

To: City Executive Board

Date: 17 November 2016

Report of: Scrutiny Committee

Title of Report: Annual Monitoring Report (AMR) 2015/16

Summary and Recommendations

Purpose of report: To present the recommendation of the Scrutiny Committee on the Annual Monitoring Report (AMR) 2015/16.

Scrutiny Lead Member: Councillor Andrew Gant, Chair of Scrutiny Committee

Executive lead member: Councillor Alex Hollingsworth, Board Member for Planning and Regulatory Services

Recommendation of the Scrutiny Committee to the City Executive Board:

That the City Executive Board states whether it agrees or disagrees with the recommendation set out in the body of this report.

Introduction

1. The Scrutiny Committee pre-scrutinised the Annual Monitoring Report (AMR) 2015/16 at its meeting on 7 November 2016. The Committee would like to thank Cllr Hollingsworth, Board Member for Planning and Regulatory, the Planning Policy Manager and the Planning Policy Officer for attending the meeting and answering questions.

Summary and recommendation

2. Cllr Hollingsworth, Board member for Planning and Regulatory Services presented the report. He explained that the Annual Monitoring Report monitors the effectiveness of the Council's planning policies; the report will influence the Local Plan review due next year.
3. The Committee discussed student numbers and student built accommodation, Officers explained the Council's policy which allows only 3,000 students from both Oxford Brookes and Oxford universities from living outside of student

accommodation and the penalty for exceeding this policy. The policy includes only accommodation fully owned and run by Brookes or Oxford universities and does not extend to language schools or other educational institutes in the city. The Committee sought assurances that the review of the Local Plan would consider ways to expand the policy to include other educational institutes.

4. Oxford Brookes University currently has over 3,700 students living outside of student accommodation and the continuing growth in university numbers means that the Council will have to refine its policy to adjust to the growth in student numbers. The Committee are supportive of officers commissioning work with Cambridge City Council to review the growth of academic institutes and meeting with Oxford and Oxford Brookes universities to discuss changes to the current policy so that it is fit for purpose for the next 20 years.
5. The Committee questioned the Council's failure to meet its retail targets. Cllr Hollingsworth explained that the Government has made a number of changes to permitted development rights and it is now very difficult for the Council to prevent retail shifting from one use class to another. The Council will have to consider alternative ways to manage retail as policies in the Local Plan will no longer be sufficient.
6. The Committee sought assurances on the following issues in the report: the shortage of supply of short stay accommodation, affordable housing figures, the viability of the affordability housing policy and the increase in retrospective HMO planning applications. The Committee queried whether indicator 26: Natural Resources Impact Analysis related specifically to renewable energy, as indicated in the wording of the target, in which case it would not have been achieved, or whether it also included non-renewable low carbon sources of energy (e.g. heat pumps), in which case the wording should reflect this. The Committee recommended that clarity should be provided either way. This was accepted and wording of the target was amended in the final paperwork presented to CEB.
7. The Committee questioned the relevance of monitoring indicator 33: Traffic growth at inner and outer cordons which measures the traffic flow in and out of the city. The Committee heard that the data comes from Oxfordshire County Council and provides context for other policies. Nevertheless the Committee would like the City Executive Board to justify the need to monitor this indicator as the City Council can't influence it in any way.

Recommendation 1 - That consideration is given to whether or not indicator 33: Traffic growth at inner and outer cordons should be included in future Annual Monitoring Reports, and that reasons are provided either way.

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List of background papers: None