

The background of the slide is a photograph of a rural landscape. In the foreground, there is a green field. Behind it, a dark, leafless tree stands prominently. To the right, another large, bare tree is visible. The background shows rolling green hills under a blue sky with scattered white clouds. The text is overlaid on this image.

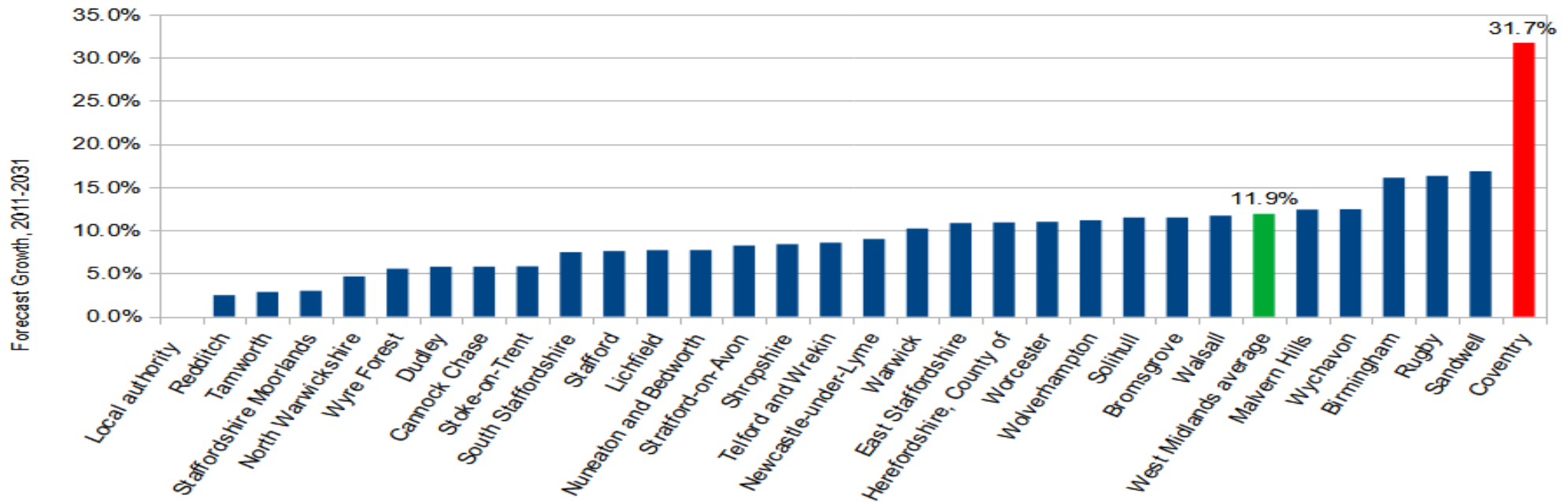
# ***The Reliability of ONS Population Figures***

*How bad data doomed the  
WarwickshireCountryside  
and ONS would not do anything about it*

# The ONS Predictions

## West Midlands - SNPP2014

West Midlands Govt Office Region, Forecast Population Growth 2011-2031  
Sources, ONS2011, SNPP2014



Actual Coventry growth, Census figures, 2001-2011 = 5.4% , and 1991-2001=2.2%



# Is it credible?

that Coventry is growing....

- twice as fast as Rugby or Birmingham,
- Three times as fast as Solihull or Warwick
- Four times as fast as Stratford?

3.6 standard deviations from the regional mean.

- Probability? 1 in 6000

# Why?

**should a population explosion  
happen in Coventry?**

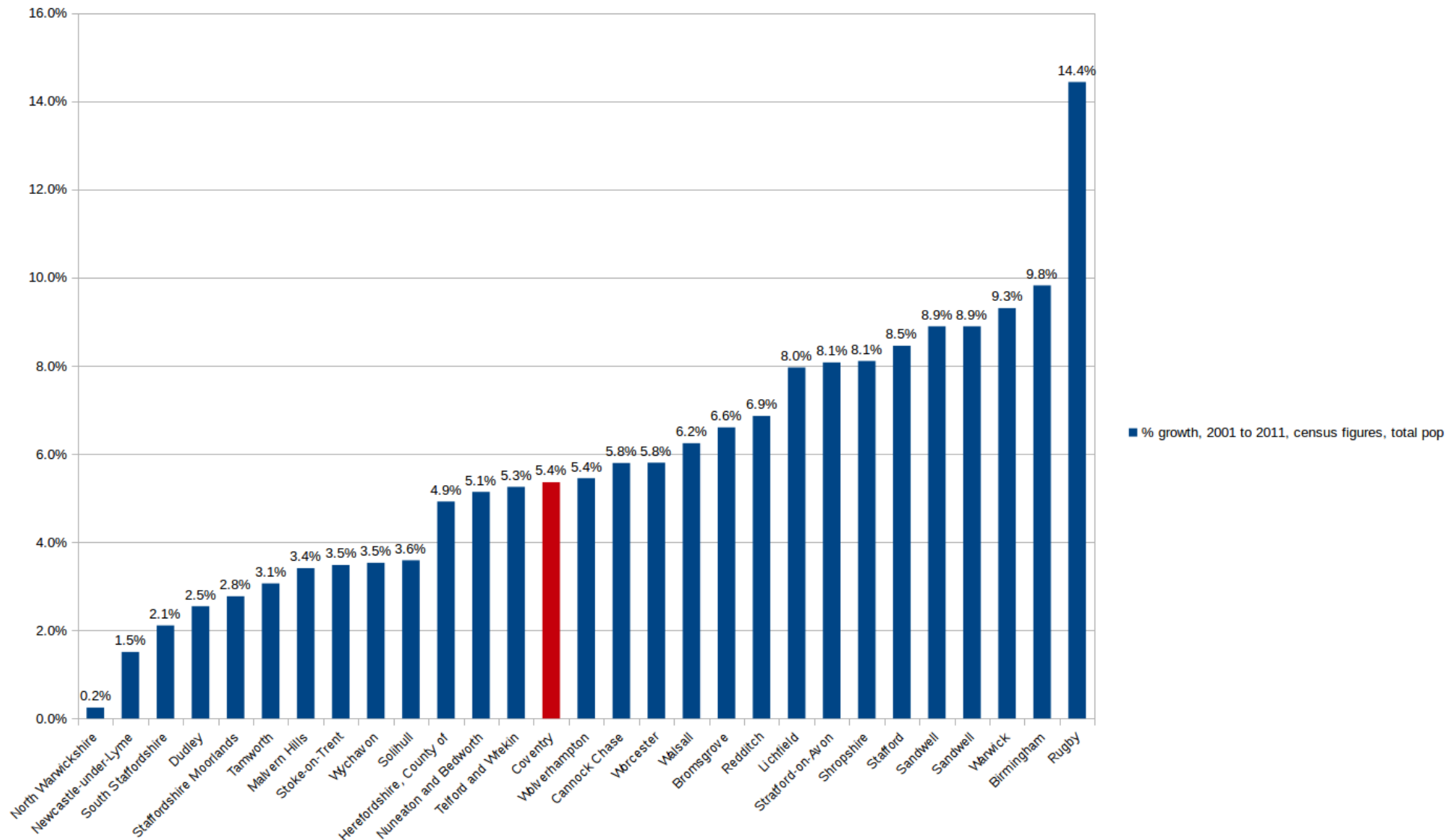
Gold discovered?

