

**Report to the Local Development
Framework Cabinet Committee**



**Epping Forest
District Council**

Report reference: LDF-016-2010/11
Date of meeting: 7 February 2011

Portfolio: Leader

Subject: Annual Monitoring Report 2009/10

Responsible Officer: Sarah King (01992 564347)

Democratic Services Officer: Gary Woodhall (01992 564470)

Recommendations/Decisions Required:

(1) To note the content of the Draft 2009/10 Annual Monitoring Report, and to approve it for submission to the Government Office and publication on the Council's website.

Executive Summary:

Government requires that an Annual Monitoring Report (AMR) is prepared and submitted by the end of December each year. This document should report on activity within the previous financial year, including housing completions, employment land provision, and the protection of areas of natural conservation value. The AMR is the main vehicle through which progress with the LDF is measured.

For the first time, the AMR is being brought to LDF Cabinet Committee for approval. The AMR brought to Members covers the 2009/10 financial year, i.e. the period 1 April 2009 to 31 March 2010. Performance against housing targets, which has historically been the Government's highest priority, is shown to be very good, as it has been since the beginning of the East of England Plan period.

Reasons for Proposed Decision:

To ensure that a robust and clear AMR is submitted to Government in time to meet the end of December deadline.

Other Options for Action:

Not to submit an AMR for submission to Government. However, this option would conflict with the requirements of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004.

Report:

1. The draft Annual Monitoring Report (AMR) under consideration reports on the 2009/10 financial year. For the first time, the AMR is being brought to LDF Cabinet Committee for approval. The AMR is divided into 6 main sections, as follows.

(1) Introduction

2. This explains the role of the AMR within the Local Development Framework (LDF), and includes a note on the (changing) status of the East of England Plan since the end of the 2009/10 financial year, following the attempted revocation by the Secretary of State, and the successful legal challenge from CALA Homes.

(2) Key information on the District

3. This part of the document gives headline data on several issues, including population estimates, house prices, travel, deprivation and unemployment. Data for the District is compared with the Eastern region and England & Wales. The data shows another increase in population estimate since the 2008/09 AMR (100 persons), a rise in average house prices (see Appendix 1 of the AMR for detailed data), and a small rise in the proportion of people claiming unemployment benefit within the monitoring period (this mirrored the national situation, see Appendix 2 of the AMR). The remainder of the data in this section is only available from the Census, and so cannot be updated until the 2011 Census data is published (anticipated in 2013 onwards).

(3) Contextual Indicators

4. This section lists data from the most recent Indices of Deprivation (2007), and highlights the least and most deprived Lower Super Output Areas (LSOA – a sub-Ward area) in the District overall (through the Index of Multiple Deprivation) and by individual topic: income, employment, health, barriers to housing/services, crime and disorder, living environment, income deprivation affecting children, and income deprivation affecting older people.

(4) Local Development Scheme

5. This part of the AMR measures the production of Local Development Framework documents against the current Local Development Scheme, and the production of supporting Evidence Base documents, such as the Strategic Housing Market Assessment. Delays which have been encountered due to the fluctuating status of the East of England Plan, and the significant resources used during the Issues and Options stage of the former Gypsy and Traveller DPD have resulted in delays to other LDF documents, although significant progress on a wealth of important Evidence Base documents is shown. The revocation of the Direction to produce a Gypsy and Traveller Development Plan Document (DPD) is detailed, and current work on Community Visioning for the future Core Planning Strategy is described.

(5) Core Output Indicators

6. This section reports on the main indicators against which Government measures performance within the AMR, comprising:

- (i) Business Development: permission for a net loss of 0.206ha employment floorspace overall (all B class uses) is recorded, as is permission for a net gain of 0.602ha floor space for town centre uses (all A and D class uses). Headline results from the Employment Land Review and Town Centres Study are given.
- (ii) Housing: a net gain of 176 new housing units is reported, up from last year's figure of 157, representing continuing good performance against the East of England Plan (EEP) target. This incorporates 66 (gross) affordable units, an increase from last year's figure of 31. The housing trajectory, showing anticipated future completions for

the next 5 years (sourced from the updated 5 year assessment of land supply) is given, detailing a 144.00% supply of land for housing from 2011/12-2015/16. This means that the Council can show that permission has been given for 144% of the amount of housing required for the next 5 year period by the EEP (i.e. 5 times the annualised target of 175 units), again representing very good performance. A net gain of 9 permissions for Gypsy and Traveller pitches is detailed, and it is shown that in November 2010, the additional 34 pitch target in the EEP was reached.

