


Report of: Planning Services Business Manager


To: Executive Board


Date: 3rd December 2007


Item No:

Title of Report : Annual Monitoring Report 2006/07


 **Summary and Recommendations**

 **Purpose of report:** To approve for submission to the Secretary of State the Annual Monitoring Report


Key decision: No 

 **Portfolio Holder:** Cllr John Goddard


Scrutiny Responsibility: Environment

 **Ord(s) affected:** All


Report Approved by


 **Portfolio Holder:** Councillor John Goddard


Legal: Jeremy Thomas



 **Finance:** Christopher Kaye


Strategic Director: Sharon Cosgrove

 **Policy Framework:** Production of an AMR is a central Government requirement of planning policy. The AMR enables an assessment to be made of the performance of planning policies.

 **Recommendation:**

 The Executive Board is asked to: -

-  1. approve the Annual Monitoring Report for submission to the Secretary of State;
-  2. authorise the Planning Policy Manager to make any necessary editorial corrections to the document prior to publication.



Introduction

1. The Executive Board is asked to consider the Annual Monitoring Report before it is submitted to the Secretary of State. This is the City Council's third monitoring report to assess the effectiveness of its planning policies. It covers the period 1st April 2006 – 31st March 2007 and is by and large a factual document.
2. The Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 (Section 35) requires every local planning authority to submit an annual monitoring report to the Secretary of State containing information on the implementation of the Local Development Scheme (LDS) and the extent to which policies set out in Local Development Documents are being achieved.
3. All local planning authorities are required to submit reports to the Secretary of State and publish the report on their websites by no later than the end of December following each monitoring period.

Why Monitor?

4. 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. It provides a crucial feedback loop and information on the performance of policy and its surrounding environment. Under the new planning system, with its focus on delivery of sustainable development and sustainable communities, monitoring takes on an added importance in providing a check on whether those aims are being achieved. Monitoring will also enable the City Council to identify the need to review 'saved' Local Plan policies and future Development Plan Documents (DPDs), and respond more quickly to changing priorities and circumstances. Two of the key factors DPDs will be assessed against at independent examination are whether the policies are founded on a robust and credible evidence base and whether there are clear mechanisms for implementation and monitoring.

Report content

5. The report covers the following key areas:

Local Development Scheme monitoring: this reviews actual plan progress of the LDS compared with the targets and milestones for Local Development Document (LDD) preparation.

Monitoring policies: in accordance with Government guidance, the City Council has adopted an 'objectives-policies-targets-indicators' approach to ensure relevant and effective monitoring. The indicators used include core output indicators, which have been set nationally for all local authorities in order to provide data in a consistent format. Local output indicators and contextual indicators have also been used to highlight key characteristics of Oxford, and to show the baseline position. The report also includes sections analysing planning appeals and the implementation of the Statement of Community Involvement.

6. Where appropriate, the report shows how policy monitoring links to national targets such as Best Value Performance Indicators and its integration with other City Council initiatives such as the Community Strategy. The existing targets in the Local Plan vary in their precision but more detailed targets will be integrated into DPDs.
7. The data in the report has been obtained from information submitted with planning applications and analysed through the Uniform computer system except where other sources are listed.

Key Findings in 06/07

8. Some of the key findings of this year's AMR are set out below:
 - o **Housing Delivery** – The Structure Plan and Local Plan 2001-2016 set a strategic target for Oxford of 6,500 dwellings over the Plan period, which equates to an annual average of 433 dwellings. There were 921 dwellings completed in 06/07, 122 less than in 05/06. However, with 3,717 dwellings completed in the first 6 years of the Local Plan period, over 50% of the Local Plan target has already been achieved. Over 80% of dwellings completed were 1 and 2 bed dwellings (reduced from 86% in the previous monitoring year). This reflects the number of smaller and City centre flat developments and the conversion of dwellings to flats. To address this issue, and to support Policy HS.8 on the Balance of Dwellings, the City Council commenced the production of a Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) in September 2006. This is anticipated to be adopted in January 2008. Planning permission was granted for 523 dwellings in total. This is 474 fewer than in 05/06 and less than half the total in 04/05 but still above the Local Plan target.
 - o **Affordable Housing** – 267 units of affordable housing were completed which equates to about 32.5% of all dwellings, in comparison to nearly 18% in 05/06. The 267 units of affordable housing is higher than the target in the City Council's Housing Strategy of 150 affordable dwellings per year. However, affordable housing delivered by planning obligations will only meet a relatively small proportion of the need for affordable housing in Oxford (estimated to be 1700-1800 affordable dwellings per year by the Housing Requirements Study).
 - o **Business development** – just under 41,000 m² of business floorspace has been completed in 06/07, the majority of which was B1a office development although there were small developments of all types of floorspace. This is lower than the business floorspace last year of 267,500 m² (although the 05/06 figure included further development at the BMW plant at Cowley) and higher than the 04/05 figure of around 14,000 m². Whilst there were a number of planning permissions granted for small B1a office developments, the most significant expansion in terms of floorspace (nearly 16,000 m²) was the development of the Cancer Research Building at the Churchill Hospital site. At the same time, 1.3 hectares of land ceased to be used for employment but was converted to other uses (in comparison to 4.7 hectares in 05/06).
 - o **Retail** – Completed retail development amounted to 1,643m² (mainly the Lidl Store, Watlington Road) and about half the level of completed retail development last year resulted from an intensification of existing units in District centres by the insertion of mezzanine floors. Loss of retail to other uses was just under 900 m². Planning permission was granted for the Westgate, which will be a very significant new retail development.

- o **Tourism** – hotel accommodation increased in Oxford with extensions to the Hawkwell House Hotel, Iffley and The Travel Lodge, Garsington Road. Planning permission has also been granted for new hotel accommodation at George Street and Western Road. Gains in guest house accommodation roughly match those changed to other uses. Work has started on extensions to the Ashmolean Museum, and work continues on the development of the Pitt Rivers Museum.
- o **Environment** – Only one application was granted permission when there was an outstanding Environment Agency objection. The Environment Agency did not feel that the Flood Risk Assessment provided enough information. However, the application was for a conversion of a building from a hostel to an apart-hotel, so there was no increase in footprint. Also, a condition was added that further information must be submitted and approved before work began. Other applications with Environment Agency objections were refused or withdrawn, or acceptable information was provided before approval and the Environment Agency objection withdrawn. This shows that the City Council is taking the issue of flood risk, and the Environment Agency’s advice, very seriously.
- o **Transport** - on parking standards, 91% of completed non-residential developments complied with car parking standards in comparison to 81% in 05/06. There was a decrease to 38% in the number of developments compliant with cycle parking standards, which may relate to the significant number of small developments. The Parking Standards, Transport Assessments and Travel plans SPD adopted in February 2007 should help to clarify the policy on disabled parking and support more rigorous enforcement of cycle parking provision.

Conclusion

10. As with the previous monitoring reports on planning policies, this third report should be viewed in the context of providing an important evidence base from which to assess future reports. The report draws attention to various key issues, and does include some comparison data with the outcome of the first two reports. A more detailed assessment of future trends will develop as the evidence base builds.

Recommendations

That Executive Board is asked to: -

1. approve the Annual Monitoring Report for submission to the Secretary of State;
2. authorise the Planning Policy Manager to make any necessary editorial corrections to the document prior to publication.

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Background papers: None