New university or military base?

Tech industry – new silicon valley?

**Is there any evidence of a  
population boom in  
Coventry?**

# In the peak of East European migration, was there a boom in Coventry? 2001-2011

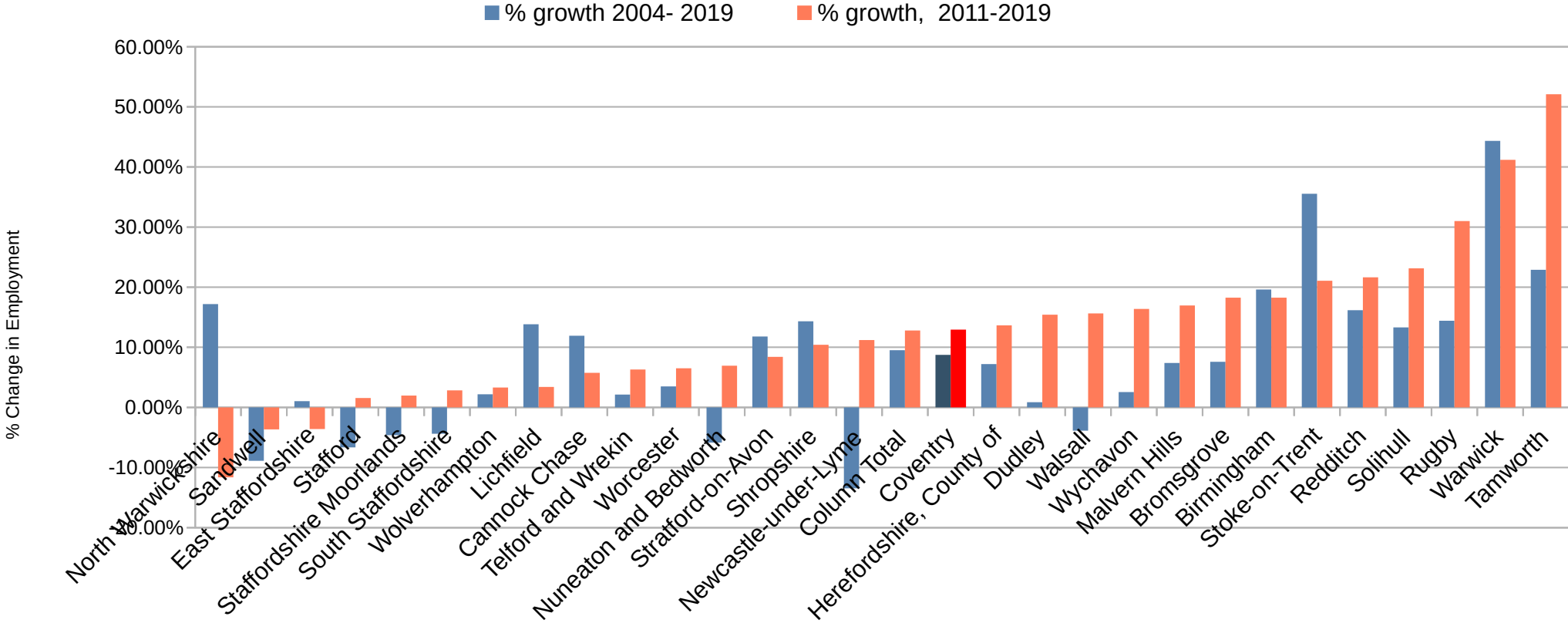


# Employment Growth, West Midlands

annual population survey - workplace analysis

Employment Growth, West Midlands, Percentage Change

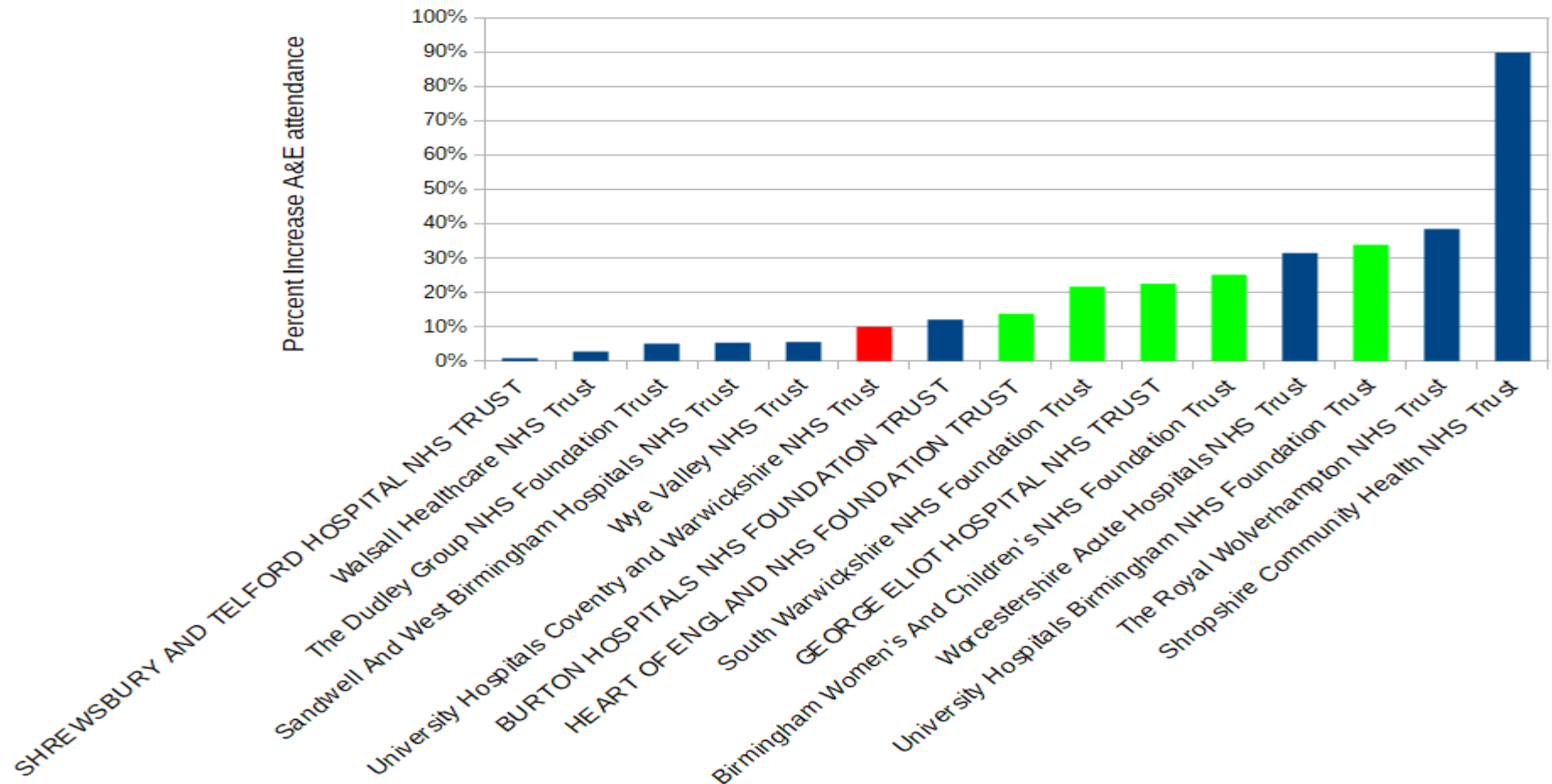
2004- 2019 Annual Population Survey Workplace Analysis, Jan to Dec basis



