

WIRRAL COUNCIL

CABINET

8 DECEMBER 2011

SUBJECT:	<i>LOCAL DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK FOR WIRRAL – ANNUAL MONITORING REPORT</i>
WARD/S AFFECTED:	<i>ALL</i>
REPORT OF:	<i>ACTING DIRECTOR OF REGENERATION, HOUSING AND PLANNING</i>
RESPONSIBLE PORTFOLIO HOLDER:	<i>REGENERATION & PLANNING STRATEGY - COUNCILLOR PHIL DAVIES</i>
KEY DECISION?	<i>YES</i>

1.0 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.1 This report seeks Cabinet approval for a statutory Annual Monitoring Report, which reports on the impact of land use planning policies and the preparation of local plans, to be submitted to the Secretary of State. There is no requirement for public consultation but copies of the Report must be made available for public inspection on the Council's website.

2.0 RECOMMENDATION/S

- 2.1 That the Local Development Framework Annual Monitoring Report for 2010/11, attached to this report, is approved for formal submission to the Secretary of State and is placed on the Council's website for public inspection.

3.0 REASON/S FOR RECOMMENDATION/S

- 3.1 To enable the Council to meet the statutory requirement to submit an Annual Monitoring Report to the Secretary of State by 31 December 2011.

4.0 BACKGROUND

- 4.1 Section 35 of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 requires the Council to make an annual report to the Secretary of State on the progress made in implementing the Council's Local Development Scheme (which sets out the timetable for the preparation of Local Development Documents) and on the extent to which the policies set out in individual Local Development Documents are being achieved. In particular it must:

- record the stage that each Local Development Document has reached against the key milestones set out in the approved Local Development Scheme;
- provide a statement of the reasons for any delay in the preparation of an individual Document and outline the steps that will be taken to prepare the document in the future;
- monitor performance against any annual number or other number set out in a policy within the Regional Spatial Strategy or a Development Plan Document, from the date the policy was adopted or approved, particularly for housing; and

- identify any policy that the Council is not implementing, alongside the reasons for not implementing it, together with the steps that the Council will take to amend or replace the policy.
- 4.2 Annual Monitoring Reports must also provide a list of local development orders made under Section 61A of Town and Country Planning Act 1990, setting out the reason for the order, its actual effects, and a record of any revocations.
- 4.3 The draft Annual Monitoring Report for Wirral for 2010/11 is attached to this report.

5.0 KEY ISSUES

- 5.1 This year's Annual Monitoring Report has been prepared in a context of significant changes in national approach, in line with the removal of data burdens placed on councils and the wider Localism agenda.
- 5.2 The Government has already withdrawn national guidance on good practice and have removed the need to report on a series of National Core Output Indicators.
- 5.3 Further amendments are also being proposed through the Localism Bill and amendments to national Regulations. This is, therefore, expected to be the last time that the Annual Monitoring Report is presented in the current annual format and the last time that it will have to be formally submitted to the Secretary of State.
- 5.4 Until the full package of these changes has been enacted, the format of the information provided in previous Annual Monitoring Reports has been maintained. This includes the retention of the Regional Spatial Strategy, which will not be formally abolished until after the Localism Bill is enacted towards the end of 2011, for indicators to 31 March 2011. The latest indication is that abolition is unlikely to occur before February 2012.
- 5.5 The Government has also proposed national changes to Local Development Schemes, which will also no longer need to be submitted to the Secretary of State but will in future need to be maintained alongside continuously updated information.

