

**SUBJECT: MONMOUTHSHIRE LOCAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN
ANNUAL MONITORING REPORT**
MEETING: INDIVIDUAL CABINET MEMBER DECISION
DATE: 14 October 2015
DIVISION/WARDS AFFECTED: ALL

1 PURPOSE:

- 1.1 To outline the purpose, key findings and conclusions of the Local Development Plan (LDP) first Annual Monitoring Report (AMR), attached at **Appendix 1**.

2. RECOMMENDATION:

- 2.1 To endorse the first LDP AMR for submission to the Welsh Government by 31 October 2015.

3. KEY ISSUES:

3.1 Background – Adopted Monmouthshire LDP

- 3.1.1 The Monmouthshire LDP 2011-2021 was formally adopted by the Council on 27 February 2014. As part of the statutory development plan process the Council is required to prepare an Annual Monitoring Report (AMR).

3.2 The Annual Monitoring Report

- 3.2.1 The AMR provides the basis for monitoring the effectiveness of the LDP and determines whether any revisions to the plan are necessary. It demonstrates the extent to which the LDP strategy and objectives are being achieved and whether the plan's policies are functioning effectively. It also allows the Council to assess the impact of the LDP on the social economic and environmental well-being of the County and identifies any significant contextual changes that may influence the plan's implementation or review.

- 3.2.2 This is the first AMR to be prepared since the adoption of the plan and is based on the period 27 February 2014 – 31st March 2015. Future AMRs will be based on the financial year 01 April to 31 March.

- 3.2.3 As this is the first year the LDP has been operative and this is the first AMR to be prepared, the impacts of the Plan are limited and any conclusions preliminary at the early stage of plan implementation. This year's AMR provides a short term position statement and baseline data for future comparative analysis in successive AMRs. The monitoring of the policy framework over a longer period will enable trends to be identified and firmer conclusions drawn.

3.3 LDP Monitoring Framework

- 3.3.1 The LDP policy and sustainability appraisal (SA) monitoring frameworks form the basis for the AMR, assessing how the plan's strategic policies, and associated supporting policies, are performing against the identified key monitoring targets and outcomes and whether the LDP strategy and objectives are being delivered. This has enabled the Council to make an informed judgement of the Plan's progress in delivering the targets/monitoring outcomes and policies during this monitoring period.

3.4 Key Findings

3.4.1 Section 5 of the AMR provides a detailed assessment of plan performance. The results of the monitoring process demonstrate that many of the indicator targets and monitoring outcomes are being achieved. Some of the most significant findings in relation to these are:

- Progress is being made towards the implementation of the spatial strategy.
- Monmouthshire can demonstrate a 5.0 year housing land supply.
- The Council has approved proposals for 519 dwelling units of which 167 (32%) are for affordable homes. One strategic housing site has been granted planning permission at Wonastow Road, Monmouth.
- The County has a total of 46.8ha employment land available, with permissions granted for a range of employment uses on protected, non-allocated and strategic mixed-use employment sites predominantly in the main towns (10.65 ha). A number of rural diversification and rural enterprise schemes have also been approved (7).
- Vacancy rates in the central shopping areas in all of the County's town and local centres are below the national average.
- A substantial proportion of development permitted was on brownfield land (28%). This is significant in Monmouthshire terms given the limited opportunities for brownfield development in the County.

3.4.2 Although the LDP is performing well there are a number of indicator targets and monitoring outcomes that are not currently being achieved. The most significant findings in relation to these are:

- There has been limited progress with the number of dwellings built; 205 new dwelling completions were recorded, 17 of which were affordable. The implementation of LDP allocated housing sites has also been limited.
- There has been limited take-up of employment land (0.38 ha) and no planning permissions approved on strategic employment sites (SAE1 sites).

3.4.3 Further investigation has determined that there are justified reasons for this performance and this is not representative of any fundamental issues with the implementation of the Plan strategy or policy framework at this time. This is the first year the LDP has been operative and the primary reason for the apparent slow delivery in some areas. Furthermore, at this preliminary stage in the LDP's implementation it is difficult to determine conclusive trends as to which policies are performing as expected and which are not. Continued close monitoring in future AMRs will help to identify more definitive trends in the performance of the Plan's strategy and policy framework.

3.5 Contextual Information

3.5.1 Section Three is an analysis of the relevant contextual material that has been published since the adoption of the Plan at a national, regional and local level, along with general economic trends. This concludes that the changes identified to date do not suggest the need for an early review of the plan.

3.6 Supplementary Planning Guidance (SPG)

3.6.1 Progress that has been made in the preparation of SPG to help to facilitate the interpretation and implementation of LDP policy is also detailed in Section Three. SPG preparation will continue in the next monitoring period.

