

Local Development Framework

Annual Monitoring Report

April 2008 - March 2009



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1. INTRODUCTION

This is Oxford City Council's fifth Annual Monitoring Report of planning policies of the Local Development Framework. It covers the period 1st April 2008 – 31st March 2009. 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 Documents are being achieved.

Monitoring is essential to establish what is happening now and what may happen in the future and to 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 respond more quickly to changing priorities and circumstances.

This report covers the following aspects of planning policy monitoring:

- **Local Development Scheme monitoring** - This reviews whether the targets and milestones for Local Development Document preparation as set out in the Local Development Scheme have been met.
- **Policy monitoring** - Policies will be monitored in order to assess:
 - whether policies and related targets have been met or progress is being made towards meeting them, or if not, the reasons why;
 - what impact the policies are having in respect of national, regional and local policy targets, and any other targets identified in Local Development Documents;
 - whether policies in the Local Development Documents need adjusting, or replacing, because they are not working as intended;
 - whether the policies need changing to reflect changes in national or regional policy; and
 - if policies or proposals need changing, the actions needed to achieve this.

Oxford has adopted an objectives-policies-targets-indicators approach to ensure relevant and effective monitoring. The indicators are divided into those required by the government (core indicators), local indicators selected as being particularly relevant to Oxford and useful to supplement the core indicators, or contextual indicators. The existing targets in the Local Plan vary in their precision but more detailed targets will be integrated into Development Plan Documents.

Where appropriate, the report shows how policy monitoring links to national targets. Key monitoring areas in the report provides valuable information for the City Council's corporate objectives on housing, particularly affordable housing, and tackling climate change and promoting sustainable environmental resource management.

The data sources for compiling this report includes information from:

- planning applications granted permission;
- information from site visits of developments that have commenced and been completed;
- vacancy rates of business premises;
- retail surveys in city and district centres;
- information from Thames Valley Environmental Records Centre, the Environment Agency, University of Oxford and Oxford Brookes University.

2. SNAPSHOT OF OXFORD

Area	17.6 square miles, 46 sq km	
Population	151,000 approximately (including approximately 30,000 students)	
Housing	Number of private households in Oxford	56,000
	% of owner-occupiers in Oxford (% of owner-occupiers in the South East – 73.2%)	54.9%
	% private rented sector accommodation (% of private rented sector accommodation in the South East – 8.8%)	17.5%
	Number of households living in temporary accommodation (2009)	395
	Number of Council homes (as at 1.4.09)	7,665
	Comparison of the average cost of a dwelling in Oxford with average mortgage (joint) 2007	£293,071 (roughly 10 times average income)
	% of new dwellings completed above 50 dwellings per hectare during 2008/09 (on sites of 10 or more dwellings)	92.4%
Economy, retail & tourism	Number of businesses in Oxford (approx)	3,545
	Number of jobs in Oxford	115,000
	% of working age population who are in employment (2008)	73.4%
	Unemployment levels (Jan-Dec 2008)	5.2%
	Number of areas in Oxford graded to be amongst the 20% most deprived areas in England (for low skills, low incomes, and high levels of crime) Index of Multiple Deprivation 2007	10
	Number of visitors to Oxford per year	9.3 million
Environment	% of Green Belt land (much of this being flood plain)	27%
	Local estimates of CO2 emissions - Total emissions per capita (2006)	7.21 tonnes
	Local estimates of CO2 emissions – Total emissions for Oxford (2006)	1075 ktCO2
Transport	% of Oxford's workforce travelling to work by car (lowest proportion in the South East)	38%
	% of Oxford's workforce living outside Oxford's boundary (approx)	50%

Data sources – Oxford City Council statistics page, Oxfordshire Data Observatory, Office for National Statistics, Department for the Environment, Food & Rural Affairs, Environmental Protection Statistics

3. SUMMARY OF KEY FINDINGS

The following new indicator symbols have been introduced this monitoring year:



Green: Targets and objectives have either been met or data indicates progression towards targets/objectives.