6.0 DEVELOPMENT MONITORING

- 6.1 In terms of the findings of this year's Annual Monitoring Report, the majority of the indicators continue to reflect the scale and local impact of the national recession.
- 6.2 The amount of completed employment floorspace has continued to be low but has improved to 5.9 hectares and 13,785 square metres (20 projects) compared to 0.5 hectares and 2,223 square metres (4 projects) in 2009/10. Long term annual average take up over the previous ten years (1999/00 to 2008/09) was 9.4 hectares and 27,150 square metres (12 projects).
- 6.3 The amount of completed retail floorspace was a third lower than in 2009/10. A number of major projects, such as Morrisons at New Brighton and Asda in Birkenhead, were however still classified as under construction at the end of the reporting period.
- 6.4 The delivery of new homes has slowed considerably in response to market conditions with only 272 dwellings completed in 2010/11 compared to the market peak of 820 in 2007/08. The net figure of 97 for 2010/11 was, again,

well below the annual average target of 500 net additional dwellings set out in the Regional Spatial Strategy. Gross completions have continued to be mainly supported by public programmes including HMRI and the National Affordable Housing Programme.

- 6.5 The supply of land with planning permission has also reduced by 321 units since March 2010, to 3,082 units at March 2011, which reflects the lower number of planning applications being submitted and the number of consents that have been allowed to lapse by developers and landowners.
- 6.6 The Council's Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (SHLAA) from April 2008 showed additional sites with a remaining capacity of 2,582 units identified as deliverable within the first five years (Cabinet 2 September 2010, Minute 121 refers). A considerable part of the ongoing supply of sites was associated with Wirral Waters. The draft Annual Monitoring Report shows that development has since started on 31 sites (224 dwellings) and a further 77 (364 dwellings) have now gained planning permission.
- 6.7 A combination of the recession, the continued backlog against the Regional Spatial Strategy annual target and level of planned demolitions means that an initial assessment of the Council's immediately deliverable housing land supply is now 4 years. Whilst this is clearly below the expected 5 year supply, it is a common position being experienced by many local authorities, as a result of the recession and does not reflect an unwillingness on the part of local authorities to grant planning permission for new housing.
- 6.8 An update of the SHLAA, to April 2011, is currently subject to independent viability testing and will be reported to Cabinet early in the New Year.

7.0 PLAN PREPARATION

- 7.1 The latest Local Development Scheme for Wirral was approved by Council in February 2010 (Minute 97 refers).
- 7.2 The Scheme has not been revised, pending the outcome of the emerging changes proposed through the Localism Bill and revised national Regulations, which include a further simplification of plan-making procedures and new flexibilities for the preparation of "Local Plans" (the new name for Local Development Frameworks).
- 7.3 A new test of soundness is also to be included alongside revised national policies within the emerging National Planning Policy Framework which was reported to Cabinet on 22 September 2011 (Minute 124 refers). The final Framework is expected to be published by the Government in April 2012.
- 7.4 Progress on the preparation of the **Core Strategy** for Wirral was last reported to Cabinet on 21 July 2011 (Minute 80 refers). The further work agreed on housing, employment and retail updates is currently underway and additional consultation on the emerging Settlement Area Policies is expected to take place early in the New Year, with a view to publishing a Proposed Submission Draft Core Strategy towards the middle of 2012.
- 7.5 The target date for the adoption of the final Core Strategy is now expected to be July 2013. This is slightly longer than the timetable indicated in July, to reflect progress on the evidence base studies and to enable the necessary statutory assessments to be prepared. Whilst this is likely to be after the commencement of the new planning regime through the Localism Bill, it is

critical that the Council puts in place a sound Core Strategy, which will provide the local planning context for the Borough. This will also enable the Proposed Submission Draft to take full account of the forthcoming changes to national policy and legislation.

- 7.6 The preparation of **site-specific Site Allocations** will follow the completion of the Core Strategy. These allocations will provide the spatial expression of the Core Strategy's policies and show how the Council will deliver new development.
- 7.7 The **Joint Waste Development Plan Document for Merseyside and Halton**, approved by Council on 17 October 2011 (Minute 46 refers) will be published in November 2011 prior to submission to the Secretary of State for public examination in February 2012. The target date for the adoption of the final document is now expected to be December 2012.
- 7.8 Devonshire Park Residents Association (Prenton Ward), Hoylake Village Life (Hoylake and Meols Ward) and the Central Liscard Area Residents Association (Liscard Ward) have now been awarded national status as pilot areas for the preparation of new-style **Neighbourhood Development Plans**. Initial community consultation was undertaken at Devonshire Park during September 2011.

