

EAST HERTS COUNCIL

DISTRICT PLANNING EXECUTIVE PANEL – 21 FEBRUARY 2013
EXECUTIVE – 5 MARCH 2013

REPORT BY EXECUTIVE MEMBER FOR
STRATEGIC PLANNING AND TRANSPORT

ANNUAL MONITORING REPORT 2011/2012

WARD(S) AFFECTED: ALL

Purpose/Summary of Report

- The purpose of this report is to seek Members' approval for the publication of the Annual Monitoring Report.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR DISTRICT PLANNING EXECUTIVE
PANEL AND EXECUTIVE: That:

(A)	the Annual Monitoring Report 2011/2012 contained as Essential Reference Paper 'B' and Essential Reference Paper 'C' to this report be supported for publication.
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RECOMMENDATIONS FOR COUNCIL: That:

(A)	the Annual Monitoring Report 2011/2012 contained as Essential Reference Paper 'B' and Essential Reference Paper 'C' to this report be agreed for publication.
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1.0 Background

1.1 The Annual Monitoring Report (AMR) is a document that East Herts Council is currently required to produce. Monitoring is integral to the proactive '*plan, monitor, manage*' approach.

1.2 Since coming to power, the Coalition Government has proposed a number of changes to the planning system which will have an

impact on the monitoring of Local Plans and the forthcoming District Plan. In March 2011 the Parliamentary Under Secretary of State, Bob Neill MP, wrote to local authorities to announce the withdrawal of guidance on local plan monitoring, giving local authorities the freedom to choose which targets and indicators to include in their AMR, whilst maintaining the requirement for them to be prepared in accordance with relevant UK and EU legislation.

- 1.3 In addition to this, in November 2011 the enactment of the Localism Bill to the Localism Act removed the requirement for local planning authorities to produce an AMR for Government, whilst retaining the overall duty to monitor.
- 1.4 Despite the recent withdrawal of guidance on Local Plan monitoring by the Coalition Government, this year's AMR will continue to follow the same format as it has done in previous years and monitor the same core and local indicators. The Council will develop an updated monitoring framework alongside the preparation of the emerging District Plan and this framework will be used as the basis for future monitoring.
- 1.5 The publication of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) in March 2012 changed the national planning policy context within which planning applications were determined. This was only a number of days before the end of the monitoring year. Nevertheless, this AMR addresses both the NPPF and former PPSs where applicable to explain the justification for monitoring the appropriate topics and/or indicators.
- 1.6 The AMR reports on the period 1st April 2011 to 31st March 2012 and its main purpose is to monitor how the Council is performing against the timetable set out in the Local Development Scheme (LDS), and to report on the extent to which policies in local development documents are being successfully implemented.
- 1.7 In addition to these main purposes, the AMR is required through the Localism Act to report on net additional dwellings, Community Infrastructure Levy receipts, the number of neighbourhood plans that have been adopted, and action taken under the duty to cooperate.

2.0 Report

2.1 The key findings from the AMR are as follows:

Local Development Scheme Implementation

2.2 The Local Development Scheme (LDS) sets out the timetable for the production of planning documents. The Council met the milestones set out in the LDS over the monitoring year, namely considering the responses received from the Issues and Options consultation and commencing work to prepare for the consultation on the District Plan: Part 1 – Strategy.

Local Planning Policy Analysis

2.3 The majority of the saved policies in the Adopted Local Plan were used very infrequently during the monitoring year. However, a large number of these policies are site specific.

Sustainable Development

2.4 Monitoring renewable energy capacity in the District is not straightforward, although the Council is now obtaining information from permitted planning applications which indicates that some schemes utilising renewable energy generation are likely to come forward in the coming years. The Council will continue to seek ways to improve monitoring of this indicator in the future.

Housing

2.5 For monitoring purposes housing provision is measured against the targets set out in the East of England Plan, as it remained as part of the statutory Development Plan throughout the duration of the monitoring year, although it has since been abolished. The Council will be reviewing its housing target through the preparation of the District Plan and this housing target will be reflected in future AMRs.

2.6 An additional 383 dwellings (net) were completed in the district during 2011/2012. This number is higher than the previous monitoring year, as monitoring indicated that housing 'starts' had increased in 2010 from 2009. However, the number is lower than that achieved in earlier monitoring years which is a reflection of the challenging economic climate. Despite continued uncertainty

about the economy, monitoring has indicated that housing 'starts' have increased in 2011 and as development has commenced on a number of large sites, it is estimated that completions in 2012/13 and 2013/14 will be above 440 dwellings per year.

