

EXETER CITY COUNCIL

**PLANNING COMMITTEE
8 DECEMBER 2008**

**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 and on the extent to which the policies set out in local development documents are being implemented and achieving their objectives. Members considered a similar report in December last year.
- 2.2 The report must be submitted by the end of December 2008.
- 2.3 For the purposes of monitoring policy implementation, the monitoring report must address the period between 1 April 2007 and 31 March 2008. 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.
- 2.4 The content of the monitoring report follows advice in the good practice guide, 'Local Development Framework Monitoring', published by the ODPM. This recognises that not all information will be currently available and some will require additional survey work or research. The monitoring report must identify whether there are problems and explain how these will be overcome in the future.
- 2.5 The attached monitoring report, therefore, deals with:
- (i) a review of progress on the preparation of the local development documents that are identified in the Local Development Scheme, April 2007;
 - (ii) an assessment of Local Plan First Review policy implementation through the use of performance indicators (see Appendix 1 of the Monitoring Report and next paragraph); and
 - (iii) proposals for improved data collection (see Appendix 2 of the Monitoring Report).
- 2.6 In accordance with the ODPM advice the monitoring data 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) Mandatory Core Output Indicators, as specified in the ODPM guidance – 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 Planning Member Working Group were advised, in August 2008, of the Regional Spatial Strategy (RSS) Proposed Changes which require a significant increase in the number of houses to be built in Exeter up to 2026. Members were also informed of the changes to guidance on the preparation of the Core Strategy, set out in revised Planning Policy Statement 12, which allow for the allocation of strategic sites and require much greater detail on infrastructure delivery.
- 3.2 Government Office has advised that the Core Strategy is at risk of being found unsound if provision for these matters were to be made without being subject to further consultation.
- 3.3 Accordingly, it is intended that further consultation will be carried out on the new housing targets, on the inclusion of strategic allocations at Monkerton/Hill Barton and Newcourt, and on broad guidance for the delivery of infrastructure. As advised by Planning Member Working Group on 25 November 2008, the aim is to carry out the consultation as soon as there is clarity on the final RSS housing requirements. It is hoped that this will be early in 2009 but a decision date has not been confirmed. Taking into account the consultation responses the Core Strategy will be considered by Executive and will then be published for pre-submission representations, followed by submission to the Secretary of State.
- 3.4 A revised timetable for the Core Strategy will be included in the revised Local Development Scheme which will be considered by Planning Committee in 2009 when the outcome of the RSS and Local Government Review is known. The revised Local Development Scheme will identify, as priorities, the preparation of the Core Strategy and the Site Allocation Development Plan Document (as reported to Planning Member Working Group on 19 August 2008). It will also include joint working with East Devon and Teignbridge District Councils in respect of New Growth Point proposals to the east and to the south west of the City. The nature of the joint working (Area Action Plans, Masterplans or Supplementary Planning Documents) has still to be determined.
- 3.5 Progress has been achieved in the preparation of Supplementary Planning Documents (SPD's) with the adoption of the Residential Extensions SPD and the commencement of work on the Trees in Relation to Development and Residential Design SPD's. The Affordable Housing SPD was subject to consultation in October/November 2007 but has not yet been adopted because of the risk that the Planning Inspectorate may find the Core Strategy unsound if the affordable housing policy, including the increase in the percentage required, had been predetermined and also because of the more recent concern that it would be unwise to adopt a higher standard at a time of economic difficulty.

- 3.6 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.
- 3.7 For information, the studies that have been completed, or that are in preparation, in support of the Core Strategy are listed in Appendix 1. The completed studies are on the City Council website at www.exeter.gov.uk/planning.

(ii) Monitoring Results

- 3.8 Between 2001 and 2008 an average of 7.9 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 an average of 538 dwellings has been completed each year compared to the Structure Plan target rate of 447 dwellings a year. Completion rates will be significantly lower 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.
- 3.9 The proportion of housing completed on previously developed land has fallen from 80% in 2006/7 to 68.6% in 2007/8 due, in particular, to a high number of greenfield completions at Digby. An average density of 47 dwellings per hectare has been achieved which generally meets the target in the Regional Spatial Strategy Proposed Changes for 40-50 dwellings per hectare overall and at least 50 dwellings per hectare in urban extensions. Only 10% of dwellings completed were affordable which is largely the result of most of the affordable housing at Digby having been completed in the previous year.
- 3.10 In the City Centre, Princesshay has proven very successful. According to Experian, who produce national rankings of shopping centres, Exeter has risen from 57 last year to 43 as a result of Princesshay. Vacancies in the City Centre increased from 26 last year to 36 this summer, the most significant increases being in High Street, Paris Street and Sidwell Street. The total number of vacancies, however, remains modest when set against almost 600 retail units in the City Centre overall, and there is progress in re-letting. Enhancements have been made to the public realm at Lower High Street and, apart from tree planting, have been completed at Sidwell Street and Paris Street.
- 3.11 In the Newcourt area, permission was granted last year for housing development at the RNSD upper site. The Council has since resolved to grant permission to Dukeminster, subject to the signing of a Section 106 Agreement, for housing development on the remainder of the RNSD and on land immediately north of Old Rydon Lane. This included a road link between Topsham Road and the A379. Following an appeal, Tesco has been granted permission for an alternative alignment and junction on the A379. Subject to a High Court ruling (the hearing is next summer) on the ownership of land that is required to deliver the Dukeminster junction, it will be for the County Council, as highway authority, to determine which junction should be implemented, as both junctions cannot be constructed together.
- 3.12 The monitoring information is being used to inform the preparation of documents in the Local Development Framework.

- 4 **RECOMMENDED** that the Annual Monitoring Report 2008 be approved for submission to the Secretary of State.

RICHARD SHORT
HEAD OF PLANNING SERVICES

ECONOMY AND DEVELOPMENT DIRECTORATE

Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985 (as amended)

Background Papers used in compiling this report:

1. 2001 Census of Population
2. ECC Best Value Performance Plan 2007-2008
3. ECC Employment Land Availability Survey
4. ECC Housing Land Availability Survey
5. ECC Audit of Outdoor Recreation Facilities
6. Natural England - SSSI Condition Summary
7. Environment Agency – Objections to planning applications on flood risk grounds
8. ECC Air Quality Progress Report 2008

APPENDIX 1 : SUPPORTING STUDIES

COMPLETED

Urban Capacity Study 2006

Exeter and Torbay Strategic Housing Market Assessment 2007

Housing and Employment Land Permissions and Completions 2008

Employment Study 2007 (Atkins)

Landscape Sensitivity and Capacity Study 2007 (Diacomo Associates and White Consultants)

Retail Capacity Update 2007 (DTZ)

Hotel Study 2007 (The Tourism Company)

Open Space Audit 2005

Strategic Flood Risk Assessment 2008 (plus further site appraisal : clarkebond)

Habitats Regulations Assessment 2008 (WSP)

East of Exeter New Growth Point Energy Strategy 2009 (Element Energy Limited)

IN PREPARATION

Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment

Housing Viability Study

Newcourt Study (Atkins)

Employment Land Review

Post Princesshay Retail Capacity Study (DTZ)

Exeter Area Green Infrastructure Strategy (with East Devon, Teignbridge and Natural England : LDA Design)

Gipsy Site Search

Sustainability Appraisal

PROPOSED

Monkerton/Hill Barton Study

Alphington Study (possible study for discussion with Teignbridge District Council)

Office Market Assessment