8.0 FUTURE MONITORING ARRANGEMENTS

- 8.1 National proposals contained within the Localism Bill and draft Regulations indicate that future monitoring will no longer need to be presented in a single annual report but that monitoring data will need to be made publically available as soon as it becomes available to the Council.
- 8.2 The Government also intends to change the scope of the new monitoring system to include details about any new-style neighbourhood development plans and orders; information on the receipt and use of any funds collected under the Community Infrastructure Levy; and any action taken with another authority under the new "duty to cooperate".
- 8.3 The Council's response to consultation on the revised national Regulations was reported to Cabinet on 22 September 2011 (Minute 124 refers).

9.0 RELEVANT RISKS

- 9.1 Failure to submit an Annual Monitoring Report to the Secretary of State within the statutory deadline of 31 December would currently place the Council in breach of a statutory duty under the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act.

10.0 OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED

- 10.1 The submission of an annual report is still a statutory duty. A full review of the detailed content and format of the Annual Monitoring Report for 2010/11 is not considered to be appropriate until the full package of national changes has been enacted, which is not currently expected to take place until early 2012.

11.0 CONSULTATION

- 11.1 There is no requirement for public consultation on the content of the Annual Monitoring Report, which is a factual statement of progress during the previous

monitoring year. Copies of the Annual Monitoring Report must, however, be made available for public inspection on the Council's website.

11.2 The scope of future annual monitoring reports, in addition to any statutory requirements, will be subject to public consultation as part of the preparation of the Core Strategy, which will include a series of indicators for monitoring delivery.

11.3 A series of 14 indicators have already been included in the monitoring framework for the Joint Waste Development Plan Document for Merseyside and Halton approved for publication by Council on 17 October 2011, which will be confirmed following public examination during 2012.

12.0 IMPLICATIONS FOR VOLUNTARY, COMMUNITY AND FAITH GROUPS

12.1 There are no implications for voluntary, community and/or faith groups.

13.0 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS: FINANCIAL; IT; STAFFING; AND ASSETS

13.1 There are no financial implications arising from this report.

13.2 The Annual Monitoring Report is prepared by the Forward Planning Section of the Council's Strategic Development Service using existing resources.

13.3 Future requirements for the more timely publication of local statistics can be met from within existing resources but will require changes to the process for reporting and presenting information through the Council's website, which will need to be the subject of a further report to Cabinet once the Localism Bill is enacted.

14.0 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

14.1 Section 35 of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act requires every local planning authority in England to submit an annual report to the Secretary of State by 31 December each year. Copies of the submitted Annual Monitoring Report must be made available for public inspection on the Council's website.

15.0 EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

15.1 The Annual Monitoring Report includes information on indicators related to population, housing, economic activity, social conditions and the latest national Index of Multiple Deprivation for England.

15.2 Equality Impact Assessment (EIA)

(a) Is an EIA required? No

16.0 CARBON REDUCTION IMPLICATIONS

16.1 The Annual Monitoring Report includes information on indicators relating to development rates, travel patterns, environmental quality, energy, minerals and waste management.

17.0 PLANNING AND COMMUNITY SAFETY IMPLICATIONS

17.1 The Annual Monitoring Report includes information on recorded outcomes arising from the application of national, regional and local planning policies and local planning decisions in Wirral. The report does not have any community safety implications.

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APPENDICES

Draft Annual Monitoring Report 2010/11
Draft Housing Land Schedule (April 2011)

REFERENCE MATERIAL

None

SUBJECT HISTORY (last 3 years)

Council Meeting	Date
Cabinet – Annual Monitoring Report 2007/08	10 December 2008
Cabinet – Annual Monitoring Report 2008/09	9 December 2009
Cabinet – Annual Monitoring Report 2009/10	25 November 2010