# A&E Attendance

Percent Increase, A&E Attendance 2011-12 to 2017-18

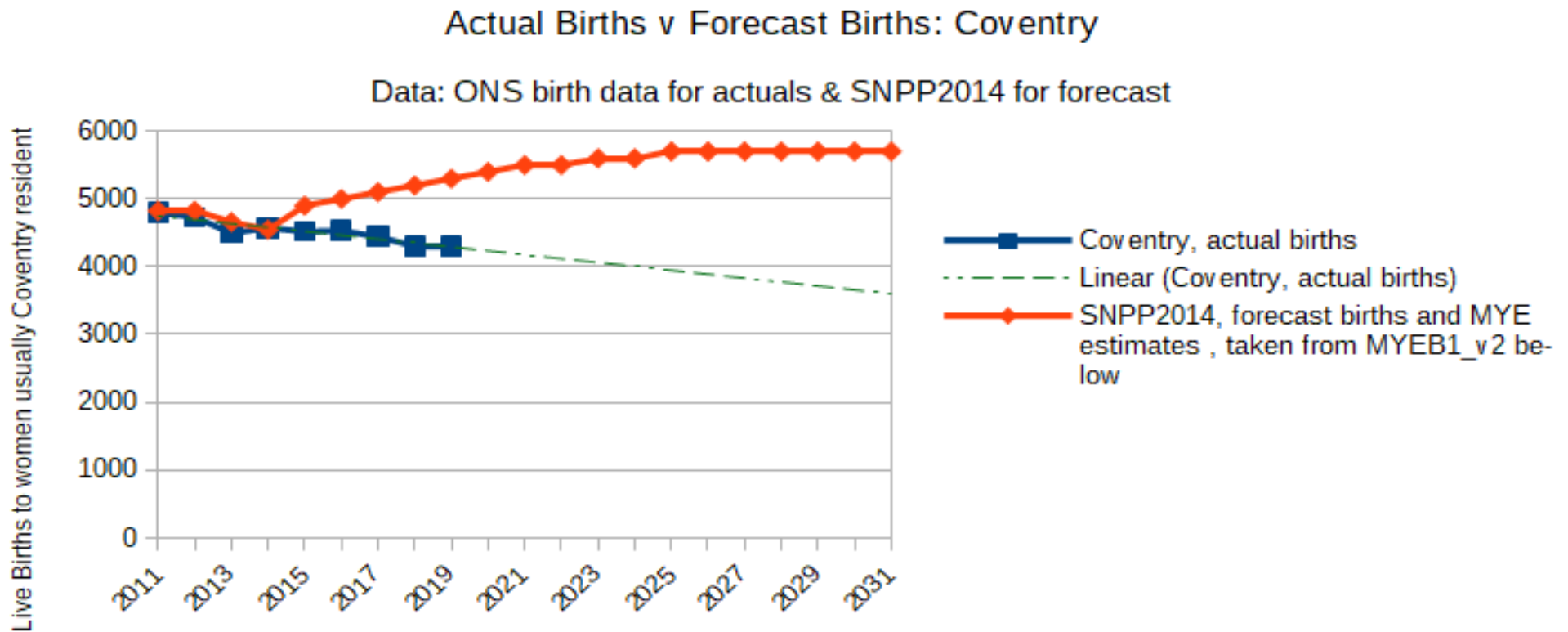
NHS Hospital Trusts, Former West Midlands Gov Region



