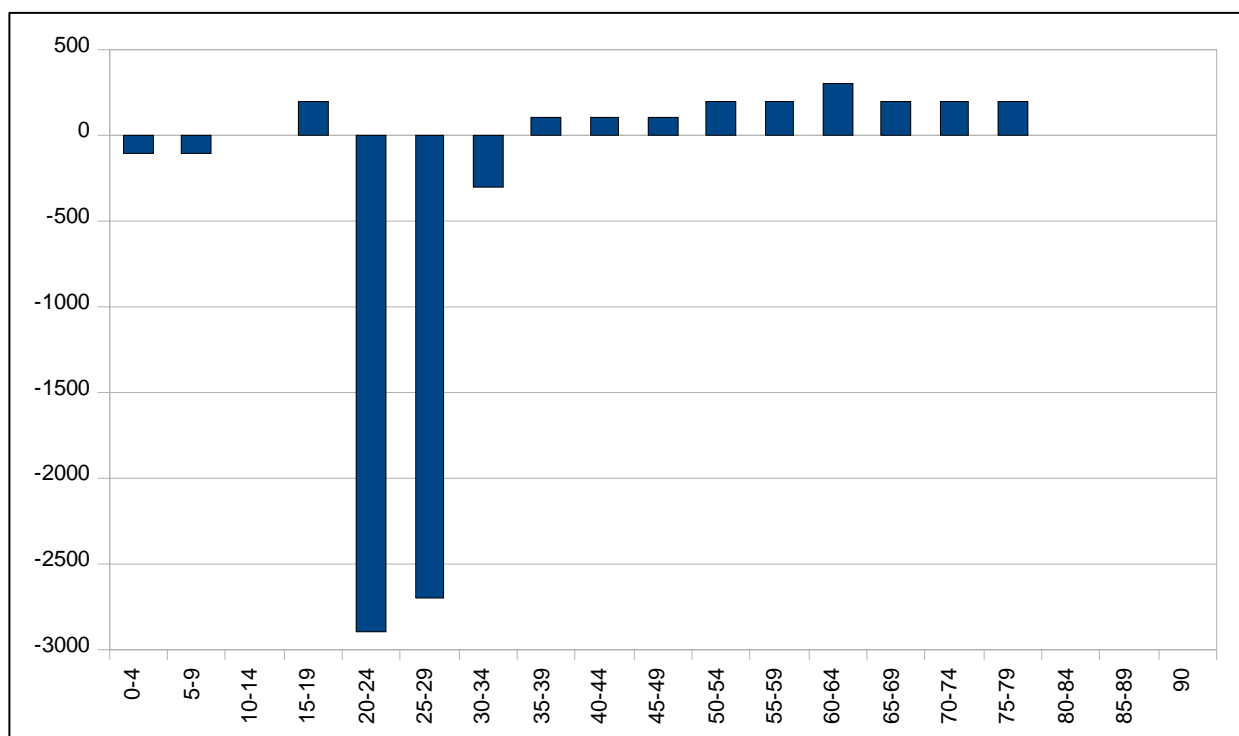
- 4,000 fewer people living in Oxfordshire in 2008 than in the original estimate.
- Over 7,000 fewer people in Oxford City. In the revised figure, an additional 4,000 students left the City during 2002 to 2008 and the net outward migration estimate increased by 3,300.
- Slight increases in population in all other districts. The greatest increase (plus 1,200) is in the Vale of White Horse.
- Significant reductions in the number of 20 to 30 year olds (figure 2), particularly in Oxford City. This reflects students leaving Oxford on completion of their studies. This is also the age group most likely to migrate.
- Small changes to the estimated number of children in Oxfordshire (slightly fewer 0-9 year olds and slightly more 15-19 year olds).
- Slight increases in all ages between 35 and 80 years.
- No change in the estimated number of people aged 80 years and over.

