

**REPORT FROM: PLANNING, BUILDING CONTROL AND LICENSING
MANAGER**

TO: EXECUTIVE

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AUTHORITY'S MONITORING REPORT (AMR) 2015/16

PURPOSE OF REPORT

To present the Local Planning Authority's Monitoring Report (AMR) for the period 1st April 2015 – 31st March 2016.

RECOMMENDATION

That the Executive approve the Authority's Monitoring Report 2015/16.

REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATION

Part 6, Section 116 of the Localism Act 2011 and Regulation 34 of the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012, require that all local planning authorities prepare a report which monitors the progress of their Local Development Scheme and the policies contained in their Development Plan.

ISSUE

Background

The Council has a legal requirement to monitor the implementation of its Local Development Scheme (LDS) – the timetable which sets out how and when the new Local Plan will be prepared. It is also required to monitor 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 2015 to 31st March 2016.

Results and Key Findings

A copy of the AMR is attached as Appendix 1. This provides details of the data collected and a brief analysis of performance against each indicator.

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

The following work relating to the preparation of the Local Plan was carried out during the 2015/16 monitoring period:

- Independent Examination of the Core Strategy
- Adoption of the Core Strategy
- Initial preparation work on the following evidence-base reports:
 - Green Belt Assessment
 - Green Infrastructure Strategy (scoping)

The work load associated with the Examination and Adoption of the Core Strategy has led to a slight delay in the preparation of the Local Plan Part 2: Site Allocations and Development Policies. As a consequence consideration will be given to revising the LDS in due course.

Performance against key indicators:

This is the first AMR to be produced since the adoption of the Core Strategy in December 2015. As the Core Strategy was only in place for three months of the monitoring period the effects of the new planning policies have not yet made a noticeable impact. Due to the time lag between the adoption of new policy and development occurring on the ground, it will be a number of years before the full impact of the Core Strategy is seen.

For the 2015/16 monitoring period the AMR looks at the performance of policies in both the Replacement Pendle Local Plan 2001-2016 and the Core Strategy.

A summary of some of the key indicators are highlighted below:

Indicator SD01: Amount of new development completed in each settlement/spatial area – 53% of development in 2015/16 was located in the M65 Corridor, which is noticeably lower than in the previous two years. The West Craven Towns received 32% of new development, largely attributable to the housing developments in Barnoldswick at Valley Road and the former Hope Mill site, Skipton Road. Just 15% of development occurred in the Rural Areas, which is a similar level to the previous four years and is in-line with the spatial development principles set out in the Core Strategy.

Indicator SD03: Amount of new development completed on Greenfield and Previously Developed Land (PDL) – 75% of all development completed in the borough during the 2015/16 monitoring period was on PDL (often referred to as Brownfield Land). This is a slight decrease compared to the previous two years but still represents good performance considering the relatively poor viability of sites within the borough and the difficulties developers face in bringing such sites forward. There were a number of changes of use and conversions completed in the monitoring period which helped to boost the PDL figure.

Indicator EN01: Amount of energy generated by renewable sources – there was an additional 0.28MW of energy generated from three newly completed renewable energy developments during the monitoring period. Progress towards achieving the targets in the Core Strategy is currently poor, with only 1.67MW being generated compared to the target of 27.2MW. Not all renewable energy developments are recorded through the planning system and so the actual total amount generated may be slightly higher. However, a significant step-change will be needed if the borough is to meet its targets for renewable energy generation going forward, especially given the current low number of extant planning permissions for renewable energy schemes. The changes made to national policy on wind turbines have resulted in a noticeable reduction in the number of applications for this type of scheme. As a consequence it will be important to look at, and boost the up-take of alternative renewable energy sources.

Indicator EN05: Amount of land designated for biodiversity importance and its condition – this monitoring period saw an increase in the amount of land designated for biodiversity importance. This was due to a 1.34ha extension of the Alkincoats Local Nature Reserve (LNR) in Colne. This brings the total amount of land designated as a LNR to 17.67ha. There have been no changes to the other designations such as Biological Heritage Sites or the Site of Special Scientific Interest in the 2015/16 period.

Indicator EN10: Number and condition of designated heritage assets – six new listings were made by Historic England during the monitoring period. These include: the Parish Church of St John the Evangelist, Higham; Colne War Memorial; and Brierfield Cenotaph. There are now 304 listed buildings or structures in the borough. Two heritage assets are deemed at risk by Historic England (Brierfield Methodist Church and the Brierfield Mills Conservation Area), but actions are in place to make improvements to these assets.

Indicator EN19: Number of planning permissions granted contrary to advice from the Environment Agency on flooding and water quality grounds – three applications were approved during the monitoring period contrary to the advice given by the Environment Agency. However, at the decision making stage conditions were imposed to two of these applications which effectively resolved the objections even though they were not officially withdrawn. The objection to the third application was also resolved through the removal of the part of the site which was located within the flood zone. Overall, the Council has consistently taken account of the advice given by the Environment Agency to ensure flood risk is minimised and water quality remains unaffected by new development proposals.

