

## PART A

**Report to:** Cabinet  
**Date of meeting:** 20 January 2014  
**Report of:** Head of Regeneration and Development  
**Title:** Watford's Monitoring Report 2013

### 1.0 SUMMARY

- 1.1 Authorities' Monitoring Reports ('**AMRs**') have an important purpose in the ongoing management of planning policy and must be prepared and published at least once a year; Watford's Monitoring Report 2013 covers the period 1 April 2012 to 31 March 2013. It includes the progress made on local plan documents and a suite of indicators which measure the effects of planning policies within both the Watford District Plan 2000 and the Core Strategy (adopted 30 January 2013). Other indicators used in the document provide a wider context on such aspects as the population and environment.
- 1.2 The purpose of this Cabinet report is to raise awareness of the information provided by the AMR 2013, which must be published on the council's website as soon as reasonably practicable.
- 1.3 Members' attention is drawn to the Executive Summary, Appendix 2 to the Cabinet Report (or pages 5-8 of the full AMR 2013). The Executive Summary will also be available to download separately from the full AMR 2013 on the website.
- 1.4 There is no requirement for formal public consultation; the AMR 2013 has previously undergone internal consultation within the council and with Hertfordshire County Council; it also features in the January 2014 Members' Bulletin.

### 2.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 That Cabinet notes the information provided by the AMR.

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**Report approved by:** Jane Custance, Head of Regeneration & Development.

### 3.0 **DETAILED PROPOSAL**

- 3.1 Watford's Monitoring Report 2013 covers the period 1 April 2012 to 31 March 2013. Additional information that has subsequently become known with regard to more recent developments is supplied within the commentary where it is practical to do so, quoting the dates applicable, in order to provide as up to date a picture as possible.
- 3.2 The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) was published on 27 March 2012 and came into force with immediate effect, superseding previous planning guidance, and on the 6 April 2012 'The Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012' were published.
- 3.3 The regulations state which information must be included; for example, progress made on the timetable for the production of documents within the local plan; information on the number of affordable dwellings and overall net additional dwellings. Further details are available in Appendix 3: Summary of the AMR process – 2013.
- 3.4 Watford's Monitoring Report 2013 focuses on monitoring a suite of indicators and monitoring mechanisms that were developed as the Local Plan Part 1 progressed (and included as the 'Monitoring Framework' within the Core Strategy). They measure the effects of planning policies and will be regularly reviewed.
- 3.5 **Some extracts follow from the Executive Summary, available as Appendix 2 to the Cabinet Report (or pages 5-8 of the full AMR 2013).**

### 3.6 **Local Plan**

**The Local Plan Part 1: Core Strategy was adopted on 30 January 2013**, and sets out the council's vision for development and conservation in Watford to 2031.

- 3.7 **An initial consultation of the Local Plan Part 2 took place between 4 November and 16 December 2013.** This contained initial site allocation proposals, draft development management policies, and draft town centre policies.

### 3.8 **Housing**

**There were 541 net housing completions during 2012/13** ahead of the Core Strategy housing target of an average 260 dwellings per annum. **Watford can demonstrate a 5 year housing land supply, which is 137.7%, above the National Planning Policy Framework requirement of 105%.** Watford is continuing to make good progress in delivering new homes.

- 3.9 **Affordable dwelling completions numbered 184**, averaging 34% of the 541 total net housing completions for 2012/13.
- 3.10 **In 2012/13, 97% of housing completions were on previously developed land**, exceeding our local target which continues to be 80% of all residential development on previously developed land.

### 3.11 **Business Development and Employment**

There has been a small net loss of 1,358 sq.m. in B use class floorspace within allocated employment areas since 2006. **Overall, this indicates that existing policies are protecting employment within allocated employment areas.**

3.12 **Watford's Core Strategy seeks a minimum of 7,000 additional jobs in the district between 2006-2031. There is an encouraging increasing trend of approximately 1,000 total jobs per year in Watford since 2009.** Morrisons have recently opened their new supermarket on 25 November at Ascot Road, on the former Royal Mail depot site in West Watford, creating about 270 jobs in the area. This is the first part of the Western Gateway (Ascot Road) regeneration scheme to take shape.

3.13 **100% of employment development within Watford took place on previously developed land, exceeding the Core Strategy target of 90%.** No greenfield land has been used for any employment development during the period monitored since 2006/07.

### 3.14 **Green Infrastructure**

**Targets to maintain the total amount of open space managed by WBC and the amount managed to Green Flag Award standard have been met in 2012/13 - both are unchanged.**

3.15 **A bid for external funding has been successful for Cassiobury Park with £418,000 awarded by the Heritage Lottery Funding/BIG lottery funding. If we are successful at Stage 2 of the bidding process (February 2014), the £6.6 million project will see a huge range of improvements to the park.**

From the evidence available, our policies seem to be serving to protect our biodiversity, along with the council co-ordinating with a broad partnership of local organisations and actively improving the wildlife value of all the sites it manages.

### 3.16 **Transport and Projects**

**Recent initiatives to lessen congestion and improve sustainable transport include joint working on the Grand Union towpath improvement project; improved cycle parking facilities and the installation of electric car re-charge points and some new bus shelters across the town, with further installations planned.**

3.17 **In addition to Ascot Road, where the new Morrisons recently opened, substantial progress has been made with other major development projects such as Charter Place, Watford Health Campus and the town centre improvement works.** These will lead to additional jobs and homes along with improved retail, transport, leisure, healthcare and other supporting services and facilities.

### **Conclusion**

3.18

It has been shown that our local plan policies have been working and helping to ensure that Watford continues to maintain the extent of our green spaces and improve

the overall environment as much as possible, joint working with partners in providing homes, leisure and employment opportunities and promoting high quality design and sustainable development.

#### 4.0 **IMPLICATIONS**

##### 4.1 **Financial**

4.1.1 The Director of Finance comments that there are no financial implications contained within this report.

##### 4.2 **Legal Issues** (Monitoring Officer)

4.2.1 The Head of Democracy and Governance comments that as stated in the body of the report the Council is required to publish an annual monitoring report by virtue of The Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012.

##### 4.3 **Equalities**

There are no direct equalities impacts arising from this report. The application of existing policies will be covered by existing equalities assessments and the review and preparation of new policies will be subject to assessments at the appropriate time.

##### 4.4 **Potential Risks**

We consider that there are no risks with this report as it is an item for information.

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Appendix 1. Watford's Monitoring Report 2013 -

<http://www.watford.gov.uk/ccm/content/planning-and-development/watford-annual-monitoring-report-2013.en>

Appendix 2. Executive Summary – extract from AMR 2013.

Appendix 3. Summary of the AMR process – 2013.

#### Background Papers

No papers were used in the preparation of this report

#### File Reference

LP.41.

