HERTSMERE BOROUGH COUNCIL
REPORT TO EXECUTIVE

Item no: 8.4

Date of Meeting / Decision: 10 December 2008

This is not a key decision

Urgency: The proposals are not exempt from call-in on the grounds of urgency.

TITLE:

HERTSMERE ANNUAL MONITORING REPORT 2007-2008

Each local planning authority has to submit an annual monitoring report to the Secretary of State by 31 December 2008. Hertsmere’s annual monitoring report for 2007/8 monitoring year is attached and sets out progress in the implementation of local plan policies against various indicators, as well as charting progress made in implementing the local development scheme timetable.

PORTFOLIO HOLDER: COUNCILLOR HANNAH DAVID

1. ACTION RECOMMENDED

1.1 That the content of this report is noted.

1.2 That the Annual Monitoring Report for 2007/08, as set out in the appendix to this report, is approved for submission to the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government. (Please note that copies of the appendix are available in the Members’ Room, at the Civic Offices Reception and on request from Democratic Services. The Annual Monitoring Report can also be viewed on the Council’s website).

2. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY / PROPOSALS

2.1 The Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 reformed the plan making system and formalised plan monitoring by making it a statutory requirement for all Local Planning Authorities to prepare an Annual Monitoring Report (AMR). This is the Council’s forth AMR under the new legislative requirement and covers the time period 1 April 2007 – 31 March 2008 and has to be submitted to the Secretary of State by 31 December 2008.

2.2 The AMR must outline the progress that has been made on the implementation of the new plan system and the extent to which policies either in the saved Local Plan or in emerging Local Development Documents are effective and being implemented.
2.3 Overall the Council is making good progress in achieving its Local Development Framework and in meeting a number of key targets. A total of 17 out of 22 targets have been met, (77%) compared to 19 out of 26 (73%) in 2006/7.

2.4 The key trends that have emerged from the AMR are that the Council is still performing well in terms of the amount of new housing achieved on previously developed land (PDL) and the amount of new housing being delivered. The Central government target for the amount of new housing to be built on PDL is 60%. The Council continues to exceed this target with 100% of new housing on PDL in 2007/2008. This is mainly due to the fact that large amounts of the Borough are designated as Green Belt ensuring that new development is focused into the existing towns. However, the AMR reveals that a total of 2.79 hectares of land, previously used for employment purposes, was redeveloped for housing in 2007/8. This reflects the competing demands on brownfield land within the principal settlements but it should be noted that the Council’s emerging Core Strategy seeks the introduction of Local Significant Employment Sites which will ensure that key local employment sites, outside of the larger industrial estates such as Elstree Way, Borehamwood and Cranbourne Road, Potters Bar, are afforded protection from residential redevelopment. The individual locations to be protected will be set out in a draft Site Allocations DPD in 2009.

2.5 The East of England Plan was adopted in May 2008 setting a target of 5,000 homes to be built over a 20-year period to 2021. The Council is almost on target, in terms of the annual housing requirement, with 1722 housing completions between 2001 and 2008 compared to a cumulative target of 1,750 over this period. The Council is also able to demonstrate a five-year supply of developable housing land, as required by the latest government policy in PPS3 (Housing). The five year total of 1,459 units (on previously developed land) has been derived from the following:

- Dwellings under construction at 01/04/08 = 591
- With planning permission at 01/04/08 = 343
- Outline or Subject to S.106 at 01/04/08 = 38
- Urban Capacity Study and other known sites/capacities (as informed by pre-application discussion) = 487

2.6 The Council’s Urban Capacity Study indicates that there is presently insufficient land to meet the Secretary of State’s proposed target of 5,000 new homes. This is reflected in an increase in the rate required to meet the panel report target in the last five years of the trajectory when there may be a need to release Green Belt land to meet regional housing requirements, but only if windfall brownfield sites do not come forward. The recent emergence of possible development sites in Borehamwood such as the Gas Holders Site on Station Road and the BBC Elstree Centre suggest that sufficient windfalls may emerge, to enable regional housing requirements to be contained within existing built up areas.

2.7 The Council is generally on track with regard to employment development, transport, accessibility, the environment and open space. A percentage total of 39% of indicator targets were met in 2007/8 compared to 29% in the 2006/7. Perhaps the most significant areas where the Council is failing to meets its own
target are with regard to commercial retail development and the proportion of Affordable Housing which is provided through family-sized homes.