**Table 1: Revised ONS population estimates for Oxfordshire, mid 2008**

	Revised Mid 2008	Previous mid 2008	Difference between original and revised 2008 estimates		
			TOTAL adjustment	Student adjustment	Migration adjustment
Cherwell	<b>138,800</b>	138,200	<b>600</b>	-400	1,100
<b>Oxford</b>	<b>146,500</b>	153,900	<b>-7400</b>	-4,400	-3,300
South Oxfordshire	<b>130,000</b>	129,100	<b>900</b>	-100	1,400
Vale of White Horse	<b>118,100</b>	116,900	<b>1200</b>	-	900
West Oxfordshire	<b>102,100</b>	101,600	<b>500</b>	-500	1,700
<b>Oxfordshire</b>	<b>635,500</b>	<b>639,700</b>	<b>-4,200</b>	<b>-5,500</b>	<b>1700</b>

Source: Office for National Statistics, 2010

**Figure 2 Impact of revised 2008 population estimate in Oxfordshire by age**



Source: Office for National Statistics, revised population estimates, 2010

### Implications

The ONS revised population estimates for 2008 are the base for the latest ONS population projections (see section 3). The reduction to the the estimate could have implications for population-based government funding such as that allocated for social care. The impact will be greatest in Oxford City as this is the area of greatest change (population estimates now significantly lower).

The estimates are also used as a denominator in national indicators. Changes to the population estimates may alter the performance of Oxfordshire compared with other counties for indicators based on per capita measures.

### 3 Future population change

There are two methods for modelling future population change, one based on what would happen if recent trends continue, the second based on the number of people who can be accommodated in the available housing. These are summarised and compared below.

#### 3.1 ONS local authority area projections based on recent trends

The ONS produces national and local authority population projections based on recent trends in births, deaths and migration. The projections take no account of national or local policies, planned housing growth or capacity of an area to accommodate the projected population.

#### Growing:

##### If recent trends continue:

- Oxfordshire's population could grow from **635,500** people in 2008 to **675,000** by 2018.<sup>2</sup>
- There could be **736,500** people living in the county by 2033, 16% more than in 2008.
- All districts in Oxfordshire could see an increasing population. Cherwell and West Oxfordshire would see the greatest change.

**Table 2 Number of people living in Oxfordshire, 2008 to 2033**

	2008	2018	2028	2033	2008 to 2018 change		2008 to 2033 change	
Oxfordshire	635.5	675	717.7	736.5	39.5	6.22%	101.0	15.89%
Cherwell	138.8	149.1	159.5	164.0	10.3	7.42%	25.2	18.16%
Oxford	146.5	153.7	161.2	164.6	7.2	4.91%	18.1	12.35%
South Oxfordshire	130.0	136.2	144.0	147.6	6.2	4.77%	17.6	13.54%
Vale of White Horse	118.1	124.0	131.3	134.6	5.9	5.00%	16.5	13.97%
West Oxfordshire	102.1	112.0	121.7	125.7	9.9	9.70%	23.6	23.11%

Source: ONS 2008-based population projections, May 2010

#### Reasons for growth

- There are expected to be 2,000 to 3,000 more births than deaths each year in Oxfordshire (natural change).
- Between 800 and 1,700 more people will move into Oxfordshire than will leave each year (net migration). This includes people moving from elsewhere in the UK and from overseas.

