

Annual Monitoring Report

(APRIL 2010 - MARCH 2011)

December 2011



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SUMMARY

The Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act (2004) requires Local Planning Authorities to prepare an Annual Monitoring Report (AMR). The 2011 Annual Monitoring Report is the seventh to be prepared and covers the period from 1st April 2010 to 31st March 2011. This Annual Monitoring Report covers the whole area of North Devon District excluding the area within Exmoor National Park. A series of contextual indicators indicate the key social, environmental and economic characteristics of the District.

Since 2006, North Devon and Torridge District Councils have been working jointly to produce a Core Strategy for northern Devon. During the early periods of joint working both authorities prepared their own Local Development Scheme (LDS). In February 2009 a joint revised Local Development Scheme was submitted to the Government Office for the South West (GOSW) and a further revised version submitted in October 2009. Neither version has been agreed by GOSW but a further LDS review is now required following delays resulting from the intended revocation of Regional Spatial Strategies, implications of the Localism Act and the Government's draft National Planning Policy Framework.

No key stages in the preparation of the Core Strategy were reached during the monitoring period, although progress was made on representations received during January to March 2010 and on the evidence base to inform policy development.

Monitoring information for Core Output Indicators (COIs) is set out, where available, to assess performance against national planning policy objectives. Where detailed information is not available for all COIs, explanations are provided.

The Housing Trajectory within the adopted Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (SHLAA) as of April 2010, published in August 2011, indicates that housing provision since 2001 continues to be above strategic housing requirements as set out in the approved Structure Plan.

Local Output Indicators (LOIs) monitor the extent to which policies in Local Development Documents (LDDs) are being implemented successfully and the impact and effectiveness of local plan policies. Overall vacancy rates and the proportion of A1 uses in town centres remain stable, although some town centres are performing better than others.

There have been no major adverse impacts on the local environment. The number of households seeking affordable housing through the choice based lettings scheme remains high and 43 families spent time in temporary accommodation in the district during the monitoring period, a slight increase from the previous year.

Once the Localism Act is enacted early in 2012, local planning authorities will no longer need to submit Annual Monitoring Reports to the Secretary of State. Annual Monitoring Reports are still required and will need to be made available to the public, but authorities will have more flexibility in terms of which targets and indicators they monitor.

The AMR looks at how the range of indicators will be reviewed.

1. INTRODUCTION

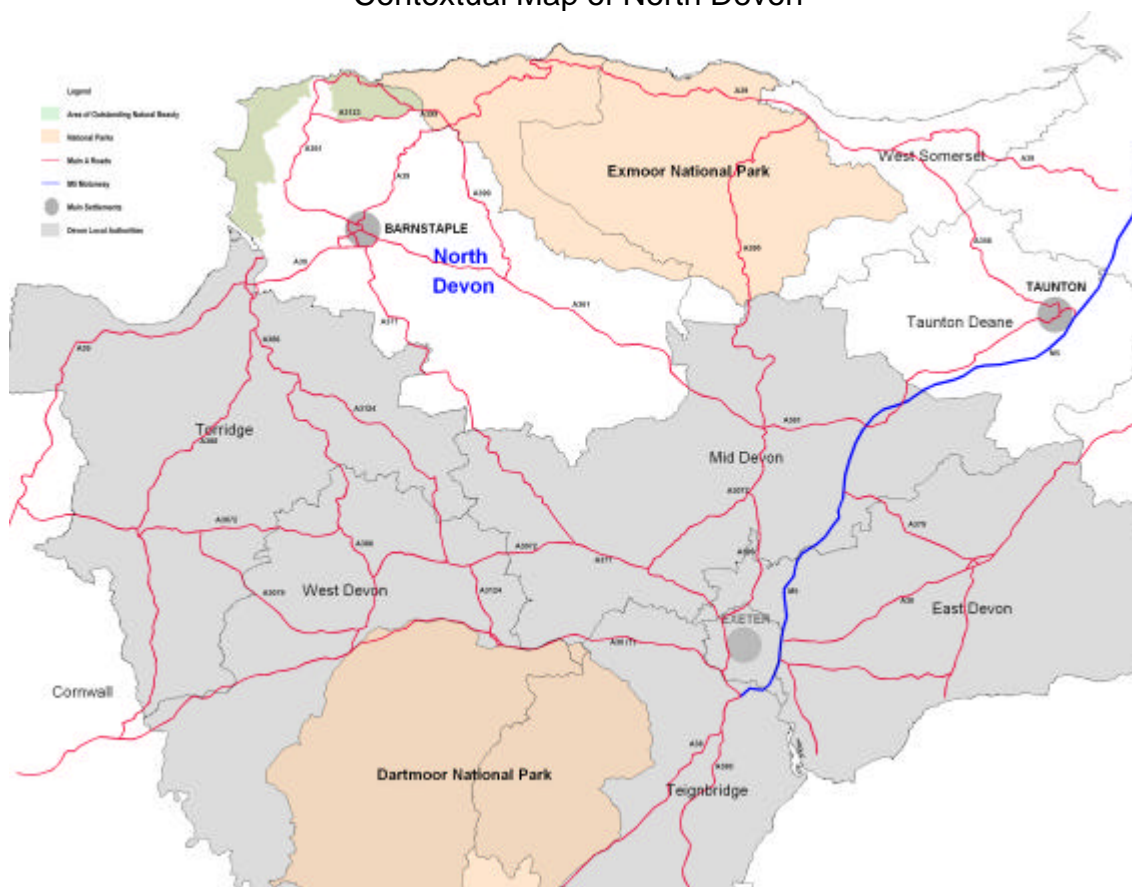
- 1.1** Section 35 of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 requires every Local Planning Authority (LPA) to produce an annual report to the Secretary of State. This Annual Monitoring Report (AMR) assesses the implementation of the Local Development Scheme (LDS) and the extent to which policies in Local Development Documents (LDDs) are being implemented successfully. Whilst the preparation of an AMR is still appropriate, local planning authorities will no longer need to submit AMRs to the Secretary of State following future enactment of the Localism Act. AMRs are still required and will need to be made available to the public, but local authorities will have more flexibility in terms of which targets and indicators they monitor.
- 1.2** Monitoring is an increasingly important aspect of evidence based policy making. It is required to identify when existing policies are not being implemented or are not working effectively, so that appropriate action can be taken. It is also proposed to identify key challenges, opportunities and possible ways forward for revising and adjusting spatial planning policies.
- 1.3** The 2011 Annual Monitoring Report is the seventh to be prepared for North Devon and covers the period from 1st April 2010 to 31st March 2011. The previous AMRs included monitoring information over earlier 12-month periods, and provide a baseline for comparison.
- 1.4** This AMR is designed to accord with Regulation 48 of the Town & Country Planning (Local Development) (England) Regulations 2004 (as amended) and demonstrates the Council's compliance with Regulation 17 of the Environmental Assessment of Plans & Programmes Regulations 2004.

