

Report to: Executive
Date: 16 December 2008
Report of: Executive Member for Regeneration
Subject Local Development Framework: Annual Monitoring Report and Local Development Scheme for County Durham
Ward: All

1. Purpose of Report

- 1.1 To report progress in preparing an Annual Monitoring Report (AMR) and Local Development Scheme (LDS) for County Durham. Copies of both documents are available in the Members Library.

2. Consultation

- 2.1 The reports have been prepared and considered by a joint team of planning policy officers, established to achieve the early integration of the planning service for the new Council. Both reports have been considered by the Planning Workstream for the new authority and will be submitted to the County Council for approval and to each of the District Councils for information.

3. Background

- 3.1 In accordance with the provisions of the 2004 Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act, every Local Authority must publish and submit an Annual Monitoring Report (AMR) to the Secretary of State before 31 December. The document must consider progress in delivering economic, social and environmental benefits against national and local indicator measures. It must report on the milestones in preparing Local Development Framework documents, as set out in the Local Development Scheme.
- 3.2 The relevant monitoring period is from April 2007 to March 2008 and during this monitoring period, the District Councils' in Durham were the relevant planning authorities. However, given Local Government Review and the fact that most authorities ceased any further work on their Local Development Framework earlier this year, it has been agreed with GO-NE that a joint AMR for all of the Durham councils would be more appropriate for 2007/2008
- 3.3 The second document is the Local Development Scheme, which sets out the Development Plan Documents and Supplementary Planning Documents to be prepared over the next few years and the timetable for preparation, including key milestones and targets.
- 3.4 The draft Local Government (Structural Changes) (Transitional Arrangements) Regulations 2008 will make Durham County Council the local planning authority for Local Development Framework purposes upon enactment of the regulations. It is now understood that this will be effective from 27th November 2008. However, District authorities still need to be aware of the content of the Scheme and progress in achieving milestones in the AMR. The Local Development Scheme has therefore been placed on the agenda for each of Districts' Cabinets and Executives for information.

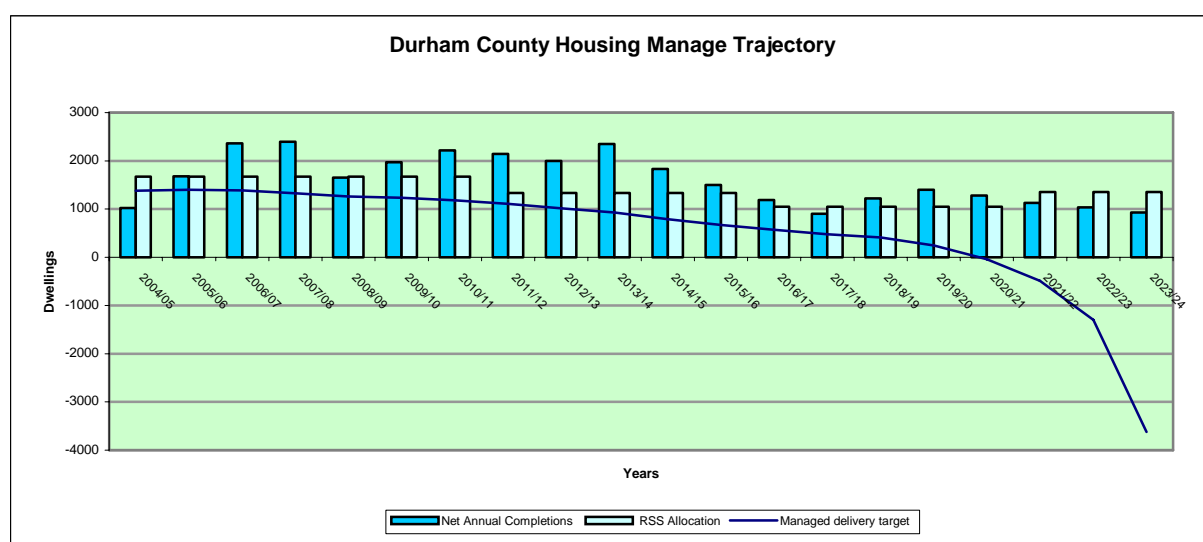
4. Position Statement and Option Appraisal

