

SOUTH CAMBRIDGESHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

REPORT TO: Leader and Cabinet 14 December 2006
AUTHORS: Executive Director/Principal Planning Policy Officer

LOCAL DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK ANNUAL MONITORING REPORT

Purpose

1. To agree the Local Development Framework Annual Monitoring Report for submission to the Department of Communities and Local Government (DCLG).

Effect on Corporate Objectives

Quality, Accessible Services	The Annual Monitoring Report provides detailed information on the impact of planning policies on the communities, services and environment of South Cambridgeshire.
Village Life	
Sustainability	
Partnership	The District Council has worked in partnership with other bodies, in particular with the County Council, to monitor the impact of planning policies.

Background

2. The Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 introduced the requirement for District Councils to produce yearly Annual Monitoring Reports. The Annual Monitoring Report (AMR) examines how successful South Cambridgeshire's planning policies have been in achieving their objectives and targets, and how successful the Council has been in achieving its programme of plan preparation. This is the second Annual Monitoring Report that the District Council has produced and it covers the period from 1st April 2005 to 31st March 2006.
3. The Annual Monitoring Report analyses progress against key milestones for plan preparation established in the Local Development Scheme. It monitors the impact of planning policies contained in the adopted Local Plan 2004 through the framework of indicators and targets established by the Local Development Framework. It also monitors a wider set of 'significant effect' indicators that were established through the Council's Sustainability Appraisal of the Local Development Framework.

Results

4. Detailed results and analysis is included in the Annual Monitoring Report. The AMR is a lengthy, technical report. A copy can be viewed in the Member's Room. The key points arising from the AMR are summarised in this report. The final AMR will be published on the Council's website. Cabinet is asked to delegate agreement of the AMR to the Planning Portfolio Holder.

Local Development Scheme

5. Progress against the milestones for the production of DPDs for the period to end March 2006 set out in the Local Development Scheme has been very good, despite the ambitious and demanding timetable, with submission of the first six DPDs in January 2006.
6. The approved LDS indicated that a Travellers DPD would have reached Regulation 26 public participation around the end of the monitoring period. However, the sub regional travellers needs survey that was a key part of the evidence base for the DPD was not finalised until May 2006. Due to officers being committed on progressing the submitted DPDs, the Council decided to appoint consultants to take forward work on this important issue for the district. Work started in May 2006.
7. GO-East has also advised Councils to include information in their AMRs to bring the position on performance against the Local Development Scheme up to date. The Council received a binding report on the Core Strategy from the independent Inspectors in November 2006. This was a major achievement, being the first such report in the country to find a Core Strategy "sound". The report allows the Council to proceed to statutory adoption and publication of the document; this is programmed to take place in January 2007. This is ahead of the LDS programme which anticipated receipt of the Inspectors' Report in March 2007 and adoption April – June 2007. However, a European Court of Justice Judgement has required the Government to introduce a new requirement for assessment of sites of European importance for nature conservation. The Council has done this but may now be required to carry a more complex assessment called "Appropriate Assessment". The introduction of the necessary Regulations has been delayed and it is therefore unclear whether the Council has to undertake an Appropriate Assessment. Legal advice is being sought.
8. Where the programme departs from that in the LDS May 2005 key milestones chart, results from the decision of the Inspectors appointed to conduct the examinations into the 6 submitted DPDs. They advised that they would be holding separate examinations in series with the report following each examination, instead of the examinations immediately following each other with the reporting period following. This had implications for the programming of all examinations after the Core Strategy and Development Control examinations, which took place as programmed in July and October 2006 respectively. Nonetheless, a programme of examinations is proceeding on the other submitted DPDs. The examination into the Northstowe Area Action Plan started on 5 December 2006. Examinations will take place on the other submitted DPDs as follows: Cambridge Southern Fringe Area Action Plan – starting on 19 June 2007, Cambridge East Area Action Plan – starting on 3 July 2007, and the Site Specific Policies DPD – not yet programmed but likely to be towards the end of 2007.
9. Additionally, the Council has undertaken issues and options consultation on two other DPDs. The Gypsies and Travellers DPD consultation has taken place later than the Scheme programme but due to a delay in the completion of the sub regional travellers needs assessment and the need to appoint consultants to undertake this work as the Policy Team is fully committed on the examinations in the submitted DPDs. The Northwest Cambridge Area Action Plan, being prepared in partnership with Cambridge City Council, is ahead of the adopted programme and a revised programme is contained in a draft revised Local Development Scheme submitted to GP-East in September.

LDF Indicators

10. Progress in relation to indicators and targets established by the Local Development Framework reflect the period of transition between the Local Plan and the LDF strategy. Some headline results are as follows:
- 888 dwellings were completed in 2005/2006 in South Cambridgeshire. This is a marked increase on the previous year's total of 547 dwellings. It is, however, still below the level required by the current Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Structure Plan, and the emerging draft Regional Spatial Strategy (RSS). It is anticipated this rate will increase substantially when the major developments planned for in the LDF begin to deliver dwellings.
 - 268 affordable homes were completed in the district during 2005/2006, or 30% of total completions. This was a significantly higher proportion than in the previous year, with only 94 affordable houses produced in 2004/2005, 17.2% of the total. This shows the impact of the Local Plan 2004 affordable housing policies.
 - 24.9% of dwellings were completed on Previously Developed Land. This is below the district target of 37%, but reflects the previous development strategy set out in the Cambridgeshire Structure Plan 1995 and in the Local Plan 2004, where significant allocations of land were made on Greenfield land on the edge of existing villages and at the new village of Cambourne. The revised strategy of the LDF focussing more on brownfield housing delivery should result in higher figures in future years.
 - A particular issue of concern in last year's AMR was a rise in the level of nitrogen dioxide pollution in the district compared to 2002 figures. The figures for 2005/2006 show a reduction in recorded emissions, and a general improvement in air quality. However, vehicle flows across the urban boundary of Cambridge increased, with an extra 2,000 vehicles per day being recorded.

Financial Implications

11. Government is presently consulting on Planning Delivery Grant 2007/8 Proposed Allocations Criteria. This includes the way in which the AMR will affect the PDG award. The document sets out the proposed proportional split for the composition of the next PDG awards. It proposes that 50% of the plan making element will be awarded against meeting milestones in your original LDS with the remaining 50% awarded against sustainable development targets.

Legal Implications

12. None.

Staffing Implications

13. None.

Risk Management Implications

14. None.

Consultations

15. None.

Conclusions/Summary

16. The Local Development Framework Annual Monitoring Report demonstrates good progress against key plan making milestones, and achievement of the Council's development strategy for the district. Future Annual Monitoring Reports will allow the Council to continue to monitor progress.

Recommendations

17. Cabinet is recommended to note the contents of this report and delegate to the Planning Portfolio Holder, agreement of the Annual Monitoring Report for submission to the DCLG;

Background Papers: the following background papers were used in the preparation of this report:

South Cambridgeshire Local Plan 2004
South Cambridgeshire Local Development Scheme
South Cambridgeshire Local Development Framework

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