Amber: The policy needs close attention in the following monitoring year or where there are new indicators, there has not been sufficient information to make an assessment of policies against performance.



Red: The data indicates under-performance against targets and objectives.

Of the 27 indicators monitored, 2 indicators have not been given a score as targets have not been identified. The table below shows that the majority of the indicators are on target:

Figure 1: Indicator types and scores in 08/09

Indicator type			
National core indicator	9	3	0
Local/ contextual indicator	10	1	2

The 08/09 monitoring year needs to be assessed in the context of the economic downturn. Nationally, the downturn has seen reduced economic output and an increase in numbers of people out of work with an adverse impact on the construction industry in particular. Whilst Oxford has been clearly affected by the recession with, for example, an increase in jobseekers allowance claimant count from 1,630 in October 2008 to 2,914 in April 2009, Oxford has not been as badly affected as other areas. This is demonstrated by the many positive findings in this years report:

- 665 net additional dwellings were completed in 08/09 (over 50% above the Regional Spatial Strategy and emerging Core Strategy target of 400 dwellings per year).
- Oxford has already exceeded its first 5-year requirement for housing provision (target 2,000 dwellings) after only 3 years because the cumulative total of the 3 years from 2006/7 to 2008/9 totals 2,015 dwellings. 95.1% of the development sites have been identified in the Strategic Housing Land Assessment update to meet the 5 year rolling supply of deliverable sites. This excludes dwellings from windfall sites.
- 231 affordable dwellings were completed in 2008/09, above the Corporate Plan target of 150 dwellings a year.
- 15,412 m² of completed development for employment use was achieved, 48% less than 07/08 and has been decreasing each monitoring year. However, the development achieved still adds to the range & type of employment land available.
- all developments of 10 or more dwellings or 2,000 m² or more floorspace approved in 08/09 complied with the requirements of the Natural Resource Impact Analysis to provide a minimum of 20% of their energy requirements by on-site renewables.

There are 2 indicators not performing against target:

- Students and purpose built student accommodation** – The Oxford Local Plan sets a target of no more than 3,000 students to be living in accommodation not provided by each university. Policy ED.6 states that permission will not be granted for additional teaching/administrative accommodation where the number of full-time students at each respective university living outside of university provided accommodation does not exceed 3,000. Similar policies have been included in the emerging Core Strategy. In 08/09, the University of Oxford has reported they are over this limit by 619 students and Oxford Brookes by 795 students. However, there are a number of student accommodation schemes currently under construction (348 study rooms for University of Oxford and 842 for Oxford Brookes) plus planning permission was granted in the monitoring year for a further 132 new student units for University of Oxford. Other student accommodation schemes are in the pipeline. These planned developments should help to reduce the deficit next year. Planned growth in student numbers is expected to be about 1% per year for each university and development sites have been allocated with the capacity for approximately 3,100 units of student accommodation. Major development is planned by both the University of Oxford and Oxford Brookes University. It is critical that the development is only permitted where the City Council is satisfied that by the time new developments are operational, there will be a correct amount of purpose built student accommodation.
- Compliance of non-residential development to cycle standards** – Of the 50 monitored non-residential completions, 58% were considered to be compliant with the cycle parking standards. Whilst this is a significant improvement on 07/08 of 43% compliant, it is still far from the 80%+ rate of compliance that might be hoped for. This indicator was identified last year as one that required careful monitoring, and this still remains the case. Officers will need to pay careful attention to ensure appropriate cycle parking is secured in the planning application process and in monitoring compliance with conditions on cycle parking provision. It is also an issue members may wish to highlight in determining planning applications.

The indicators shown as amber are indicators such as the Building for Life Criteria and the new section on monitoring the policies of the West End Area Action Plan. These are new indicators, and in the case of the West End, there has not been sufficient development since the Area Action Plan was adopted to make an assessment of policies and performance.

