

Leeds Local Plan Authority Monitoring Report 2022-23

Date: 16th July 2024

Report of: Chief Planning Officer

Report to: Development Plan Panel

Will the decision be open for call in? Yes No

Does the report contain confidential or exempt information? Yes No

Brief summary

The purpose of Authority Monitoring Reports (AMRs) is to report on the performance of specific planning policies, summarise progress on the Local Plan against milestones set out in the Local Development Scheme (LDS), and provide up-to-date information on the implementation of neighbourhood plans.

The reporting period for this AMR covers the period 1 April 2022 – 31 March 2023. The full AMR 2022/23 document is set out in Appendix 1 of this report.

The main headlines of the AMR for 2022/23 are:

- Overall housing delivery was 2,703 new homes.
- Affordable housing delivery was at the highest level in the plan period with 633 affordable homes built.
- Journeys to work through sustainable transport modes (walk, cycle, bus and rail) increased by 3% from previous year, although private vehicles still remained the most common mode.
- Carbon emissions (CO₂ levels) across Leeds increased slightly by 3.7% from last year, although these still remained much lower than pre-Covid and are likely a result of the recent increase in commercial and domestic activity following Covid-19 lockdowns.
- Renewable energy installations, capacity and generation all increased in 2022/23.
- Air quality (NO₂ levels) generally improved, with all but one Air Quality Management Area, all but one air quality monitoring site and all particulate matter monitoring sites meeting air quality objectives.
- Office floorspace delivery was 63,000sqm and general employment (industrial and waste uses) delivery was 33ha, both exceeding Core Strategy targets.

Recommendations

Development Plan Panel is requested to;

- a) Note and comment on the contents of this report; prior to the AMR being approved by the Chief Planning Officer and published on the Council's website in due course.

What is this report about?

- 1 The purpose of Authority Monitoring Reports (AMRs) is to report on the performance of specific planning policies, summarise progress on the Local Plan against milestones set out in the Local Development Scheme (LDS), and provide up-to-date information on the implementation of neighbourhood plans. The AMR can also help inform if there is a need to undertake a partial or full update of the local plan, when carrying out a review at least every 5 years from the adoption date. This 'plan, monitor and manage' approach is a familiar one and essential for many aspects of planning. It must be set within the wider corporate performance management and monitoring and the strategic context of the Council's aims and strategies (including the Best City Ambition and Inclusive Growth Strategy).
- 2 The Council is required to make the information in the AMR available publicly. Regulation 34 of the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012 sets out what information the reports must contain, for example the number of net additional dwellings delivered in the period, but authorities can largely choose for themselves which targets and indicators to report upon provided they are in line with the relevant UK legislation.
- 3 The reporting period for this AMR covers the period 1 April 2022 – 31 March 2023. The full AMR 2022/23 document is set out in **Appendix 1** of this report. The AMR is split into 12 main sections. These include a section covering information on the preparation of planning documents and neighbourhood plans and 11 topic-based sections which report on performance against monitoring indicators set out in the local plan and other relevant indicators. This report highlights some of the main headlines from the AMR 2022/23 below.
- 4 Members should note that there is an inevitable time lag between the end of the reporting period and publication of information in the AMR document. This period is used to collect and collate data such as housing and economic development planning approvals and completions. The AMR also makes use of data and information published by other bodies, such as the government, and the publication of this information can lag up to 6 months from the end of the reporting period. The AMR is also necessarily a 'data heavy' document given the breadth of topics covered and information is needs to provide. The expectation is that many users of the document will be looking for specific information and as such a useful function of the AMR is having this planning policy evidence in one document.
- 5 A revised format for the AMR has been prepared this year which makes it easier to find topic based data or information relating to specific monitoring indicators and gives a clearer indication of what the data means in terms of performance of policies relating to a topic or sub-topic. Some of the data compiled in the AMR can be variable from one year to another for example housing, and particularly economic development, delivery. In these cases, it is helpful to also look at longer term trends to get a better sense of the direction of travel. In this regard the AMR indicates performance over the short-term and long-term.
- 6 Having established this revised template for the report, it is hoped that in future and subject to resources and priorities reports can be prepared in a more timely manner i.e. at the beginning of the next calendar year.
- 7 The main issues arising from the 2022/23 AMR are set out as follows

Plan-making

- 8 There were no new neighbourhood plans made during 2022/23 but a total of 19 neighbourhood plans have been made in Leeds since 2017. One supplementary planning document (SPD) was adopted, the Transport SPD in February 2023, which superseded the Street Design Guide, Travel Plans, Parking and Public Transport Improvements.
- 9 Progress was made in the preparation of the Local Plan Update (focused on updating planning policies to address the net zero pillar) and Leeds Local Plan 2040. The first stage of consultation of on the scoping of the Leeds Local Plan 2040 started in February 2023.