Indicator HS01: Number of new homes completed – a total of 127 dwellings (gross) were completed during the monitoring period. There were no losses of dwellings and therefore the net number of completions also stands at 127 dwellings. The level of house building is at its highest since 2007/08. However, it is still notably lower than the annual requirement of 298 as set out in the Core Strategy.

Since the start of the plan period in 2011 a total of 364 (net) new dwellings have been completed. When this is added to the number of long term empty properties which have been reoccupied the overall number of new homes that count towards the housing requirement stands at 1,234. This is 256 less than the actual requirement and therefore the Council is in a position of under-delivery.

Indicator HS02: Future predicted housing completions – as part of the annual monitoring work the Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (SHLAA) has been updated and indicates that in the next five years there are sites available to deliver an estimated 2,079 dwellings. This gives the Council a 5.1 year supply of housing land. It should be noted that the supply of housing land fluctuates on a regular basis, with new permissions being granted/refused. The five year supply calculation in the AMR is correct as of 31st March 2016 but also takes account of recent appeal decisions to provide a more realistic position.

Indicator HS03: Number of new dwellings granted planning permission and total number of dwellings with an extant planning permission – an additional 446 dwellings were granted planning permission during 2015/16. A large proportion of these were accounted for through the granting of planning permission at the site off Knotts Lane in Colne (182 dwellings). In addition, two medium sized schemes were granted permission at Fletcher Street/Bracewell Street, Nelson (39 dwellings) and at the Former Westons site in Foulridge (22 dwellings).

There are now 1,255 dwellings with an extant planning permission. Of these, 1,058 have not been started and 197 are under construction. This is slightly more than the previous year and suggests that there is growing confidence in the area and house-builders are starting to develop sites in Pendle.

Indicator HS05: Number of affordable homes completed – there were 74 affordable dwellings completed in 2015/16, equating to 58% of the total number of dwellings completed. This shows good performance in terms of helping to meet the affordable housing targets outlined in the Core Strategy.

Indicator EC01: Amount of new (gross) employment floorspace completed – a total of 15,811m² (gross) employment floorspace was completed during the monitoring period, requiring around 2.14ha of land. The majority of this floorspace was for B2 (General Industry) use and was a result of the change of use of Scholefield Mill, Nelson. In terms of meeting the employment land requirement set out in the Core Strategy, there is now a cumulative under-delivery of 8.38ha.

Indicator EC03: Amount of new employment floorspace with an extant planning consent – there are currently 12.51ha of land with planning permission for employment uses. Collectively these permissions would provide 41,324m² of new employment floorspace, which if developed will help to contribute to the employment land requirement.

Indicator EC12: Amount of new retail/town centre floorspace completed – there was 2,217m² of new A1 retail floorspace completed during the 2015/16 monitoring period. A large proportion of this was due to the completion of the new Lidl supermarket at the former Glen Mill site in Colne (1,898m²).

Indicator EC13: Town centre occupancy levels – the retail occupancy survey shows that both Colne and Barnoldswick have seen a decrease in the number of vacant units for the fourth year in a row. This presents a positive picture in terms of the vitality of these towns. Nelson, Brierfield and Earby have all seen small increases in the number of vacant units during the monitoring period. However, the survey only presents a snap-shot in time and there is always some fluctuation in retail unit vacancies. The number of vacancies in Barrowford has remained constant at seven units. The number of units in the ‘A’ use classes (shops, restaurants etc) has remained fairly stable in all centres during 2015/16.

Conclusions

The performance across the indicators has been varied with some areas showing signs of improvement on previous years and others showing continued poor performance. Future monitoring will help to show if these trends persist and if management actions are needed to address them. The continued monitoring of these indicators helps to provide an evidence base for the preparation of the Local Plan Part 2 and for use in planning applications and appeals.

IMPLICATIONS

Policy:	The AMR is essential to ensuring that the policies in the Local Plan are being properly implemented. It is used to highlight any problems so that relevant changes can be made to planning policy.
Financial:	None arising directly from the 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 arising directly from the report.
Health and Safety:	None arising directly from the report.

- Sustainability:** The continued monitoring against the indicators in the AMR helps to build up time series data and show whether the implementation of the policies in the Local Plan are helping to ensure that new development in the borough is being delivered in a sustainable manner. Many of the indicators in the AMR are derived from the Significant Effects Indicators set out in the Sustainability Appraisal for the Core Strategy.
- Community Safety:** None arising directly from the report.
- Equality and Diversity:** None arising directly from the report.

APPENDICES

Appendix 1 – Authority’s Monitoring Report 1st April 2015 – 31st March 2016

Appendix 2 – Authority’s Monitoring Report Appendices

LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS

Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations (2012)

Localism Act (2011)

Replacement Pendle Local Plan (2001-2016) (2006)

Pendle Local Plan Part 1: Core Strategy (2011-2030) (2015)

Local Development Scheme (2014)