2. MONITORING FRAMEWORK

- 2.1** The performance of the Council in delivering its corporate objectives is monitored by this document, particularly the Local Output Indicators (LOIs), where such objectives are reasonably measurable and the data to assess achievement is readily available.
- 2.2** Where there are trends or changes in performance that may require policy to be reassessed or reviewed, then they will be monitored wherever practicable. This monitoring regime enables the Council to manage its policy making based on its contribution to the achievement of identified objectives in a timely and cost effective manner.
- 2.3** The monitoring framework is kept under review to accommodate both external changes (such as Government changes to Core Output Indicators) and locally identified changes.
- 2.4** The monitoring process will inform the review of policy as appropriate. The Planning system introduced in 2004 envisaged that local planning authorities will offer consistency in the direction of their policy through a long term Core Strategy with the other documents comprising the LDF being more flexible in their response to changing circumstances or priorities. The monitoring process is central to identifying the need for, and appropriate direction of, any changes in the policies contained within the LDF.

3. NORTH DEVON DISTRICT PORTRAIT

Contextual Map of North Devon



3.1 Table 1 shows the contextual indicators for North Devon, with comparable information for Devon, the South West region and the UK where available.

Table 1: Key Contextual Indicators for North Devon

Contextual Indicator	North Devon	Devon ²	South West	UK
Population				
Population Size ¹	91,500	747,400	5,210,000	61,792,000
Population Density (people per hectare)	0.9	1.17	2.16	2.46
% of population under age 16	19%	18%	18%	19%
% of population over age 75	10.2%	10.6%	9%	8%
% of population within urban areas ³	63.1%	~	~	~
Ethnic Composition (2006)				
White	97.27%	96.26%	~	~
Mixed	0.76%	0.8%	~	~
Black	0.65%	0.51%	~	~
Asian	0.98%	0.88%	~	~
Chinese	0.44%	0.77%	~	~

Employment				
Average annual household income (derived from analysis of 2008 CACI Paycheck data/BBC)	£29,206	£30,662	~	£38,302
% unemployed	4.5%	3.6%	4.6%	6.2%
% retired	21%	20%	21%	16%
% employed	81.7%	80.9%	78%	73.9%
Housing				
Number of households	42,385	298,576	2,313,481	22,387,939 ⁴
Average household size	2.15	2.45	2.21	2.63
Average house prices	£206,358	£212,478	£200,468	£197,899
Transport/Accessibility				
% of households with no car	20.3%	19.1%	20.2%	27.4%
% travel to work by car	60.67%	62.5%	66.56%	62.14%
% travel to work by public transport	3.4%	4.7%	6.1%	14.9%
Environment				
Area of the District (ha)	108,588	~	~	~
% area of district within National Park	18.5% ⁵	~	~	~
% area of district within AONB	7.2%	~	~	~
Area covered by SSSIs (ha)	3,143 ⁶	~	~	~
Area covered by registered parks and gardens of special historic interest (ha)	399	~	~	~
Number of listed buildings	2,909 ⁷	~	~	~
Number of Conservation Areas	41 ⁸	~	~	~
Number of Scheduled Ancient Monuments	82 ⁷	~	~	~
Community Safety				
Crime rate per 1000 population	N/A	62 ⁹	73	86 ⁴

1. Office of National Statistics, 2009 figures
2. Excludes Plymouth and Torbay U.A.s (Total pop. 390,700)
3. Barnstaple, Ilfracombe, South Molton, Braunton and Fremington
4. Figure for England and Wales
5. The parts of Exmoor National Park within North Devon district are excluded from this AMR.
6. When the SSSIs within the North Devon part of Exmoor National Park are included, the total area covered by SSSIs within North Devon is 9,588 hectares.
7. These figures relate to North Devon district outside Exmoor National Park.
8. Within North Devon district there are 39 Conservation Areas outside the National Park plus 5 Conservation Areas within the North Devon part of Exmoor National Park.
9. Devon & Cornwall Constabulary Area

Key Contextual Characteristics

- 3.2** This Annual Monitoring Report (AMR) covers the whole area of North Devon District Council excluding the area within Exmoor National Park, where the National Park Authority will be preparing its own AMR. This area, excluding the land within the National Park, coincides with the area covered by the Local Development Framework (LDF) for North Devon and the approved Local Development Scheme (LDS).
- 3.3** Contextual indicators are set out above to show some social, economic and environmental characteristics of the locality. They provide context against which to consider the effects of policies and implications for developing new policies. Most of the information in Table 1 is only available for North Devon district as a whole (including Exmoor National Park), so all of the North Devon figures include those parts of the National Park situated within North Devon (except where indicated otherwise), even though this Annual Monitoring Report does not cover this area.