Housing

- 10 Leeds delivered a net additional 2,703 new homes in 2022/23. This was the lowest since 2017/18 and 544 dwellings lower than the Core Strategy target of 3,247 dwellings per annum set out in Policy SP6. Over the plan period started in 2017, total delivery was cumulatively 1,241 dwellings below the target. It is considered that this was a consequence of the construction timeframes, which usually means completions are translated from construction starting 24-36 months previous, following the Covid-19 lockdown period when new site commencements dropped to almost zero. Members should be aware that the housing completions data is now available for 2023/24 and these show that a total of 4,340 net additional dwellings were delivered, well above the plan target and almost removing the deficit over the plan period. This will be reported in full in the 2023/24 AMR.
- 11 There continues to be an extensive supply of sites for new housing with 6,743 new dwellings approved during 2022/23, adding to the total stock of over 33,000 new homes under construction or with planning permission in March 2023.
- 12 Affordable housing completions were at the highest level since the start of the plan period with a total of 633 affordable homes completed. This improved delivery reflects:
 - a) partnership work via the Affordable Housing Growth Partnership Action Plan (the culmination of engagement with the Affordable Housing sector between 2021 and 2022 through a series of 1-to-1 discussions through the Council's Affordable Housing Delivery Group, which is made up of Registered Provider partners,
 - b) regeneration programmes,
 - c) Section 106 (planning obligations) spend, and
 - d) increasing delivery of Council Housing as part of the LCC Programme of schemes across the District which has sought to improve this delivery. Delivery continued to be below the need for the affordable housing of 1,230 affordable units per annum identified in the 2017 Strategic Market Housing Assessment (SHMA).
- 13 However, it should be noted that the SHMA affordable need figure is not a plan target for delivery. The AMR helps clarify the roles played by Section 106, the Council's own house building programme and the importance of grant funding through Registered Providers (by far the largest share of new affordable homes).
- 14 Core Strategy Policy H4 sets out a preferred housing mix target to be provided based on the number of bedrooms. During 2022/23, completions of 1, 3 and 4 bedroom properties exceeded the target proportion and 2 bedroom properties were significantly below the target (19% against the target of 50%). This partly reflects a longer-term trend of under delivery of 2 and 3 bedroom units and over delivery of 1 bedroom (led by development in the city centre) and 4 bedrooms units over recent years.

- 15 Targets for the proportion of accessible dwellings approved were exceeded in 2022/23. Core Strategy Policy H10 sets a requirement for 30% of new dwelling to meet the requirement of M4(2) 'accessible and adaptable dwellings' and 2% of dwellings to meet the requirement of M4(3) 'wheelchair user dwellings'. 41% of planning approvals in 2022/23 met the M4(2) standard and 2.2% the M4(3) standard.
- 16 Approvals of student accommodation were at the highest level of the plan period in 2022/23, with 2,942 units approved with 3,975 individual bedspaces. Conversely there were no completions during the recording period compared to an average of around 900 units per annum over the preceding five years. This likely also relates to the pause in construction starts during the Covid-19 lockdown period with completions expected to be high in forthcoming years based on planning approvals and construction activity.

Transport & accessibility

- 17 Development continued to be delivered in sustainable locations in relation to access to public transport, with 84% of new housing within a 30-minute journey to key local services (including over 95% to employment, schools and GP services) and 95% of all non-residential developments within 400m of a bus stop.
- 18 Journeys to work made by sustainable transport modes (walking, cycling, bus and rail) increased by nearly 3% in 2022/23 from the previous period, with a 2% reduction in journeys made by private vehicles. Since 2020, there has been an emerging trend in a significant increase in working from home) as a result of Covid-19.
- 19 The delivery of strategic transport improvements continued in 2022/23, including the completion of transformation works along New Briggate, the East Leeds Orbital Route (ELOR) and Connecting Leeds' £270m Leeds Transport Investment Programme, and works progressing on the City Square and Leeds City Rail station transformation works.

Minerals & waste

- 20 Total waste received in Leeds continues to increase year-on-year, with over 2,100,000 tonnes received in 2022. Just under 1% of collected waste was sent to landfill, with 61% being incinerated (with energy produced from waste) and 37% being recycled or composted.

Climate change

- 21 The amount of carbon (CO₂) emitted in Leeds increased slightly in 2022/23, seeing a 3.7% increase from the previous year, although this is likely a result of the significant drop in emissions from 2019 during Covid-19 lockdown periods and the pickup in domestic and commercial activity as we emerged from lockdowns. CO₂ levels still remain lower than pre-Covid levels and reflects a similar rate of decrease seen before 2019, indicating progress is still being made towards carbon reduction, and which compares positively against the regional and national figures. The largest emitter types are for transport (40%), domestic (31%) and industry (17%).
- 22 Renewable energy installations continue to increase in 2022/23, resulting in increased renewable energy capacity and generation from the previous year, with targets continuing to be met.