The outlook beyond the 08/09 monitoring period shows positive signs. The City Council has established a good working relationship with the Homes and Communities Agency since it was established in December 2008 and Oxford has been very successful in attracting funding:

- £12 million for 180 affordable homes provided through housing associations;
- £300,000 to begin the master planning of a major regeneration scheme at Barton which may include up to 1,000 homes on City Council owned land;
- £4 million to begin Council house building, representing 50% of the £8 million awarded across the South East for this purpose. Planning permission has already been granted for the construction of 67 Council homes for rent on sites at Cardinal House and Lambourne Road. Construction is expected to start on site early next year;
- £2.8 million funding through the Places for Change Programme for the refurbishment of the Old Fire Station – a project with Crisis (a national charity for single homeless people) to provide a new Skylight Centre that will offer practical and creative workshops including art, music and drama, vocational workshops and associated learning opportunities;

4. LOCAL DEVELOPMENT SCHEME

This section addresses progress on the various documents that make up the Local Development Framework. It examines the extent to which the Development Plan Documents (DPDs) and Supplementary Planning Documents (SPDs) have progressed in relation to the targets set out in the Local Development Scheme.

Oxford's Local Development Scheme sets out the work programme for, and resources required to prepare the documents that will form part of the Local Development Framework. The first half of this monitoring period was under the Local Development Scheme 2007-2010. In November 2008 a new Local Development Scheme was brought into effect covering the period (2008-2011).

Monitoring period April 2008 to end March 2009

During this period work continued on the production of the following documents:

- *Core Strategy DPD*
The Proposed Submission Document was published on 5th September 2008; following consultation the Core Strategy was submitted to the Secretary of State on 21st November 2008 in line with the milestone set in the Local Development Scheme. An exploratory meeting was held with the appointed Inspector on 20th January 2009.
- *Oxford's West End Area Action Plan DPD*
Following the examination of the Area Action Plan, the Inspector's Report was received on 28th April 2008. The Area Action Plan was found to be sound and was adopted as such on 30th June 2008, ahead of the Local Development Scheme milestone (set at October).
- *Northern Gateway Area Action Plan DPD*
A consultation by letter and questionnaire took place from 19th November 2008 - 19th December 2008.
- *Streamlined Contributions SPD*
Initial consultation by letter and questionnaire was undertaken in August 2008 and City Executive Board approval of the draft document for public consultation in January 2009.

Progress since April 2009

Whilst not forming part of the monitoring period covered by this Annual Monitoring Report, an update on progress since April 2009 is provided for information. The hearing sessions of the examination into the Core Strategy were opened in July 2009. Subsequently, in the light of legal challenges to the South East Plan (which forms part of the Development Plan for Oxford), the Planning Inspector has decided to suspend the Core Strategy examination until the legal challenges are concluded.

The Local Development Scheme will be revised in the light of recommendations and priorities set through the Inspector's Report. More details will be reported in next year's Annual Monitoring Report.

Conclusions

The City Council has shown a strong commitment to delivering the first phase of the Local Development Framework and has met many of the challenging targets it set itself. Whilst there have been some occasions when the planned timetable has had to be reviewed, these minor amendments to the timetable have not had any significant effect on the overall programme, and major progress has been made.

Oxford City Council has to date produced the following documents:

- Oxford Local Plan 2001-2016 – saved policies

- Oxford's West End Area Action Plan – adopted
- Oxford's Core Strategy 2026 – emerging

- Affordable Housing SPD – adopted
- Natural Resources Impact Analysis SPD – adopted
- Parking Standards, Transport Assessments and Travel Plans SPD – adopted
- Telecommunications SPD – adopted
- Planning Obligations SPD – adopted
- Balance of Dwellings SPD – adopted

- Statement of Community Involvement – adopted
- Oxford's Local Development Scheme 2008-2011
- Annual Monitoring Reports