

EAST HERTS COUNCIL

DISTRICT PLANNING EXECUTIVE PANEL – 17 DECEMBER 2015

REPORT BY THE LEADER OF THE COUNCIL

AUTHORITY MONITORING REPORT (AMR) 2014/15

WARD(S) AFFECTED: ALL

Purpose/Summary of Report

- The purpose of this report is to seek Members' approval for the publication of the Authority Monitoring Report (AMR).

RECOMMENDATION FOR DISTRICT PLANNING EXECUTIVE PANEL: That Council, via the Executive, be advised that:

(A)	The Authority Monitoring Report (AMR) 2014/2015 contained at 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 Local planning authorities are required to publish information, at least annually, that shows progress with Local Plan preparation, reports any activity relating to the duty to cooperate and shows how the implementation of policies in the Local Plan is progressing. This is important to enable communities and interested parties to be aware of progress that is being made. Local planning authorities can also use the Authority Monitoring Report to provide up-to-date information on the implementation of any neighbourhood plans that have been made.

1.2 Regulation 34 of the Town and Country (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012 states that a local planning authority's monitoring report must contain the following information:

- The title of the Local Plans or Supplementary Planning Documents (SPDs) specified in the local planning authority's Local Development Scheme (LDS).
- In relation to each of those documents –
 - the timetable specified in the Local Planning Authority's

- LDS for the documents preparation;
 - the stage the document has reached in its preparation;
 - if the documents preparation is behind the timetable, the reasons for this.
- Where any local plan or SPD specified in the local planning authority's LDS has been adopted or approved within the period in respect of which the report is made, a statement of that fact and of the date of adoption or approval.
- Where a local planning authority are not implementing a policy specified in a local plan, the local planning authority's monitoring report must:
 - identify that policy; and
 - include a statement setting out why the local planning authority are not implementing the policy, together with the steps (if any) that the local planning authority intend to take to secure that the policy is implemented.
- Details of the net additional dwellings or net additional affordable dwellings in any part of the local planning authority's area.
- Where a local planning authority has made a Neighbourhood Development Order or a Neighbourhood Plan, the local planning authority's monitoring report must contain details of these documents.
- Where a local planning authority has adopted a Community Infrastructure Levy, the local planning authority's monitoring report must contain information on the amount of CIL collected and the amount spent.
- Where a local planning authority have co-operated (through the Duty to Cooperate) with another local planning authority, county council, or a body or person, the local planning authority's monitoring report must give details of what action they have taken during the period covered by the report.

1.3 The Annual Monitoring Report (AMR) the subject of this report covers the period 1st April 2014 to 31st March 2015. The format of the AMR reflects both the regulations set out above 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 set out below. The full document can be found at **Essential Reference Paper 'B'**.

Local Development Scheme Implementation

- 2.2 The Local Development Scheme (LDS) sets out the timetable for the production of planning documents. The timetable indicates that the District Plan should have been submitted to the Planning Inspectorate for Examination. Unfortunately the Council has fallen some way behind this timetable. Two key factors have caused significant delays to the plan-making process.
- 2.3 Firstly, the Council received a very encouraging response of several thousand representations to the Preferred Options consultation in 2014. However, as a result of this response, it is continuing to take Officers a considerable amount of time to process and respond to the issues raised.
- 2.4 Secondly, national planning policy dictates that the District Plan should be based on a comprehensive evidence base covering a multitude of topic areas. Due to the complexity of the work involved, and the need for joint working with neighbouring authorities, the completion of some technical work has taken longer than expected. This has particularly been the case with the identification of an objectively assessed housing need figure through the Strategic Housing Market Assessment and ongoing transport modelling work which is being led by Hertfordshire and Essex County Councils.
- 2.5 A new version of the LDS will be prepared in early 2016 which will contain an updated timetable for District Plan preparation.

Neighbourhood Planning

- 2.6 There has been a positive response to Neighbourhood Planning across the district. In the monitoring year, the Bishop's Stortford Silverleys and Meads Neighbourhood Plan was agreed at Referendum, (and was subsequently adopted in July 2015). In addition, East Herts Council agreed to designate Neighbourhood Areas for:
- The Buntingford Area (comprising of Aspenden, Buckland & Chipping, Cottered, Hormead, Wyddial and Buntingford);
 - Bishop's Stortford Central, South and All Saints and part of Thorley; and
 - Walkern Parish.

- 2.7 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

- 2.8 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

- 2.9 Details of Community Infrastructure Levy receipts and expenditure will be monitored when/if a CIL is adopted.