Natural environment

- 23 There has been little change to Leeds' green and blue infrastructure (GBI) since monitoring of it began in 2021/22, with the largest typologies being for the habitat network (22%), green and open space (11%) and woodland (10%).

- 24 The majority of Leeds' Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs) are in 'Unfavourable – recovering' condition (75%), with 10% each being in 'Unfavourable – no change' and 'favourable', with 5% in decline and 0.5% destroyed.
- 25 Tree cover for Leeds has increased to 17.3% from a baseline position of 14.4% in 2016 using data from the Forest Research, and which matches the average tree cover for all of England.

Environment quality

- 26 Air quality (NO₂ levels) has generally improved across Leeds, with 5 of Leeds' 6 Air Quality Management Areas (AQMAs) meeting air quality objectives and only one air quality monitoring sites exceeding this objective. Particulate matter (PM₁₀ and PM_{2.5}) have increased slightly from 2021/22, although these remain well below maximum air quality objectives.
- 27 There has been improvement of one water body and deterioration of one other water body in terms of ecological water quality in 2022, with only one water body testing for 'good'. All water bodies failed chemical water quality tests most recently in 2019, although this has been seen nationally due to a change in methodology by the Environment Agency.

Population & health

- 28 The last Census in 2021 shows that the population in Leeds increased by 8.2% from 2011 to 812,000, having the second highest population (behind Birmingham). Leeds continues to be ethnically diverse, with a 'White' population of 79%, 9.7% 'Asian', 5.6% 'Black, Caribbean or African', 3.3% 'Mixed or Multiple' and 2.3% 'Other'.
- 29 Life expectancy in Leeds has increased from the last period to 78.7 years for males and 82.7 for females, although this performs worse against the national figures. The under 75 mortality rate has also decreased to 356.7, although again remaining higher than the national figure but lower than for the region. Infant mortality rate remains similar to the previous period at 5.0, higher than the regional and national figures. Leeds does perform better than the national figure for some health outcomes, including the mortality rate from cardiovascular diseases, cancer and diabetes diagnoses, winter mortality, alcohol-related admissions and smoking prevalence in adults.
- 30 Social progress has decreased slightly in Leeds to an overall Social Progress Index score of 55.1, performing best on the 'Basic Human Need' dimension, moderately on 'Foundations on Wellbeing' and least-best on 'Opportunity'. The inner-city wards typically have a lower SPI score than those on the edges of Leeds, with Horsforth, Moortown and Adel & Wharfedale ranking the highest, and Gipton & Harehills, Hunslet & Riverside and Burmantofts & Richmond Hill ranking the lowest.

Centres & neighbourhoods

- 31 Housing and employment delivery targets are set in the Core Strategy for the City Centre and Aire Valley regeneration area. Whilst there are no specific targets for Leeds' town and local centres, officers are looking at ways to measure the health of centres, through data such as vacancy levels, for future AMRs.
- 32 Leeds City Centre delivered 294 new residential units and 41,500sqm of office floorspace in 2022/23, with the majority of this being located to the north of the River Aire. This falls short of the expected annual delivery of 520 dwellings in the City Centre as set within the Core Strategy, but exceeds the annual target for 31,000sqm of new office floorspace.
- 33 Aire Valley Leeds delivered 165 new residential units, 9,500sqm of office floorspace and 23.5ha of general employment (industrial and waste) completions in 2022/23. This residential and office delivery falls considerably short of expected delivery targets of 310 residential dwellings, but

exceeds the annual target of 11.9ha of general employment land as set out in the Core Strategy.

Economy

- 34 The number of residents in employment in Leeds increased by 5.8% to 408,000 in 2022, with an employment rate of 77.3 which compares positively against the regional and national employment rates.
- 35 Leeds delivered a peak total of 63,000sqm of additional office floorspace across 8 completions in 2022/23, far exceeding expected annual delivery targets of 33,600sqm. However, across the current Plan Period, since 2012, only 77% of planned floorspace has been delivered.
- 36 As of March 2023, there is a current supply of just under 800,000sqm of office floorspace, representing 23.7 years of office supply. The Plan Period (2012-2028) supply is just under 1,080,000sqm, representing a surplus of nearly 80,000sqm against Core Strategy requirements.
- 37 Leeds currently has a 1,800,000sqm stock of office floorspace in 2023, a decline of 0.4% from 2022. This loss compares positively to the regional and national figure which seen much higher losses.
- 38 33 hectares of general employment land (industrial and waste uses) was delivered in 2022/23 across 14 completions, reaching a peak total within the current Plan Period and exceeding the annual delivery target of 23.5 hectares. However, across the plan period (2012-2028) only 62% of planned land being has been delivered.
- 39 As of March 2023, there is a current supply of 299 hectares of general employment land, representing 12.7 years supply. The Plan Period (2012-28) supply in March 2023 was just under 460 hectares, representing a deficit of 33.2ha against Core Strategy requirements.
- 40 Leeds currently has a 4,930,000sqm stock of industrial floorspace in 2023, a decline of 0.7% from 2022. This loss compares negatively to the regional and national figure which actually saw increases.