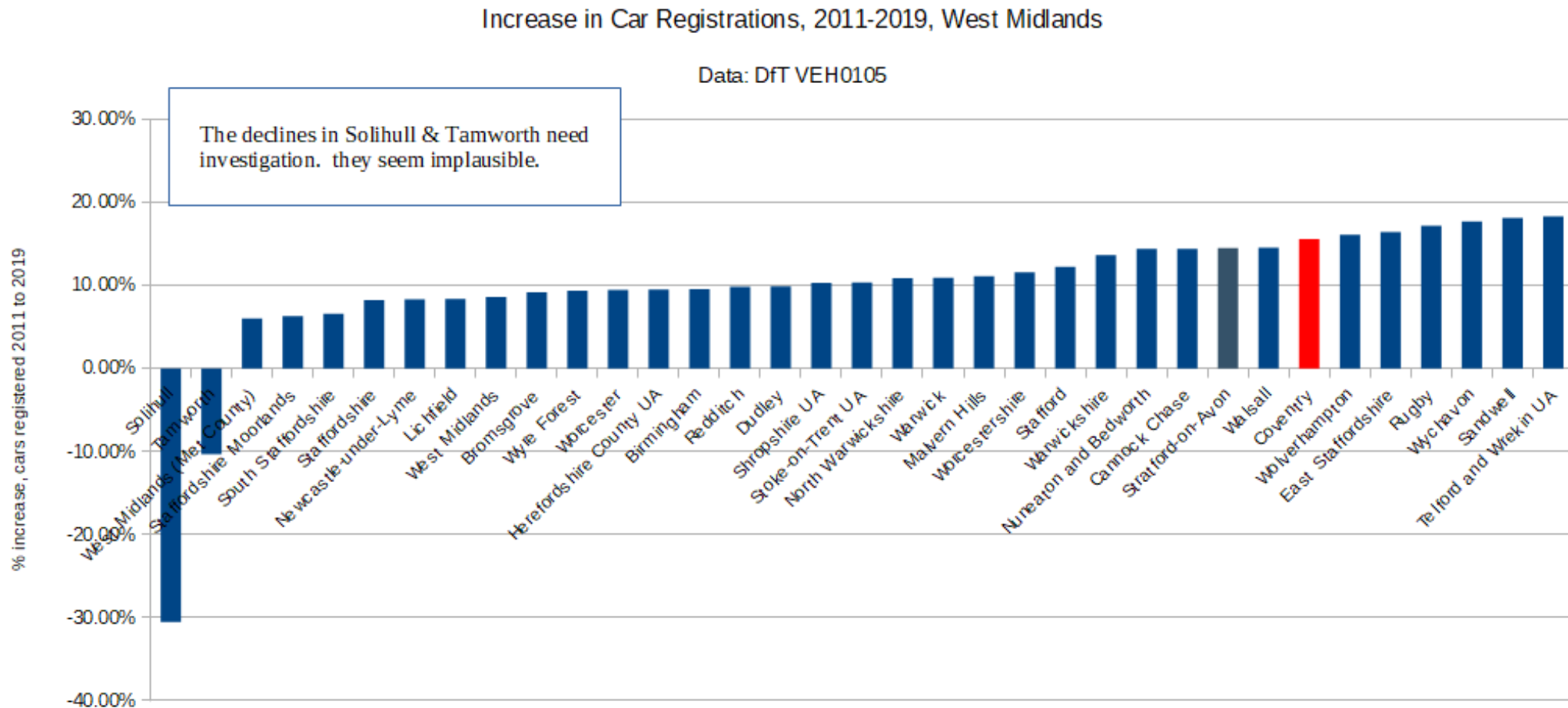


# Births

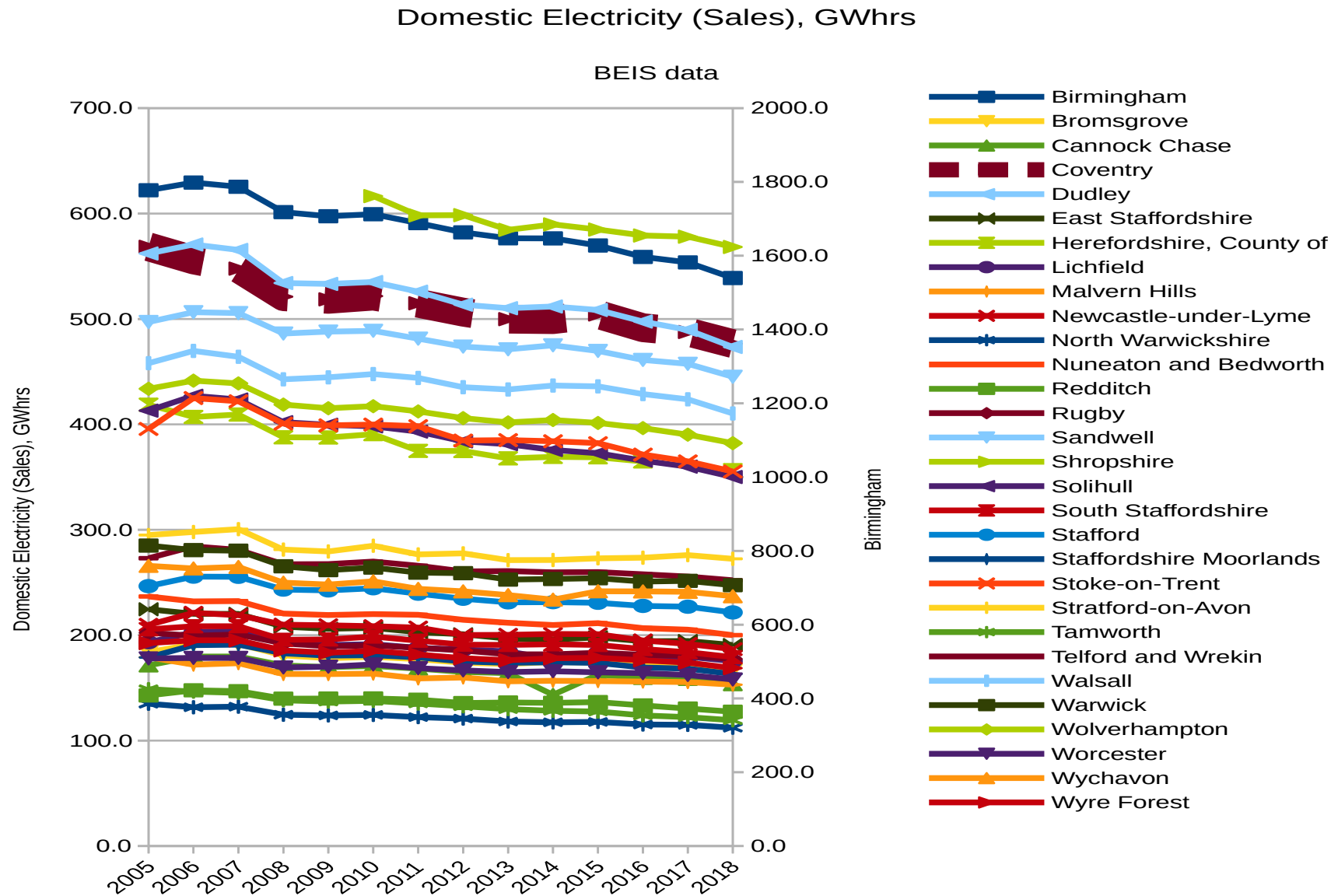
Actual Births are falling far short of ONS predictions



