

EAST HERTS COUNCIL

LOCAL DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK EXECUTIVE PANEL -  
24 NOVEMBER 2011

REPORT BY EXECUTIVE MEMBER FOR PLANNING POLICY AND  
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

ANNUAL MONITORING REPORT 2010/2011

WARD(S) AFFECTED: ALL

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**Purpose/Summary of Report**

- The purpose of this report is to seek Members' approval for the publication and submission of the Annual Monitoring Report to the Secretary of State by 31 December 2011.

**RECOMMENDATION FOR EXECUTIVE: to commend to Council that:**

<b>(A)</b>	The Annual Monitoring Report 2010/2011 contained as Essential Reference Paper 'B' and Essential Reference Paper 'C' to this report be approved for publication and submission to the Secretary of State by 31 December 2011.
<b>(B)</b>	The Head of Planning and Building Control, in consultation with the Executive Member for Planning Policy and Economic Development, be authorised to make any necessary amendments or corrections to the above document, which may be required or identified prior to publication and submission to the Secretary of State.

1.0 Background

1.1 The Annual Monitoring Report (AMR) is a statutory document that East Herts Council is currently required to produce on an annual basis as part of its Local Development Framework (LDF). As the LDF Monitoring Good Practice Guide explains, *'monitoring is essential to establish what is happening now, what may happen in the future and then compare these trends against existing policies and targets to determine what needs to be done'*. 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 Local Development Frameworks. 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, the Localism Bill, which is currently progressing through Parliament, will remove the requirement for local planning authorities to produce an AMR for Government, whilst retaining the overall duty to monitor. Therefore this will be the final AMR that the Council will be required to submit to the Secretary of State.
- 1.4 Despite the recent withdrawal of guidance on Local Plan monitoring by the Coalition Government, this years AMR will continue to follow the same format as it has done in previous years. The Council will develop an updated monitoring framework alongside the preparation of the LDF and this framework will be used as the basis for future AMRs.
- 1.5 The AMR reports on the period 1 April 2010 to 31 March 2011 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 key milestones and the extent to which policies in Local Development Documents (LDDs) are being successfully implemented.

## 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. Although not in line with the timetable set out in the adopted LDS, the key milestone achieved in the monitoring year was the completion of the Core Strategy Issues and Options consultation which took place in Autumn 2010.

- 2.3 The Council aims to revise the LDS in 2012 in order to update the timetable for the production of planning documents, following guidance from the Coalition Government.

### **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 to continue to be measured against the targets set out in the East of England Plan, as it remains part of the statutory Development Plan until such time as Regional Spatial Strategies (RSS) are abolished through the enactment of the Localism Bill. The Council will be reviewing its housing target through the preparation of the LDF and this housing target will be reflected in future AMRs.
- 2.6 An additional 200 dwellings (net) were completed in the district during 2010/2011. This number is significantly lower than that achieved in recent monitoring years and is a reflection of the challenging economic climate experienced throughout 2009 when there were very few housing 'starts' on new sites. Despite continued uncertainty about the economy, monitoring has indicated that housing 'starts' have increased in 2010 and as development has commenced on a number of large sites, it is estimated that completions in 2011/12 and 2012/13 will be close to 400 dwellings per year.
- 2.7 There were 38 new affordable dwellings built during 2010/11, which represents 13% of all dwelling completions during the monitoring year. However, when applying the Local Plan thresholds for eligible sites, 37% of completions were for affordable housing. It is estimated that the number of affordable completions will also increase in the next monitoring year.
- 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 2012/13 to 2016/17, to meet the East Herts housing requirement of 3,300 additional dwellings (660 per annum).

- 2.9 As shown in Appendix B, Table 2 of the AMR, East Herts has a housing land supply equivalent to 4.4 years for the period 2012/13 to 2016/17. 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.

### **Green Belt and Countryside**

- 2.10 There were no major departures from the Local Plan with regards to the Green Belt or the Rural Area beyond the Green Belt.

### **Transport**

- 2.11 Of all residential sites completed in the year, 82% of new dwellings have been completed within 30 minutes public transport time of five of the six key services. However, only 58% of new dwellings have been completed within 30 minutes public transport time of a hospital. This is 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**

- 2.12 There was 12,620 square metres of floorspace created for employment use throughout the District, 83% of which was on previously developed land.

### **Shopping and Town Centres**

- 2.13 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**

- 2.14 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 591 to 582 with a subsequent decrease in area of 20ha. This is due to the selection of one new wildlife site and the de-selection of ten wildlife sites.

## **Built Heritage**

- 2.15 There were no changes recorded to Areas of Archaeological Significance during the monitoring year. There is one Grade II\* listed building on the national at risk register due to concerns over its long term management.

## **Leisure, Recreation and Community Facilities**

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

## **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**

- LDF Monitoring Good Practice Guide (ODPM) 2005
- 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) 30<sup>th</sup> March 2011  
<http://www.communities.gov.uk/documents/planningandbuilding/pdf/1876440.pdf>

Essential Reference Papers accompanying this report:

'A' – Corporate Implications/Consultation

'B' – Annual Monitoring Report 2010/11

'C' – Schedule of Housing Commitments

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## ESSENTIAL REFERENCE PAPER 'A'

Contribution to the Council's Corporate Priorities/ Objectives:	<p><b>Pride in East Herts</b> <i>Improve standards of the built neighbourhood and environmental management in our towns and villages.</i></p> <p><b>Shaping now, shaping the future</b> <i>Safeguard and enhance our unique mix of rural and urban communities, ensuring sustainable, economic and social opportunities including the continuation of effective development control and other measures.</i></p> <p><b>Leading the way, working together</b> <i>Deliver responsible community leadership that engages with our partners and the public.</i></p>
Consultation:	Consultation has taken place internally with the Executive Member for Planning Policy and Economic Development, Director of Neighbourhood Services, Head of Planning and Building Control and the Council's Planning Policy Team.
Legal:	It is a statutory duty under the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 for East Herts Council as the local planning authority to produce an AMR.
Financial:	East Herts Council relies on Hertfordshire County Council for data collection and, as such, has been paying an annual fee to the County Council Monitoring Unit for this service.
Human Resource:	There are no known human resource requirements.
Risk Management:	If the AMR is not submitted the Council will not be fulfilling its statutory requirements.