Historic Environment

- 41 There have been no new Conservation Area designations or new appraisals produced in 2022/23, although changes have been proposed for the Morley Town Centre and Dartmouth Park Conservation Areas, expanding the boundaries of both to create a new unified Morley Conservation Area.
- 42 There has been a net change in two Listed Buildings being removed from Historic England's Heritage at Risk register, although the net addition of one Places of Worship added on this list, although this meets the Core Strategy baseline position for the first time since 2014.

What impact will this proposal have?

- 43 The AMR is a reporting tool, which indicates how plan policies are performing against specific monitoring indicators. This can then be used to identify if policies set out in the development plan are being implemented correctly and having the desired effect. The outcomes reported in the AMR will be used as part of the evidence base to inform the preparation of new and updated policies as part of the proposed Local Plan Update and Leeds Local Plan 2040 plan updates.

How does this proposal impact the three pillars of the Best City Ambition?

Health and Wellbeing

Inclusive Growth

Zero Carbon

- 44 The AMR monitors many indicators which relate directly and indirectly to the objectives and outcome set out in the against the three pillars of the Best City Ambition. These can be used to measure the performance of Local Plan policies against the three pillars. These are signposted below.
- 45 Zero Carbon – the Climate Change section (pages 48-63) includes indicators relating to carbon reduction, energy efficiency, and renewable energy capacity and production. Performance of plan policies has been generally positive with a reduction in carbon emissions, an increase in the proportion of energy efficiency buildings and an increase in renewable energy capacity and production being reported as outcomes in the AMR.
- 46 Health and Wellbeing – Health and well-being outcomes are reported in the Population & Health section (pages 91-107). These outcomes are often indirectly linked to planning policies such as those relating to housing quality, employment, access to facilities, the natural environment and environmental quality. There is a mixed picture in Leeds in terms of recent changes and when compared to national and regional averages. These indicators are important to consider in the preparation of new and updated planning policies in the Local Plan Update and Leeds Local Plan 2040.
- 47 Inclusive Growth – A number of local plan monitoring indicators relate to outcomes that are important to achieving inclusive growth and ensuring the benefits of economic growth are distributed fairly and there are opportunities for all. These include provision of housing, particularly affordable and specialist housing (Housing section, pages 12-31) in relation to targets and needs; economic development (Economy section, pages 123-142); infrastructure delivery (Built Environment & Infrastructure section, pages 85-90) and development in town & local centres and regeneration priority areas (Centres & Neighbourhoods section, pages 108-122)

What consultation and engagement has taken place?

Wards affected: ALL

Have ward members been consulted? Yes No

- 48 The AMR is not subject to formal public consultation and engagement, as it is reporting tool. The figures in the AMR should, however, be used to identify if policies set out in the development plan are being implemented correctly and having the desired effect.

What are the resource implications?

- 49 Compiling the data that goes into the Authority Monitoring Report and preparing the report itself is resource intensive, particularly where this requires new data to be collected. As such, the AMR makes best use of existing data sets and intelligence and secondary evidence compiled by other bodies such as the government to monitor the performance of local plan policies against the relevant indicators.

What are the key risks and how are they being managed?

- 50 Whilst there are no specific risks associated with this report, the preparation of the AMR provides an important basis to review the delivery of planning policies and progress against the Local Development Scheme and to put in place appropriate interventions as required.

What are the legal implications?

51 S.35 Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 requires every local planning authority to prepare reports containing information as prescribed to–
(a) the implementation of the local development scheme;
(b) the extent to which the policies set out in the local development documents are being achieved. The report must then be made available to the public

Options, timescales and measuring success

What other options were considered?

52 Publication of the AMR is a legal requirement so has not been subject to a wider appraisal of options. The scope of the information published in the AMR was determined by the requirements of legislation, monitoring indicators set out in the Local Plan and the availability of data and intelligence.

How will success be measured?

53 The AMR is the document which reports on the success of Local Plan against the monitoring indicators set out against individual policies and in relation to progress made to implement the Local Development Scheme.

What is the timetable and who will be responsible for implementation?

54 The document will be converted into an accessible version that meets website accessibility standard (for the visually impaired) and then will be published on the Council's website in due course.

Appendices

- **Appendix 1:** Leeds Local Plan Authority Monitoring Report 1st April 2022 – 31st March 2023.

Background papers

- N/A