

BRECKLAND COUNCIL

**REPORT OF THE EXECUTIVE MEMBER FOR THE PLANNING, HEALTH & HOUSING
PORTFOLIO to the
CABINET: 8 DECEMBER 2009
(Author: Sarah Robertson, Planning Graduate – Capita Symonds)**

ANNUAL MONITORING REPORT 2009

1. Purpose of Report

- 1.1 The purpose of the Report is to advise Members of the contents of Annual Monitoring Report for the 2008/2009 financial year.

2. Recommendations

It is recommended that the Council/Committee:

- 2.1 Note the contents of this report

Note: In preparing this report, due regard has been had to equality of opportunity, human rights, prevention of crime and disorder, environmental and risk management considerations as appropriate. Relevant officers have been consulted in relation to any legal, financial or human resources implications and comments received are reflected in the report.

3. Information, Issues and Options

3.1 Background

- 3.1.2 Section 35 of the Planning and Compulsory purchase Act 2004 requires all local authorities to produce an Annual Monitoring Report (AMR). This is the fifth AMR produced by the council and seeks to monitor the Core Output Indicators outlined in the Government's "Local Development Framework Monitoring: A Good Practice Guide."

- 3.1.3 The AMR reflects on the key strategic themes outlined within the Core Strategy and Development Control Policies. These are: housing, employment, retail development, natural resources, the environment and accessibility. This is the first AMR to use the monitoring indicators defined within this document. The progress of the Local Development Scheme, which plots the development of all Local Development Documents, which form the Local Development Framework is also noted.

- 3.1.4 The following paragraphs summarise the findings in this years report.

Housing

- 3.1.5 The district has seen the development of 627 new homes across the financial year 2008/2009, whilst the demolition of 20 dwellings has resulted in a net gain of 607 dwellings. Of these, 202 were affordable equating to 32% of the total. This is slightly below the East of England's Plan target of 35%. However, 79% of all new dwellings were built on previously developed land, exceeding the regional target, which is set at 60%. On 1st April 2009 there were 2228 dwellings either under construction or with planning permission that were awaiting development.

Employment

- 3.1.6 There has been a net increase in floorspace for employment uses over the last financial year, which is equal to 9,016 sqm of development. This is over double the amount of new employment floorspace which was completed in the financial year

2007/2008.

Retail/Town Centre Development

3.1.7 Over the past financial year, a number of changes have occurred to the retail uses across the districts five market towns. A net loss of 2248.27 sqm of floorspace occurred across the town centre uses in the five market towns. Of this, 1940.13 sqm of floorspace was lost from the designated town centre area of the market towns. There were 67 vacant units within the market towns at the time of survey (March 2009) in comparison to 62 in March 2008. In total in 2008/09 vacant units occupied 5489.5 sqm of floorspace compared with 3828.86 sqm in 2007/08.

Natural Resources

3.1.8 There have been 13.8 ha of greenfield land developed in the past year for either employment or housing over the financial year 2008/2009. This is nearly a 50% increase in comparison to the previous year. It should be noted that these figures relate only to sites that have been completed in their entirety, and do not include those sites where individual units have been developed. The completed whole plots will be picked up in future monitoring years.

Environment.

3.1.9 Across the financial year 2008/2009, the council permitted three planning applications contrary to advice from the Environment Agency in regard to flood risk. In all cases this is where the Local Planning Authority has considered a more detailed Flood Risk Assessment provided by the applicant or where the Council has negotiated amendments to the scheme to reduce risk from flooding, Whilst this is a rise from previous years, when none have been permitted, decisions have been informed by specific site analysis rather than a desk based assessment. No planning permissions were granted contrary to Environment Agency advice on water quality. As of the 1st September 2009 Natural England state that 55% of the Sites of Specific Scientific Interest in Breckland are in a favourable condition, 24% are in an unfavourable condition but recovering, whilst 18% are unfavourable with no change and 3% are in an unfavourable condition and declining.

Local Development Scheme

3.1.10 Over the financial year 2008/2009 Breckland Council has undertaken two issues and options consultations on the Site Specific Policies and Proposals DPD and consulted on the preferred options for the Thetford Area Action Plan. The Core Strategy and Development Control Policies DPD was submitted to the government inspectors at the end of the financial year, for consideration into its soundness.

3.1.11 Amendments to the Local Development Scheme are set out in Appendix A and these reflect the milestones which Capita Symonds will deliver for the Council. The amended Local Development Scheme enables additional consultation to be undertaken and for the Council to address recommendations from the Inspectors Report. Following the experience with the Core Strategy, the Council is advised that the Examination and adoption processes can be streamlined to result in a quicker finalisation of the documents.

4. Risk and Financial Implications

4.1 Risk

4.1.1 The Risk Management questionnaire has been completed and this report does not require a risk assessment because the changes/issues covered by the recommendations are not significant in terms of risk.

4.2 Financial

4.2.1 None

5. Legal Implications

5.1 None

6. Other Implications

- a) Equalities: None
- b) Section 17, Crime & Disorder Act 1998: None
- c) Section 40, Natural Environment & Rural Communities Act 2006: None
- d) Human Resources: None
- e) Human Rights: None
- f) Other: None

7. Alignment to Council Priorities

7.1 The Annual Monitoring Report will contribute to the following Council Priorities:

- Building Safer and Stronger Communities
- Environment
- Prosperous Communities

8. Ward/Community Affected

8.1 All wards are affected by the Local Development Framework

Lead Contact Officer:

Name/Post: Sarah Robertson Planning Graduate

Telephone: 01362 656 857

Email: sarah.robertson@capita.co.uk

Key Decision Status (Executive Decisions only):

This is not a key decision

Appendices attached to this report:

Appendix A – Annual Monitoring Report 2009