3.7 Sustainability Appraisal (SA) Monitoring

3.7.1 Section Six expands on the assessment of LDP performance against the SA Monitoring Objectives, providing a short term position statement on the performance of the Plan against a number of sustainability indicators. This is a baseline for comparative analysis from which future AMRs will be able to evidence the emergence of trends. There is an overlap between some of the LDP and SA indicators helping to demonstrate how the two monitoring processes are interlinked.

3.8 Conclusions and Recommendations

3.8.1 Section Seven provides the conclusions and recommendations of this first AMR. The key conclusion is that while it is difficult to determine definitive trends in policy performance, good progress is being made in delivering the identified targets and monitoring outcomes. There is no evidence to suggest the need for a full or partial review of the LDP at this early stage of plan implementation.

3.8.2 It is recommended that this AMR be submitted to the Welsh Government in accord with statutory requirements. Continued close monitoring in future AMRs will help to identify more definitive trends in the performance of the Plan's strategy and policy framework particularly in relation to housing delivery including strategic housing site allocations, the delivery of affordable housing and the progress on strategic employment sites.

3.9 Next Steps

3.9.1 The second AMR in respect of the Monmouthshire LDP will be presented to Planning Committee at the same time next year, with the broad structure of the AMR remaining the same from year to year in order to provide ease of analysis between successive reports.

3.9.2 The Council is required to commence a full review of the LDP every four years. A review of the LDP in advance of the formal review will only take place if the conclusions of the AMR, or other exceptional circumstances, indicate otherwise.

3.9.3 AMRs will be placed on the Council's website for information and publicised via our Twitter account @MCCPlanning.

4. **REASONS:**

4.1 Under the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act (2004) and associated Regulations, all local planning authorities are required to produce a LDP. The Monmouthshire LDP was adopted in February 2014 and provides the land use framework which forms the basis on which decisions about future development in the County are based. The Council has a statutory obligation, under section 61 of the 2004 Act, to keep all matters under review that are expected to affect the development of its area. In addition, section 76 of the Act requires the Council to produce information on these matters in the form of an AMR for submission to the Welsh Government at the end of October each year following plan adoption. The preparation of an AMR is therefore an integral part of the statutory development plan process. The Welsh Government has issued regulations and guidance on the required contents of AMRs. The completion of the 2015 Monmouthshire AMR is in accord with these requirements and guidance.

5. RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS:

- 5.1 Officer time and costs associated with the data collection and analysis of the monitoring indicators and preparation of the AMR. These costs will be met from the Planning Policy budget and carried out by existing staff.

6. SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT AND EQUALITY IMPLICATIONS:

- 6.1 The Council must comply with European Directives and Regulations to monitor the state of the environment and this forms an integral part of the AMR. The adopted LDP and completion of the AMR accord with these requirements.

Sustainable Development

- 6.1.1 Under the 2004 Act the LDP is required to be subject to a Sustainability Appraisal (SA). The role of the SA is to assess the extent to which planning policies would help to achieve the wider environmental, economic and social objectives of the LDP. In addition, the European Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) Directive requires the '*environmental assessment*' of certain plans and programmes prepared by local authorities, including LDP's. All stages of the LDP were subject to a SA, whose findings were used to inform the development of LDP policies and site allocations in order to ensure that the LDP would be promoting sustainable development. The SEA Directive also requires that the Council monitor the state of the environment through monitoring the sustainability objectives set out in the SA Report. This forms an integral part of the AMR.

Equality

- 6.2.1 The LDP was also subjected to an Equality Challenge process and due consideration given to the issues raised. The AMR provides an analysis of existing LDP policies, which were prepared within this framework. Assessments of Equality Impact will be required throughout the Plan's implementation wherever there is likely to be significant impact. Future review of LDP policies and proposals will require an Equalities Impact Assessment to be carried out.

7. CONSULTEES:

- Head of Planning
- Development Management Officers

8. BACKGROUND PAPERS:

European Legislation:

- European Strategic Environment Assessment Directive 2001/42/EC.
- Strategic Environmental Assessment Regulations 2004.
- The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2010 (as amended 2011).

National Legislation and Guidance:

- Planning (Wales) Act 2015
- Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004.
- Town and Country Planning (Local Development Plan) (Wales) Regulations 2005
- Local Development Plans Wales, Welsh Assembly Government, 2005.
- Local Development Plan Manual, Welsh Assembly Government, June 2006.
- Planning Policy Wales (Edition 7), Welsh Government, July 2014.

Monmouthshire LDP:

- Monmouthshire Adopted LDP, Monmouthshire County Council, February 2014.
- Monmouthshire LDP 'Sustainability Appraisal/Strategic Environmental Assessment Report Addendum', February 2014.

Monmouthshire County Council publications:

- Monmouthshire LDP 'Retail Background Paper', May 2015.

- Monmouthshire LDP 'Employment Background Paper', June 2015.
- Monmouthshire 'Joint Housing Land Availability Study', July 2015.

9. AUTHOR & 10. CONTACT DETAILS:

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