

**To: City Executive Board**

**Date: 5<sup>th</sup> December 2012**

**Item No:**

**Report of: Head of City Development**

**Title of Report: Annual Monitoring Report 2011/12**

### **Summary and Recommendations**

**Purpose of report:** To approve the Annual Monitoring Report for publication

**Key decision?** No

**Executive lead member:** Councillor Colin Cook

**Policy Framework:** The Annual Monitoring Report enables an assessment to be made of the effectiveness of the planning policies in the Local Development Framework.

**Recommendation(s):** That the City Executive Board is asked to:

1. Approve the Annual Monitoring Report 2011/12 for publication;
2. Authorise the Head of City Development to make any necessary editorial corrections to the document prior to publication.

Appendix 1 – Annual Monitoring Report 2011/12

Appendix 2 – Risk Assessment

## **Introduction**

1. The City Executive Board is asked to consider the Annual Monitoring Report before it is published. This is the City Council's eighth monitoring report to assess the effectiveness of planning policies of the Local Development Framework. It covers the period 1<sup>st</sup> April 2011 to 31<sup>st</sup> March 2012 and is a factual document.
2. The former requirement under the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act for every local planning authority to submit an annual monitoring report to the Secretary of State has been removed by the Localism Act 2011. However, Section 113 of the Localism Act still requires local planning authorities to publish monitoring reports at least yearly in the interests of transparency. Regulations require this monitoring information to be made available online and in council offices as soon as possible after the information becomes available. The monitoring data is currently only collected annually, but it may be possible in future to publish some data during the year if it becomes available more frequently.
3. The Annual Monitoring Report (AMR) provides feedback to Members, stakeholders and residents on the performance of planning policies and whether the objectives of those policies are being achieved. In so doing, monitoring enables the City Council to respond more quickly to changing priorities and circumstances. In addition, statutory plans are assessed at independent examination on whether the policies are founded on a robust and credible evidence base, and whether there are clear mechanisms for implementation and monitoring.

## **Monitoring indicators**

4. The Localism Act retains the requirement for monitoring reports to set out information relating to the implementation of the Local Development Scheme and the extent to which the policies set out in local development documents are being achieved. However, there is no longer any formal national guidance, nor any national core output indicators. Local planning authorities can decide what to include in their monitoring reports, while ensuring that they are prepared in accordance with relevant UK and EU legislation.
5. Most of the indicators and targets selected in the Annual Monitoring Report (AMR) are required because the City Council made a commitment to monitor such data in the adopted Core Strategy or the West End Area Action Plan. Once the Barton Area Action Plan and the Sites and Housing Plan are adopted, additional monitoring indicators arising from those plans will be added to future AMR's.
6. In addition, many of the former national indicators have been retained because they continue to provide useful information, for instance in

relation to the housing trajectory and land developed for employment uses.

### Findings of 2011/12 Annual Monitoring Report

7. The AMR includes sections setting out key facts about Oxford, progress against the Local Development Scheme, monitoring of policies and implementation of the Statement of Community Involvement.
8. During the 2011/12 monitoring year, an updated Local Development Scheme (LDS) for the period 2011-14 was approved by City Executive Board in September 2011. Good progress was made on the Barton Area Action Plan and the Sites and Housing Plan during the year, with production of the two plans running almost in parallel. Consultation on preferred options took place during the early summer of 2011, and the two draft submission documents were agreed at the same Council meeting in December 2011. These documents were published for consultation in February/March 2012. Evidence gathering for the Community Infrastructure Levy also began during the year, but work on the Northern Gateway Area Action Plan did not commence in January 2012 as had originally been intended.
9. In relation to policy monitoring, a traffic light approach has been applied to reflect performance against targets and objectives. The vast majority of indicators are either green or amber:

	Green (on-target or progressing towards it)	Amber (new indicator or policy needs close attention next year)	Red (under performance against target)
Citywide indicator	29	9	2
West End AAP indicator	10	5	0

10. There are two indicators not performing against target, shown as red:

#### **Indicator 5 - Affordable housing completions (gross) and tenure**

The number of affordable housing completions dropped to 18, significantly below the target of 200 in the Core Strategy monitoring framework. The large schemes at Rose Hill were completed in the previous monitoring year and no substantial sites have been completed this monitoring year. The continued economic uncertainty has undoubtedly had an effect. The City Council has actions in place to reverse this trend in future years including bringing forward the strategic site at Barton; identifying some new large housing sites in the Sites and Housing Plan; developing affordable housing on its own land;

and taking financial contributions towards affordable housing from small housing sites and student accommodation developments.

