



REPORT

To: Infrastructure Committee

29 August 2006

**From: Head of Planning
Infrastructure Services Department**

LOCAL PLAN MONITORING

1. Introduction

1.1 The following report sets out, for Members' information, the results of monitoring undertaken for the Shetland Local Plan. This monitoring will also be used to provide valuable information for Members, Community Councils and the public on the ongoing Housing Zone Review. Members may recall that a monitoring report was produced last year (minute ref: 51/05). This current report builds on the Planning Service's commitment to monitor the land use planning policies of the Council.

2. Link to Council Priorities

2.1 Increase supply of Housing (priority 1.7), Respecting Our Unique Landscape (Priority 2.1), Protecting Natural Resources (Priority 2.2) and Strengthening Rural Communities (Priority 4.5) contained in the Corporate Improvement Plan 2004-2008 are key corporate objectives. The implementation of policies contained within the Local Plan and the processing of planning applications that accord to the policies of the Local Plan ensure that the corporate objectives are achieved.

3. Background

3.1 The Shetland Local Plan was adopted by the Council on Tuesday 31st March 2004 (Min Ref. 29/04) and became operative on the 30th June 2004.

3.2 Following meetings with Community Councils in November and December 2004 to discuss the Housing Zone Review, four pressure areas were identified, namely Gulberwick, Quarff and Cunningsburgh; Burra and Trondra; Scalloway; and Tingwall, Whiteness and Weisdale. Within these Pressure Areas the Community Councils believed that housing pressure was the

greatest and that more substantial alterations were required to the existing housing zone lines. The findings of these meetings were presented to Members at Infrastructure Committee in January 2005 (Min Ref. 2/05).

- 3.3 In May 2005 the Planning Service began to undertake monitoring of all planning applications submitted in each of the Community Council areas from January 2004 to May 2005. It was decided that the monitoring of the pressure areas should also include applications submitted in the year 2003. The aim was to allow for a fuller assessment of the zoning policy in the Pressure Areas and ascertain what the trends for development in these areas were.
- 3.4 This report builds on the report presented to Committee last year. This current report and the appendix refers to monitoring of the Local Plan policies for the period June 2005 to May 2006. Findings of the monitoring have been attached as Appendix 1 to this report. Appendix 1 provides a breakdown of applications submitted during the time periods and the decisions that were made. Appendix 2 provides a graphical representation of these findings, and due to the amount of information conveyed it has been made available in the Members' Room.

4. Discussion

- 4.1 It can be seen from the information presented in Appendix 1 and Appendix 2 that the housing zone system is working well and there remains a considerable amount of new housing development being considered. This finding confirms the initial impression gained in discussions with Community Councils in November/ December 2004.
- 4.2 In the four pressure areas, during the period 03/05/05 to 03/05/06, 99 planning applications were submitted for housing developments. Of these 99 applications no applications were refused. Two applications were recommended for refusal but they were approved contrary to officers' recommendation.
- 4.3 Since 2003, 6 applications were approved contrary to the recommendation of the Planning Service and 4 have been refused. This clearly illustrates that there is a growing understanding of how the system of zones is operated and means that they are an effective means of guiding development.
- 4.4 Outwith the pressure areas, and during the period 03/05/05 to 03/05/06 only 2 applications have been refused throughout the whole of Shetland. It should be noted that one of these applications was for a new house. Two applications were

recommended for refusal but were approved and one application was refused contrary to the recommendation.

- 4.5 Appendixes 1 and 2 also demonstrate that the majority of planning applications for all types of development, not just new housing, are determined at a delegated officer level. For the monitoring period, 82% of all applications for new houses are dealt with under the scheme of delegation.
- 4.6 All of this, together with the information in the two Appendices, suggests that the Local Plan is performing well to date and that the Zoning system is guiding rather than restricting development.
- 4.7 In order to make this information readily available, the Planning Service intends to publish the Appendices on the Council's website and produce a short summary for members of the public.

5. Financial Implications

- 5.1 This report has no direct financial implications.

6. Policy and Delegated Authority

- 6.1 The Infrastructure Committee has full delegated authority to act within its remit (Min Ref: 19/03 and 07/03). However, this report is for information and there are no policy and delegated authority issues to be addressed.

7. Conclusion

- 7.1 This report and the information contained within the 2 Appendixes constitute the results of our monitoring of planning applications and the Housing Zones. This report fulfils the commitment to undertake monitoring of the Local Plan that was made to you last year.

8. Recommendation

- 8.1 I recommend that the Committee notes the contents of this report and the appendices.