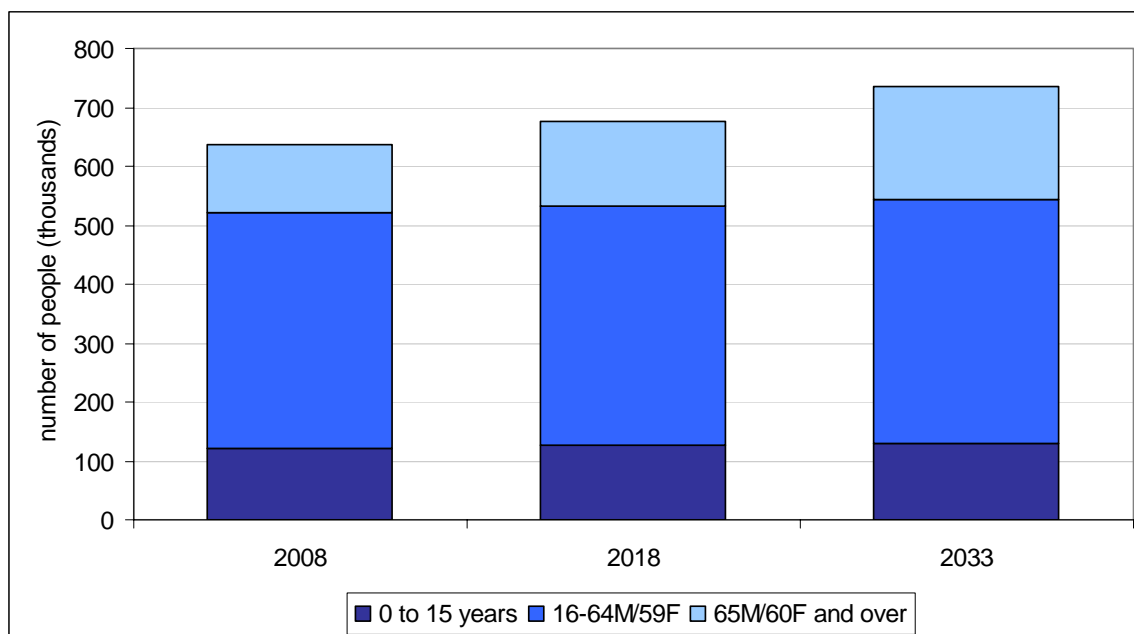
<sup>2</sup> Office for National Statistics, 2008 based Subnational Population Projections. May 2010

## Getting older:

### If recent trends continue:

- the number of people of pension age<sup>3</sup> would increase from **114,900** in 2008 to **142,000** in 2018, and to **193,500** in 2033, 68% more than in 2008 (figure 3).
- numbers of the very elderly (85 years plus) would increase by almost 40% by 2018, and by 2033 there could be an **additional 23,400 people aged 85+** living in the county, more than double the number in 2008
- the number of children between the ages of 0 and 15 years would increase by just 5,400 from 2008 to 2018, and by 10,400 between 2008 and 2033 (8.7%)
- by 2011 there will be more people of pensionable age living in Oxfordshire than children, and numbers of 60/65+ will continue to increase at a faster rate than the number of children (figure 4).
- the proportion of the population of working age will decrease from 63% in 2008 to 56% in 2033<sup>4</sup>.

