

WELWYN HATFIELD BOROUGH COUNCIL
CABINET – 5 MARCH 2019

Recommendation from the Cabinet Planning and Parking Panel on 7 February 2019:-

123. LOCAL PLAN - ANNUAL MONITORING REPORT

Members considered the report of the Corporate Director (Public Protection, Planning and Governance) on the Local Plan – Annual Monitoring Report (AMR), which serves a number of objectives, including reporting upon the amount of development that has taken place in the Borough during the year, assessing whether this development meets targets across a number of indicators, as well as setting out expectations for future development in the Borough. In addition, it also reports on progress against the Local Development Scheme, which sets out when and how the Council would produce new planning documents and policies and includes progress on the Council's efforts under 'duty to cooperate' with other public authorities.

The 2017/18 AMR covered the period from 1 April 2017 to 31 March 2018. While the AMR also referred to development and changes since the 31 March 2018, the 2018/19 AMR would report on these in more detail.

The report noted that the AMR was set out over nine chapters theme by topic. The key conclusions from the AMR were summarised on pages four and five of the report.

The AMR presentation covered the following items:

- The Borough and its people
- Planning for the future
- Monitoring of Local Plan policies
- Centres, Services and Facilities
- Housing
- The Economy
- Environmental Assets
- Infrastructure and Movement
- Site-Specific Monitoring

Members raised and discussed the points below:

- Good report but concern expressed in terms of 93% of new builds having access to a hospital – did it mean that the remaining 7% would not be able to get to hospital? Officers clarified that this related to 30 minutes of walking or travelling by public transport to a hospital. Further discussion ensued on the QEII not having an accident and emergency unit.
- Loss of employment land was considered and it was noted that Panshanger airfield had been omitted from the AMR. It was agreed that reference would be made to airfield in Panshanger text. It was noted that other sites for an airfield had been identified.

- Noted that CO2 omissions were above average.
- Members expressed their concern of the current Welwyn Garden City bus station in terms of its design; the angle at which the buses parked up and access for wheelchair users. Officers advised that this would be brought to Hertfordshire County Council's attention.
- Noted that there was no change to the deprivation statistics.
- A Member raised a question in respect of housing numbers, delivery timescales and windfall projections. Officer advised that the projected numbers against the Local Plan were lower than anticipated last year – main reason being that some sites not completed due to bad weather and others having started earlier than expected but with the demolition works without any completions. In terms of the review of the analysis of windfall completion; it was noted these were not available at present.
- Officers advised that the inspector (Local Plan) would be looking at other sites that can be used within the green belt. Members will have the opportunity to consider the sites identified for development.
- Members agreed that there was a need for mix of dwelling size, as there appeared to be a considerable number of 1 and 2 bedroom apartments. It was suggested that developers should be requested to ensure sufficient number of 3+ bedroom houses. The Officer advised that it was not possible to dictate house type but developers can be asked to demonstrate how they are meeting the need for different households identified in the SHMA and that there would be more opportunity to deliver a mix of dwelling types on the larger strategic sites. Noted that Wheat Quarter development site had been included in the figures provided.
- Trend lines would be more informative. Use of same colours coded legends on maps would be helpful.

RESOLVED

That the Cabinet Planning and Parking Panel recommends to Cabinet that the Annual Monitoring Report 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 Environment and Planning.