# Cars Registered, West Midlands



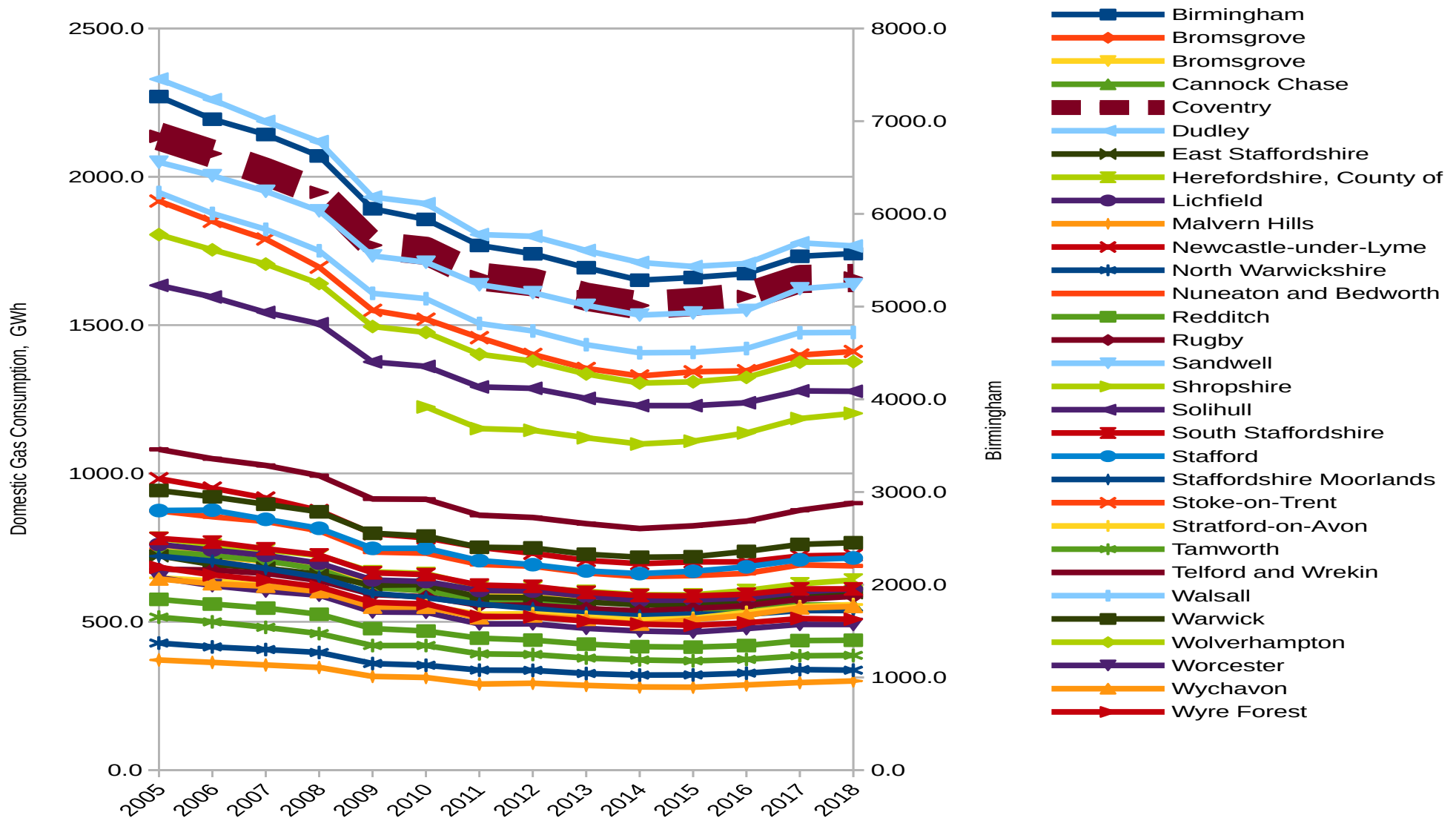
# Domestic Electric Use, West Midlands 2005-2018