Annual Monitoring Report : Key findings

- 4.1 Progress in preparing District and County development plans has now ceased and future plan preparation activity is in the process of being integrated across existing development plan teams. Consequently, this AMR reports jointly on key economic, social and environmental trends to identify County Durham's contribution to national and regional objectives, as well as setting a baseline for the development of County Durham's Local Development Framework.
- 4.2 The AMR identifies the county's spatial strengths and weaknesses and reports against national and regional indicator sets. Over time, these will be expanded to include local indicators to measure progress in achieving local objectives and to respond to the challenges that Durham will face in the future.
- 4.3 The profile section of the AMR highlights the diverse and distinctive characteristics that make up this part of the region. Challenges include an ageing and declining population and pockets of severe deprivation associated with low levels of productivity, particularly in Easington. However, the District has made some positive contributions to County performance in a number of areas:
- 440 houses were built in the District, down from 599 the previous year;
 - 4 of these were affordable housing units;
 - 1 of the 2 transit sites for gypsies and travellers developed in the County is at Easington;
 - take-up of employment land in Easington was 5.74 hectares, second only to Durham City in the County;
 - Easington has 63.5 hectares of employment land available for development – a review of current capacity and future needs will be reported shortly;
 - the County is making good progress towards the sub-regional target for renewable energy generation – a study in capacity for wind generation on the Limestone Plateau affecting Easington, Sedgefield and Durham City will be reported shortly, 14 turbines were approved in Easington, 25 in Sedgefield and 6 in Durham;
 - no developments in Easington were built in flood risk or Green Belt areas.
- 4.4 Action to improve economic performance is supported by the availability of 515 hectares of employment land for development in the County, of which more than 300 hectares is available for development in the short term. Over 85,000 square metres of employment floorspace was developed during 2007/08 to accommodate a mix of business, general industry, storage and distribution uses. Significant proposals include Heighington Lane West in Sedgefield and Hawthorn Business Park in Easington. The majority of built development was on previously developed land, whilst the spatial distribution of the employment land supply (and annual take-up) largely correlates to the strategic transport corridors of the A1 and A19.
- 4.5 Housing trajectories for each of the seven Districts demonstrate a significant improvement in housing delivery. Low levels of housebuilding at the start of the plan period (2004), were followed by a strong housing market across the County. All of the Districts can demonstrate that they have a 5-year deliverable housing land supply as required under the terms of Planning Policy Statement 3 (Housing). Taken together, the County can demonstrate a level of housing land supply which is 50% above the minimum 5-year requirement for the County.
- 4.6 Maintaining a rolling 5-year housing land supply is an important element in the award of Housing and Planning Delivery Grant (HPDG), for which Easington was awarded the

maximum £72,398 HPDG. The Government's Department of Communities and Local Government recently commissioned a study into how local authorities prepare and justify these assessments, and Easington has been selected as a case study for the dissemination of good practice.

- 4.7 All but one of the seven Districts has achieved significantly above the regional target of 65% of housing development built on previously developed sites. Easington is in the top quartile having delivered 95.8% of development on previously developed sites, whilst collectively County Durham delivered over 80%.
- 4.8 There are ambitious plans for future housing delivery in every District, although the reporting period predates the current credit crunch. The effect on meeting the overall sub-regional housing target is demonstrated in the following trajectory, provided as a trigger for action to review policies if housing projections are found to be adrift. The trajectory takes into account the cumulative surplus/shortfall in housing provision from previous years, where 0 would signify housing development commensurate with the RSS requirement. The key performance measure is the remaining annual requirement, represented by the 'managed delivery' line in the trajectory. This line represents the amount of housing needed to meet the target and get the projection back on track. Durham is projected to provide housing numbers above the RSS target until after 2019, from when surplus allocations will accumulate:



- 4.9 The trajectory does not yet reflect the South and East Durham Growth Point which will provide for some 11,500 additional homes across defined areas of Easington, Sedgfield and Wear Valley. Further work is being undertaken to manage and monitor the additional proposed housing.
- 4.10 2500 new homes were delivered during the year in the County, 118 of which have been affordable units. Affordable provision has been constrained in part to the lack of an appropriate policy in some areas of the County which historically had a plentiful supply of low cost homes and the viability of affordable provision could not be sustained. In other areas, a large proportion of housing development is on sites which are too small to meet the minimum size thresholds for an affordable requirement. The current economic climate is also delaying larger schemes where affordable housing provided through Section 106 planning agreements would be expected. This issue will

need to be addressed through a county-wide approach to affordable housing in the new County Local Development Framework.