2.8 The Council’s policies state that not more than 2 units in any parade of 6 units should be in a non-retail use. This means that 66% of the units in the Borough’s town centres should be in retail use but in 2007/08 the proportion in retail use was 57%. It will be necessary to consider retail trends in the preparation of the Local Development Framework (LDF) Site Allocations DPD where detailed criteria for the proportion of different ground floor uses within new primary and secondary frontages in each town centre will be introduced. The proportions are to be set at different levels according to the town centre in question.

2.9 In respect of Affordable Housing, the proportion of Affordable Housing, which has been developed as family housing, is 25% or 90 units, compared to a figure of 75% or 355 units for market housing. As with the proportions for the previous monitoring year, this suggests that developers may simply be meeting the requirement to provide a proportion of Affordable Housing units on development sites by providing larger numbers of one and two bedroom flats. The number of one-bedroom affordable flats has increased from 13 units (06/07) to 50 units (07/08), while the number of two-bedroom affordable flats has increased from 93 units (06/07) to 116 units (07/08). The Council needs to ensure that a good mix of unit sizes is provided through the development of Affordable Housing. The Affordable Housing SPD was adopted in September 2008 and contains more stringent measures to ensure that an adequate mix is provided.

2.10 Good progress has been made in implementing the Local Development Scheme (LDS) and in particular, milestones relating to the preparation of its Parking and Affordable Housing have largely been met. Some slippage on key milestones for Development Plan Documents has occurred which appears to be consistent with the experience of other Local Planning Authorities. However, considerable progress was made during the monitoring period on the Core Strategy, including publication and consultation of the Core Strategy Preferred Options. The Council approved the final document for submission to the Secretary of State on 19th November 2008. In particular, it is hoped that this DPD will help to support and enhance the delivery of sustainable planning outcomes in Hertsmere, including an increasing proportion of targets in the Annual Monitoring Report.

3. **REASON(S) FOR RECOMMENDATION**

3.1 To inform Members of the progress of the plan implementation so far and to agree the 2007/08 for submission to the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government.

4. **ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS**

4.1 There are no alternative options. The Council is required to submit an Annual Monitoring Report by the end of the calendar year and the document attached as Appendix 1 meets the statutory requirement.
5. **PLANNED TIMETABLE FOR IMPLEMENTATION**

5.1 There is no specific timetable for implementation as the function of the AMR is to monitor policy implementation and the introduction of the new plan system, known as the Local Development Framework, introduced by the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004.

6. **DELEGATION**

6.1 This decision is for the Executive as a whole.

7. **FINANCIAL AND BUDGET FRAMEWORK IMPLICATIONS**

7.1 It has been a somewhat easier task than in previous years when collating data required for this AMR. This continues to be a burden on policy staff as the AMR is an annual requirement, but it has become less of a laborious and resource intensive procedure. Further work is required in improving current monitoring systems and updating when necessary and also endeavouring to create new systems that will continue to improve the data collection process in forthcoming years. The Council currently has a good monitoring system for housing, which was recently overhauled by officers within the Planning and Building Control Unit. Improved monitoring systems for employment floorspace monitoring and town centre uses now exist, but all of these need to be kept updated on a monthly or quarterly basis. Methods have been created to monitor previously uncollected data such as policy usage within Development Control and transport issues. Monitoring has become a key part of the policy team’s role and the employment of a Monitoring Officer within the team has only helped with this and will continue to do so as there are ever increasing government monitoring requirements and performance targets.

8. **LEGAL POWERS RELIED ON AND ANY LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

8.1 The primary legislation requiring the production of the AMR is the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004.

9. **RISK MANAGEMENT IMPLICATIONS**

9.1 None.

10. **PERSONNEL IMPLICATIONS**

10.1 The preparation of the Annual Monitoring Report is being undertaken internally within the Policy & Transport team. The personnel demands can be absorbed within the existing team structure.
11. CORPORATE PLAN & POLICY FRAMEWORK IMPLICATIONS

11.1 The AMR supports the Council’s LDF which is one of its core policy documents. The proposed changes to the dates in preparing Development Plan Documents, although regrettable, should not affect the role of the LDF in delivering Corporate Objectives.

12. ASSET MANAGEMENT PLAN IMPLICATIONS

12.1 None.

13. HEALTH AND SAFETY IMPLICATIONS

13.1 None.

14. APPENDICES ATTACHED

14.1 Appendix – Hertsmere Annual Monitoring Report 2007/08. *(Please note that copies of the appendix are available in the Members’ Room, at the Civic Offices Reception and on request from Democratic Services. The Annual Monitoring Report can also be viewed on the Council’s website).*

15. BACKGROUND PAPERS USED IN PREPARATION OF THIS REPORT


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