# Domestic Gas Use, West Midlands

## Domestic Gas Consumption 2005-2018, GWh

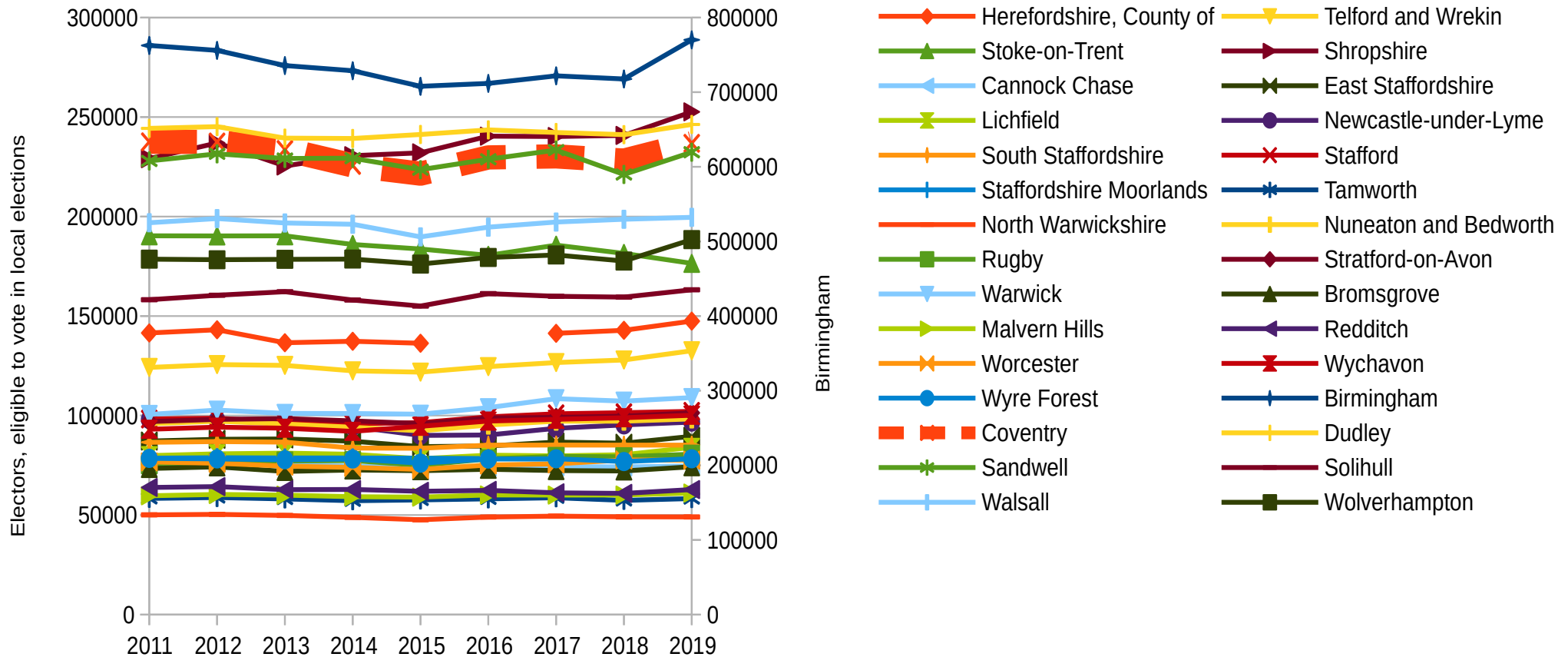
## West Midlands, BEIS data



# Voters

Local Authority Electors, West Midlands, 2011-2019

ONS Table 1 UK Electoral Statistics

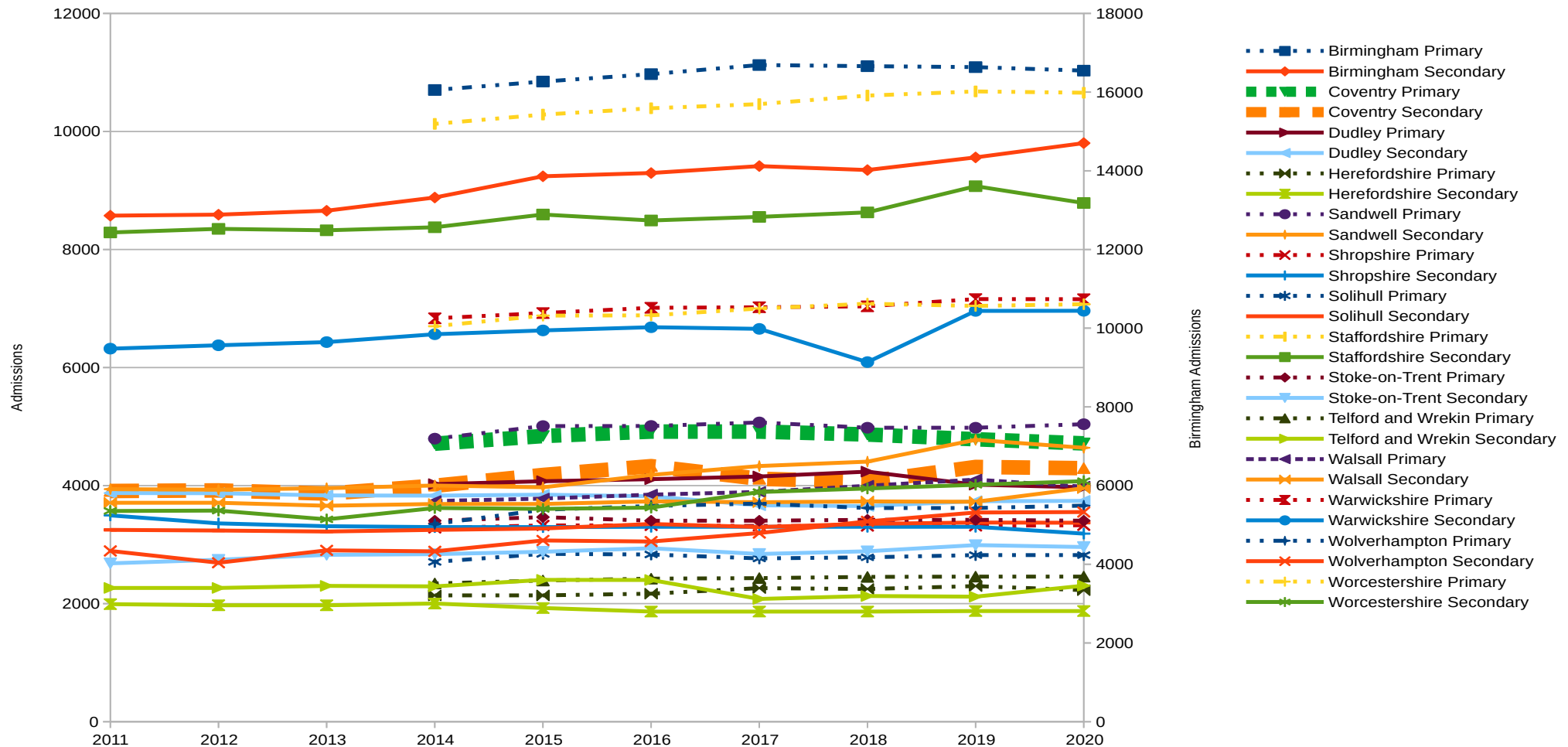


National Statistics

# School Admissions

Primary and Secondary School Admissions, West Midlands GOR

Data, DfE



“Official Statistics” DfE



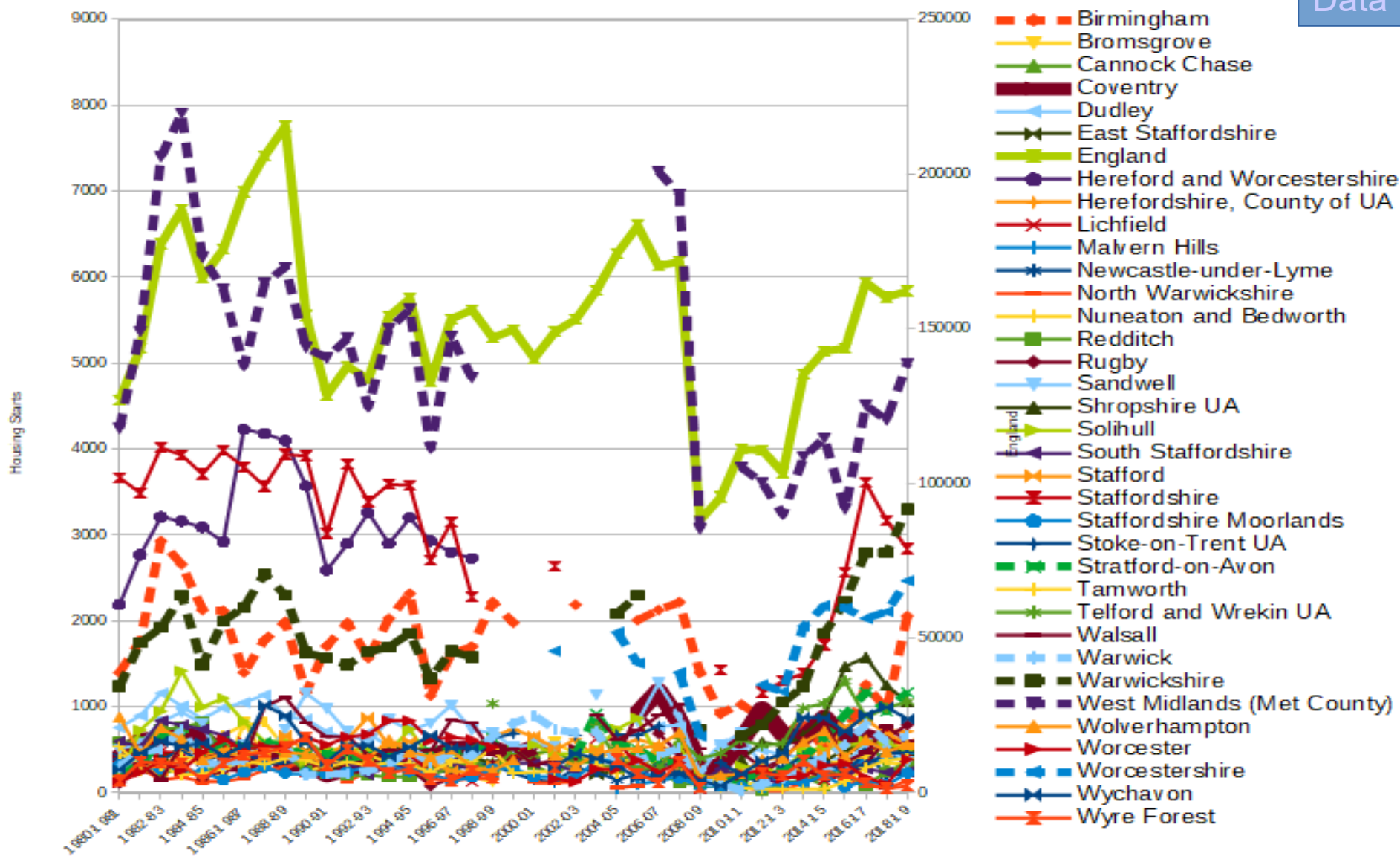
# Starts - House Building

MHCLG,  
'Statistical  
Dataset'

