

To: City Executive Board

Date: 2nd December 2009

Item No:

Report of: Value and Performance Scrutiny Committee

Title of Report: ANNUAL MONITORING REPORT TO ASSESS THE EFFECTIVENESS OF PLANNING POLICIES IN THE LOCAL DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK

Summary and Recommendations

Purpose of report: To request the City Executive Board consider the Scrutiny Committee's recommendations on this matter.

Key decision - Yes

Executive lead member - Councillor Cook

Report approved by:

Councillor Goddard – Chair of Value and Performance Scrutiny Committee

Policy Framework: Improving the local environment and quality of life, Stronger and more inclusive communities, Transform Oxford City Council by improving value for money and service performance

Recommendation(s):

That the CEB City Executive Board consider the Scrutiny Committee's recommendations on this matter as follows:

1. Student Accommodation

a. To express disappointment that the target of no more than 3,000 students living outside of university accommodation is being exceeded by both universities. Recognising the proposals by both universities to reduce this target, it still leaves students in family and other accommodation in excess of the target.

b. To explore enforcement and other strategies to achieve this target now

c. To propose for the future a year on year reduction in the 3,000 target in discussion with the University of Oxford and Oxford Brookes University

2. Affordable Housing

The Council should consider its planning policies to see whether the 50% affordable housing requirement is applied to developments of less than 10 units. It is not possible to re-open the Examination in Public on the issue of affordable housing.

3. Cycle Stands

To come forward with enforcement actions that can ensure the current cycle stands target is met.

4. Environmental Quality

a. To tighten the definition on what is renewable energy. Some of those already sighted, whilst being more efficient, are not renewable

b. To commend to Area Committees that they apply NRIA's to smaller applications. Changes to the threshold and a tighter definition of renewable energy could be investigated in progressing the Development Management Development Plan Document Mark

5. Community Engagement

a. Current community engagement is not carried out early enough during consultation. This is particularly so for large scale developments. Consideration should be given to front loading community engagement processes and using Area Committees as the vehicle for this.

b. Statistics on the number of visitors to Oxford: The figure provided for the number of visitors to Oxford/year (9.3m) is questionable. Given that this figure was confirmed to be true can it be broken down between the type of visitor and in particular:

- Business
- Leisure
- Shopping

1. Introduction and Background

At its meeting on 16th November 2009, the Value & Performance Scrutiny Committee considered the report of the Head of City Development on the annual monitoring report to assess the effectiveness of planning policies in the local development framework.

During the discussion, the Committee commented on a number of key areas as follows:

1. Student Accommodation

Disappointment was expressed that the target of no more than 3,000 students living outside of university accommodation was being exceeded by both universities. Proposals by both universities to reduce this figure still meant that students were in family and other accommodation. Enforcement action should be explored as well as other strategies to reduce the number of students in private accommodation, with the aim of a year on year reduction in the 3,000 target.

2. Affordable Housing

The Council should consider its planning policies to see whether the 50% affordable housing requirement is applied to developments of less than 10 units. It is not possible to re-open the Examination in Public on the issue of affordable housing.

3. Cycle Stands

Investigate enforcement actions that can ensure that the current cycle stands target is met.

4. Environmental Quality

a. To tighten the definition on what is renewable energy. Some of those already sighted, whilst being more efficient, are not renewable.

b. To commend to Area Committees that they apply NRIA's to smaller applications. Changes to the threshold and a tighter definition of renewable energy could be investigated in progressing.

5. Community Engagement

a. Current community engagement ticks all the boxes but in practice is not early enough in the process. This is particularly so for large scale developments. Consideration should be given to front loading the community engagement processes and using Area Committees as the vehicle for this.

b. Statistics on the number of visitors to Oxford: The figure provided for the number of visitors to Oxford/year (9.3m) seems too high to be believable. Given that this figure was confirmed to be true can it be broken down between the type of visitor and in particular, between business, Leisure and shopping.

2. Recommendations to City Executive Board

The recommendations of the committee are detailed in the header to this report.

3. Comments from the Board Member

The Board Member has seen the report and may comment further at the meeting of the City Executive Board.

4. Comments from the Strategic Director

Student Accommodation: I already have regular liaison meetings with both Universities and will ensure this matter is on the agenda for our next meeting.

Affordable Housing: Work is already underway, in the context of the Development Management Development Plan Document, analysing options in this regard.

Cycle Stands: This is in hand starting with the larger developments first

Environmental Quality: This has been brought to the attention of Development Control Officers

Community Engagement: Development Control Officers already encourage developers to do this but in future will be able to confirm that this is encouraged too by Members.

Visitor Statistics: If it is possible to provide this breakdown the information will be sent to all Members.

5. Legal Comments

There were no comments from the Head of Legal and Democratic Services.

6. Finance Comments

There were no comments from the Head of Finance.

Report Author: Colin Gregory on behalf of The Chair of the Value and Performance Scrutiny Committee
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