**Figure 3 Population by broad age group, 2008 to 2033**



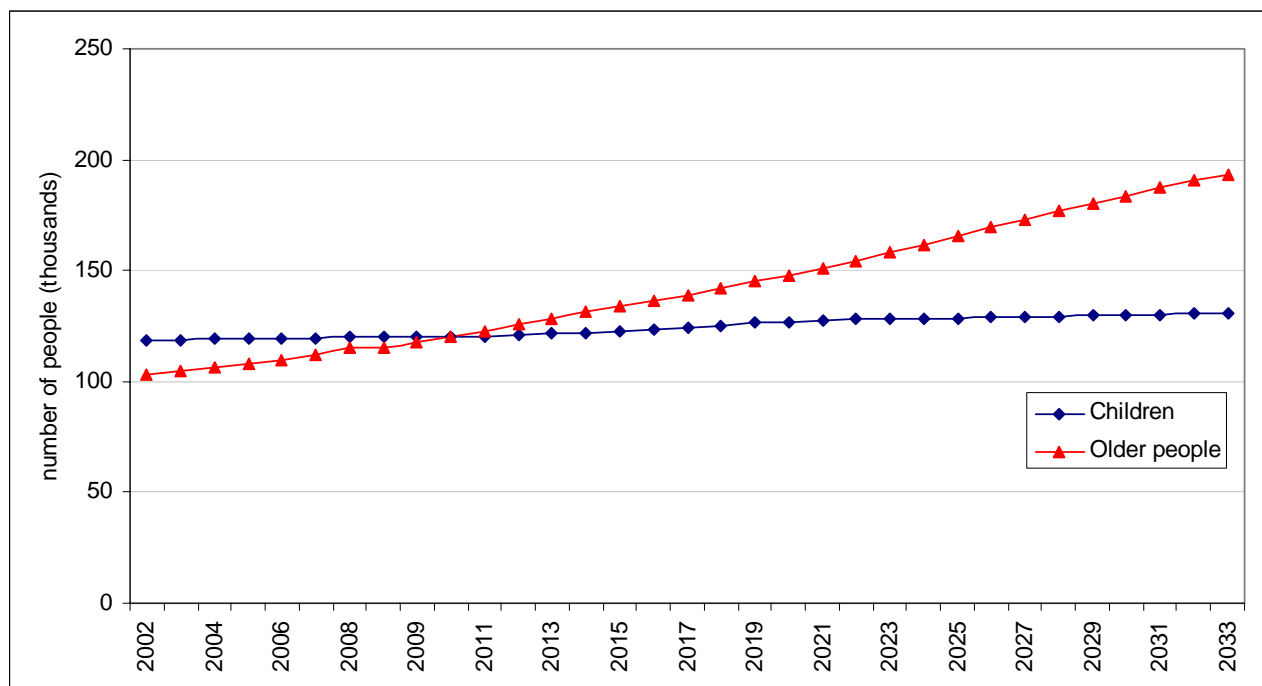
AGE GROUP	2008	2018	2033	% change 2008 to 2018	% change 2008 to 2033
0 to 15 years	120.0	125.4	130.4	4.5%	8.7%
16-64M/59F	400.7	407.7	412.6	1.7%	3.0%
65M/60F and over	114.9	142.0	193.5	23.6%	68.4%
85 years and over	14.2	19.7	37.6	5.5	38.7%
<b>All ages</b>	<b>635.5</b>	<b>675.0</b>	<b>736.5</b>	6.2%	15.9%

Source: Office for National Statistics, 2008-based population projections, 2010

<sup>3</sup> These projections are based on the current retirement ages (males 65 years, females 60 years). Proportions of older people to working age people will change as the proposed changes to retirement age take effect over the period of the projection.



Figure 4 Numbers of children and older people, 2001 to 2033



Source: Office for National Statistics, 2008-based population projections, 2010

### Implications

- The sharp increase in the numbers of very elderly people is likely to present significant challenges for the provision of public services, including health and social care (increasing number of people with dementia for example).
- An increasing proportion of households will be headed by an older person. The number of people who live alone, including older people, is likely to increase. This could have an impact on demand for and availability of appropriate housing in the county.
- There will be a smaller number of working age people compared with numbers of older people, reducing the numbers who are able to provide care.

### 3.2 Oxfordshire population forecasts based on planned housing growth

The ONS projections are not available below local authority area and do not take account of housing growth. Oxfordshire County Council publishes forecasts which take account of the number of homes available (existing and planned), as well as recent trends in births, deaths and migration. Forecasts are published by district to 2026 and by ward to 2016. The latest forecasts published in June 2010 show:

- The greatest population increase is expected in urban areas<sup>5</sup>: from 381,300 people in 2006 to 416,400 in 2016, an increase of 9%. These are the areas where much of the planned housing growth will be located.
- The total number of people living in rural wards (villages, hamlets and isolated dwellings) is expected to increase by just 3% from 2006 to 2016, although many rural wards will see little or no population growth and the population of others will decrease. This reflects the anticipated decrease in average household size – the same number of houses will accommodate fewer people.
- The numbers of children and working age people in rural wards are forecast to decrease by 3%, whilst the number of people of pension age is expected to increase by 25%.
- Urban wards have a higher proportion of working age people (around 5% higher) and a correspondingly lower proportion of older people (again around 5% lower) than rural wards (table 3.3). The proportion of older people is slightly higher in the town and fringe wards than in the more rural wards (figure 3.5).