Housing Starts, West Midlands Gov Region

MHCLG, 4 July 19

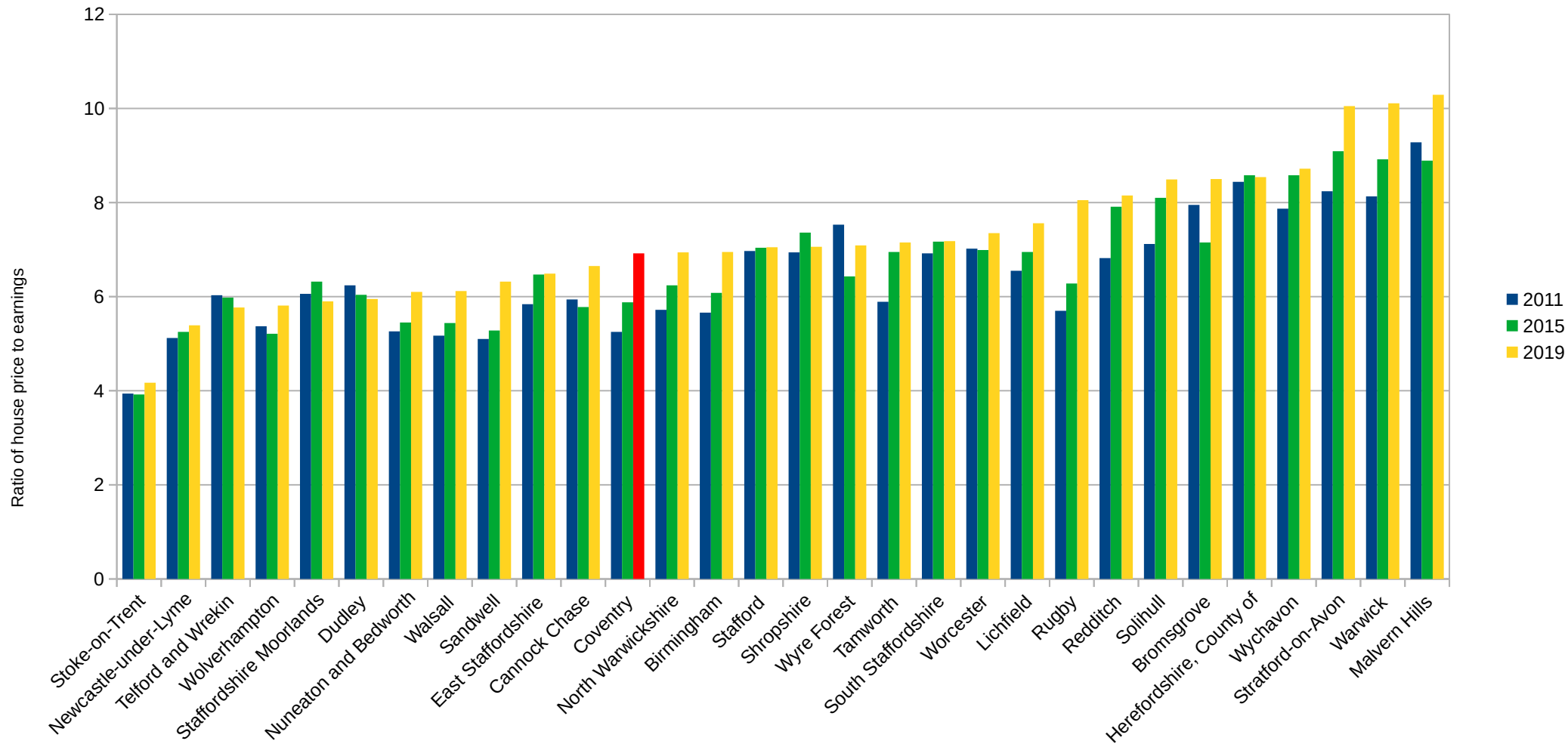
Data



# Housing in Coventry is very affordable. No evidence of excess demand

Affordability of lower quartile homes, West Midlands

2011,2015, &2019, ONS data Table 6c, Residence based earnings



# Who are the hordes moving into Coventry?

They

- Don't go to A&E,
- Don't vote
- Don't have babies
- Don't send children to school
- Don't buy houses
- Don't use gas and electric
- Don't claim state pension or ESA
- Don't produce waste

If they exist, they are ghosts or vampires, who leave no trace.

# Where do the newcomers live?

There is a big gap between Housing Delivery and the alleged population growth in Coventry

MYE2019 Coventry Population	371,521 people
Number of homes that would be needed for all the new people (54,651)	22,618 homes
Actual homes Delivered 2011-2019	9218 homes

# Where does ONS go wrong?

**Too many births forecast - 1000/yr**

**Too many students staying on - 3750/yr**

- 6500 non EU foreign students graduate annually [HESA]
- ONS only has 2650 leaving/yr. [SNPP2014]
- We know nearly all the foreign students leave the city after graduating. [from HESA & Home Office Exit Checks],
- Every year population growth figures are ballooned by 3750 ghosts - foreign students who have left the city

# Validation

- Professor David Coleman, Emeritus Professor of Demography at Oxford University “Your local analysis is as good as it can be, I think.I'd be happy to recommend your study.”
- Prof Tony Champion, Emeritus Newcastle University, advisor to ONS: “Your PPT's challenge to the current set of ONS SNPP seems highly valid to me” “the onus of proof must surely be on ONS ....and Coventry to ....explain why the 'extra people' in the MYE have no impact [on births, cars, voters, gas & electric, schools, waste jobs etc].”
- Piers Elias, past president British Population Society. Your evidence is “compelling”
- Prof Phil Rees, Emeritus Prof of Population Geography Univ of Leeds. The ONS response to your evidence was “poor”



# The Great Fob Off

The inside view – what we learned from FOI

Coventry, Wirral, & Guildford challenged ONS with detailed evidence – no substantive reply. Just “We welcome feedback” – even to MPs and Andy Street

## Senior ONS manager comments

“The biggest qualm we’ve heard as feedback – for all ONS outputs .. – has been that **“ONS is willing to hear what people say, but seems to do literally nothing with it**, they just do what they were going to do anyway with a very broad-brush and little local insight”. In one instance with Manchester, that lead to somewhat vigorous bristled debate. [from FOI]

“It makes me wonder whether we really have a complaints procedure

**“Maybe I’m getting too used to the weaselly words approach!”**

# The UKSA investigation

## The report

“We found that the population estimates for some cities such as Coventry, did seem to be inconsistent with, and potentially higher than, local evidence would suggest. This also appeared to be the case in a number of smaller cities with large student populations.

