

To: City Executive Board

Date: 26th November 2008

Item No:

Report of: Head of City Development

Title of Report: Annual Monitoring Report 2007/08

Summary and Recommendations

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

Key decision? No

Executive lead member: Cllr Colin Cook

Report Approved by:

Executive Director, City Regeneration: Mel Barrett

Finance: Chris Kaye

Legal: Jeremy Thomas

Head of Environmental Development: John Copley

Planning Policy Manager: Mark Jaggard

Head of City Development: Michael Crofton-Briggs

Policy Framework: Production of the Annual Monitoring Report is a Government requirement of all local planning authorities. The Annual Monitoring Report enables an assessment to be made of the performance of the planning policies of the Local Development Framework.

Recommendation(s):

That the City Executive Board is asked to:-

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

Introduction

1. The City 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 fourth monitoring report to assess the effectiveness of its planning policies of the Local Development Framework. It covers the period 1st April 2007 to 31st March 2008 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 and the extent to which policies set out in Local Development Framework 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. As the delivery of sustainable development and sustainable communities is a key focus of planning, monitoring provides 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 (DPD), and respond more quickly to changing priorities and circumstances.
5. 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

6. The report includes sections setting out key facts about Oxford and assesses the implementation of the Statement of Community Involvement. The report covers the following key areas:

Local Development Scheme (LDS) monitoring: this reviews actual plan preparation progress against the milestones set out in the LDS. The main documents/events in the monitoring year were:

- West End Area Action Plan: examination in January 2008 and adoption June 2008
- Core Strategy: consultation on Preferred Options March/May 2007 plus Further Preferred Options consultation March/April 2008
- Planning Obligations Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) – adoption April 2007
- Telecommunications SPD– adopted September 2007
- Balance of Dwellings SPD – adopted January 2008

The production of all of these documents was consistent with the milestones set out in the Local Development Scheme with one exception of a months delay.

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.

7. The format of the report and the indicators used has been changed slightly from previous years due to changes in the core indicators required by the government and to make the report more concise and focused. Where appropriate, the report shows how policy monitoring links to national targets and its integration with other initiatives such as the Sustainable Community Strategy.

Key findings in 07/08

8. Some of the key findings of this year’s AMR are set out below:

Housing – The Oxford Local Plan 2001-2016 set a strategic target for Oxford of 6,500 dwellings over the Plan period (an annual average of 433 dwellings). There were 529 dwellings completed in 07/08. This is 100 dwellings more than the Oxford Local Plan target but it is 292 dwellings less than in 06/07. Since the start of the Oxford Local Plan period, 65% of the 15-year target for dwellings has already been achieved and Oxford is on track to exceed the target. The Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment demonstrates enough sites have been identified in order to meet the 5-year rolling supply of deliverable housing sites from 08/09. Further sites will be required in future years in order to meet the emerging Regional Spatial Strategy target of 400 dwellings per annum. The mix of market dwellings completed continues the trend in previous years with a skew towards 1 and 2-bed dwellings. This is to be expected as this reflects completions, and the Balance of Dwellings SPD was only adopted in January 2008. The affordable dwelling mix is better although it also shows a skew towards 2-bed dwellings. The implementation of the Balance of Dwellings SPD

should improve the mix delivered from developments, and help to reduce the loss of family dwellings.

73 units of affordable housing were completed. This is lower than the target in the Housing Strategy of 150 affordable dwellings per year. However, this is largely due to the number of phased schemes being partially completed, and is expected to increase again next year. Oxford is now almost achieving the target of requiring 50% affordable dwellings on sites developed by private developers with a capacity of 10 or more dwellings.

Student numbers and accommodation - The number of full-time students at the University of Oxford in the 2006/07 academic year was 18,160. There were 12,690 full-time students at Oxford Brookes (7,075 studying at campuses in Oxford). Of these, over 17,500 students live in university provided accommodation. Both universities were under the 3,500 Local Plan limit on the number of students living in private sector accommodation. As well as plans for additional academic accommodation, there are a number of student accommodation schemes being proposed (about 2,000 student rooms, several have planning permission and others at pre-application stage) that would be restricted to occupation by students of the two universities.

Business, retail and tourism development – Overall, the amount of land lost from employment use has been less than previous years. This land has been redeveloped principally for student accommodation and residential use. Just over 29,500 m² of business floor space was completed. This is less than the previous year when just under 41,000m² was developed. This year a significant proportion of the increase in floor space has been within the research and development sector, which is key to the future success of Oxford's established knowledge-based cluster. There continues to be new development in the University and health sectors, which are key sectors in Oxford's economy. This development is part of the sustained investment within these sectors over recent years, and is part of a long-term rolling programme.

The retail and leisure sectors have shown only a modest increase in additional floor space. The city and district centres are still generally performing well. Whilst retail underpins these centres there continues to be a good diversity of uses. The current level of vacancies for the Cowley centre (Templars' Square) is higher than previous years.

New hotel bed spaces were completed in Broad Street. Work has also started on converting 2 buildings to short stay accommodation. However, 3 guest houses on arterial roads changed to residential use.

Environment –14 applications were made that required Natural Resource Impact Analysis statements to be submitted. Nearly all of these met the requirement for 20% of energy to be generated from

renewables. Environment Agency advice regarding flood risk was followed when making decisions on planning applications.

Transport - 88% of completed non-residential developments complied with car parking standards, and 73% complied with disabled parking standards. The rate of compliance with minimum cycle parking standards has improved slightly on previous years, but remains low at 43%. Officers will need to employ greater vigilance in future in negotiating and ensuring compliance with conditions of cycle parking provision and there may be a need to review cycle parking provision policy in the future to ensure greater clarity and effective implementation.

Financial implications

9. There are no direct financial implications in the report.

Legal implications

10. It is a statutory requirement for all local authorities to produce Annual Monitoring Reports.

Risk analysis

11. There are no direct risk issues.

Equality implications

12. Equality issues are addressed in the appropriate indicators on quality of housing and parking standards.

Climate change implications

13. A section of the report assesses environmental issues.

Conclusion

14. As with the previous monitoring reports this report should be viewed in the context of providing an important evidence base on the effectiveness of planning policies. The report draws attention to various key issues and includes comparison data with previous years.

Recommendation(s):

15. That the City Executive Board is asked to:-
 1. approve the Annual Monitoring Report for submission to the Secretary of State;

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Background papers: None

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