

To: City Executive Board

Date: 7th December 2010

Report of: Head of City Development

Title of Report: Annual Monitoring Report 2010/11

Summary and Recommendations

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

Key decision? No

Executive lead member: Councillors Ed Turner and Colin Cook

Policy Framework: Production of the Annual Monitoring Report is currently a government requirement of all local planning authorities. 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 2010/11 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.

Appendix 1 – Annual Monitoring Report 2010/11

Appendix 2 – Risk Assessment

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 seventh monitoring report to assess the effectiveness of planning policies of the Local Development Framework. It covers the period 1st April 2010 to 31st March 2011 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 the policies set out in the Local Development Framework are being implemented.
3. It should be noted that the Localism Act proposes to remove the requirement for local planning authorities to submit their Annual Monitoring Reports (AMR's) to the Secretary of State, but until the Act comes into force that requirement remains. The Localism Bill does, however, retain the overall duty to monitor and there is clear benefit in continuing to publish an AMR since it provides feedback to Members, stakeholders and residents on the performance of planning policies and whether the objectives of those policies are actually being achieved. In so doing, monitoring enables the City Council to respond more quickly to changing priorities and circumstances.
4. In addition, Development Plan Documents 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

5. The Government announced in a letter dated 30th March 2011 that it had withdrawn its formal guidance on Annual Monitoring Reports (AMR's), including the national core output indicators. Local planning authorities now have greater freedom to decide what to include in their monitoring reports, while ensuring that they are prepared in accordance with relevant UK and EU legislation.
6. Accordingly, the opportunity has been taken to review the former national indicators and to remove some that were not particularly relevant in the Oxford context, for instance those in relation to gypsy and traveller pitches and farmland birds. However, most 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.

7. The local indicators from last year have also been reviewed and a few have been removed. However, a number of new targets and indicators contained within the Core Strategy and its accompanying sustainability appraisal have been added to this version of the Annual Monitoring Report (AMR). Given that the Core Strategy was adopted on 14th March 2011, two weeks before the end of the monitoring year covered in this AMR, it will not be possible to draw any meaningful conclusions about the effectiveness of Core Strategy policies until next year at the earliest because nearly all planning decisions taken during the 2010-11 monitoring year pre dated the adoption of the Core Strategy.
8. There are also a few Core Strategy indicators that will need to be added next year because the City Council's planning application monitoring system does not currently collect the relevant data, for instance data relating to the submission of flood risk assessments and travel plans.

Findings of 2010/11 Annual Monitoring Report

9. 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.
10. Good progress was made against the Local Development Scheme (LDS) with the adoption of the Core Strategy and the commencement of work on the Barton Area Action Plan and the Sites and Housing Development Plan Document, albeit that the length of the Core Strategy examination did have a knock-on effect on the timetable for subsequent planning policy documents.
11. In relation to policy monitoring, a traffic light approach has been applied to reflect performance against targets and objectives. The table below shows that only two (affordable housing completions and tenure, and appeals allowed where conservation policies were cited as a reason for refusal) did not perform against target. 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	25	11	2
West End AAP indicator	9	6	0

12. The 2010/11 monitoring year needs to be assessed in the context of a very weak economy and the currently uncertain economic outlook. This national context has had a knock-on effect on the rate of development activity in Oxford, as elsewhere. Key findings are that:
- 200 net additional dwellings were completed in 2010/11, which is a reduction on the 09/10 figure of 257 dwellings. This reflects the national slowdown in housing delivery, but housing delivery over the last five years (06/07-10/11) still significantly exceeds the annual average required to meet the Core Strategy target of 400 dwellings per year. This is because in each of the years 2006/07-2008/09, the number of additional dwellings built was significantly above the 400 target;
 - the proportion of family (3+ bedroom) dwellings has increased compared to previous monitoring years, which suggests that the Balance of Dwellings Supplementary Planning Document is being effectively implemented. There has been a decrease in the proportion of 2 bedroom dwellings, but an increase in the proportion of 1 bedroom dwellings;
 - planning permission was granted for 520 new units of student accommodation, the vast majority of which were for use by students at the University of Oxford;
 - 2,226m² was completed for employment uses, a reduction from the figure of 4,926m² last year which again reflects the wider economic situation. Very little employment related development was granted planning permission in 2010/11, although it should be noted that planning permission has subsequently been granted for some significant employment developments (such as an office development for Centrica at the Business Park) since the end of this monitoring period;
 - notwithstanding the economic situation, the City and District centres appear to be performing well and there was an encouraging fall in the number of vacant units at the Cowley centre by almost half;
 - performance was generally good against the environmental and quality of life indicators, and progress is being made on a number of regeneration initiatives.
13. The Annual Monitoring Report includes an annual update on the progress made by each of the two universities against the policy target that no more than 3,000 full-time students live outside of accommodation provided by the relevant university. This information is received directly from the universities. As a separate piece of work, officers are investigating concerns raised by some residents about alleged discrepancies in the figures on student numbers when drawn from different sources, such as in comparison to data on student Council Tax exemptions. Officers in Planning and Council Tax are

preparing a joint report on this issue, which is likely to be completed and shared with interested parties early in the New Year.

Level of risk

14. 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

15. 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

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

Financial implications

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

Legal implications

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

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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	7 Dec 2011	1, 2, 3, 4, 5	2	1	2	1	2	1	Michael Crofton-Briggs		