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LEADER OF THE COUNCIL
CABINET MEMBER FOR
STRATEGIC ECONOMIC
DEVELOPMENT, FINANCE AND
DEVOLUTION

DELEGATED REPORT

**LOCAL DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK FOR
WIRRAL – MONITORING REPORT 2015/16**

REPORT SUMMARY

This report seeks approval for the publication of the Council's statutory Monitoring Report and associated documents, to report on the impact of land use planning policies and the preparation of local plans and other planning documents during 2015/16.

Copies of the Monitoring Report and its associated documents must be made available for public inspection on the Council's website by the end of December 2016.

The Monitoring Report provides information that is relevant to all Wards within the Borough.

The approval of the Monitoring Report is not a Key Decision as the recommendation reflects a statutory requirement and no change in Council policy or significant additional expenditure would be required.

RECOMMENDATION

That the Monitoring Report for 2015/16 and its accompanying background documents and data tables are approved and made available for public inspection and published on the Council's website.

SUPPORTING INFORMATION

1.0 REASON/S FOR RECOMMENDATION/S

1.1 To enable the Council to meet the statutory requirements of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 (as amended) and the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012 (SI 2012, No. 767).

2.0 OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED

2.1 There are no alternative options, as national regulations require the publication of monitoring information as soon as possible after the information becomes available.

3.0 BACKGROUND INFORMATION

3.1 Section 35 of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 requires the Council to make a statutory report on the progress made in the preparation of Local Development Documents and on the extent to which the policies set out in existing Local Development Documents are being achieved.

3.2 Section 113 of the Localism Act 2011 amended this requirement such that local planning authorities must now publish this information direct to the public at least yearly in the interests of transparency. The local planning authority is no longer required to send the report to the Secretary of State but the Secretary of State retains powers to make regulations prescribing the timing, content and form of reports.

3.3 Previous Monitoring Reports have been published on the Council's website at <https://www.wirral.gov.uk/planning-and-building/local-plans-and-planning-policy/development-monitoring>

3.4 The Council must report to the public at least annually with each report covering a period of up to twelve months from the end of the period covered by the last monitoring report. The Council's last Monitoring Report was published in December 2015.

3.5 National regulations require the Council to make reports on:

- the approval or adoption of local plans and supplementary planning documents;
- the stage that each local plan or supplementary planning document has reached against the timetable specified for document preparation in the Council's Local Development Scheme and the reasons for any delay;
- the delivery of net additional dwellings or net affordable dwellings against any number specified in a local plan within each reporting period and since the policy was first published, adopted or approved;
- any adopted local plan policy that the Council is not implementing, alongside the reasons for not implementing it and the steps (if any) that the Council intend to take to secure that the policy is implemented;
- the making of any neighbourhood development orders or neighbourhood development plans;

- the collection and expenditure of any Community Infrastructure Levy, in the manner set out in the Community Infrastructure Regulations; and
 - details of the action taken to co-operate with other local planning authorities and prescribed bodies on strategic matters to secure the sustainable development or use of land.
- 3.6 Up-to-date information collected for monitoring purposes must be made available for public inspection at the local planning authority's principal office (and at any other such places as the local planning authority consider appropriate) and published on the local planning authority's website, as soon as possible after the information becomes available.
- 3.7 The Government's Open Data policy for local government recommends that data (unless private or sensitive) is made available on-line in open and machine-readable formats so that it can be easily re-used by residents, businesses and other interested parties.
- 3.8 Council on 13 February 2013 (Minute 108) resolved that the Portfolio Holder be given authority to approve the publication of future monitoring information on the Council's website, in line with the requirements of relevant national regulations.

4.0 MONITORING REPORT FOR 2015/16

- 4.1 The draft Monitoring Report for Wirral for 2015/16, which has been prepared in line with previous formats, is attached to this report.
- 4.2 This year's Monitoring Report is, again, accompanied by a separate report setting out the monitoring undertaken for the Joint Waste Local Plan for Merseyside and Halton, adopted in July 2013.
- 4.3 The latest revision to the Council's Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment, for April 2016, was published for public consultation in August 2016.
- 4.4 A summary of the main findings is set out below:

