

## **EXETER CITY COUNCIL**

### **PLANNING COMMITTEE 5 DECEMBER 2011**

#### **LOCAL DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK ANNUAL MONITORING REPORT**

## **1 PURPOSE OF THE REPORT**

- 1.1 To consider the content of the Local Development Framework Annual Monitoring Report and progress in plan preparation.

## **2 BACKGROUND**

- 2.1 The Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 requires every local planning authority to submit an annual report to the Secretary of State containing information on the preparation of the local development documents proposed in the Local Development Scheme (LDS) and on the extent to which the policies set out in those documents are being implemented and achieving their objectives. Members considered a similar report in December last year.
- 2.2 However, the recently enacted Localism Bill contains provisions that remove the requirement to send the AMR to the Secretary of State, for it to be produced annually and for it to be a single report. The requirement remains for every authority to report on progress of their LDS and the extent to which policies set out in their local development documents are being achieved, but as long as reports are made available to the public, the local planning authority can choose the time period on which reports cover and when to make them available to the public. The provisions that relate to the AMR will come into force on 15 January 2012.
- 2.3 The Government have also withdrawn previous guidance on local plan monitoring. It is therefore a matter for each Council to decide what to include in their monitoring reports while ensuring that they are prepared in accordance with relevant UK and EU legislation. Exeter City Council's emerging Core Strategy also contains a Monitoring Framework, which contains different targets and indicators to the adopted Local Plan Monitoring Framework and when adopted the new framework will need to be incorporated into a review of the AMR.
- 2.4 This monitoring report addresses the period between 1 April 2010 and 31 March 2011. As no local development documents were adopted in this period, the monitoring information will relate to the policies in the Local Plan First Review, adopted March 2005.
- 2.5 The content of the monitoring report includes:
- (i) a review of progress on the preparation of local development documents;
  - (ii) an assessment of Local Plan First Review policy implementation through the use of performance indicators (see Appendix 1 of the Monitoring Report); and
  - (iii) A 5 year supply of deliverable sites (see Appendix 2 of the Monitoring Report).
- 2.6 The monitoring data also includes information on 'Contextual Indicators' – that allow for the wider social, environmental and economic circumstances to be taken into account. The main focus of the report is, however, to examine:

- (i) Core Output Indicators – that assess direct policy effects;
- (ii) Local Indicators based on the indicators listed in the Local Plan First Review Monitoring Framework, adopted March 2005; and
- (iii) Sustainability Indicators derived from the “Sustainability Appraisal Scoping Report” for the Core Strategy, published by the City Council in May 2005.

### **3 MAIN CONCLUSIONS**

#### **(i) Local Development Scheme**

- 3.1 Members will be aware that the programme for the preparation of documents, particularly the Core Strategy, has been delayed due to changes in regulations concerning the preparation of the Local Development Framework (LDF), and the delay in the adoption of the Regional Spatial Strategy (RSS). However, the Council has moved forward with the Core Strategy and submitted it to the Secretary of State for examination in February. The Council expect the Core Strategy Development Plan Document (DPD) to be found sound and to be adopted early in 2012.
- 3.2 The Council’s Local Development Scheme (LDS), has been revised to identify, as priorities, the preparation of the Core Strategy and a Site Allocation Development Plan Document (DPD), to be followed by a Development Management DPD and, a City Centre Area Action Plan. The revised programme was published in March 2011.
- 3.3 Progress has been achieved on the preparation of Supplementary Planning Documents (SPD’s) with the adoption of the Residential Design Guide SPD, Affordable Housing SPD in September 2010 and the University of Exeter (Streatham Campus) SPD in December 2010.
- 3.4 Progress is also being made on the preparation of the Masterplans for the strategic allocations proposed in the Core Strategy. Monkerton/Hill Barton and Newcourt are complete and were approved for use for Development Management purposes in September 2010, subject to further investigation into the location of two gypsy and traveller sites.
- 3.5 In March 2008, the Secretary of State issued a Direction that “saved” (i.e. retained as part of the development plan) all of the policies in the Local Plan First Review 2005 other than four policies which relate to sites that have been completed. The saved policies will continue in force until replaced by policies in Development Plan Documents which form part of the Local Development Framework.
- 3.6 For information, the studies that have been completed, or that are in preparation, in support of the Core Strategy are listed in Section 2 of the attached Monitoring Report.

#### **(ii) Monitoring Results**

- 3.7 Between 2001 and 2011 development of an average of 6 hectares of employment land has been completed each year compared to the Structure Plan 2001-2016 target rate of 5.7 hectares a year. Over the same period development of an average of 517 dwellings has been completed each year compared to the Structure Plan target rate of 447 dwellings a year (with 12,000 new houses proposed in the Core Strategy, the target rate will be 600 dwellings a year). Completion rates are likely to be low over the next few years due to the economic downturn but will increase again as the economy improves and sites are brought forward through the Local Development Framework.

- 3.8 Exeter's five year supply calculation, which uses information from the Strategic Housing Land Availability (SHLAA) November 2010, shows our predicted completions as being likely to exceed the current adopted Structure Plan targets and can deliver 5 years and 10 months against the emerging Core Strategy housing targets.
- 3.9 The proportion of housing completed on previously developed land has risen from 68.6% in 2007/8 to 97.3% in 2008/9, 90% in 2009/10 and 85% in 2010/11. The slight decrease between 2009 and 2011 is due to the exclusion of private gardens from the definition of previously developed land. An average density of 75 dwellings per hectare has been achieved which exceeds the Local Plan target of 30 to 50 dwellings per hectare.
- 3.10 The number of vacant retail units in the City Centre dropped from 51 in March 2010 to 37 in October 2010. The total number of vacancies remains modest when set against almost 595 retail units in the City Centre overall (currently around 6.2% compared to the national rate of 15%) and there is progress in re-letting. Prime rental values have stabilised and have not changed since 2009 and Exeter maintains its competitive position. The John Lewis Partnership store plans to open in time for Christmas 2012, which is positive for the City as it will serve as an anchor store and enhance Exeter's regional retail status.
- 3.11 At Newcourt, the road link between the A379 and Topsham Road that runs through the proposed development area is complete and open to vehicles. Ongoing improvements continue to provide facilities for cyclists and pedestrians as part of a Cycling Strategy which aims to create a clear and intelligible cycle network to continue the growth that has been witnessed since 2005.

#### **4 RECOMMENDATION**

- 4.1 That the Annual Monitoring Report 2011 be approved for submission to the Secretary of State.

**RICHARD SHORT**  
**HEAD OF PLANNING AND BUILDING CONTROL**

#### **ECONOMY AND DEVELOPMENT DIRECTORATE**

**Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985 (as amended)**  
**Background Papers (and other sources) used in compiling this report:**

1. Office for National Statistics (ONS)
2. The Home Office
3. Department of Business, Enterprise and Regulatory Reform (BERR) now The Department for Business, Innovation and Skills (BIS) - Business Demography
4. Colliers CRE
5. ECC Economic Trends Reports
6. Natural England - SSSI Condition Summary & LNR boundaries
7. Environmental Health Department, ECC
8. ECC Corporate Plan – Planning for Our Future 2007-2010 (2011/12 update)
9. Devon County Council
10. Development Management Section, ECC Planning Services
11. Design Section, ECC Planning Services
12. Car Parks Section, ECC
13. Parks and Open Spaces Section, ECC
14. ECC Employment Planning Permissions and Completions 2011
15. ECC Housing Planning Permissions and Completions 2011
16. Environment Agency – Assessment of river water quality