- 4.11 The Regional Spatial Strategy sets out a sub-regional renewable energy target for County Durham of 82 MW to 2010, with the aim of generating at least 10% of the region's consumption of electricity from renewable sources, rising to 20% by 2020. As at 31st March 2008, County Durham had exceeded targets with 16.22 MW of operational onshore wind energy capacity and a further 135 MW of renewable energy capacity.
- 4.12 Preparation of all development plan documents in the County and District planning authorities ceased following the announcement to establish a single unitary authority for County Durham. Work has already commenced on a new Local Development Framework for the County, incorporating as far as possible the work already undertaken both individually and jointly by the Districts. This includes evidence on housing needs and supply, employment, flood risk, matters concerning environmental and open space provision, and conservation. Significant further work is identified in the AMR for the interim planning team to ensure consistency between Districts, and to assess whether the evidence base is sufficiently robust and comprehensive to support a new county-wide development plan.
- 4.13 Adoption of documents in a Local Development Framework for County Durham will unavoidably be delayed until at least 2010 as the unitary planning authority commences new document preparation. A Local Development Scheme with a programme for document preparation will be published by the end of December 2008. In the meantime, Local Plan policies extended by District authorities on Direction of the Secretary of State are collectively reported in this AMR and will remain effective to support development management decisions across the county area until policies in the new Local Development Framework for County Durham are adopted to replace them.

Local Development Scheme

- 4.14 In response to the July 2007 Housing Green Paper, the Durham Housing and Neighbourhoods Partnership, prepared and submitted a New Growth Point Bid for the area covering South and East Durham. Based along both the A19 and Bishop Auckland-Darlington Economic Corridors, the Durham Growth Point seeks to deliver accelerated housing and employment growth, in order to address economic and regeneration needs within these communities. In East Durham proposals focus on the two main towns of Seaham and Peterlee, whilst in South Durham the triangle of towns comprising Newton Aycliffe, Bishop Auckland and Spennymoor are the primary focus. The proposals deliver growth through a number of mixed use strategic sites and the implementation of town centre regeneration schemes, together with housing market renewal in the priority settlements of Peterlee, Coundon, Ferryhill and Chilton. These will be delivered alongside a number of planned improvements in both transport and community infrastructure within these localities.
- 4.15 An announcement in July 2008 confirmed that the Bid had been successful. Notwithstanding this, the proposals as set out in the Bid still need to be tested through the Local Development Framework process. It will therefore be essential to reflect the policy platform required to enable the timely delivery of the Growth Point within the Local Development Documents proposed in this Local Development Scheme and the Growth Point is therefore fundamental to the content of the County Durham Local Development Framework. A more detailed report on the Durham Growth Point will be prepared for a future meeting of the Executive.

