



## AGENDA ITEM: 8

### SUMMARY

<b>Report for:</b>	<b>Cabinet</b>
<b>Date of meeting:</b>	<b>16<sup>th</sup> December 2014</b>
<b>Part:</b>	<b>1</b>
If Part II, reason:	

<b>Title of report:</b>	<b>The Annual Monitoring Report and Local Planning Framework Update</b>
Contact:	<p>Cllr Andrew Williams, Portfolio Holder for Planning and Regeneration;</p> <p>Laura Wood, Team Leader, Strategic Planning and Regeneration (extension 2661); and</p> <p>Francis Whittaker, Strategic Planning and Regeneration (extension 2383)</p>
Purpose of report:	<p>To consider:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• the Annual Monitoring Report for 2013/14; and</li> <li>• progress on the Local Planning Framework.</li> </ul>
Recommendations	<p>Cabinet is recommended to:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Note the headline results from the forthcoming Annual Monitoring Report 2013/14 with regard to housing, employment and retail; and</li> <li>2. Note progress on the Local Planning Framework.</li> </ol>
Corporate Objectives:	<p>The Annual Monitoring Report looks at the effectiveness of current planning policies – for example the achievement of the overall housing target and protection of green space/wildlife sites – and progress towards planning policy review (i.e. targets set out in the Local Development Scheme). It therefore provides a good summary of how the Council’s planning policies are supporting delivery of corporate objectives – especially those relating to affordable housing; safe and clean environment and regeneration.</p> <p>As the policies within the Core Strategy and other planning documents are aimed at enabling growth, it also provides an indication of how the ‘Dacorum Delivers’ objective is being supported.</p>
Implications:	<p><u>Financial</u></p> <p>Funding is provided from the LDF reserve. A budget has been</p>

<p>'Value For Money Implications'</p>	<p>agreed for 2014/15. The 2015/16 budget is currently being reviewed as part of the annual budget cycle.</p> <p><u>Value for Money</u></p> <p>Every effort has been made to secure external funding – most recently through the New Homes Bonus, to reduce the impact on the Council's budget. Where possible, evidence base work is undertaken jointly with other authorities to ensure cost is optimised (through economies of scale). Collaborative working with landowner consultants will continue to help extend the resources available to the Council and avoid the duplication of site specific technical information.</p>
<p>Risk Implications</p>	<p>A risk assessment has been carried out as part of the PID / CORVU monitoring process. The Local Development Scheme also contains its own risk assessment. The key concern is that the (new) development plan must be sound, and delivers what is needed expeditiously. Risk is reduced by ensuring processes and the evidence base is robust. Sufficient financial resources are essential to achieve that. Certain elements of the process have explicit statutory requirements such as consultation, publication, examination and presentation of the adopted Development Plan Document. The Annual Monitoring Report reviews the risks inherent in preparing the Local Planning Framework. Monitoring of development is a source of information which, properly used, can assist risk reduction – i.e. it checks whether progress and control of development has been successful and can indicate where change (in policy or process) may be beneficial.</p>
<p>Community Impact Assessment</p>	<p>An Equality Impact Assessment has been carried out for the Core Strategy. This is currently being converted and updated into a broader Community Impact Assessment. An independent Sustainability Appraisal Report which accompanies the Core Strategy also considers equalities issues separately. It concludes that the Core Strategy avoids any discrimination on the basis of disability, gender or ethnic minority.</p>
<p>Health And Safety Implications</p>	<p>None.</p>
<p>Monitoring Officer/S.151 Officer Comments</p>	<p><b>Deputy Monitoring Officer:</b></p> <p>No comments to add to the report.</p> <p><b>S.151 Officer</b></p> <p>No further comments to add to the report.</p>
<p>Consultees:</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Assistant Director Planning, Development and Regeneration.</li> <li>• Group Manager, Strategic Planning and Regeneration.</li> <li>• Corporate Management Team.</li> </ul>

<p>Background papers:</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Local Development Scheme (February 2014)</li> <li>• Adopted Core Strategy (September 2013)</li> <li>• Dacorum Borough Local Plan 1991 – 2011 and related supplementary planning advice</li> <li>• National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)</li> <li>• Draft Annual Monitoring Report 2013/14</li> </ul> <p><i>Note: The finalised Annual Monitoring Report 2013/14 will be published in late December 2014 and made available in the Group Rooms then.</i></p>
<p>Glossary of acronyms and any other abbreviations used in this report:</p>	<p>AMR – Annual Monitoring Report  LDS – Local development Scheme  LPF – Local Planning Framework  LDF – Local Development Framework (<i>note: this is the same as the LPF above; the terms are used interchangeably</i>)  SPD – Supplementary Planning Document  SPG – Supplementary Planning Guidance  GUI – Grand Union Investments Ltd  DPP – Development Plan Document  DDP – Dacorum Development Programme  ED Strategy – Economic Development Strategy  NPPF – National Planning Policy Framework  PPG – National Planning Policy Guidance  SPAR – Strategic Planning and Regeneration</p>

## Background

### 1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 This report covers two matters connected with:
- a) the Annual Monitoring Report (AMR) 2013/14; and
  - b) the Local Development Scheme (February 2014).

