

# CITY OF PLYMOUTH

**Subject:** Local Development Framework  
2010 Annual Monitoring Report

**Committee:** Growth and Prosperity Overview and Scrutiny Panel

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## 1. BACKGROUND

- 1.1. The Local Development Framework (LDF) Annual Monitoring Report (AMR) is a statutory document which has to be submitted to Government by the end of December. It is seen as the main mechanism for assessing both progress in preparing LDF Documents, as well as the performance of the Strategy - providing the catalyst for any review or update. It should be noted that, although these provisions will be subject to change as the Localism Bill 2010 proceeds through Parliament, the principle of public reporting on an annual basis of LDF performance will still continue.
- 1.2. This Annual Monitoring Report is a position statement as at 31 March 2010 and covers the monitoring year 2009/10 (i.e. it is required to report on development activity between April 2009 through to March 2010.)
- 1.3. While it is helpful to review progress on an annual basis, many of the development indicators need to be considered within a longer timescale (e.g. 5+ years), before coming to conclusions. For example, when a major development takes place in one year, it often takes one or two years for the market to assimilate its full potential, which in turn means correspondingly lower development rates in the following year. Therefore, where appropriate, this AMR caveats its conclusions within these broader considerations

## 2. CONTEXT

- 2.1. The approach to scrutinising the LDF was considered at the meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Panel (OSP) on 20<sup>th</sup> August 2007. It was agreed that the most effective approach would be for the OSP to consider the findings of the AMR each January. The Panel could then advise on any implications it feels should be addressed:
  - Through the Local Development Scheme (LDS) - thereby informing the prioritisation of work in relation to planning policy development and delivery.
  - In relation to planning policy matters - where the monitoring of performance against the LDF's objectives may indicate the need for some adjustments.
- 2.2. Within this context, the Panel needs to consider the following key messages that come from the 2010 AMR.

### **3. KEY MESSAGES IN RELATION TO THE LOCAL DEVELOPMENT SCHEME**

- 3.1. Plymouth remains the most successful authority in the country in preparing its LDF. As at January 2010 the Council was over two thirds of the way through completing its very ambitious LDF programme, having:
- Adopted 10 of its original programme of 14 Statutory LDF documents
  - Adopted 3 Supplementary Planning Documents: the Planning Obligations and Affordable Housing (SPD) (whose first review has also been adopted), the Design SPD and the Development Guidelines SPD
  - Adopted the Review of Statement of Community Involvement
  - Progressed the Derriford/Seaton AAP to Pre-submission Consultation in February 2011 (with a view to Adoption in January 2012)
  - Progressed the Sustainable Neighbourhoods DPD to Issues and Preferred Options Consultation in February 2011 (with a view to Adoption in March 2013)
  - Progressed the Plymouth Urban Fringe DPD to Issues and preferred Options Consultation in February 2011 (with a view to Adoption in March 2013)
- 3.2. This progress has not only provided us with national publicity about Plymouth and its aspirations, but also given the city a significant competitive advantage by bringing certainty to the development process and thus facilitating investment. Already a number of major investments have been completed, or are underway, bringing about a step change in the quality, pace and intensity of development.
- 3.3. In looking to the 2011 LDF work programme, there are a number of matters that will impact on the timetable. These are:
- The national legislative and regulatory framework for preparing Statutory Development Plans is in the process of being changed through the coalition government's Localism Bill, with consultation on the draft bill commencing in December 2010. This is expected to lead to a radical change in the way that parts of the planning system operate and the way in which Development Plan guidance is provided. The Council will, in due course, be responding to this new initiative and the implications it has for producing Plymouth's remaining LDF documents.
  - With the strategic framework of the Core Strategy in place and rapid progress being made on the supporting delivery mechanisms of the AAPs and DPDs, the focus for resources continues towards pro-actively assisting delivery and implementation.

### **4. KEY MESSAGES IN RELATION TO MONITORING CORE STRATEGY TARGETS**

- 4.1. The Core Strategy was prepared with monitoring in mind. Each Section of the Core Strategy contains a set of Strategic Objectives, amplified by key targets. The AMR follows this approach of reporting on each topic area in terms of whether its key indicators are 'On Track' or 'Below Target'.
- 4.2. Whilst economic circumstances have inevitably impacted on the delivery of the LDF vision and its strategic objectives, it is important to note that there is no evidence to suggest that the Plymouth Vision needs to be changed, simply that it is likely to take a few more years (some 3 to 5 years) to achieve it
- 4.3. Out of the 40 Targets of the LDF Core Strategy

Targets met or on track to being met	34	85.0%
Below target/ improving performance	3	7.5%

Target not fully met	2	5.0%
Target superseded	1	2.5%

#### 4.4 The 2 targets not to have been fully met are

- CS Target 9.2 relating to the delivery of the Peninsula Dental School by 2008. Development on the Devonport site just missed this target with a completion date of 16 March 2009. Reserved Matters were approved for development on the Derriford site in November 2009, development is currently underway and completion is expected in Summer 2011
- CS Target 9.1 is the target met only in part. The part not met relates to the educational project for the amalgamation of Mount Wise and Marlborough primary schools in Devonport on a new site. This project is no longer in the Council's Capital Programme and changes in demographics mean that the amalgamation of these schools is no longer achievable.