4. LOCAL DEVELOPMENT SCHEME MONITORING

- 4.1 The North Devon Local Development Scheme (LDS) was adopted in June 2007. Core Strategy advancement was not achieved to this timetable, most significantly as a consequence of the withdrawal of the Preferred Options stage as a formal element in Development Plan Document preparation. The loss of this stage through new regulatory requirements resulted in the Councils undertaking additional consultation to ensure the achievement of appropriate engagement.
- 4.2 A revised LDS was submitted jointly with Torridge District Council to the Government Office for the South West in February and again in October 2009, but no response was received as to whether the LDS was approved. The Councils have been effectively working to a Development Scheme Programme within the revised draft LDS (submitted in October 2009), so it is more meaningful to consider progress against this timetable than that in the adopted 2007 LDS.
- 4.3 However, in May 2010 a new coalition government was elected who, in July 2010, made it clear that Regional Spatial Strategies were to be revoked along with the proposed housing targets and replaced with the Localism Bill to allow Councils to prepare their local plans without having to follow top-down targets. This statement delayed progress of the Core Strategy due to the need to provide additional evidence to justify revised housing figures for both North Devon and Torridge District Councils.
- 4.4 The 2009 LDS identified certain Local Development Documents (LDDs) that were scheduled to reach key stages before April 2011. The review of their progress against key dates will fall within the scope of this year's Annual Monitoring Report.

Table 2 : Progress against the Proposed Timetable in the Development Scheme Programme

Local Development Document (LDD) and stages	Target Date ¹	Date achieved
Core Strategy DPD (joint with Torridge DC)		
• Issues & Options Consultation	Nov / Dec 2007	Nov 2007 / Jan 2008
• Pre-publication (Reg. 25) Consultation	January 2010	Jan / March 2010
• Publication (Reg. 27) Consultation	June 2010	N/A

¹ Target dates identified in the draft Local Development Scheme (October 2009).

- 4.5 An amended timetable needs to be prepared and agreed as the current timetable and targets within the 2009 LDS are no longer being met. Delays have resulted from intended revocation of the draft RSS, including need for preparation of additional evidence based documents to form a robust evidence base. Further delays have resulted from implications of the Localism Act and the publication of the draft National Planning Policy Framework during 2011.

4.6 Additional consultation with local communities will be required as a result of new housing numbers, town visions and amended core strategy policies following the impending revocation of Regional Strategies and changes arising from the draft National Planning Policy Framework. The latest timetable to which the Councils are working is set out in Table 3 for further Regulation 25 consultation scheduled to occur in May/June 2012, with the Publication stage (Regulation 27) to follow at the end of 2012 and Adoption in summer 2013 (nearly 2 years after the intended timescale set out in the revised draft LDS October 2009).

Table 3 : Revised Timetable in the Development Scheme Programme

Local Development Document (LDD) and stages	Target Date¹	Date achieved
Core Strategy DPD (joint with Torridge DC)		
• Completion of stakeholder workshops and preparation of draft visions	November 2011	November 2011
• Finalise evidence base	February 2012	
• Prepare a draft core strategy for consultation	March 2012	
• Pre-publication (Reg. 25) Consultation	May / June 2012	
• Publication (Reg. 27) Consultation	Nov / Dec 2012	
• Submission to the Sec. of State for Examination	February 2013	
• Examination	May / June 2013	
• Adoption	August 2013	

¹ Target dates identified in the draft Local Development Scheme (October 2009).

4.7 This revised Joint Local Development Scheme identifies a more realistic programme to advance the Local Development Framework, on the basis of identified priorities in the context of available resources and the recent and scheduled changes to the national policy framework and legislation. North Devon and Torridge District Councils are committed to working together to deliver a joint Core Strategy and achieving a sound Core Strategy is an accepted priority. The Councils are and will continue to work in partnership in document production where it would be practical and advantageous to do so.

5. POLICY MONITORING

Indicators

- 5.1 The Government published a revised set of Core Output Indicators in July 2008 (Core Output Indicators Update 2/2008), which have now been withdrawn in anticipation of the enactment of the Localism Act. It is therefore a matter for Councils themselves to decide what to include in their AMRs although focus should be placed on specific local issues as identified in the strategic plan (which is currently in draft form).
- 5.2 Monitoring is achieved by recording a broad range of indicators:
- Contextual Indicators – in the District Portrait (section 3) provides a current local snapshot.
 - Core Output Indicators (COIs) – are produced by central government to enable comparison between districts.
 - Local Output Indicators (LOIs) – are developed by each authority. North Devon has developed a joint set with Torridge DC to facilitate coordinated monitoring of similar indicators.
 - Sustainability Appraisal Indicators (SAIs) – are the product of the sustainability appraisal process. Local Authorities are advised to develop sufficient SAIs so that with COIs and LOIs a robust assessment of policy implementation is possible.