- 2.7 There were 166 new affordable dwellings built during 2011/12, which represents 37% of all dwelling completions during the monitoring year. However, when applying the Local Plan thresholds for eligible sites, 73% of completions were for affordable housing. This figure has been boosted by a number of large sites coming forward with affordable housing, some in the ownership of Registered Social Landlords to provide for 100% affordable housing. In addition, proportionately less market housing has been delivered due to the economic climate.
- 2.8 The housing trajectory included in the AMR as **Essential Reference Paper 'C'** sets out the identified housing commitments anticipated to come forward for development over the five year period 2013/14 to 2017/18, to meet the East Herts housing requirement of 3,300 additional dwellings (660 per annum) that was in place during the monitoring year 11-12.
- 2.9 As shown in Appendix B, Table 3 of the AMR, East Herts has a housing land supply equivalent to 3.6 years for the period 2013/14 to 2017/18. This is calculated on the basis of sites with planning permission, Local Plan Allocations including the Areas of Special Restraint and Special Countryside Area to the north of Bishop's Stortford, and large brownfield sites expected to come forward for development during the five year period. Applying the NPPF which allows local planning authorities to make an allowance for windfall sites and the new requirement in paragraph 47 for '*an additional buffer of 5%*' results in a housing land supply equivalent to 3.8 years, as shown in Table 5 of Appendix B.
- 2.10 However, the East of England Plan has now been formally abolished by Government and prior guidance had been given to Councils that in the absence of regional housing targets, they could use their 'Option 1' figures to monitor housing supply (550 additional dwellings per annum for East Herts). Therefore this has also been calculated in Table 4 of Appendix B of the AMR, and amounts to 4.3 years. Applying the NPPF which allows local planning authorities to make an allowance for windfall sites and the new requirement in paragraph 47 for '*an additional buffer of 5%*' results in a housing land supply equivalent to 4.5 years, as shown in Table 6 of Appendix B.

Green Belt and Countryside

- 2.11 There was one major departure from the Local Plan with regard to the Rural Area Beyond the Green Belt, but no major departures from the Local Plan with regards to the Green Belt.

Transport

- 2.12 94% of new dwellings completed in the year are located within 30 minutes public transport time of five of the six key services. However, only 63% of new dwellings have been completed within 30 minutes public transport time of a hospital. This is partly due to the fact that there are only two hospitals in the district, at Bishop's Stortford and Hertford, and reflects the limited public transport options available within the district.

Economic Development and Employment

- 2.13 There was 4,458 square metres of floorspace created for employment use throughout the district, 57% of which was on previously developed land.

Shopping and Town Centres

- 2.14 The majority of the primary shopping frontages in the three main settlements are in A1 use. However, vacancy levels in the district continue to fluctuate due to the economic climate.

Environment and Design

- 2.15 There have been no changes to Sites of Special Scientific Interest or Local Nature Reserves in terms of number or area of sites. However, the number of wildlife sites in the district has fallen from 582 to 573 with a subsequent decrease in area of 43ha. This is due to the selection of three new wildlife sites and the deselection of twelve wildlife sites. One planning permission was granted contrary to the advice of the Environment Agency on flood defence grounds.

Built Heritage

- 2.16 There were no changes recorded to Areas of Archaeological Significance during the monitoring year. There are four listed buildings on the national at risk register.

Leisure, Recreation and Community Facilities

- 2.17 Both Southern Country Park, Bishop's Stortford and the Ridgeway Local Park, Hertford have successfully retained their Green Flag Status in 2011.

Community Infrastructure Levy

- 2.18 Details of Community Infrastructure Levy receipts and expenditure will be monitored once the CIL has been adopted. Currently it is in the early stages of preparation.

Neighbourhood Planning

- 2.19 No formal steps were taken towards agreeing neighbourhood forums, designating neighbourhood areas or adopting Neighbourhood Plans over the monitoring period. The Council will continue to monitor progress in forthcoming years.

Duty to Cooperate

- 2.20 The Council has worked closely with neighbouring planning authorities, County Councils and prescribed bodies to maximise effectiveness in preparing the District Plan. The Council will continue to monitor the approach taken and produce evidence as part of the plan-making process to demonstrate that the requirement as set out in the Localism Act is being met.

3.0 Implications/Consultations

- 3.1 Information on any corporate issues and consultation associated with this report can be found within **Essential Reference Paper 'A'**.

Background Papers

- Local Development Framework Core Output Indicators Update 2/2008 (DCLG) July 2008
- Monitoring that Matters – towards a better AMR (PAS) April 2011 <http://www.pas.gov.uk/pas/aio/1348152>
- Letter from Bob Neill MP (CLG) 30th March 2011 <http://www.communities.gov.uk/documents/planningandbuildin g/pdf/1876440.pdf>
- National Planning Policy Framework (DCLG) March 2012

https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/6077/2116950.pdf

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