**Table 3: Urban/rural population change by broad age band, 2006 to 2016**

		0-15	16-64M/59F	pension age	85+	Total
<b>2006</b>	urban	70,594	249,967	60,722	8,520	381,284
	rural	21,975	70,106	24,572	2,907	116,653
	town and fringe	22,446	70,480	25,961	3,374	118,887
<b>2016</b>	urban	77,584	266,423	72,397	11,432	416,404
	rural	21,275	68,021	30,573	3,920	119,869
	town and fringe	22,806	72,108	32,428	4,704	127,342
<b>change 2006 to 2016</b>	urban	10%	7%	19%	34%	9%
	rural	-3%	-3%	24%	35%	3%
	town and fringe	2%	2%	25%	39%	7%

Source: Oxfordshire County Council ward population forecasts, 2010

NB: The latest round of forecasts is based on levels of housing growth recommended in the South East Plan (published by the previous government in June 2009). However the recent change of government and the abolition of regional spatial strategies and housing targets mean that there is currently (July 2010) significant uncertainty about future housing growth. The housing data used in the current forecasts is the best available at the time of publication, but the resulting population forecasts should be used with caution given the significant level of uncertainty. The forecasts will be updated once figures on housing growth are clear.

<sup>5</sup> Using the ONS definitions of urban and rural, 68 of Oxfordshire's 147 wards are 'urban' (population of 10,000 people or more); 31 are classed as 'town and fringe' and the remaining 38 as 'village, hamlet and isolated dwellings'.

**Implications**

There is likely to be an increasing number of elderly people living in rural areas. The number of very elderly (likely to rely on public transport) is expected to increase significantly, and ensuring access to services will continue to present even greater challenges for service providers.