HOUSING

5.3 Indicator H1 – Plan Period & Housing Targets

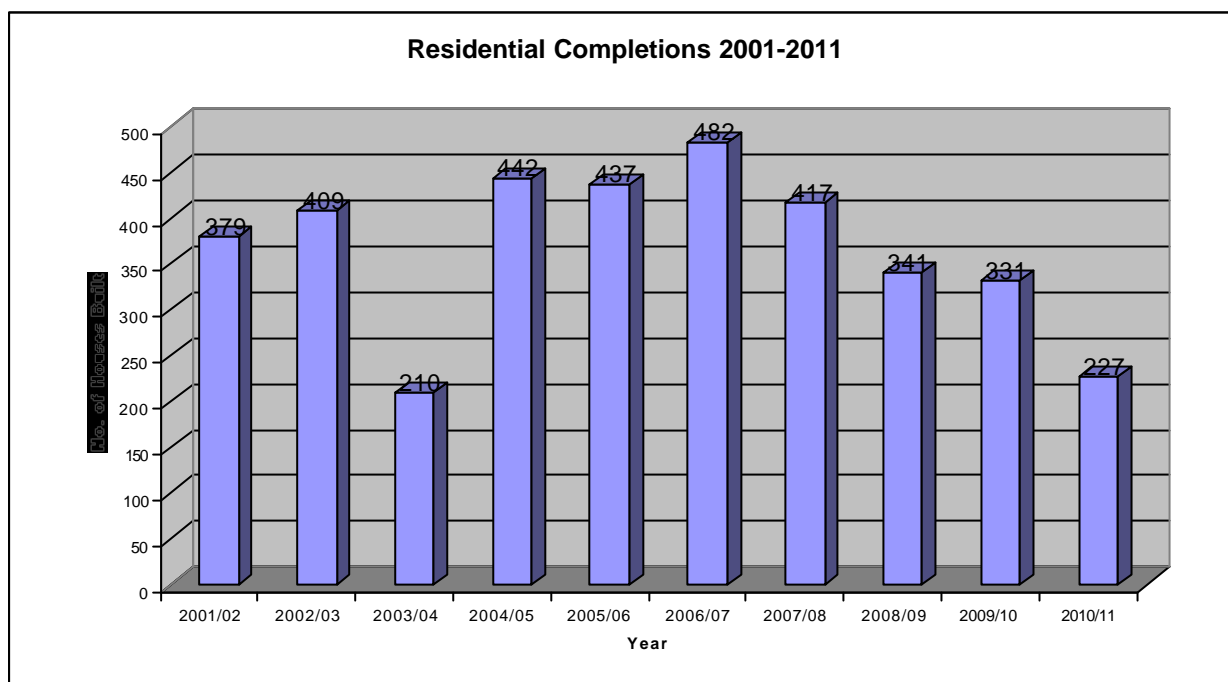
- 2001 – 2016 4,900 homes (327 dwellings per annum) (Devon Structure Plan 2001- 2016)
- 2011 – 2016 1,225 homes (245 dwellings per annum, being residual annual target from Structure Plan after provision to 2011)

5.4 Indicator H2 (a) – Net Additional Dwellings in Previous Years

- 2001 – 2002 379 dwellings
- 2002 – 2003 409 dwellings
- 2003 – 2004 210 dwellings
- 2004 – 2005 442 dwellings
- 2005 – 2006 437 dwellings
- 2006 – 2007 482 dwellings
- 2007 – 2008 417 dwellings
- 2008 – 2009 341 dwellings
- 2009 – 2010 331 dwellings

5.5 Indicator H2 (b) – Net Additional Dwellings for the Reporting Year

A total of 227 net additional dwellings were completed from April 2010 to March 2011. This figure is lower than in previous years but reflects current economic conditions and the state of the local housing market.



5.6 Indicator H2 (c) – Net Additional Dwellings in Future Years

The **Housing Trajectory for North Devon** (Appendix 1), recently published in the North Devon and Torrridge Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (SHLAA) August 2011, shows that housing provision remains above the strategic housing requirement derived from the Structure Plan as at April 2010. It has been calculated on the basis of the annualised strategic housing requirement from the adopted Devon Structure Plan of 327 dwellings per year, until any revised target is adopted through the joint Core Strategy.

This annualised Structure Plan figure would give a combined target of 3,270 from 2001/2 to 2010/11, with 3,675 dwellings having been delivered (a surplus of 405 homes). There is a residual requirement for 1,225 dwellings (2011 to 2016) to meet Devon Structure Plan requirements, which equates to 245 per year.

At the time of producing this report, evidence is being prepared in liaison with Devon County Council over the housing numbers required to meet projected household growth for the period of the Core Strategy (2011 – 2031). This evidence will help determine the future annual housing requirements until 2031. Consultation with community stakeholders is currently underway through a series of visioning events for the main settlements to help determine the level and broad distribution of strategic housing growth required over the plan period.

The Housing Trajectory (Appendix 1) shows an indicative annualised housing requirement of 405 dwellings per year (based on the figure for North Devon within the original draft RSS of 8,100 dwellings from 2006 to 2026) up to 2016. From 2013/14, when the Core Strategy is scheduled to be adopted, this target will be superseded when an evidence-based housing target has been incorporated into the joint Core Strategy.

5.7 Indicator H2 (d) – Managed Delivery Target

The principal problem with housing delivery in the immediate future remains current market conditions. Land supply is not seen as constraining overall delivery, at least in the short and medium terms, providing sufficient flexibility is retained in the revised housing targets once adopted. The North Devon and Torridge Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (SHLAA) published in August 2011 indicated that in April 2010 there was 7.5 years supply of readily available, suitable and achievable housing land based on Structure Plan residual requirements (242 dwellings pa).