ONS did not adequately consider your concerns and more needs to be done to investigate the root and scale of the issue associated with students and outward migration.”

## What UKSA really thought – the first draft:

(From FOI disclosure)

“..fixes have not done enough to address the overestimation of these groups in some areas. **This has led to an over reliance on insufficiently robust data to inform local planning decisions such as the need to build additional schools and housing.**”

“ONS’s decision not to incorporate a UPC element seems to have led to an overestimation of the growth in international students

“...we [OSR] are convinced that there is an issue with Coventry’s figures and that local sources of data are clearly inconsistent with the ONS figures,” [from an email]

# What ONS said, in private

” Basically, do we need to say clearly to people that **we don’t intend on introducing a bespoke LA method for some areas?**”

“It’s worth being aware that **we’ll not be making changes to the way we produce estimates for mid-2020** except in response to pandemic related data issues”

“**plans to correct**” implies an error of which we have made none.”  
[Rich Pereira]

## 2020MYE published without qualification

The ONS 2020 MYE	379,000
Our best estimate – based on new homes built since 2011	335,000
The 2011 census population	317,000

# A Big Problem

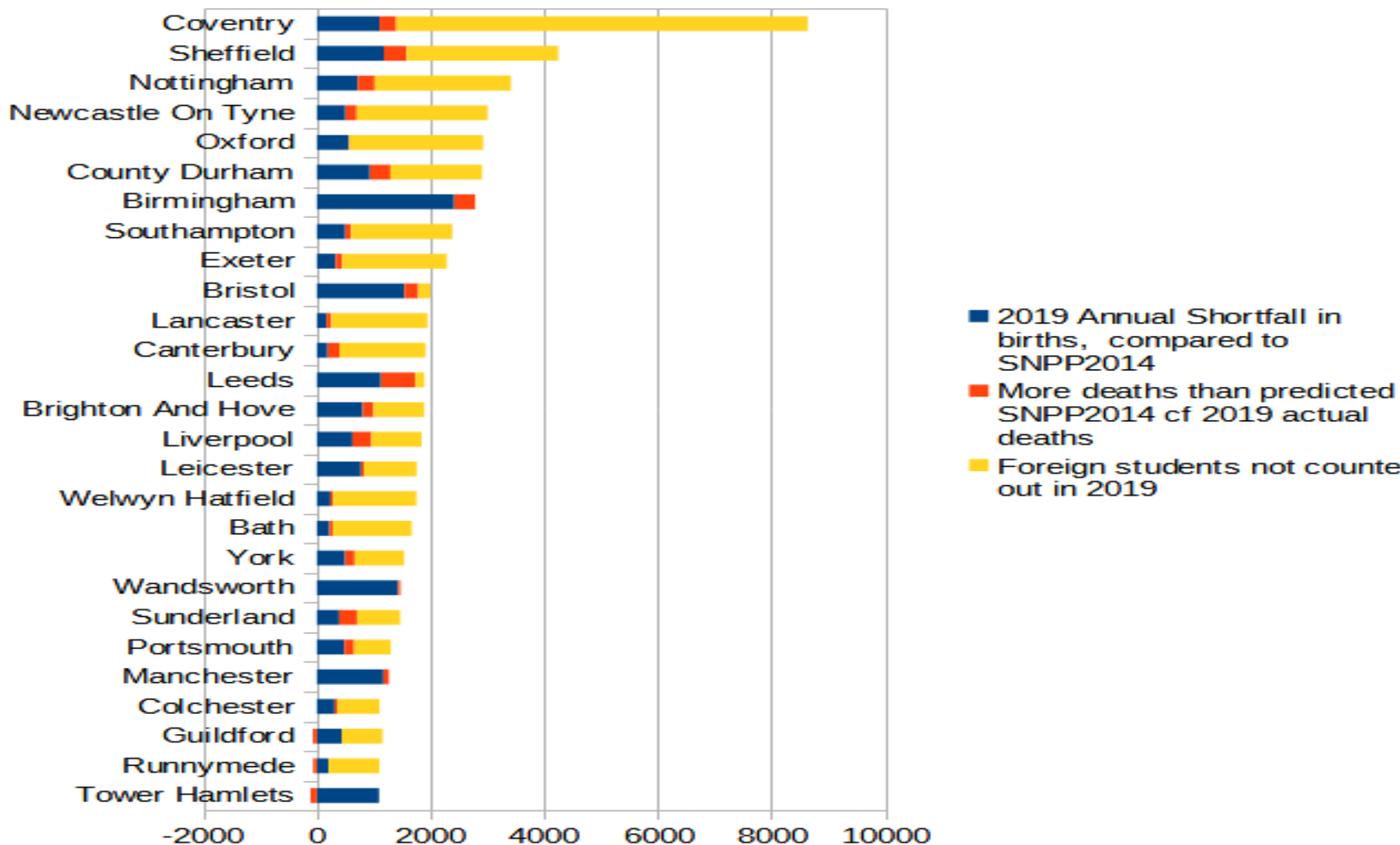
**“The ONS has fallen a long way short, lacking intellectual curiosity, prone to silly mistakes and unresponsive to the needs of consumers of its statistics.”** Andrew Tyrie, Chair Treasury Select Committee – 2017

..the [International Passenger] survey does not provide sufficiently robust statistics to meet some important needs for migration data, for example, at a local authority level **Sir Andrew Dilnott 2013**

There is a continued problem with the quality and quantity of migration data available at a local level. ..estimates of migration are not robust, particularly for areas with high population turnover. For some local authority areas the Census has shown that the ONS population estimates have misrepresented the level of population growth, a problem caused by inaccurate internal and international migration estimates | **Royal Statistical Society 2013**

**“All aspects of population statistics in the United Kingdom are in an unsatisfactory state.** Even the base population remains uncertain. Despite every effort, the last two censuses have turned out to be unsatisfactory. Even the 2001 census, designed to be infallible, has had to be revised twice and incompatibilities with other sources patched up with statistical Polyfilla. With present systems the degree of error is unknowable but possibly large Prof David Coleman,” 2007,

## Bloated Estimates - too many births, not enough deaths, and too many students staying after graduation



Persons who are not there - inflated births, depressed deaths, students who have left



# ***Does it Matter?***

*This is a death sentence for the green belt around Coventry, Shakespeare's Forest of Arden will be covered with houses*



# Questions?

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I am happy to share the detailed research

Slide show and documents on

[Www.coventrygreenbelt.org](http://Www.coventrygreenbelt.org)