Progress on Policy Delivery

- 4.5 The national recession is still having a noticeable impact on wide a number of indicators.
- Housing Development
- 4.6 Gross housing completions remained stable at 562 in 2015/16, compared to 563 in 2014/15 but net completions reduced slightly to 498 in 2015/16, from 537 in 2014/15, due to fewer gains from net conversions and a higher number of demolitions.
- 4.7 The capacity of land with planning permission for new housing (outside Wirral Waters, which has outline consent for 13,521 new dwellings) rose slightly, to 2,221 in April 2016, compared to 1,932 dwellings at April 2015. The capacity of sites identified as deliverable and developable in the Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment in April 2016 had also risen slightly, to 5,651, from 5,494 dwellings in April 2015.
- 4.8 The Council's wider housing land supply (assessed against the higher Objectively Assessed Need identified in the Council's latest Strategic Housing Market Assessment (May 2016), again, excluding Wirral Waters), has, however, now reduced to between 2.0 and 2.2 years, further below the five-year supply required by national policy.

Employment Development

- 4.9 While the amount of newly completed employment floorspace increased further, to 19,300sqm during 2015/16, compared to 10,900sqm during 2014/15, demolitions and other losses nevertheless resulted in a net loss of employment floorspace overall, mainly due to the demolition of the former Mobil Oil plant at Wallasey Bridge Road, which has not yet been replaced.
- 4.10 The higher level of newly completed floorspace is, however, expected to continue with the completion of projects at Turbine Park (8,500sqm, 11 industrial units); Quarry Road East (7,451sqm, combined research facilities); Bridge Street (1,341sqm, conversion to 4 industrial units); Hilbre Street (707sqm, workshop); Cross Lane Industrial Estate (660sqm, office and storage unit); Wirral International Business Park (575sqm, industrial unit); and North Cheshire Trading Estate (98sqm, storage unit).

Retail Development

- 4.11 There was a significant reduction in the amount of newly completed retail floorspace, with the majority continuing to take place outside existing centres. By contrast, all of the additional floorspace for financial and professional services continued to take place within an existing town centre.

Waste Development

- 4.12 The latest Monitoring Report for the Joint Waste Local Plan also continues to show progress against a number of indicators.
- 4.13 Only one application to provide additional capacity was approved in Wirral in 2015/16, for a 2.8MWth anaerobic digestion, biogas to Grid plant at East Street, Seacombe, with a capacity of up to 36,000 tonnes per annum, equivalent to 8 percent of the increase in consented capacity during 2015/16 across the plan area as a whole.

Progress on Plan Preparation

- 4.14 Progress on the Core Strategy Local Plan was last formally reported as part of the Monitoring Report for 2014/15.
- 4.15 A revised Strategic Housing Market Assessment (May 2016) was published for public consultation in August 2016, alongside the latest update to the Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment, for April 2016 (Cabinet, 18 July 2016, Minute 31 refers). The results of consultation are expected to be reported to Cabinet in early 2017.
- 4.16 A Retail and Leisure Study Update has also been completed and approved (Cabinet, 18 July 2016, Minute 32 and, Council 17 October 2016, Minute 62 refer).
- 4.17 An update to the Council's Employment Land and Premises Study will now also be commissioned, for completion in early 2017.
- 4.18 A revised Proposed Submission Draft Core Strategy is now therefore expected to be presented to Cabinet for approval in September 2017, to be submitted to the Secretary of State for public examination in December 2017.

Neighbourhood Planning

- 4.19 The Council has now designated four local neighbourhood planning forums, at Devonshire Park; Hoylake; Leasowe; and Birkenhead and Tranmere, to allow them to prepare their own planning proposals for their respective designated areas.
- 4.20 The Neighbourhood Development Plan for Devonshire Park was formally 'made' by Council on 14 December 2015 (Minute 81 refers) and The Neighbourhood Development Plan for Hoylake is expected to be formally 'made' by Council on 19 December 2016, following the successful local referendum on 1 December 2016.

Duty to Co-operate

- 4.21 The Council agreed a Statement of Co-operation on Local Planning with City Region Partners on 17 October 2016 and the Liverpool City Region Strategic Housing and Employment Land Assessment (SHELMA) is now expected to be considered, for approval for stakeholder engagement, by the Liverpool City Region Housing and Spatial Planning Board in early 2017.

