

Report for Information

Report to Sustainable development panel
2 December 2011

Report of Head of planning services

Subject Annual monitoring report 2010/11

Item

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Purpose

To inform the sustainable development panel of the content of the annual monitoring report (AMR). This consists of a greater Norwich report monitoring the progress of the Joint Core Strategy (JCS) and a Norwich appendix covering other city specific issues.

Recommendations

That SD Panel members note the content of the AMR.

Financial Consequences

There are no direct financial consequences for the council relating to this.

Risk Assessment

There are no risks associated with the AMR.

Strategic Priority and Outcome/Service Priorities

The report helps to meet the strategic priority "Strong and prosperous city – working to improve quality of life for residents, visitors and those who work in the city now and in the future" and the service plan priority to deliver the Local Development Framework for Norwich

Cabinet Member: Cllr Bremner

Ward: All

Contact Officers

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Background Documents

None

Report

Introduction

1. The purpose of this report is to inform the SD Panel of the content of the Annual Monitoring Report. This consists of a greater Norwich Annual Monitoring Report (AMR) monitoring the progress of the Joint Core Strategy (JCS) (see appendix 1 to this report) and a Norwich appendix covering other city specific issues (see appendix 2 to this report).
2. The AMR covers the period from April 2010 to March 2011.
3. The AMR will be submitted to the Department for Communities and Local Government in December 2011.

The Joint Core Strategy Annual Monitoring Report

4. The AMR for the JCS sets the baseline for future monitoring and provides a useful indication of how the GNDP area is currently performing in terms of its overall objectives.
5. Monitoring of the JCS will be reviewed before each annual publication in order to improve the presentation of outputs and understanding of performance. Indicators may need to be altered over time as data publications change but, wherever possible, appropriate data proxies will be used in order to keep a clear view of how the JCS is performing.
6. There are many targets in the JCS's monitoring framework that are currently being met or where clear improvements have been made since the base date of the strategy, April 2008:
 - Carbon emissions have reduced substantially;
 - More planning permissions are being granted in accordance with the advice of the Environment Agency;
 - More household waste is being recycled and composted;
 - The number of conservation areas with appraisals has increased;
 - The quality of the GNDP area's Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs) has improved;
 - No listed buildings have been lost through development;
 - The proportion of new dwellings built on previously developed land has consistently achieved targets;
 - Pro-rata targets for new office floorspace have been achieved;
 - The proportion of school leavers obtaining 5 or more GCSEs has increased since 2007;
 - A greater proportion of people are qualified to at least A-level and degree standard;
 - Deprivation, relative to England as a whole, has shown an improvement;
 - Objectives around crime, road safety, healthy lifestyles and community engagement have been met.

7. There are a number of indicators where targets are not currently being met. Many of these indicators are likely to have been adversely affected by the global economic downturn. For example, national housing completions have fallen dramatically since 2007 and the same is true for the GNDP area. New housing completions in 2010/11 were 54% lower than they were in 2007/08. Employment rates were 2.5% lower in 2010/11 than they were in 2007/08 but it must be recognised that jobs may well have been created over this period as well as some lost. Despite the economic downturn retailing in Norwich has been remarkably resilient, unlike the national trends with high levels of shop closures. Norwich has improved its national retail ranking over the monitored period.
8. There are indicators which are perhaps less influenced by external factors such as the global economy, including housing need, the environment and education. These are where the overall focus for action must be placed.

The Norwich appendix

9. The JCS Annual Monitoring Report replaces many aspects of the previous annual monitoring reports produced by Norwich City Council.
10. The Norwich appendix monitors information and provides commentary on the remaining City of Norwich Replacement Local Plan (adopted November 2004) policies not covered in the JCS AMR.
11. Key findings from the Norwich AMR show:
 - **Employment:** while targets for small businesses were achieved, there was little development on allocated employment land and a loss of employment overall in Norwich.
 - **Retail;** Norwich city centre has weathered the recession relatively well with the city retaining a place in the top 10 of retail centres nationally, and retail vacancies falling (see JCS AMR pages 46 and 47 for further detail). Whilst new retail completions were low, the proportion of cafés and restaurants in comparison with shops increased in the city centre, partly in response to recent policy changes to widen the attractions of the city centre. In local and district centres, while vacancy rates remain higher than pre recession rates, recent increases were reversed or stabilised. The proportion of non retail uses in both local and district centres continued to rise.
 - **Housing;** completions (377 dwellings) were low in comparison with pre recession rates, though densities remained high (average 97 per hectare). There were 112 affordable housing completions, again low in comparison with pre recession rates, but higher than 2009/10. The quality of new housing

completed was generally high – 57% of larger schemes achieved at least the silver standard (14 out of 20) using nationally accredited Building for Life standards.

12. The appendix also sets out progress on local development documents being produced for the LDF for Norwich.