**Indicator 27 - Appeals allowed where conservation policies cited as a reason for refusal.** There were three cases where decisions were refused with conservation policies cited as a reason for refusal and all three of them were allowed (to varying degrees) by the Planning Inspectorate. The three cases were all small schemes and given the wider context of the large number of applications affecting the historic environment, although this indicator scores red it is not a matter of serious concern.

11. Indicators shown as amber include those relating to development complying with Natural Resource Impact Analysis (NRIA) requirements and student accommodation. The NRIA indicator scored amber as some schemes did not precisely meet the requirements. The reason that these schemes did not meet the requirements is that they produced an energy strategy which was site specific and focused on saving energy as opposed to renewable or low carbon solutions.
12. The Annual Monitoring Report includes an annual update on the progress made by each of the two universities against the policy threshold that no more than 3,000 full-time students live in the community (not in accommodation provided by the relevant university). Both universities were just above the 3,000 target during the 11/12 monitoring year, as at 31<sup>st</sup> March 2012. Notwithstanding this, it is appropriate to update Members with the current position given the fact that the data quoted in the attached monitoring report was gathered in December 2011.
13. Oxford Brookes University had 3,381 students in the community in December 2011, falling to 3,220 in February 2012. For the 12/13 academic year, the university reports that there are an additional 438 places available at the Dorset House and Westminster Hall developments, whilst taking account of losses at Harcourt Hill. This brings the university below the 3,000 threshold. In addition, Oxford Brookes report that their initial estimate is that there has been a fall in the student intake in the 12/13 academic year.
14. The University of Oxford had 3,401 students in the community in December 2011. For the 12/13 academic year, an additional 154 places are available arising from recent developments including Pembroke College. A further 279 places are currently under construction. This will bring the university below the 3,000 threshold.
15. Given that this is a critical policy in the Core Strategy and that both universities count student numbers and places of university accommodation in December, officers will work with the universities to prepare a within-academic year update to the student accommodation section of the AMR. This will take into account the number of students

at each university in the 12/13 academic year, and will be published in spring 2013.

16. The 11/12 monitoring year needs to be assessed in the context of the continuing 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. Oxford continues to experience a challenging economic environment. This years report show that Oxford has been affected by the recession, but there have however been some positive findings:
  - a. 228 dwellings (net) were completed during 2011/12, which is a modest improvement on the previous year and may indicate that the housing market in Oxford is improving.
  - b. Planning permission granted for major research and development uses including significant redevelopments within the University Science area (Physical and Theoretical Chemistry and a new Physics Building), amounting to 26,710 sqm gross.
  - c. Planning permission granted in the health sector for a new building 3,928 sqm gross at the Nuffield Orthopaedic centre
  - d. The City and District centres continue to perform well with relatively low vacancy rates.
  
17. Despite the economic downturn, the indicators for Quality of Life and Regeneration scored positively with significant progress being made during the monitoring period towards the delivery of new healthcare and education facilities despite problems with funding streams. Oxford's biodiversity resource also remains strong. The majority of SSSIs are in favourable condition, and Oxford maintains a healthy number of UKBAP priority species.

#### **Level of risk**

18. A risk assessment has been undertaken and the risk register is attached (Appendix 2). All risks have been mitigated to an acceptable level.

#### **Climate change/environmental impact**

19. There are no direct climate change or environmental impacts arising from this report. However, Section 4 of the Annual Monitoring Report provides information about a range of environmental indicators, including data on biodiversity, heritage issues and compliance with Natural Resources Impact Analysis (NRIA) requirements.

#### **Equalities impact**

20. There are no direct equality impacts arising from this report.

**Financial implications**

21. There are no direct financial implications arising from this report.

**Legal implications**

22. There are no direct legal implications arising from this report.

**Name and contact details of author:-**

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**List of background papers:** None

**Version number:** 1

**Appendix 2 – Risk Assessment**

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Risk ID	Risk						Corporate Objective	Gross Risk		Residual Risk		Current Risk		Owner	Date Risk Reviewed	Proximity of Risk (Projects/ Contracts Only)
Category-000-Service Area Code	Risk Title	Opportunity/Threat	Risk Description	Risk Cause	Consequence	Date raised	1 to 6	I	P	I	P	I	P			
CEB-001-CD	Reputational risk	T	Failure to achieve planning policy targets	There could be a range of causes, some of which may be external (e.g. the state of the economy) and some internal (failure to properly implement policies)	Reputation of the City Council could be adversely affected in the eyes of the community and stakeholders	5 Dec 2012	1, 2, 3, 4, 5	2	1	2	1	2	1	Michael Crofton-Briggs		

