

HEREFORDSHIRE HOUSING LAND STUDY 2004 AND EMPLOYMENT LAND STUDY 2004

Report By: Forward Planning Manager

Wards Affected

County-wide

Purpose

1. To present to members the results of the Herefordshire Housing Land and Herefordshire Employment Land Studies 2004.

Financial Implications

2. None.

Background

3. As part of the changes to the planning system brought about by the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 there is a requirement for the Council to prepare an annual monitoring report to Government on progress in preparing the documents set out in the Local Development Scheme (LDS), and on how far planning policies are being achieved. The content of the Annual Monitoring Report (AMR) will be developed over time to meet the requirements of the new system and will involve consideration of the report by Cabinet via the Planning Committee.
4. An important part of the AMR will be the presentation of evidence regarding the extent to which policies within Local Development Documents are being achieved and in particular it will be necessary that the AMR will report on the number of dwellings built in Herefordshire during the period.
5. A considerable amount of monitoring is already undertaken within the Council and this is provided to the Regional Planning Body to present in its annual monitoring report. In addition a report outlining the results of the annual Housing Land Study has been presented for information purposes to the Planning Committee each year since 1999.
6. This year the Housing Land Study has again been prepared and as a precursor for future AMR's an Employment Land Study for Herefordshire has also been prepared for publication. In addition to presenting an indication of land available in the County these documents can help to assess the success of the Council's planning policies in respect of housing and the provision of employment land and will prove valuable as background information for the forthcoming Public Inquiry into objections to the Unitary Development Plan. Full copies of both documents are attached to this report.

Housing Land Study

7. The study involved a survey of all planning permissions for new housing in the County. The numbers of dwellings built, under construction and not started on each permission

have been recorded. The study also examines other features of housing supply and its characteristics.

8. Some 661 dwellings have been built in the County during the 12 months from April 2003 to the end of March 2004. This is an increase from 622 completions recorded in last years study although it is below the average rate experienced in the past 12 years.
9. The number of housing commitments in the County have continued to hold up with 1817 units having planning permission or being identified in adopted local plans.
10. During the first eight years of the UDP period 6,758 houses have been built in the County with just over half (53%) taking place in urban areas. In terms of the proposed UDP strategy these completions have been distributed as follows:

Location	Actual Completions 1996-2004	Anticipated % completions 1996-2011
Hereford City	1571 (23.2%)	27%
Market Towns Total	2041 (30.2%)	29%
Main Villages	1933 (28.6%)	26%
Smaller Settlements	479 (7.1%)	7%
Other rural areas	734 (10.9%)	11%

Development on previously-developed land

11. Over the 8-year period the percentage of housing built on previously-developed land has averaged at 43%. This year the study shows that in terms of completions 69% of all new dwellings in the County were on previously-developed (brownfield) land. Looking to the future, 77% of all dwellings given planning permission on new sites between April 1st 2003 and March 31st 2004 were on previously-developed land.

Conversions

12. During the year some 167 dwellings resulted from the conversion of existing buildings, of these 68 involved the development of agricultural buildings, which in terms of the definition contained in PPG3 constitutes the development of greenfield land.

Affordable Housing

13. Some 94 affordable dwellings were built during the year, and at March 2003 there were a further 93 commitments. Over the 8 years since 1996 some 777 affordable houses have been built although significant numbers of these have involved the replacement of existing social housing.

Types and mix of sizes of housing

14. By far the most common form of dwelling being built is the house (78% of all permissions), although over the last three monitoring periods house numbers have decreased slightly. The proportion of flats and apartments has increased two fold to 18%. The figures show that the percentage of bungalows being built has fluctuated a little but remains at a fairly low level of less than 4% of all dwelling types built.

Density

15. There has been a general increase in housing densities in urban areas and the main villages. The increase in residential densities across the urban parts of Herefordshire has not occurred in wider rural areas. On average, across the County, densities are around 11 dwellings per hectare – significantly lower than the minimum of 30 dwellings per hectare set out in the guidance provided in PPG3.

Employment Land Study

16. This annual study monitors the supply of employment land across the County, by tracking the progress of planning permissions and development plan allocations. As with the Housing Study it covers the period April 2003 to March 2004.

Completed Development

17. The amount of land developed for employment uses over the period was 6.01 hectares spread over 22 different sites. This represents a decline on the previous year when 10.9 hectares were completed, but remains above the annual county average of 4.83 hectares per annum since 1986-7.

Supply

18. There are some 160.21 hectares of new land for employment uses on 111 sites in Herefordshire. Of this 132.91 hectares is allocated within the adopted local plans, 22.59 hectares has planning permission and 4.71 hectares is currently under construction for employment uses.

Future Allocations

19. The Unitary Development Plan Revised Deposit allocates a further 22.81 hectares of new employment land across the County. Allocations include a ten hectare Ross Business Park, an extension to Whitestone Business Park and new sites to replace longstanding sites in Bromyard and Kington.

Physically Constrained Land

20. Of the 183.02 hectares supply of current and future employment land, 112.65 hectares is not constrained. The remaining 70.37 hectares are physically constrained and not currently available for development. Rotherwas Industrial Estate, Hereford accounts for 50.69 hectares of the constrained land, due to reasons of flooding, access and archaeology.

Supply of Readily Available Land

21. Only 37.51 hectares are readily available for development purposes. Readily available includes all employment land that is not physically constrained and is available on the market. Spread over 23 sites, the most significant proportion of this available supply is located within the newly created Leominster Enterprise Park (16 hectares).

Office Development

22. Three new major office developments were completed. These sites amount to 3694 square metres of new office space (Use class B1a). Planning consent was given to a further five new major office developments providing a further 5980 square metres of office space.

Assessment of Need for Employment Land

23. Projections of past take up rates indicate a possible surplus in Countywide supply of 18.02 hectares over the UDP Plan period up to 2011. However, projections indicate that existing employment land in Hereford, Ross-on-Wye, Ledbury, Kington and the wider rural area will require safeguarding as there is likely to be an insufficient supply of readily available land over the Plan period. Unitary Development Plan allocations should satisfy most of the projected shortfalls, but supply in Hereford and Ledbury is dependant upon the ability to overcome physical constraints.

RECOMMENDATION

- THAT (a) the results of the Herefordshire Housing Land Study 2004 and Employment Land Study 2003-2004 be noted;**
- (b) the Herefordshire Housing Land Study 2004 and Employment Land Study 2003-2004 be published as a record of the housing and employment land position in the County.**