### 2. ANNUAL MONITORING REPORT

#### Statutory Requirements

- 2.1 In April 2012, the Town and Country Planning (Local Development) (England) (Amendments) Regulations 2008 were superseded by the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012. These new regulations introduced greater flexibility regarding coverage and presentation. There is no longer a legal requirement for local authorities to publish monitoring reports by a prescribed date, or to formally submit them to the Secretary of State. The information must be published 'as soon as possible' after it becomes available. Officers recommend that this information continues to be contained and analysed in an annual report.
- 2.2 The following information must be provided:
- a) The titles of the Local Plan and Supplementary Planning Documents specified in the Council's Local Development Scheme together with the timetable for their preparation, the stage reached and reasons for any slippage against the published timetable;

- b) Information on any Local Plan or Supplementary Planning Document that has been adopted or approved during the monitoring period, and the date of this adoption;
  - c) Performance against monitoring indicators set out within its Local Plan;
  - d) An explanation of why the local planning authority has chosen not to implement a policy specified in its local plan (if appropriate);
  - e) Information regarding any Neighbourhood Development Orders or Neighbourhood Development Plans;
  - f) Information related to progress on establishing a Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL); and
  - g) Details of actions under the 'Duty to Co-operate' introduced in the Localism Bill 2011.
- 2.3 Items (a) to (c) above have always been provided within the Council's AMRs. Items (d) to (g) are newer requirements that are being incorporated into the AMR process.
- 2.4 As well as monitoring the performance of the planning policy documents, the AMR is being used to report progress on the Dacorum Development Programme (DDP) and Economic Development (ED) Strategy.
- 2.5 The Annual Monitoring Report for 2013/14 is prepared by Officers. It is due to be completed by the end of 2014. A draft copy will be available in Group Rooms prior to the Cabinet meeting. Once finalised, copies will be placed in the Group Rooms and published on the Council's website.

#### **Improving monitoring arrangements and reporting**

- 2.6 The AMR summarises planning activities within the Borough over a twelve month monitoring period (1<sup>st</sup> April 2013 – 31<sup>st</sup> March 2014). The order and content reflects the structure of the Core Strategy and the monitoring indicators within it. Sections have been added to ensure the document complies with the 2012 Regulations and performance of the DDP and ED Strategies. This broadening of content will allow the AMR to become the document through which the success of development projects and economic development work can be measured. The AMR 2013/14 will be accompanied by a technical appendix containing more detailed monitoring information for reference.
- 2.7 The County Council's county-wide monitoring system (SmartHerts) has now been in operation for three years and supports the districts monitoring routines. SmartHerts has significantly improved the efficiency of monitoring processes within the SPAR team.

#### **Key Findings - (1) Headline figures**

- 2.8 The AMR 2013/14 reports progress against key targets. Headline figures for housing, employment and retailing are set out below:

Housing:

- 254 (gross) (219 (net)) dwellings were completed over the monitoring period. The net figure is below the annual Core Strategy target (430 dwellings per year) and is lower than the completion rate in the previous monitoring period of 290 (net). This chiefly reflects the low level of completions on larger sites. However, this contrast with an improving future supply of commitments (2,168 (net) commitments at 1<sup>st</sup> April 2014 compared to 1,890 (net) commitments a year ago) and increased building activity on key sites which should boost future completions.
- Despite this, the supply of new housing remains good at 5.9 years' worth (bearing in mind the minimum requirement is for a 5 year rolling supply to be maintained).
- 50% (gross) of all dwellings (42% net) were completed on previously developed land (PDL). The lower levels of PDL completions were a consequence of the associated increase in completions on non-PDL (greenfield) sites. Previous high levels of performance (90%+) are unlikely be repeated in the future as the PDL resource in our built-up areas depletes.
- 123 affordable housing units were secured in 2013/14. 27 were delivered directly through the operation of the planning system (i.e. through on-site provision by developers) and a further 96 units were delivered through the 'First Buy / Home Buy' scheme. The former equates to 12% of the total (net) completions. While this represents a substantial reduction since the 2012/13 position (92 homes) there is potential for a significant increase in supply over the next three years (635 homes). The 'First Buy / Home Buy' scheme is operated by Government for first time buyers seeking to access new build properties and they also play an important role in helping to meet local housing needs.