CS Target 4.3 has been superseded. This target was for the completion of at least 4 Plymouth Design Panel meetings every year to consider major proposals and strategic design related strategies. These meetings had been identified as a proxy for achieving appropriate design review of projects. However recently developed Building for Life Assessments are considered to provide a far more informative assessment of the design quality of significant residential developments and now replace Core Strategy target 4.3.

#### 4.5 The three targets that are not yet on track to being met are:

1. CS Target 6.2 relating to the delivery of office development.
2. CS Target 10.4 relating to the delivery of Lifetime Homes.
3. CS Target 11.5 relating to onsite renewable energy production.

Mechanisms for improving future performance on each of these targets are set out below

1. CS Target 6.2 relating to the delivery of office development.  
In 2009/10 7,567sq m of office space had been completed, up from 4,868 sq m in the previous year. The figures were boosted by the completion of two major developments, an office building of almost 5,000 sq m at Sutton Harbour and a mixed use scheme with a 1,898 sq m office element at Millbay. Furthermore the City Centre and University Area Action Plan aims to create a new office core and contains a proposal for 100,000 sq m of office floorspace. This is expected to come forward in the next 4-5 years which would see this target being met in future.
2. CS Target 10.4 relating to the delivery of Lifetime Homes.  
Whilst this year's performance of 17% is below the policy target of 20%, it shows significant improvement for the 3<sup>rd</sup> consecutive year. This reflects the success of previous measures put in place including a standard section in the case officer's report on "Equalities and Diversities Issues" where Lifetime Homes requirements are addressed. A partial explanation for the below target performance is the number of dwellings that were the subject of earlier outline applications to which Lifetime Homes conditions had not been applied. This is likely to be less significant in future as all outline applications will have been subject to the Core Strategy policy. The following measures are being undertaken that will ensure further improved performance in 2010/11.

- From 1<sup>st</sup> September all relevant applications will need to provide a statement as part of the Validation Agreement as to how they meet the Lifetime Homes criteria
  - An additional on-site staff training session is planned
  - In December 2010, Members attended a training session which included Lifetime Homes as a topic.
3. CS Target 11.5 relating to onsite renewable energy production. 71% major applications approved between October 2008 and September 2009 had conditions requiring compliance with this policy. This is an improvement on the previous year's performance of 19% thanks largely to the measures implemented last year whereby case officer reports are expected to address this issue to ensure compliance and specialist advice is provided by our Environmental Planning Coordinator.
- From 1<sup>st</sup> September all relevant applications will need to provide a statement as part of the Validation Agreement as to how they meet the onsite renewable energy policy
  - A further training session for planning officers on the onsite renewable energy requirement is planned for 2011 to raise awareness of the requirements of this policy, and to ensure that the requirements for onsite renewable energy production equipment are considered early in the design and planning approval process.

4.6 However as well as detailing where targets are not yet on track to being met, the AMR also highlights significant trends or changes to past trends

#### 4.7 Housing

- In the last four years 3,575 new homes were built and a further 309 provided through converting or subdividing properties
- 361 homes were demolished, most of which were Council homes to clear the way for regeneration projects
- In 2008/9 555 homes were completed
- 335 affordable homes were delivered
- 96 per cent of new homes finished in the last year were built on brownfield sites. (94% taking account of the new definition which excludes garden land)
- Although the number of homes under construction fell to 458, the 342 new homes which were started during the year showed a slight increase over the previous year

#### 4.8 Employment and Retail space

- 2.39 hectares of employment land were developed, falling from its peak of 9.61 hectares in the previous year.
- The area of sites under construction or with planning permission fell by 31% in the past year
- The vacancy rate in the city's prime shopping frontages was 10%, the same as in 2008. This is better than the national average<sup>1</sup> for December 2009 of 12% and the 13% figure for the South West.

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<sup>1</sup> Local Data Company survey February 2010

#### 4.9 Planning

- 107 major planning applications were determined in 2009/10. 323 minor applications and 795 householder and other applications
- Planning Committee approved development to the value of £288 million in 2009/10 (and an additional £250million for Sherford)
- Development to the value of £134million has been approved on 10 Market Recovery Action Plan sites

#### 4.10 Environment

- Since the start of the Local Development Framework 48.4 hectares of Local Nature Reserve has been designated and a further 83 hectares are planned.
- 66% of dwelling completions were on sites which had a Building for Life assessment of good or very good

#### 4.11 Transport

- 129,000 passengers used Plymouth City Airport in 2009/10
- Number of public transport journeys in 2009/10 was 20.1 million
- Total vehicle miles fell to 1,113 million from 1,134 million in 2008/09

#### 4.12 People

- The overall employment rate has decreased for the 2<sup>nd</sup> consecutive year to 70.8%
- There has been a steady rise in the number of economically active in Plymouth although this rise has slowed recently - the numbers increased by 1,700 between 2009 and 2010

### **5. CONCLUSIONS**

- 5.1. The 2010 AMR has reported that considerable progress is still being made in implementing the Core Strategy, through a number of delivery mechanisms including the Area Action Plans. This work is providing a very strong foundation for delivering Plymouth's Vision, turning aspirations into reality by facilitating the development of key elements of the Vision. With 10 years to go in the plan period, the City Council can remain confident that the delivery of its overall vision remains on track.
- 5.2. The main concern, at this stage, relates to the potential effects of the current recession. However there are no indicators that would suggest that a change of policy approach is necessary, other than a pragmatic acceptance that it is going to take at least 3-5 years longer to achieve what we had expected to deliver by 2021.