- 4.16 It is proposed that the first Local Development Scheme includes milestones for the production of the following documents:
- **The Core Strategy** - contains the overarching strategy for future development of the County, including minerals and waste, to which all subsequent planning documents must conform. The Core Strategy will cover the period up to 2026. It will include a vision and strategic objectives, a spatial strategy, core policies, strategic development sites and a framework for monitoring and implementation.
 - **The Growth Point Area Action Plans** - will be separate but co-ordinated Area Action Plans covering Central and Eastern Bishop Auckland, Peterlee and Spennymoor. Although three separate Development Plan Documents, they will be closely co-ordinated and run parallel to the timeline for the Core Strategy until the Examination stage when they will be staggered by a month to ensure that the Core Strategy is likely to be found sound.
 - **Design and Sustainability Supplementary Planning Document** – will provide guidance on how new development should be designed and constructed. This will help achieve high design standards to reflect the aims and ambitions of national advice and guidance and local aims and objectives. It is also intended to address some of the causes of climate change.
- 4.17 The initial focus will be on those Local Development Documents that are clearly vital to spatial planning in the County or where resources are already committed. However there are other Local Development Documents that will be produced when the time and resources are available and others, which may be produced if it becomes clear that they are required. These are listed below:
- Minerals and Waste Policies and Allocations Development Plan Document
 - Site Allocations Development Plan Document
 - The Stanley Town Centre Area Action Plan
 - Newton Aycliffe Area Action Plan
 - The Durham City Centre Area Action Plan
 - The Barnard Castle Town Centre Area Action Plan
 - The Chester-le-Street Area Action Plan
 - The Consett Town Centre Area Action Plan
 - Affordable Housing Supplementary Planning Document
 - Community Infrastructure Levy/Planning Contributions Supplementary Planning Document
 - Green Infrastructure Supplementary Planning Document

Next Steps

- 4.18 Once the content of the Annual Monitoring Report has been agreed, it will be submitted to the Government Office for the North East by the 31st December 2008 deadline and published on the websites.
- 4.19 The AMR will be used by the local planning authorities to support development management decisions and to identify matters to be addressed in the preparation of a new County Durham Local Development Framework. The Department of Communities and Local Government also use the information contained in the report for the purposes of calculating Housing and Planning Delivery Grant awards.
- 4.20 Once the content of the Local Development Scheme has been agreed by Council it will be submitted to the Government Office for the North East by the 31st December 2008 deadline. It should be noted that Government Office has been involved in the drafting of the Local Development Scheme and have expressed support for its contents.

- 4.21 The Local Development Scheme will be monitored through the Annual Monitoring Report, and by the Department of Communities and Local Government (for the purposes of calculating Housing and Planning Delivery Grant). If it becomes clear that milestones will not be met or that further Local Development Documents need to be produced then the Local Development Scheme will be reviewed.

5. Implications

5.1 Financial

There are no financial implications for District of Easington Council

5.2 Legal

There are no legal implications

5.3 Policy

There are no policy implications

5.4 Local Government Review

Implications for LGR are addressed in the report

5.5 Risk

A risk assessment is included in the Local Development Scheme. As the Annual Monitoring Report is a technical report and demonstrates that the Council meets its 5-year housing land supply, there are no further risks.

5.6 Communications

The Annual Monitoring report and the Local Development Scheme will be published on the Council's website in accordance with planning regulations.

6. Corporate Implications

6.1 Corporate Plan and priorities

The report addresses corporate priorities to secure economic wellbeing through the management of employment and housing land supply, the redevelopment of major sites and support for tourism potential; also the priority for decent homes through the monitoring of housing provision; the priority for clean and tidy communities through the monitoring of environmental protection and improvement, recycling and renewable energy; the priority for better transport through the management of infrastructure provision; and the priority for healthy communities through the monitoring of green space provision.

6.2 Equality and Diversity

Equality and diversity will be built in to development plan preparation process

6.3 E-govt

Plan preparation and consultation will be undertaken in accordance with the governments e-planning requirements

6.4 Procurement

There are no procurement issues

6.5 Service Plan

This report meets service plan objectives for the preparation and timely submission of plans

6.6 Performance Management and Scrutiny

The report meets planning performance targets for development plan preparation

6.7 Sustainability

Sustainability appraisal is a statutory requirement of plan preparation and will inform all of its policies and proposals

6.8 Well-being expenditure

There are no expenditure implications

6.9 Human resources

Human resource implications are addressed in the report

6.10 Crime and Disorder

There are no crime and disorder implications

6.11 Human Rights

There are no human rights implications

6.12 Social Inclusion

Plan preparation and consultation will be undertaken in accordance with social inclusion objectives

7. Recommendation

That the contents of the Annual Monitoring Report and Local Development Scheme are noted.

Background Papers/Documents referred to

Planning Policy Statement 3, Housing
Regional Spatial Strategy