Figure 5 Population change by ward, 2006 to 2016

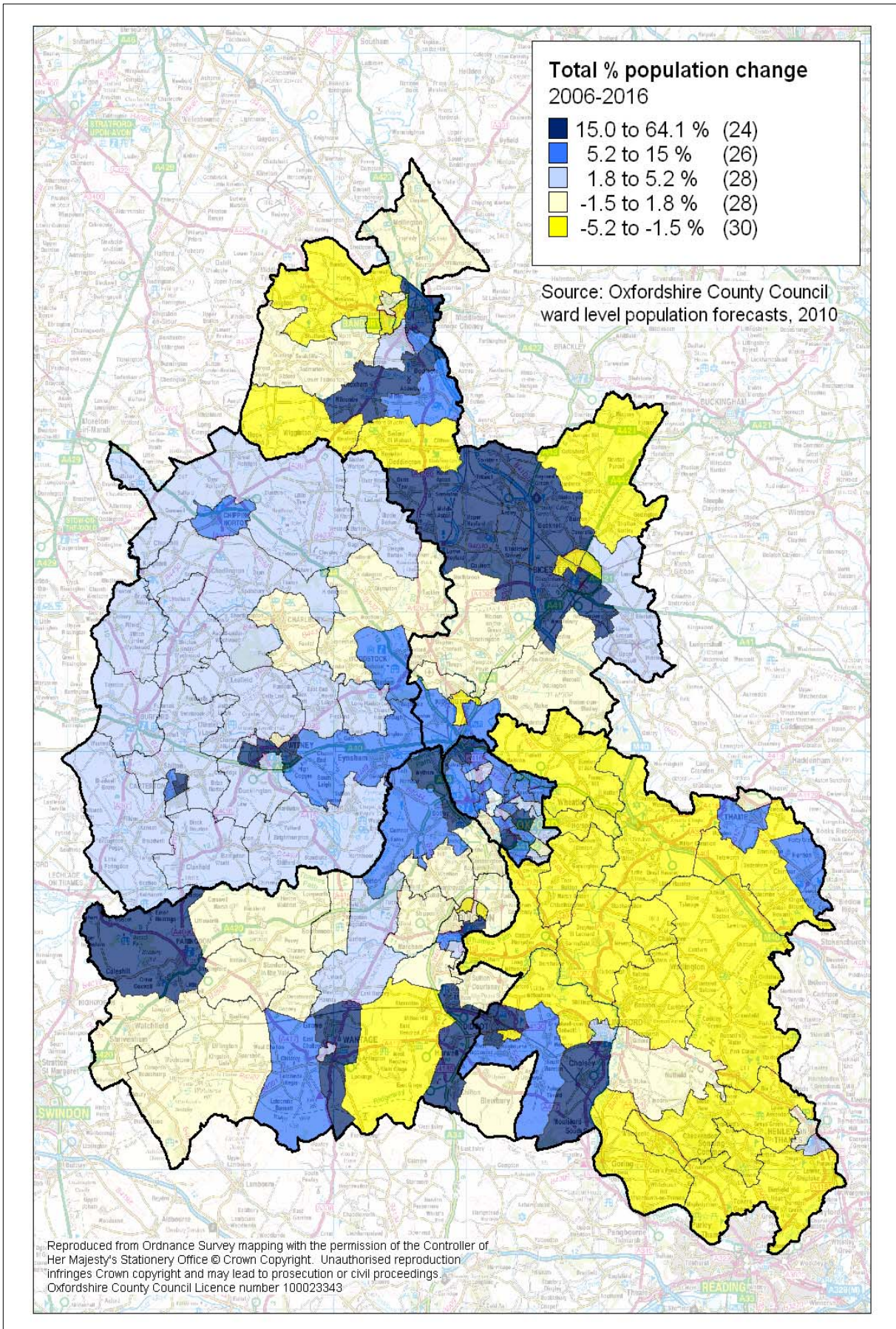
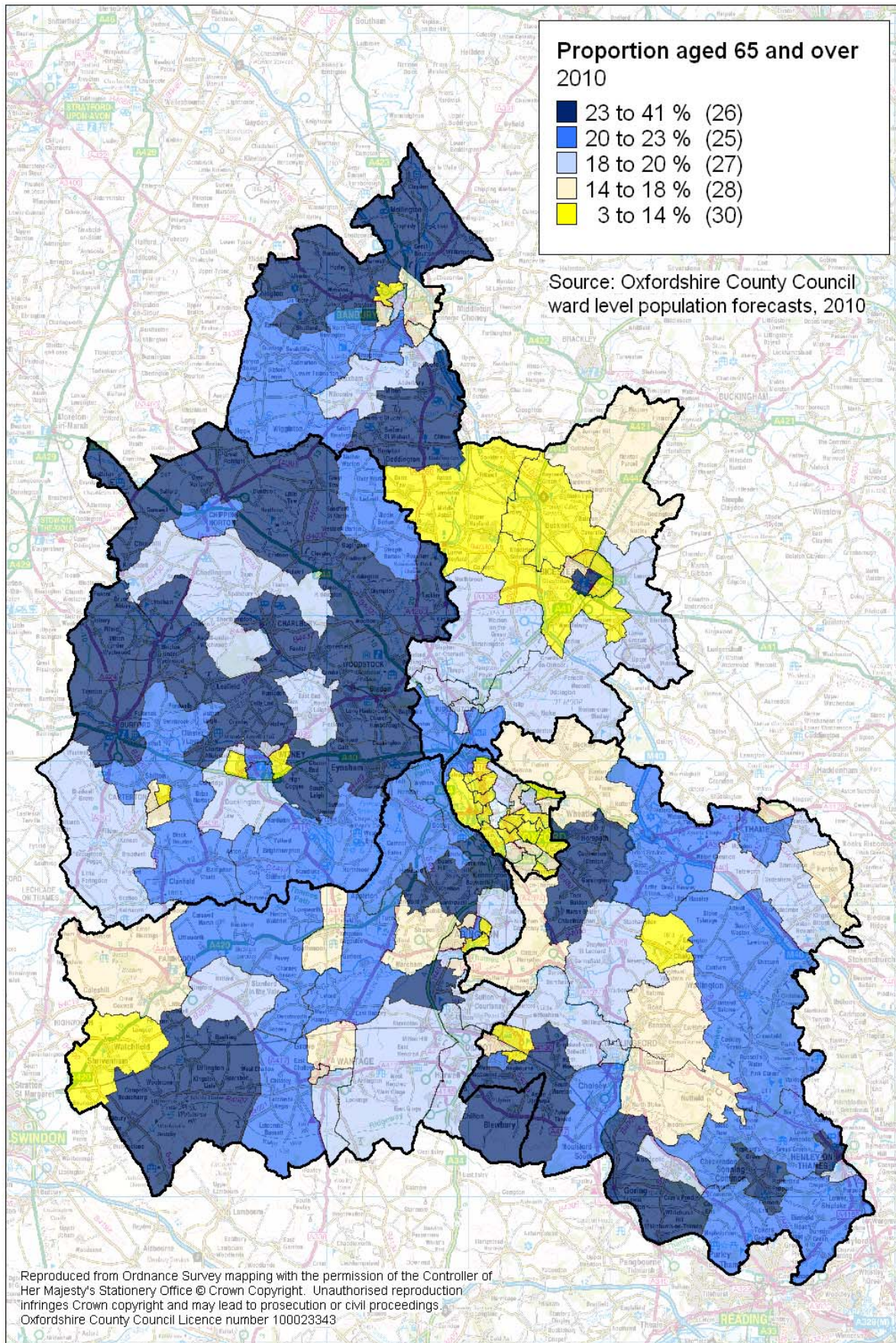