The SHLAA has not yet been updated to a base date of April 2011. However, there are at least 1,588 deliverable housing units remaining (1,815 – 227 dwellings built this year) which equates to at least a residual land supply of 6.5 years based on 245 dwellings pa (the residual annual target from Structure Plan after provision to 2011). However, an informal review of future deliverable housing supply identifies a further 244 dwellings from planning permissions since April 2010 and progress towards delivery on key sites not previously identified as deliverable. This would equate to at least a residual land supply of 8.4 years (based on 245 dwellings pa) although the SHLAA Panel has not endorsed this figure.

Some existing sites have been ‘mothballed’ altogether or ‘stalled’ whilst others are being processed more slowly than would normally be expected. Action has been, and continues to be taken to bring such sites back into active development. This approach has proved to be very successful in Ilfracombe where the District Council is working very closely with the Town Council in order to unblock such sites.

Sales for those developments still being built and marketed remain reasonably buoyant, but the terms and availability of finance are constraining the level achieved. The Council’s efforts in bringing forward additional affordable housing units are likely to help delivery, but a recovery in the housing market is needed for private developers to have sufficient confidence to start building in substantial quantities again.

5.8 Indicator H3 – New & Converted Dwellings on Previously Developed Land

127 dwellings were built on previously developed land during the monitoring period, which equates to 56% of the total houses built, compared with 76% during the previous year. This reduction is primarily due to the coalition government’s amendment to PPS3 in June 2010 that excluded private residential gardens from the definition of previously developed land in Annex B.

5.9 Local Indicator – Dwellings Completed by density of development

- Less than 30 dwellings per hectare = 20%
- Between 30 & 50 dwellings per hectare = 56%
- More than 50 dwellings per hectare = 24%

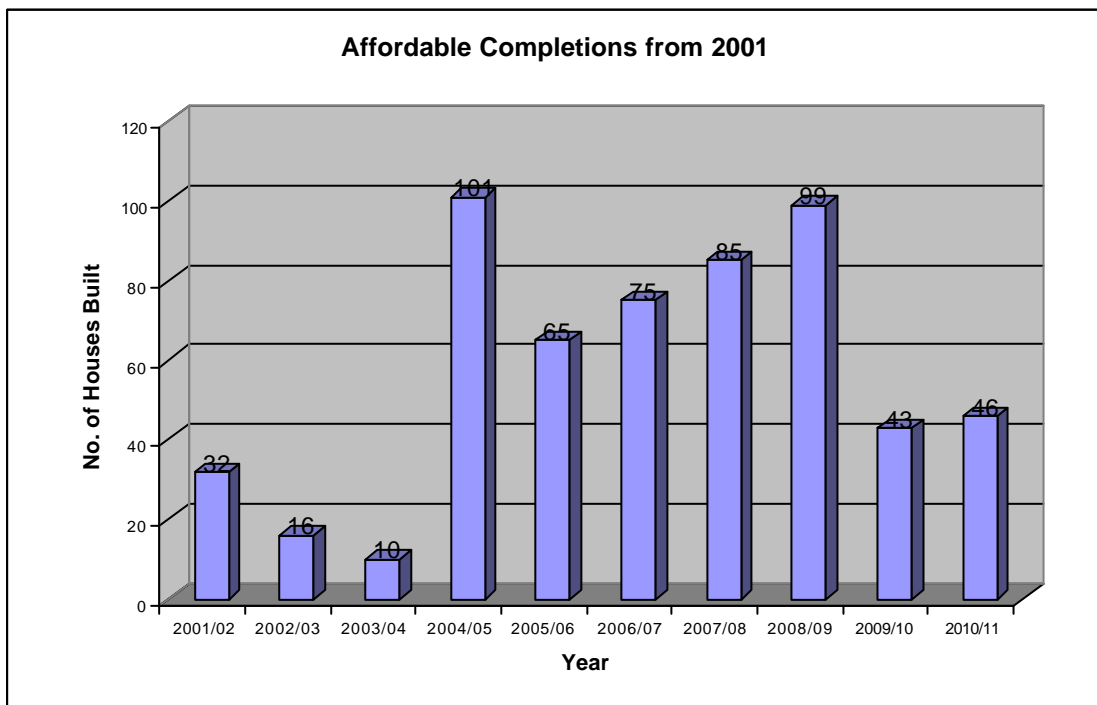
These figures show a higher proportion of new homes built between 30 and 50 dwellings per hectare than in previous years (compared to figures of 25%, 32%, 43% respectively in 2009/10).

5.10 Indicator H4 – Net Additional Gypsy & Traveller Pitches

One additional permanent pitch was provided during the monitoring period.

5.11 Indicator H5 – Gross Affordable Housing Completions

A total of 46 affordable dwellings were completed within the period (excluding those in Exmoor National Park). This was split between 44 dwellings provided through Registered Providers and 2 dwellings delivered by individuals. This figure compares to a total of 43 units completed in 2009/10 and 99 units completed in 2008/09. The overall fall in provision of affordable homes compared to 2008/9 reflects continued poor viability across the wider housing market, reducing the delivery of grant free units that have traditionally made up a significant proportion of new affordable homes in North Devon, as well as no 'kick start' funding to major house builders being spent in the district.



5.12 SA Indicator – % of new dwellings which are affordable

20% of dwellings completed during the monitoring period (46 out of 227 homes) were affordable, compared to 13% in 2009/10.

5.13 Local Indicator – Affordable Housing completions over plan period

The cumulative total for affordable dwellings during the period of the current local plan (from April 2006) is 348 homes.

5.14 Indicator H6 – Housing Quality : Building for Life assessments

The Council has continued to undertake assessments under the Building for Life criteria devised by CABI for five major residential developments substantially completed during 2010/11. Two of these developments were sites assessed during 2009/10 where at least another 10 dwellings had been completed. The results varied with 1 development scoring a 'good standard' (14/20), 2 developments rated as 'average' (10/20 to 13.5/20) and 2 developments rated as 'poor' (9.5/20 or less).