- (iii) Transport: Over 90% of residential development completed within the monitoring year is shown to be within 30 minutes travel time on public transport for 5 out of 6 key services (most are not within this distance/time of a hospital with an A&E department), showing that, in the main, development is being permitted in sustainable locations.
- (iv) Local Services: The two developments falling into the 'large (1000m²) retail / office / leisure' category are described. Open spaces within the district which have 'green flag' status are listed, and an update on the Audit of Open Space, Sports and Recreation Facilities is given.
- (v) Flood protection: Details of the sole application granted contrary to Environment Agency advice are given (and the reasons why this decision was taken).
- (vi) Biodiversity: Areas of natural conservation value within the District are recorded, covering Special Areas of Conservation (SAC), Local Nature Reserves etc. No important areas were lost within the monitoring period, and the addition of some 40 new Local Wildlife Sites is noted.
- (vii) Renewable Energy: Details of the 8 applications involving energy generation which were permitted are given.
- (viii) Gypsies and Travellers: Details of the additional pitches granted permission, and the progress against the East of England Plan target, are given. The formal revocation of the Direction is noted.

(6) Local Indicators

7. This section covers 4 'voluntary' indicators, monitoring potential issues which are important locally and/or specific to the Council, and which may need to be addressed through new or amended policy. These are: town centres (the non-retail/retail balance in key frontage); the development of horticultural glasshouses; Locally Listed buildings; and bungalows (specifically their loss).

Summary

8. In general, the AMR reports good performance against the various targets set for the Council throughout the East of England Plan, but also highlights some issues which need resolving, such as the balance of retail and non-retail units within the town centres, and the overall loss of employment floorspace. These issues will need to be addressed through the LDF Core Planning Strategy. Close monitoring of the objectives and targets within the Core Planning Strategy will be key; the AMR will be the main mechanism to report on this in future.

Resource Implications:

The AMR is prepared annually by the Information & Technical Officer, within existing budgets.

Legal and Governance Implications:

Section 35 of the Planning & Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 requires that an AMR is produced annually, and submitted to the Secretary of State (via the relevant Government Office).

The preparation of the AMR also supports the following corporate objectives:

- Corporate Plan Action GU1, as it monitors the ease of access to key services from new housing development, thus helping to monitor whether homes are provided in sustainable locations
- Corporate Plan Action GU4, as the AMR is part of the Local Development Framework
- Corporate Plan Action HN1, as it monitors the provision of affordable housing each year
- Corporate Plan Action EP3, as it records data relating to land use, planning policies, housing, transport and local infrastructure in one report
- Corporate Plan Action EP5, as it reports the latest Indices of Deprivation available, thus helping the Council to focus on improving areas with the highest levels of deprivation

- Cabinet 2010/11 Key Objective 4, as it monitors the provision of affordable housing
- Cabinet 2010/11 Key Objective 6, as it monitors the production of the entire Local Development Framework

The completion of the AMR is also a target within the Planning & Economic Development Business Plan 2010/11.

Safer, Cleaner and Greener Implications:

The AMR is essential to the production of the Local Development Framework, which is charged with delivering sustainable development. This is in accord with the aims of the Safer, Cleaner and Greener agenda.

Consultation Undertaken:

The Principal Planning Officer (Forward Planning) has had much input into the AMR. Several members of staff in the Planning and Economic Development Directorate have contributed to data within the report, and advised on individual developments and planning applications.

Background Papers:

Annual Monitoring Report, 2010.

5 Year Assessment of Land Supply 2011/12-2015/16 ([available here](#)).

Impact Assessments:

Risk Management

The submission of the AMR to Government is a statutory requirement. The Council is required to show how it has progressed in producing its Local Development Framework. If progress against, for example, housing targets, is not accurately monitored, the Council could risk under provision of housing, and thus be vulnerable to less appropriate housing schemes being granted on appeal by the Planning Inspectorate.

Equality and Diversity:

Did the initial assessment of the proposals contained in this report for relevance to the Council's general equality duties, reveal any potentially adverse equality implications? No

Where equality implications were identified through the initial assessment process, has a formal Equality Impact Assessment been undertaken? No

What equality implications were identified through the Equality Impact Assessment process?
The preparation and submission of the AMR may actually impact positively on equality issues, specifically under the 'socioeconomic duty'. This is because the AMR monitors, for example the provision of affordable housing, and the existence and ranking, of areas of deprivation in the district (under the 2007 Multiple Indices of Deprivation). The provision of affordable housing has the potential to improve the quality of life of people living in the district, particularly those who might be on lower incomes, who cannot afford market housing in this expensive part of the country. Analysis of the areas of deprivation could help the Council to identify areas in which to plan schemes for improvement, thus improving the quality of life for people in those areas also.

How have the equality implications identified through the Equality Impact Assessment been addressed in this report in order to avoid discrimination against any particular group?
The potential positive impacts listed above are not limited to any one particular group; they would affect anyone who was allocated any affordable housing provided, and schemes to improve areas of deprivation would benefit all those living, working, and visiting there.