Figure 6 Proportion of older people by ward, 2010

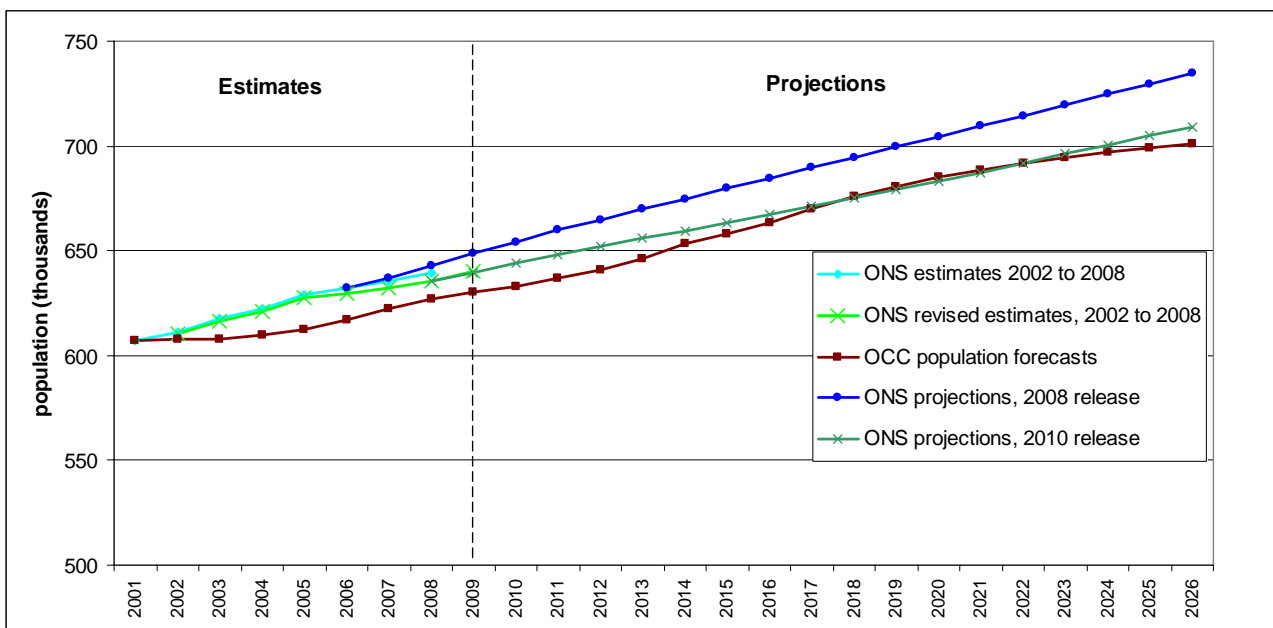


#### 4 Comparison of ONS and OCC population data

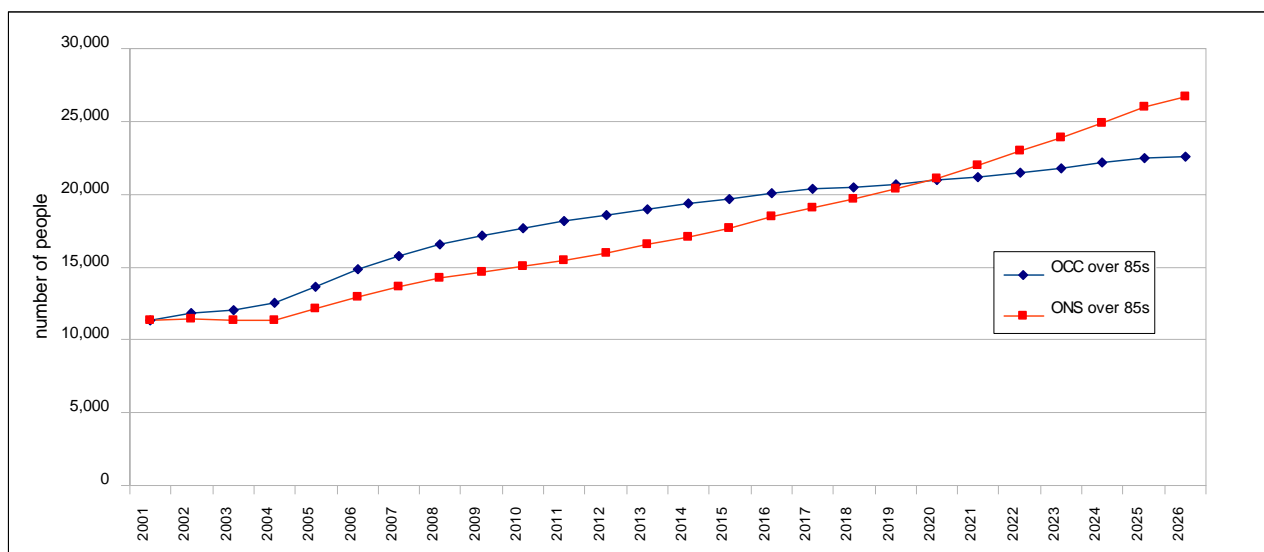
The new methodology used by the ONS to produce the 2009 population estimates and revised estimates for 2002 to 2008 brings the ONS estimates more in line with the housing-based forecasts published by the County Council, particularly in Oxford City where previously the figures were significantly different (figure 7). This is also true for the population projections, where both modelling methods now produce similar figures for the population to 2026.

Previous data releases have produced significantly different projections for the over 65 age group (and the over 85s in particular) between the two data sources. Recent changes to the ONS methodology along with the use of latest data on fertility, mortality and migration rates in both data sets mean these differences are now much less marked (figure 8).

**Figure 7 Comparison of ONS and OCC data sets, 2001 to 2026**



**Figure 8** Numbers of over 85 years olds in Oxfordshire, 2001 to 2026 comparison of ONS and OCC data



## 5 Using the data

The ONS estimates and projections should be used when comparing Oxfordshire with other areas, for example eg in national indicators, and grant applications to central government.

The OCC ward forecasts are intended for local service planning at smaller area level.

Further details on all datasets included in this briefing are available on the Oxfordshire Data Observatory website.

For further information visit the **Oxfordshire Data Observatory**

[www.oxfordshireobservatory.info](http://www.oxfordshireobservatory.info)

or contact Inga Doherty on 01865 815041 email [inga.doherty@oxfordshire.gov.uk](mailto:inga.doherty@oxfordshire.gov.uk)