

EAST HERTS COUNCIL

DISTRICT PLANNING EXECUTIVE PANEL – 8 DECEMBER 2014  
EXECUTIVE – 6 JANUARY 2015

REPORT BY EXECUTIVE MEMBER FOR STRATEGIC PLANNING  
AND TRANSPORT

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AUTHORITY MONITORING REPORT 2013/2014

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 of the Authority Monitoring Report.

<b><u>RECOMMENDATION FOR DISTRICT PLANNING EXECUTIVE PANEL</u></b> <b><u>AND EXECUTIVE: That:</u></b>	
<b>(A)</b>	<b>the Authority Monitoring Report 2013/2014 contained as Essential Reference Paper 'B' and Essential Reference Paper 'C' to this report be supported for publication.</b>
<b><u>RECOMMENDATION FOR COUNCIL: That:</u></b>	
<b>(A)</b>	<b>the Authority Monitoring Report 2013/2014 contained as Essential Reference Paper 'B' and Essential Reference Paper 'C' to this report be agreed for publication.</b>

1.0 Background

- 1.1 Local Planning Authorities are no longer required to prepare an Annual Monitoring Report (AMR) for submission to the Secretary of State before the end of each year. In addition, the enactment of the Localism Act in 2011 led to the withdrawal of the national core output indicators, giving local authorities the freedom to choose to report on indicators that are considered relevant to their local area and plan-making process.

1.2 Section 34, Part 8 of The Town and Country (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012 published updated regulations for authorities' monitoring reports. Under these regulations, Local Planning Authorities are now required to report on the following:

- Title of Local Plans or Supplementary Planning Documents (SPDs) specified in the Local Planning Authority's Local Development Scheme (LDS)
- The timetable specified in the local planning authority's LDS for the documents preparation
- Progress against the time-table for preparing Local Plan documents and / or any Supplementary Planning Documents (SPDs)
- The reasons behind if there has been any delay in producing the documents as per the time-table in the LDS
- Dates and fact sheets of any adopted or approved Local Plans or SPDs
- Update on current status of saved policies (identifying policies that are no longer in use)
- Effectiveness of the policies of the emerging Local Plan
- Housing growth
- Details of any Neighbourhood Plans and Neighbourhood Development Orders / Areas in the monitoring period
- Details of actions taken under the Duty to Cooperate within the reporting period
- Community Infrastructure Levy

1.3 This AMR, now called the 'Authority Monitoring Report', reports on the period 1<sup>st</sup> April 2013 to 31<sup>st</sup> March 2014. The format of the AMR has changed from previous years to reflect both the updated regulations and a more localised approach to monitoring. The Council is in the process of developing an updated monitoring framework alongside the emerging District Plan and it is likely that the format of the AMR will continue to evolve as part of this process.

## 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 the agreement by Council of the Draft District Plan Preferred Options document for consultation, and the commencement of public consultation on the document.

### **Neighbourhood Planning**

2.3 There has been a positive response to Neighbourhood Planning across the district. In the monitoring year, pre-submission consultation (Regulation 14) was carried out on the Bishop's Stortford Silverleys and Meads Neighbourhood Plan and the designation of two neighbourhood areas were agreed by the Council at Hertford Heath and Brickendon Liberty. Since the end of the monitoring year, there has been further progress made with regard to Neighbourhood Planning which will be reported in the next AMR.

### **Duty to Cooperate**

2.4 The Council has worked closely with neighbouring local authorities, 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 and NPPF is being met.

### **Community Infrastructure Levy**

2.5 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.

### **Housing**

2.6 Following the withdrawal of the East of England Plan in January 2013, the housing target of 660 dwellings per annum which was contained in that Plan ceased to apply and it became the

responsibility of the Local Planning Authority to devise its own housing target based on their requirements and needs.

- 2.7 The Draft District Plan which was agreed for public consultation by Council in January 2014 identified a housing requirement of at least 15,000 dwellings to be provided over the 20 year plan period, 2011-2031, equating to an annual average of 750 dwellings. As this is an up-to-date evidence based target, this figure is being used to monitor housing delivery and calculate future land supply in this monitoring period.
- 2.8 An additional 366 dwellings (net) were completed in the district during 2013/2014. This number is lower than that recorded in the last monitoring year where 699 dwellings were completed. It is likely that the lower figure recorded this year is due, in part, to that very high figure recorded last year where significant completions were recorded on a number of large sites. It is anticipated that completions in 2014/15 and 2015/16 will be between 550-600 dwellings per year, which will be an increase on this monitoring year.
- 2.9 The Schedule of Housing Commitments 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 2015/16 to 2019/20. The identified housing supply is 3,769 dwellings. The NPPF requires the Council to have a supply of deliverable sites sufficient to provide five years' worth of housing against housing requirements. The five year land supply calculation has been made using alternative scenarios which produce four different calculations for the five year land supply ranging from 3.4 years to 4.4 years.
- 2.10 The first variation in the calculation concerns the shortfall in housing completions since the start of the Plan period and how it is addressed. The estimated shortfall in housing completions between 2011-2015 is 971 dwellings. There are two approaches that can be used to address this shortfall. These are:
- the 'Liverpool method' – the shortfall since the start of the Plan period is spread evenly over the remainder of the Plan period.
  - the 'Sedgefield method' – the shortfall since the start of the Plan period is addressed in the next five years (wholly within the five year land supply).