Employment and retailing:

- During the monitoring period there was a net loss of 26,600 sq. metres B-class employment floorspace (i.e. offices, industry and warehousing). Since the start of the Core Strategy plan period in 2006, there has been a net loss of nearly 92,000 sq. metres of such floorspace.
- There has been a net loss of over 55,000 sq. metres of office floorspace since 2006. This trend needs to be carefully monitored over future years, given the Core Strategy's target for a net gain of 130,000 sq. metres between 2006 and 2031. However, there is scope for substantial office development, particularly on the Maylands Gateway site in Hemel Hempstead. Whether the Core Strategy's office floorspace target is met depends mainly on the amount of offices built on this site.
- There has been a net loss of over 36,000 sq. metres of industrial/warehousing floorspace since 2006. Planning permission exists for a net gain of over 61,000 sq. metres, mainly on the Maylands Business Park in Hemel Hempstead. There is also potential for further gains, for example, on the Maylands Gateway site in accordance with the revised Development Brief. The Council is therefore on track to meet (or exceed) the Core Strategy target of no net loss of industry, storage and distribution floorspace over the 2006-2031 period.
- All new employment development in the monitoring period used previously developed land, except for a few schemes involving conversion of agricultural buildings.

- The Core Strategy seeks to direct most retail development to the town and local centres. Policy CS16 contains guidance on future floorspace increases from 2009 to 2031, if there is demand.
  - There has been an increase in retail development during the monitoring period. The Aldi store in Woodhall Farm opened in November 2013. The two remaining foodstore proposals (Aldi store in (Two Waters) Hemel Hempstead and the Marks and Spencer Simply Food in Berkhamsted) were both completed in the 2014/15 monitoring period. However, the Morrisons foodstore application in the Hemel Hempstead town centre was formally withdrawn in March 2014.
  - Any increase in comparison (non-food) floorspace is likely to be well below the Policy CS16 figures. A floorspace gain is expected outside of designated centres, contrary to the monitoring target of nil net gain. This is largely because of the proposed retail warehousing at Jarman Park in Hemel Hempstead, which was permitted prior to the Core Strategy.
- 2.9 Data relating to other key planning areas including social and community facilities, transport and accessibility, and the built and natural environment is still being processed. The AMR also gives updates on the progress of the Dacorum Development Plan and the Economic Development Strategy.

### **Key findings - (2) Progress with the Local Planning Framework**

#### Progress during 2013/14 monitoring period

- 2.10 Good progress was made on the LPF during the 2013/14 monitoring period. Key achievements included:
- The Local Development Scheme (LDS) was adopted in February 2014.
  - Inspector's Report received in July 2013, finding the Core Strategy 'sound' subject to a number of main modifications.
  - Adoption of the Core Strategy by Full Council on 25<sup>th</sup> September 2013.
  - Formal adoption of the Affordable Housing Supplementary Planning Document (SPD), Hemel Hempstead Town Centre Masterplan (SPD) and Chilterns Buildings Design Guide (SPG) by Full Council on 25<sup>th</sup> September 2013.
  - Continuing work with relevant bodies/organisations under the Duty to Cooperate.
  - Publication of a series of Local Allocation archaeological assessments in January 2014.
- 2.11 Significant progress continues to be made on the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) that will eventually supersede the Planning Obligations SPD (April 2011). Technical work on the viability and suitability of charging CIL on key housing sites in the Core Strategy was completed. In addition, consultation on the Council's Draft Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) Charging Schedule took place during January and March 2014. Although outside of this monitoring period, Members will note that the CIL charging schedule successfully passed public Examination in late 2014 and implementation is on track for 1 April 2015.

Progress post 2013/14 monitoring period

- 2.12 Further important progress was made on the LPF after the monitoring period, with key events including:
- Dismissal by the High Court Judge in June 2014 of the legal challenge to the Core Strategy lodged by GUI Ltd.
  - Publication and consultation on the Pre-Submissions Site Allocations DPD during September – November 2014. This included consultation on the supporting master plans to the Local Allocations (housing sites currently within the Green Belt).
  - Completion of the Outdoor Leisure Facilities Study (September 2014).
- 2.13 The CIL continues to be taken forward during 2014/15. The CIL Examination took place on 26 September 2014 and implementation is scheduled for 1 April 2015.

Changes to Government policy

- 2.14 The Council has faced some important changes in circumstances; including those relating to the coalition Government's planning agenda. The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) was published in March 2012 and additional guidance to support its interpretation and delivery (the PPG) was published for public consultation in Autumn 2013. The content of the Pre-Submission Core Strategy was reviewed in the context of this new national planning guidance and some changes made to ensure conformity. The PPG was launched in March 2014 as an online resource following earlier consultation during August – October 2013. This will ensure guidance can quickly be updated where necessary. The PPG has led to the consolidation and cancellation of a number of existing guidance.
- 2.13 Amendments to the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) regulations came into effect in February 2014. Neighbourhood planning legislation and regulations are now mostly in place and neighbourhood plans and orders are being prepared that will govern the operation of these plans.
- 2.14 It should also be noted that significant changes were consulted on and implemented by Government during and post this monitoring period that have implications for permitted development rights. These related to householder developments, and also increased rights for permitted changes of use, such as from office space to residential. (Further changes to potentially broaden permitted development rights to allow other commercial uses to convert to residential were consulted on from July to September 2014.) A prior approval process was included to assess particular impacts that such changes of use might have. Whilst the longer term impact of these changes are not yet clear, it has had an impact on the floor space quantities for employment generating uses (and associated increase in housing) during 2013/14.