Most of these developments represent completions of historic consents (approved under old policies) that do not have sufficient information on file to demonstrate achievement standards even where they have been met. These generally scored poorly under 'design and construction', although most schemes scored well under 'character' and 'environment and community'.

These results identify the need for future improvement in design standards and for showing evidence for design standards that have been met. It is anticipated that the introduction of design and access statements in 2006 will help to satisfy this requirement for more recent developments. Emerging policies within the joint North Devon and Torridge Core Strategy will seek to achieve an assessment rating of at least 'good' for all major residential developments.

5.15 Local Indicator – Homelessness

45 households spent time in temporary accommodation in the District during the monitoring period. This is a slight increase compared with the previous year 2009/10 where 43 households spent time in temporary accommodation. This increase was largely due to a local 'Registered Provider' carrying out re-development work at one of their main residential estates and the serving of 'Notice to Quit' on 29 assured shorthold tenancies.

ECONOMY

5.16 Indicator BD1 – Total Amount of Additional Employment Floor Space – by type

Gross new floor space

- B1(a) = 5847 m², B1(b) = 0 m² & B1(c) = 0 m²
- B2 = 0 m²
- B8 = 637 m²

There were no losses of employment land during the monitoring period so net floor space is the same as for gross floor space. The majority of the new floor space was delivered at Pathfields Business Park in South Molton, with a small amount at Roundswell.

5.17 Indicator BD2 – Total Amount of Employment Floor Space on Previously Developed Land – by type

All of the new employment floor space was on greenfield land.

5.18 Indicator BD3 – Employment Land Available – by type

Approximately 38 hectares of available employment land remains allocated for a combination of B1, B2 and B8 uses. This comprises 22.3 hectares at Roundswell, 11.1 hectares at Pathfields and 4.6 hectares at Mullacott. These overall figures cannot sensibly be disaggregated between use classes, since the majority of the land would all be suitable for any combination of these uses.

Since April 2011 a new school for students with behavioural, emotional and social difficulties has been built at Roundswell Business Park on 1.4 hectares of former employment land.

5.19 Indicator BD4 – Total Amount of Floor Space for Town Centre Uses

Total floor space for A1, A2, B1(a) and D2 is 827.96 m².

- A1 = 450 m²
- A2 = 0
- A3 = 64 m²
- B1a = 0
- D2 = 313.96 m²

The majority of the new retail floor space was the additional floor space at Seven Brethren where a new Tesco replaced the former Brian Fords Discount Store.

5.20 Local Indicator – Town Centre Usage

Table 4 : Retail Uses in Town Centres

Percentage of shops (A1 Use Class) in the primary shopping frontages of Barnstaple and Ilfracombe. (Target: no net decrease in the number of shops within the primary shopping areas of Barnstaple and Ilfracombe)	Barnstaple 77% A1 use (3% higher than 2009/10) Ilfracombe 64% A1 use (5% lower than 2009/10)
Percentage of shops (A1 Use Class) in the centres of Braunton and South Molton. (Target: no less than 50% of the total number of units in non-shop use within the centres of Braunton and South Molton)	Braunton 57% A1 use (2% higher than 2009/10) South Molton 32% A1 use (2% higher than 2009/10)

All surveys undertaken during September/November 2010.

It can be seen from Table 4 that the proportion of A1 uses has risen slightly in 3 of the 4 centres monitored, and fallen moderately in 1. The no less than 50% target for South Molton has never been achieved in South Molton since the policy was adopted in 2006. This is partly due to the area covered by the town centre that incorporates a high proportion of Class C3 – dwelling houses. A review of all the town/village centre core areas will be undertaken in due course.

5.21 Local Indicator – Town Centre Vacancy Rates

Table 5 : Vacancy Rates in Town Centres

Percentage of ground floor units in Barnstaple Town Centre which are (i) Use Class A1 (retail) and (ii) vacant.	51% A1 use (same as 2009/10)	11% vacant (same as 2009/10)
Percentage of ground floor units in Ilfracombe Town Centre which are (i) Use Class A1 (retail) and (ii) vacant.	44% A1 use (down 1% against 2009/10)	12% vacant (up 2% against 2009/10)
Percentage of ground floor units in Ilfracombe Harbour which are (i) Use Class A1 (retail) and (ii) vacant.	29% A1 use (same as 2009/10)	3% vacant (down 1% against 2009/10)
Percentage of ground floor units in South Molton Town Centre which are (i) Use Class A1 (retail) and (ii) vacant.	32% A1 use (up 2% against 2009/10)	7% vacant (down 1% against 2009/10)
Percentage of ground floor units in Braunton Village Centre that are vacant.	57% A1 use (up 2% against 2009/10)	1% vacant (down 1% against 2009/10)
Percentage of ground floor units in Woolacombe Village Centre which are (i) Use Class A1 (retail) and (ii) vacant.	41% A1 use (down 2% against 2009/10)	2% vacant (up 2% against 2009/10)

¹ All site surveys undertaken during September/November 2010.

Table 5 indicates that in the wider town centre areas A1 (retail) use has remained the same in Barnstaple and Ilfracombe (Harbour), increased slightly in Braunton and South Molton, but declined in Ilfracombe (Town Centre) and Woolacombe. At the same time vacancy rates in Barnstaple have remained stable, at a level similar to the average for the South West region (11.2%) but have declined in Ilfracombe (Harbour), Braunton and South Molton whilst increasing slightly in Woolacombe against the last monitoring period.

