

REPORT FROM: PLANNING, BUILDING CONTROL AND LICENSING SERVICES MANAGER

TO: EXECUTIVE

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AUTHORITY'S MONITORING REPORT (AMR) 2014/15

PURPOSE OF REPORT

To present the findings of the Local Planning Authority's Monitoring Report (AMR).

RECOMMENDATIONS

That the Executive approve the Authority's Monitoring Report 2014/15.

REASON FOR RECOMMENDATION

Part 6, Section 113 of the Localism Act 2011 and Regulation 34 of the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012, require all local planning authorities to prepare a report which monitors the progress of their Local Development Scheme and the policies contained in their Development Plan.

ISSUE

Background

The Localism Act 2011 and the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012 place a requirement on local planning authorities to monitor the implementation of their Local Development Scheme (the timetable which sets out how and when new Local Plan documents will be prepared) and the extent to which the policy objectives of the current Local Plan are being achieved.

This Authority's Monitoring Report (AMR) covers the period from 1st April 2014 to 31st March 2015. It also includes findings from the previous monitoring period as a report was not prepared in 2013/14 due to the need to progress the Core Strategy to its Examination.

Results and Key Findings

The full AMR is attached as Appendix 1 and together with its appendices provides details of the data collected and an analysis of the performance against each indicator.

A brief summary of some of the key findings is presented below along with information on the progress being made to prepare the new Local Plan.

Key planning policy work – progress on the preparation of the Local Plan

The following work was carried out during the 2014/15 monitoring period:

- Preparation of the Core Strategy (Pre-Submission Report)
- Consultation on the Core Strategy (Pre-Submission Report)
- Submission of the Core Strategy to the Secretary of State for Examination
- Preparation and review of the following evidence-base reports:
 - Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (SHLAA) update
 - Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA) update
 - Employment Land Review (ELR).

The AMR shows that work on the new Local Plan is only slightly out-of-step with the timetable in the Local Development Scheme. However, the Core Strategy has now been through its Examination in Public and is being presented for adoption in December 2015.

Work is also underway with the preparation of the Local Plan Part 2: Site Allocations and Development Policies which will look to allocate sites for new development.

Performance against key indicators:

Indicator SD03: Amount of new development completed on Greenfield and Previously Developed Land (PDL) – the monitoring of new housing, employment and retail development shows that 92% of development in 2014/15 was on previously developed land. Although the overall level of development was low, it is an encouraging sign that brownfield land is still being brought forward in the borough.

Indicator HS01: Number of new homes completed – during 2014/15 a total of 83 dwellings (gross) were completed. There were no losses of dwellings during this period and therefore the net number of completions also stands at 83 dwellings. This level of house building is still relatively low compared to the pre-recession period. However, it represents an increase on the previous two monitoring periods and may suggest that conditions in the housebuilding industry and the housing market are improving, albeit slowly.

The AMR provides an analysis of the performance against the housing requirement. It shows that cumulative completions (including the reoccupation of long-term empty homes) since 2011/12 totalled 976 dwellings (237 from new dwelling completions and 739 from reoccupied empty homes). The requirement for the same period is 1,192 dwellings. This means that the requirement is not currently being met and the borough is in a position of under-delivery.

Indicator HS03 shows that there are currently 1,128 dwellings with an extant planning permission. However, it is clear that not all of these dwellings will be built as some of the sites are now being promoted for alternative uses. At present, only 184 of these dwellings are under construction. Although this figure has increased since the previous monitoring period (again showing signs of improvements to the housing market) it will not provide a sufficient number of dwellings to meet the annual requirement of 298 next year. Furthermore, as there is now a shortfall of 216 dwellings

against the overall requirement, and with so little development coming forward, the under-delivery position is likely to worsen next year.

It is clear that in order to meet the housing requirement going forward, a higher level of development will be required. The allocation of sites in the Local Plan Part 2 will be an important step in ensuring the housing needs of the borough can be met.

Indicator HS02: Future predicted housing completions – an update of the Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (SHLAA) has been carried out as part of the annual monitoring work. Appendix D of the AMR provides details of the sites included in the SHLAA, their potential capacity and likely timescales for delivery. It indicates that there are sites currently available to accommodate 2,045 dwellings over the next five years. This is sufficient to provide a five year supply of deliverable housing land to meet the housing requirement. However, a number of these sites are yet to obtain planning permission and will need to be progressed in the planning system expediently in order to make their contribution to the supply.

Indicator HS05: Number of affordable homes completed – a total of 14 new-build affordable homes were completed in the 2014/15 monitoring period, representing 17% of all new dwellings built. These dwellings were part of the scheme developed by Great Places Housing Association at Mosley Street/Every Street, Nelson. Past delivery of new affordable housing has been poor, partly due to the viability of developing new housing sites in Pendle. Indicator HS06 shows that the overall number of affordable housing units with planning permission is now 136, representing 12% of the total stock of planning permissions for housing. This is an improvement compared to previous years, however, this is mainly due to the promotion of a number of key sites by Housing Associations developing fully affordable schemes rather than through contributions from market housing schemes.

