



Report of the Director of Development

Executive Board

Date: 13 December 2006

Subject: Local Development Framework – Annual Monitoring Report

Electoral Wards Affected:

All

Specific Implications For:

Equality and Diversity

Community Cohesion

Narrowing the Gap

Eligible for Call In

Not Eligible for Call In
(Details contained in the report)

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1. A report on the 2006 LDF Annual Monitoring Report (AMR) was noted at the Development Plan Panel on 5 December 2006 and the Executive Board's approval is needed for its submission to the Dept. of Communities and Local Government by 31 December 2006. Following reforms to the planning system, it is a legal requirement to submit it by that date. The Annual Monitoring Report itself is attached as an Appendix.
2. The purpose of the AMR is two fold. The first is to monitor the performance of specific planning policy areas and the second is to report on progress against the City Council's Local Development Scheme (LDS). An updated LDS was submitted to the Secretary of State in March this year.
3. Consistent with the LDF Regulations and Government Guidance, the reporting period for the AMR is 1 April 2005 – 31 March 2006. The progress update on the LDS relates to the position at December 2006.
4. It should be noted that this second AMR has been prepared during the transitional period between the 'old' Development Plan system and the introduction of fundamental reforms and related guidance, as part of the Planning & Compulsory Purchase Act 2004. Consequently, whilst progress has been made in capturing and reporting on specific data sets (such as housing completions), there is further work to be done in establishing robust and longer term monitoring arrangements within the context of available resources. Where information is currently available, the AMR reports on a number of key policy areas and also considers the approach to future monitoring work (Section 5). This will require corporate support and close interdepartmental working, to ensure that best use is made of existing information and to cover any gaps in data.

1.0 Purpose Of This Report

- 1.1 Monitoring of the LDF is a statutory requirement under Section 35, Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004. Each year an Annual Monitoring Report (AMR) has to be submitted to DCLG.

2.0 Background Information

- 2.1 The purpose of AMRs is to report on both the performance of specific planning policies and a summary of progress against milestones set out for the preparation of Local Development Documents identified as part of the Local Development Scheme. Following this, Government advice promotes the need for local authorities to review planning policies through the LDF process where appropriate. Within this context adjustments were made to update, delete or inject Local Development Documents as part of the overall programme and these were incorporated into an updated LDS which was submitted to the Secretary of State in March.
- 2.2 Within the context of the LDF Regulations and Government Guidance, the reporting period for this second AMR covers the period 1 April 2005 – 31 March 2006 for planning policy issues and the progress update on the Local Development Scheme is the position at December 2006.

3.0 Main Issues

- 3.1 There are two main issues that affect the production of monitoring reports in Leeds. Firstly, the new development plan system includes a detailed monitoring requirement linked to policies that are framed in a way that their performance can be checked. The consequent development and incorporation of monitoring routines into all new development plan documents will prove complex and will place many demands on both the plan drafting process and the back-office systems that will be needed to support policy monitoring. Work on this issue has started but will take some time to bear fruit.
- 3.2 Secondly, provision of adequate monitoring resources has been an issue. Restructuring of the Data Team in the Department is nearly complete. This will provide an additional 2 fte technicians principally to support the LDF monitoring effort. These extra staff, together with a redefinition of the way in which policy development work is organised, should be adequate for the foreseeable future. Links with the Transport Policy Division and the appropriate section of Neighbourhoods and Housing will also strengthen the monitoring resource available.
- 3.3 Data and data collection arrangements are such that, at this stage, no clear conclusions can be drawn on changes in the policy areas where monitoring is required. However, it should be noted that the number of dwellings completed continues to run at a high level, well ahead of the anticipated output. This is the result partly of a boom in planning consents following the revision of PPG3 in March 2000 which introduced a virtual presumption in favour of housing development on most brownfield sites. This has brought sites onto the local housing land market in unprecedented quantities. Combined with strong demand and a concentration on the bulk development of flats, this has led to substantial increases in output.
- 3.4 The proportions of housebuilding on previously developed (brownfield) land have risen further, the 5 year average being up from 84% in 2000 - 5 to 89% in 2001 - 6. Last year 96% of completions were on brownfield sites. The Council attaches considerable importance to maintaining these high rates of brownfield development

and expects them to continue, certainly in the short to medium term. Housing density also continues to rise and 82% of dwellings on sites completed in the last 5 years were at densities in excess of 30 to the hectare, while in 2005 - 6 this proportion rose to 97%.

4.0 Implications For Council Policy And Governance

4.1 There are no implications for Council policy and governance.

5.0 Legal And Resource Implications

5.1 There are no legal implications stemming from this year's AMR provided it is submitted to DCLG by 31st December.

5.2 As LDF work progresses the AMR will present an executive summary of the monitoring carried out on LDF policies. The AMR is an integral part of the new LDF process and is intended to bring to the Council's attention monitoring information that may indicate that certain planning policies may need revision, as well as providing assurance that implementation of other policies is 'on track'.

5.3 There are no staff resource implications in addition to those set out in para. 3.2. Any IT or data costs identified as LDF work progresses will, wherever possible, be supported from within existing provision (the approved LDF budget).

6.0 Conclusions

6.1 This report has outlined the scope and content of the Local Development Framework Annual Monitoring Report and identified issues relating to supporting the monitoring process. The attached AMR for 2006 shows what is emerging at present and proposed improvements to the monitoring system.

7.0 Recommendations

7.1 The Executive Board is recommended to approve the Local Development Framework Annual Monitoring Report 2006 for submission to the Secretary of State pursuant to Regulation 48 of the Town and Country Planning (Local Development)(England) Regulations 2004.