The most notable concern is the increase in vacancy rates in Ilfracombe (Town Centre), which is now higher than the average for the South West region. This is a particular issue when seen against this year's 5% fall in A1 uses within Ilfracombe's primary shopping frontage (Table 4). Vacancy levels in the main 3 centres (Barnstaple, Ilfracombe Town Centre and South Molton) are high enough to cause concern, but have not reached the levels found elsewhere in the country. Due to the current economic climate there is concern that this current trend of relative stagnation in our town centres will continue over the short to medium term.

5.22 Local Indicator – Out of Town Centre Retail Development

Tesco opened a new store (8,858 m² gross floorspace) on Seven Brethren in early 2011, which replaced the previous Brian Fords Discount Store (7,432 m² gross floorspace) and provided approximately 450 m² additional net floorspace.

Since April 2011 two out of town centre shops (Focus and Rodds Electrical) have closed in Barnstaple, whilst the Council has received a planning application for a new supermarket (2,879 sq metres net retail floorspace) on an 'out of centre' site in Barnstaple, which is currently undetermined. There is also likely to be a further proposal for another supermarket (approximately 3,700 sq metres net retail floorspace) on a site outside the town centre being submitted in the near future.

5.23 Local Indicator – Retail & Leisure Development

Some A1 units in the main centres have been lost to a variety of business and leisure uses including offices, take-aways, fitness and leisure studio and beauty salons. However, Table 5 shows no major change in the proportion of A1 uses within the town centres as a whole with slight increases in Braunton and South Molton.

TRANSPORT

5.24 SA Indicator – % of new development within 5 minutes public transport of a GP, Hospital, Primary or Secondary School, Employment & a Major Health Centre

We are not able to monitor this indicator at present due to inconsistencies and lack of useful information with the Accession Mapping information available from Devon County Council.

5.25 SA Indicator – Net increase in length of Cycleways, Bridleways and Public Footpaths in the District

We are not aware of any changes during the monitoring period.

5.26 Local Indicator – Travel Plans adopted in major new non-residential schemes

Travel plans were adopted in 2010/11 for 4 major new non-residential developments:

- Extension to building & change of use from use classes B1, B2 & B8 to education use, at Roundswell (50272)
- Demolition of existing chalets & construction of new bedroom accommodation, at Croyde (50336)
- Extension to existing tennis hall to provide additional tennis courts together with gymnastics hall, at Seven Brethren (50583)
- Demolition of existing hotel & erection of new hotel with public house, at Ilfracombe (50803)

HEALTH & WELLBEING

5.27 Local Indicator – Recreation Contributions

An assessment of section 106 agreements signed during the monitoring period 2010/11 together with other financial contributions identified a total contribution of £227,815 for provision of new and enhancement of existing open space off site. This is 25% higher than the equivalent figure (£182,129) for 2009/10.

5.28 Local Indicator – Recreational Provision

The development of a new monitoring database will hopefully enable this indicator to be monitored in future periods. No loss of open space has occurred as a result of residential or commercial development.

ENVIRONMENT

5.29 Indicator E1 – Number of planning permissions granted contrary to Environment Agency advice on flooding and water quality grounds

No applications were approved contrary to Environment Agency recommendation during the monitoring period. Of the four applications where objections were raised, three have been amended to overcome objections and one remains undetermined.

5.30 SA Indicator – Percentage of new development with SUDS installed

The prevalence of the use of Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems will be part of the drive towards Sustainable Design & Construction. It has been a requirement of all major developments and it is hoped that this will be practicable to monitor in future.

5.31 Indicator E2 – Changes in areas of Biodiversity Importance

No new County Wildlife Sites were designated during the period, leaving the overall total at 333 sites covering 3,920 hectares within North Devon (excluding Exmoor). North Devon District (excluding Exmoor) also contains 23 Sites of Special Scientific Interest covering an area of approximately 3,201.5 hectares.

5.32 SA Indicator – Total Number of TPOs and New TPOs in District

There are 341 Tree Preservation Order records within North Devon, including those that straddle the National Park boundary. No TPOs were revoked in the monitoring period and no new orders were made.

5.33 SA Indicator – Areas of Ancient Woodland in District

North Devon District (excluding Exmoor) contains 2,192ha of Ancient Woodland.

5.34 Indicator E3 – Renewable Energy Generation

Policy ECN15 of the North Devon Local Plan adopted in July 2006, includes a requirement for new residential and commercial development of a 'significant size' to incorporate at least 15% of predicted energy requirements from renewable sources. During 2010/11, on-site renewable energy under ECN15 has been approved for 65kW photovoltaic for 14 dwellings at San-Mar in Barnstaple, 30kW photovoltaic at the Unison Holiday Park in Croyde and 136 kW through air source heat pumps on commercial units at business parks in Barnstaple and South Molton. Fullabrook Windfarm, comprising of 22 wind turbines has been erected and is currently being tested. Once fully operational it will generate up to 66 MW of renewable energy into the national grid.

A large number of small-scale renewable energy schemes have been approved during the monitoring period, but most domestic renewable energy schemes are not subject to planning control so completion is difficult to monitor and the overall figure is an under provision of what has actually been provided. Planning consents during 2010/11 include several single turbines on farms and solar arrays up to 107kW. The LPA have also dealt with a large number of pre-application enquiries concerning the installation of solar arrays.

COMMUNITY

5.35 Local Indicator – Parish Plan Implementation Monitoring

There have been no new Parish Plans adopted in the monitoring period.