Housing Growth / Land Supply

- 2.10 The Council has recently agreed the West Essex and East Hertfordshire Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA). The report concludes that the Objectively Assessed Need (OAN) for housing in East Hertfordshire over 20 year period 2011-2031 is for 14,900 dwellings (745 per year). This is the figure that is being used to monitor housing delivery and calculate future land supply in this monitoring period.
- 2.11 An additional 503 dwellings (net) were completed in the district during 2014/2015. However, it is anticipated that with the adoption of the District Plan in 2017, which will allocate further sites for development, it may be reasonable to assume that housing completions could increase towards the end of the five year supply period.
- 2.12 The Schedule of Housing Commitments included in the AMR can be found at **Essential Reference Paper 'C'**. The schedule sets out the identified housing commitments anticipated to come forward for development over the five year period 2016/17 to 2020/21. The identified housing supply is 3225 dwellings. The NPPF requires the Council to have a supply of deliverable¹ sites sufficient to provide five years' worth of housing against housing

¹ To be considered deliverable, sites should be available now, offer a suitable location for development now, and be achievable with a realistic prospect that housing will be delivered on the site within five years and in particular that development of the site is viable.

requirements. The five year land supply calculation has been made using alternative scenarios which produce two different calculations for the five year land supply ranging from 3.0 years to 3.4 years.

2.13 The 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 2011/12 and 2015/16 is 988 dwellings. There are two approaches that can be used to address this shortfall. These are:

- The ‘Liverpool method’ – where the shortfall since the start of the Plan period is spread evenly over the remainder of the Plan period.
- The ‘Sedgefield method’ – where the shortfall since the start of the Plan period is addressed in the next five years (i.e. wholly within the five-year land supply).

2.14 The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and Planning Practice Guidance (PPG) favour the use of the Sedgefield method as it is more closely aligned with the Government’s requirement to significantly boost the supply of housing.

2.15 In addition to dealing with the identified shortfall, the NPPF also requires local planning authorities to move a buffer forward from later in the Plan period. In local planning authorities where there has been a persistent under delivery of housing (as in East Herts), the NPPF states that the buffer should be 20%.

2.16 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
20% buffer	955.75	4778.75	3.4 years

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

Buffer	Annual Housing Requirement	Five year housing requirement	Five year land supply calculation
20% buffer	1091.6	5458	3.0 years

2.17 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, as well as the allocation of additional housing sites to increase the identified housing supply, will be determined through the District Plan process.

Affordable Housing

2.18 There were 125 new affordable dwellings built during 2014/15, which represents 23.4% of all dwelling completions during the monitoring year. It is likely that the delivery of 40% affordable housing on eligible sites will remain a challenging target over the next few years.

Gypsy and Traveller Pitches

2.19 There were a total number of 6 pitches provided in the district at Nine Acres, High Cross.

Dwellings Completed on Previously Developed Land

2.20 The total number of dwellings completed on previously developed land in 2014-15 was 357 (66.7%). This is higher than the former government target of 60% for the amount of new housing on PDL. The PDL trajectory indicates that completions on brownfield land are likely to generally fall over the next few years; this is due to the majority of the brownfield allocated sites in the Local Plan having been developed and more sites coming forward for development on greenfield sites on the edges of towns and villages.

Economic Development and Employment

2.21 There was 8,442 square metres of floorspace created for employment use throughout the district during the monitoring year, 66.95% of which was developed on previously developed land.

Shopping and Town Centres

2.22 The majority of the primary shopping frontages in the three main settlements are in A1 use. The number of vacant units in the retail frontages tends to vary from year to year. It is often seen as a key indicator to how a town centre is performing economically. The data from this monitoring year shows that there has been an overall decrease in the number of vacant units from that in last monitoring year.

Environment and Design

2.23 There is currently 3,413.99 hectares of land recorded on 544 wildlife sites in the district. This represents an increase of 27.95 ha of land on the previously recorded output. This change is due to the selection of two new wildlife sites (Field adjacent to Bullsmill Lane and Archer's Spring Conifer Plantation) and the de-selection of two sites (Upper White Stubbs Wood and Bishop's Stortford Golf Course Grassland).

Renewable Energy

2.24 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 21 permissions were granted with renewable energy facilities and a total of 63kW renewable energy capacity completions were recorded in the monitoring year.

Green Belt

2.25 There were no major departures from the Local Plan with regards to the Green Belt.

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 (NPPF), DCLG, March 2012
https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/6077/2116950.pdf

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