

WELWYN HATFIELD BOROUGH COUNCIL
CABINET – 7 FEBRUARY 2017

Recommendation from the Cabinet Housing and Planning Panel on 12 January 2017:-

74. LOCAL PLAN - ANNUAL MONITORING REPORT:

Report of the Executive Director (Public Protection, Planning & Governance) was considered which acts as a record of the information on the Borough's population, performance and development which took place over the period from 1 April 2015 to 31 March 2016. This Annual Monitoring (AMR) also sets out progress against the Local Development Scheme, which specifies when and how the Council will produce new planning documents and policies, and reports on the Council's efforts under the 'duty to cooperate' with other public authorities.

The AMR also reported in detail on the preparation of the Draft Local Plan and the wider Local Plan process through to adoption in 2017. It set out the new evidence studies which have been produced during the year, the new evidence currently being produced and will be reported on next year.

The main headlines from each chapter of the AMR were summarised within the report. A presentation was received which reported on the following:

- The Borough's population – estimated to be just over 119,000, among the very largest estimated increases in the UK at a growth rate over the year of 2.6%.
- Monitoring of current District Plan Policies.
- Retail and Town Centres – Noted that the Galleria shopping centre was not included, this was because the Galleria is not designated as a centre in the Council's retail hierarchy. Growth of out of town centre floor space to be an indicator in future reports.
- Housing – during the year 408 (net) new dwellings have been completed, including student housing. During the year, 116 new affordable homes were brought to the market. This equates to 36% of new completions. There was also an increase in new homes in the green belt during the year.
- Concern expressed regarding villages and the Affordability ratio in Brookmans Park being 19.7 and the Affordability ratio for the whole Borough was 9.9.
- The Borough has a 5.03 year supply of housing land – slightly in excess of the five year requirement, the housing target was only recently set as part of the publication of the Draft Local Plan and with the intention that a five year supply would be achieved once the Local Plan was adopted.

- The Economy – loss of employment premises to other uses during the year. However, noted that job figures are above the national average.
- Environmental Assets – no change to the number of heritage assets. Highlighted that CO2 emissions are now monitored.
- Infrastructure and Movement – WHBC received £164,000 in Section 106 funds from new developments, whilst HCC received £1.4 million. Major S106 expenditure included the Hatfield Interchange project.
- Site-Specific Monitoring – The Draft Local Plan now includes site-specific criteria for a number of mixed-use and strategic development sites throughout the Borough.

RESOLVED:

- (1) That the Cabinet Housing and Planning Panel recommends to Cabinet that the AMR be approved for publication and that the Head of Planning be given delegated powers to agree any minor alterations to finalise the AMR following consultation with the Executive Member for Planning, Housing and Community.