Indicator EC01: Amount of new employment floorspace (m²) completed – the amount of new employment floorspace created in 2014/15 was significantly lower than in previous years with just 1,237m² being developed, taking-up 0.57ha of land. This is notably lower than the previous average take-up rate of 2.27ha. The reasons for this low take-up rate are unclear, however, it may suggest that the local economy is still fragile following the recession and may also suggest that there are limited quality site opportunities for new businesses or those wishing to expand.

Indicator EC12: Amount of new retail / town centre floorspace (m²) completed – there was a total of 1,670m² gross A1 retail floorspace created in 2014/15. A large proportion of this floorspace was made up of the new Booths supermarket built in Barrowford. However, there were also a number of small A1 losses equating to 495m². These mainly consisted of premises changing to alternative uses.

Indicator EC13: Town Centre occupancy levels – the latest survey findings show that the occupancy level of town centre units is relatively high with, on average, nearly 90% of units occupied.

Although there has been a very slight rise in the number of vacant units in three out of the six centres (at the time of the survey), the overall position is positive. Nelson has the highest number of vacant units at 14.7%. However, work is ongoing to improve the town centre, notably on Scotland Road/Leeds Road with the redevelopment of the former Burtons building.

Indicator EN01: Amount of energy generated by renewable sources – over the last two years there have been a number of new renewable energy developments. These have contributed a total of 0.625MW of energy, which represents a significant increase. In particular there have been five new wind turbines erected in the borough bringing the total number of turbines to 19.

The total generating capacity from renewable sources identified through the planning process is now 1.38MW. However, this amount still falls significantly short of the aspirational generation

figures identified in the Core Strategy. Furthermore, there are now fewer extant planning permissions for new renewable energy developments than in previous years. Without a step change in the number of schemes coming forward it is unlikely that Pendle will meet its generation targets in the future.

Indicator EN10: Number and condition of designated heritage assets – Historic England has made a number of new listings during 2014/15, including the Wallace Hartley Memorial, Colne and the Boy Scout War Memorial, Nelson. There are now 322 listed buildings/structures in the borough.

In terms of the condition of heritage assets in the borough, Historic England has identified two assets deemed to be at risk. These are the Brierfield Mills Conservation Area and Brierfield Methodist Church. However, both assets are undergoing work to improve their condition. Brierfield Methodist Church has a 'places of worship' grant and the regeneration of the Brierfield Mills complex will help to secure the future of the conservation area.

Historic England has removed the Whitefield Conservation Area from the heritage at risk register, confirming that the regeneration work in Whitefield has successfully seen the improvement, restoration and transformation of the buildings and environment in that area.

Indicator EN19: Number of planning permissions granted contrary to the advice from the Environment Agency – there were two applications approved contrary to the advice received from the Environment Agency in 2014/15. In both cases circumstances existed where the impact of the development was considered not sufficiently significant to warrant refusal. These applications included the change of use of Brierfield Mills to a hotel and leisure uses.

Conclusions

The 2014/15 AMR shows that there has been a varied performance against the indicators. Although there have been some positive results, the amount of housing and employment development is still low indicating that growth in the borough is fragile following the recession. There are some signs that the situation is starting to improve, although a positive approach to development will be required in the future if the vision and objectives set-out in the Core Strategy are to be realised.

Future monitoring will be important to provide a check on the progress being made in meeting the development requirements of the borough.

The AMR contains a significant amount of information and data that will be used alongside the policies in the development plan to help determine future planning applications.

IMPLICATIONS

- Policy:** The continued monitoring against the indicators in the AMR is essential to ensure that the policies in the Local Plan are being properly implemented and to highlight any problems so that the relevant changes to planning policy can be made.
- Financial:** There are no financial implications arising directly from the contents of this report
- Legal:** It is a statutory requirement under Part 6, Section 112 of the Localism Act 2011, and Regulation 34 of the Town and Country Planning (Local

Planning) (England) Regulations 2012, to prepare a monitoring report assessing the performance of the planning service.

Risk Management: None identified.

Health and Safety: None identified.

Sustainability: The continued monitoring against the indicators in the AMR helps to build up time series data and show whether the policies in the Local Plan are ensuring the sustainable development of the borough. A number of the indicators in the AMR are derived from the Significant Effect Indicators detailed in the Sustainability Appraisal for the Core Strategy.

Community Safety: None identified.

Equality and Diversity: None identified.

APPENDICES

Appendix 1 – Authority’s Monitoring Report (AMR) 2014/15

LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS

Borough of Pendle: Replacement Pendle Local Plan 2001-2016 (2006)

Borough of Pendle: Local Plan Part 1: Core Strategy Pre-Submission Report 2011-2030 (2014)