5.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 There are no financial implications arising from this report.
- 5.2 The publication of data in a machine readable format on the Council's website will not incur any additional costs.
- 5.3 Annual monitoring, analysis and reporting has been undertaken using existing resources within Environmental Services.
- 5.4 Monitoring the Joint Waste Local Plan for Merseyside and Halton has been funded as part of the shared service provided by the Merseyside Environmental Advisory Service at Sefton Council.
- 5.5 The continued preparation of the Core Strategy Local Plan and a potential Community Infrastructure Levy Charging Schedule will be undertaken using existing resources for Environmental Services.

6.0 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 The publication of monitoring information, at least annually, is a statutory requirement under the Section 35 of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 (as amended).
- 6.2 The findings of the Monitoring Report can be a material consideration in future development management decisions.
- 6.3 The Council must make any up-to-date information collected for monitoring purposes available to the public as soon as possible after the information becomes available.
- 6.4 The Community Infrastructure Regulations 2010 also require the Council to publish a report on its website no later than 31 December following the end of the reported year.

6.5 The Open Government Licence provides for the Council's right to be identified as the source of the data and for the Council to be protected from any liabilities arising from its use.

7.0 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS: ICT, STAFFING AND ASSETS

7.1 There are no IT, staffing or asset implications arising from this report, beyond the need to make continued provision for statutory monitoring and data storage and the publication of data in a machine readable format on the Council's website.

8.0 RELEVANT RISKS

8.1 Failure to report at least annually and to provide for the ongoing collection, analysis and publication of monitoring information would place the Council in breach of a statutory duty.

8.2 The Open Government Licence provides for the data to be provided as is and offers no warranty against any errors or omissions or against any loss, injury or damage of any kind caused by its use.

8.3 No data which could identify any individual will be published in contravention of the Data Protection Act 1998.

8.4 Unless additional land for development can be identified in the emerging Core Strategy Local Plan, the absence of a five-year housing land supply could lead to the loss of appeals against the refusal of planning permission, with costs awarded against the Council, unless the adverse impacts of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits when assessed against national policy as a whole.

9.0 ENGAGEMENT/CONSULTATION

9.1 There is no requirement for public consultation on the content of monitoring reports, which are a factual statement of progress during the previous monitoring year. Copies of annual monitoring information must, however, be made available for public inspection at a principal office and on the Council's website.

9.2 The scope of future monitoring, in addition to any statutory requirements, is subject to public consultation as part of the preparation of statutory local plans, such as the Council's Core Strategy Local Plan, which must include a series of indicators for monitoring the delivery and effectiveness of local plan policies.

9.3 Consultation on a draft Monitoring Plan, to accompany the publication of a Revised Proposed Submission Draft Core Strategy Local Plan, is therefore expected to take place in September 2017.

10.0 EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

10.1 The relevant Equality Impact Assessment can be viewed at
<https://www.wirral.gov.uk/communities-and-neighbourhoods/equality-impact-assessments/equality-impact-assessments-2014-0>

- 10.2 Although the Monitoring Report and its accompanying document and data tables includes information on indicators related to population, housing, economic activity and social conditions, it does not in itself have any equalities implications other than providing an additional source of accessible up-to-date public information.

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APPENDICES

Draft Monitoring Report 2016/16
Wirral Committed Residential Sites April 2016
Wirral Housing Completions 2015/16
Wirral Employment Land April 2016
Wirral Business Completions 2015/16
Wirral Business Losses 2015/16
Wirral Retail and Leisure Completions 2015/16
Joint Waste Local Plan Monitoring Report 2016

REFERENCE MATERIAL

[Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004](#) (Section 35 refers)
[Localism Act 2011](#) (Section 113 refers)
[Town and Country Planning \(Local Planning\)\(England\) Regulations 2012](#) (Regulation 34)
[Community Infrastructure Regulations 2010](#) (Regulation 62 refers)
National Archives [Open Government Licence](#) for public sector information
[Local Government Transparency Code 2015](#) (DCLG, February 2015)
[National Planning Policy Framework and Planning Practice Guidance](#) (DCLG, March 2012)
The Council's latest Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment for April 2016 can already be viewed on the Council's website at <http://www.wirral.gov.uk/planning-and-building/local-plans-and-planning-policy/local-planning-evidence-and-research-reports-4>

SUBJECT HISTORY (last 3 years)

Council Meeting	Date
Delegated – Annual Monitoring Report 2014	17 December 2014
Delegated – Annual Monitoring Report 2015	17 December 2015