5.36 Local Indicator – Conservation Area Character Appraisals

There were 8 Conservation Area Character Appraisals adopted during the monitoring period. This represents a significant continuation of the Council's programme of building a comprehensive system of character appraisals and management plans for all Conservation Areas within the district (excluding Exmoor National Park) bringing the number of recently updated appraisals to 17 out of 40 by the end of the monitoring period. Four more character appraisals have been adopted since April 2011, including a new conservation area designated in Combe Martin.

5.37 Local Indicator – s106 Contributions Secured and Money Spent

Charging for the monitoring and reporting on section 106 agreements was implemented in October 2009. The section 106 monitoring fees total £4,640 for April 2010 to March 2011. This represents 20 agreements where the fee was received during that financial year with a range of fees from £120 to £440.

6.0 LOCAL ISSUES

6.1 Systems are still being developed in the North Devon and Torridge areas to enable better monitoring of the progress of both individual and joint policy development and implementation, including the joint Core Strategy.

6.2 Policy Usage and Appeal Decisions

During the monitoring period the use and effectiveness of Local Plan policies were monitored with a view to determining the most appropriate suite of generic Development Management policies for inclusion in the LDF, in accordance with government guidance.

During the monitoring period a total of 33 planning and enforcement appeals were considered against current adopted policies. Overall 10 (30%) of the appeals were allowed and 23 (70%) were dismissed. There were no fundamental policy reasons why the Planning Inspectorate allowed planning appeals; it was mainly due to a slightly different interpretation of policy or where the conclusion on potential impacts was not considered to be an overriding material consideration that would outweigh the otherwise acceptable principle of development.

The following statistics indicate the number of appeals that referred to specific saved Local Plan policies.

Appeal decisions relating to sustainable development (design, location etc.):

- Total of 16 appeals, of which 15 were dismissed.
- Out of these: DVS1A was not used; ENV1 was used 13 times (12 dismissed and 1 allowed); ECN5 used 3 times (3 dismissed), HSG8 used once (1 dismissed), and TRA1A used once (1 dismissed).

Appeal decisions relating primarily to design and landscaping:

- Total of 16 appeals, of which 9 were dismissed.
- Out of these: DVS1 was used 11 times (9 dismissed and 2 allowed); DVS3 used 8 times (4 dismissed and 4 allowed) and HSG2 used 4 times (3 dismissed and 1 allowed).

Appeal decisions relating primarily to protecting the landscape:

- Total of 6 appeals, of which 4 were dismissed.
- Out of these: ENV2 was used 3 times (2 dismissed and 1 allowed); ENV3 used 5 times (3 dismissed and 2 allowed), ENV5 used 4 times (2 dismissed and 2 allowed).

Appeal decisions relating primarily to protecting the built heritage:

- Total of 4 appeals, of which 3 were dismissed.
- Out of these: ENV16 was used 3 times (2 dismissed and 1 allowed); ENV17 used once (1 dismissed).

6.3 There were no major developments within formally designated landscapes including the AONB, Coastal Preservation Area, Heritage Coast and Areas of Great Landscape Value either approved or allowed on appeal.

6.4 Significant Effect Indicators

Sustainability Appraisals of emerging LDDs indicate potentially significant effects that need to be monitored to enable comparison between predicted and actual effects measured during the implementation of policies. Sustainability Appraisals have been carried out in relation to Supplementary Planning Documents, a process that has continued beyond the end of the monitoring period. The Sustainability Appraisals have indicated that a commentary on identified issues should be used rather than specific indicators. Some relevant indicators are reported elsewhere in this AMR, for example provision of affordable housing.

No significant effects will arise from the emerging joint Core Strategy until it has been formally adopted (scheduled for 2013) and starts to become a material consideration in the determination of planning applications.

7.0 IMPACT ON FUTURE POLICY DEVELOPMENT AND IMPLEMENTATION

- 7.1** Changes in policy formulation, implementation and monitoring may be needed arising from issues raised by this Annual Monitoring Report and other changes, both during and since the monitoring period.
- 7.2** The Local Development Scheme approved in 2007 has long been in need of review as a result of delays initially from uncertainty over the content and subsequently over the future of the RSS; formal joint working arrangements with Torridge District Council; and changes to the LDF Regulations affecting Core Strategy preparation. More recently the Localism Act and the draft National Planning Policy Framework have both further delayed the preparation of the Core Strategy and its subsequent timetable.
- 7.3** The deliver of new housing is a key issue for the future. Although a SHLAA was published in August 2011, it needs to be reviewed and kept up to date. Once evidence is available to identify need for housing requirements for the period to 2031, then the adequacy of the identified land supply can be reassessed. The emerging Core Strategy will identify where future housing and employment land should be delivered.
- 7.4** The main difficulty recently has been encouraging the bringing forward of sites in the current economic climate. Rather than adopt blanket policies towards levels of contributions etc. it is considered that viability should be considered on a site-by-site basis in order to encourage future development.
- 7.5** Town centres are subject to continuing pressure on existing A1 retail uses and in some locations vacancy rates have risen; Ilfracombe Town Centre is of particular concern. Appropriate policy responses are needed to maintain the viability of the district's town centres. The sequential approach towards directing appropriate uses towards town centres remains important. A new retail and leisure study to meet the needs to PPS4 is currently being prepared jointly with Torridge District Council.
- 7.6** Following future enactment of the Localism Act during 2012, the Council will have more flexibility in terms of which targets and indicators to monitor in future Annual Monitoring Reports. North Devon and Torridge District Councils are committed to working together to deliver a joint Core Strategy and will work jointly in identifying a simplified range of relevant indicators to monitor in future Annual Monitoring Reports.

8.0 CONTACT DETAILS

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