- 2.11 The NPPF and NPPG favour the use of the Sedgefield method as it is more closely aligned with the requirements of the NPPF and the need to boost significantly the supply of housing and remedy the unsatisfactory consequences of persistent under delivery of housing.
- 2.12 The second variation in the calculation concerns the addition of a buffer of additional sites bought forward from later in the Plan period. The NPPF requires local authorities to provide an additional buffer of at least 5% to ensure choice and competition in the market for land and seek to provide a genuine margin of adequate supply. It should be stressed that this buffer is not an additional amount on top of the total provision; rather it is moved forward from later in the Plan period. However, in local authority areas where there is deemed to have been a persistent record of under delivery of housing, the NPPF states that the buffer should be increased to 20%.
- 2.13 The five year land supply calculations using the alternative scenarios as outlined above are set out in the tables below:

**Table 1: Five year land supply calculation using 'Liverpool method'**

Buffer	Annual Housing Requirement	Five year housing requirement	Five year land supply calculation
5% buffer	848.2	4241	4.4 years
20% buffer	960.3	4801.5	3.9 years

**Table 2: Five year land supply calculation using 'Sedgefield method'**

Buffer	Annual Housing Requirement	Five year housing requirement	Five year land supply calculation
5% buffer	981.7	4908.5	3.8 years
20% buffer	1094.2	5471	3.4 years

- 2.14 The tables above show that, irrespective of which scenario is used, the Council is unable to demonstrate a five year supply of deliverable housing sites. The appropriate method for addressing the shortfall and the level of buffer to be applied, as well as the allocation of additional housing sites to increase the identified

housing supply, will be determined through the District Plan process.

- 2.15 There were 68 new affordable dwellings built during 2013/14, which represents 17.3% of all dwelling completions during the monitoring year. When applying the Local Plan thresholds for eligible sites, 26.9% of completions were for affordable housing, which is markedly lower than the Council's 40% target and also lower than that recorded in the previous monitoring year. The reasons for this are complex and different explanations apply to different sites. A number of sites recording completions this year were large sites which have been in development over the past two to three years; on these sites the affordable housing quota has already been delivered in earlier monitoring years. Another explanation, which is particularly relevant to the brownfield re-development sites, is that permission for development was granted during the recession, and due to viability issues, the affordable housing requirement was reduced to enable development to proceed. It is likely that the delivery of 40% affordable housing on eligible sites will remain a challenging target over the next few years.

### **Economic Development and Employment**

- 2.16 There was 4,979 square metres of floorspace created for employment use throughout the district during the monitoring year, 18% of which was developed on previously developed land.

### **Shopping and Town Centres**

- 2.17 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**

- 2.18 There have been no changes to Sites of Special Scientific Interest or Local Nature Reserves in terms of number or area of sites. However, there was an addition to the number of wildlife sites bringing the total number of wildlife sites in the district to 544 from 543 with a subsequent increase in area of 0.94ha.

## Renewable Energy

- 2.19 Monitoring renewable energy capacity in the District is not straightforward, although the Council is now obtaining information from permitted planning applications and the completions in the monitoring year that utilise renewable energy generation. A total of 39 permissions were granted with renewable energy facilities and a total of 51kW renewable energy capacity completions were recorded in the monitoring year.

## Green Belt and Countryside

- 2.20 There were no major departures from the Local Plan with regards to the Green Belt and the Rural Area Beyond the Green Belt that were referred to the Secretary of State.

### 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

- The Town and Country (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012  
<http://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2012/767/contents/made>
- National Planning Policy Framework (DCLG) March 2012  
[https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/6077/2116950.pdf](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/6077/2116950.pdf)

Contact Member: Cllr Mike Carver - Executive Member for Strategic Planning and Transport  
[mike.carver@eastherts.gov.uk](mailto:mike.carver@eastherts.gov.uk)

Contact Officer: Kevin Steptoe - Head of Planning and Building Control  
01992 531407  
[kevin.steptoe@eastherts.gov.uk](mailto:kevin.steptoe@eastherts.gov.uk)

Report Author: Laura Pattison – Senior Planning Policy Officer  
[laura.pattison@eastherts.gov.uk](mailto:laura.pattison@eastherts.gov.uk)

Ripple Gupta – Planning Policy Officer  
[ripple.gupta@eastherts.gov.uk](mailto:ripple.gupta@eastherts.gov.uk)