



## Local Plan Committee

19<sup>th</sup> December 2016

Item  
**8**

Report of	Head of Commercial Services	Author	Laura Chase 01206 282473
Title	Authority Monitoring Report		
Wards affected	All		

### The Local Plan Committee is asked to approve the Authority Monitoring Report (AMR)

#### 1. Decision(s) Required

- 1.1 To approve the 2015-16 Authority Monitoring Report (AMR) for publication on the Council's website.

#### 2. Reasons for Decision(s)

- 2.1 Until the Localism Act came into effect in April 2012, Section 35 of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act required that every local planning authority (LPA) should prepare and publicise an Annual Monitoring Report (AMR) containing information on the implementation of the Local Development Scheme (LDS) and the extent to which the policies set out in Local Development Documents (LDDs) and local plans are being achieved. The Localism Act removed the requirement for local authorities to submit their AMR to Government, but retained a duty for local authorities to monitor policies. The Council accordingly still needs to demonstrate the effects of its policies in what is, as of 2015, termed an Authority Monitoring Report instead of an Annual Monitoring Report. In view of the lighter requirements for AMRs, the Council streamlined its reporting for last year's AMR and is following a similar approach this year. The report accordingly focuses on key indicators and has consolidated background information in tables, which is considered to have the advantage for users of being more concise and easier to use.

#### 3. Alternative Options

- 3.1 There are no alternatives as the Council needs to provide an annual source of information on the delivery of its planning functions.

#### 4. Supporting Information

- 4.1 The Authority Monitoring Report (AMR) provides key information that helps the Borough Council and its partners to evaluate planning policies in the context of current trends and delivery levels. The full report covering the period April 2015 to March 2016 is attached as Appendix 1 and will be available to view on the

council's website [www.colchester.gov.uk](http://www.colchester.gov.uk) and upon request to the Planning Policy team.

- 4.2 As part of the Localism Act, authorities can now choose which targets and indicators to include in their monitoring reports as long as they are in line with the relevant UK and EU legislation. Their primary purpose is to share the performance and achievements of the Council's planning service with the local community. The format of this AMR accordingly is designed to clearly demonstrate how the Council is meeting targets and indicators arising from the adopted policies contained in its Local Plan and provide information that can be used in reviewing the plan. The AMR also includes information on how the Council is working with partners to meet the duty to co-operate on cross-boundary strategic matters.
- 4.3 The AMR this year is being produced at the same time as the submission version of the new Local Plan is being produced for consideration by the Local Plan Committee and public consultation early next year. New housing land allocations have yet to be finalised for the submission version so the following tables have been modified as follows from the format normally followed for AMR reporting:
- The projection of housing delivery through the Local Plan uses the figures from last year's report updated with current year completion figures.
  - The housing trajectory, which normally provides a list of future allocations, is for this report confined to documenting historic delivery rates and providing a detailed list of housing units delivered last year. The requirement for the Council to demonstrate how it intends meet the five year housing land supply requirement will be addressed by issuing a separate Five Year Housing Land Supply early next year once allocations and their expected delivery profiles have been finalised. Officers are content that there is a 5 year supply of housing land.
- 4.4 The AMR is divided into a number of Key Themes covering progress in meeting Local Plan policy aspirations across a variety of areas. Key findings include:
- The total number of applications received between 1 April 2015 and 31 March 2016 of 1,680 shows an increase on last year's total of 1,548, but is below the pre-recession figure of 2,015 in 2007-08.
  - The housing trajectory included in this report shows that a net of 933 homes were built between 1 April 2015 and 31 March 2016. This is similar to last year's total of 943 and demonstrates the deliverability of the Objectively Assessed Need target for Colchester of 920 housing units a year. This figure is the one forming the basis for allocations in the new Local Plan. It is important to bear in mind, however, that even if the Council can ensure there is an adequate supply of housing land, economic viability considerations and market conditions influence actual delivery figures.
  - The net housing completion figures demonstrate a good performance when considered in context of the national climate and when compared to other

local authorities in Essex. The table in the Overview section of the AMR providing Essex Local Authority Housing Delivery figures shows that Colchester has out-performed all other Essex authorities in recent years. 13,572 homes were delivered in Colchester over the period 2001/2 – 2015/16.

- During the monitoring year 2015/16 106 affordable housing units were delivered, 38 of these were social rent, 55 were affordable rent and 13 were shared ownership. This amounts to 11.4% of all new homes delivered. The comparable figures for the previous two years were 259 (26.2%) in 2014/15 and 103 (14.2%) in 2013/14. This year's total compared to last year reflects the challenging national climate for affordable housing where it has been difficult for Registered Providers to deliver affordable housing led developments and therefore the council has been more reliant on delivery being through Developers Section 106 obligations. For the year 2015/16, £514,186.14 was received in commuted sums for affordable housing. This money was provided to meet requirements for affordable housing in lieu of affordable dwellings within some permitted schemes.
- Approximately 86% of new and converted dwellings were on previously developed land, which demonstrates that Colchester is continuing to prioritise re-use of brownfield land in preference to greenfield.
- The Council worked with other districts to produce an Essex Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessment (GTAA) to help provide an assessment of current provision and future need for pitches in the Borough (published in July 2014, with September 2014 revisions.) The GTAA established that Colchester had 12 local authority pitches at Severalls Lane, 15 private pitches, and one site where the use was tolerated and considered lawful due to the length of time it had occurred. Council monitoring established that in January 2016 there were 54 caravan/mobile units, including 16 on the Local Authority Site on Severalls Lane.
- The Borough has seen moderate amounts of new employment development over the last few years, mainly relating to industrial and storage and distribution uses (planning use classes B1(c), B2 and B8) uses and driven by a small number of large developments. At the same time, the Borough has been losing significant amounts of B class space, to the extent that net development rates have been negative in recent years. This year, totals continued to be significantly affected by the 2013 introduction of permitted development rights to change office use to residential. There has been a net loss of 8,690 square meters of commercial floorspace across the Borough from planning permissions issued in the monitoring period. The majority of this net loss was on B1(a) office floorspace. 10,978 square metres of office floorspace was permitted to change to residential use in line with the change to regulations.
- While AMR figures show limited new commercial activity within the Town Centre, the redevelopment of the Williams and Griffins department store and

Lion Walk shops points to investor confidence in the longer term prospects of the Town Centre. Additionally, the commercial property market for existing Town Centre property is buoyant.

- The challenging issue of transportation is being tackled through a number of approaches including new transport infrastructure (i.e. the final phase of the Northern Approach Road, introduction of the Park and Ride, and improved cycle routes including shared use paths in the Garrison, University-Wivenhoe, North Colchester, Stanway, and links to the station.) The Fixing the Link project has improved the route to and from the Town Centre and Colchester North Station with new public realm features and directional markers. Behavioural change measures are another approach to managing demand, including requirements such as travel plans which support shifts away from car-based means of transport.
- The Council's latest greenhouse gas emissions report for 2015/16 calculated that the Council achieved a 39% reduction in its carbon emissions from its baseline year of 2008. As the Council's target is to reduce CO2 emissions by 40% by 2020 the Council is on track to achieve this target. The challenge now for Colchester is to develop a new carbon management plan that identifies more innovative and creative ways to continue to reduce carbon emissions by 2020, while factoring in the effects on emissions of predicted population growth in the Borough over the same period.
- The AMR shows that there was no loss/damage to Scheduled Monuments, Sites of Special Scientific Interest or (SSSIs), Local Wildlife Sites, key community facilities or loss of designated allotment sites.

## **5. Proposals**

- 5.1 It is proposed that the Committee agree to adopt and publish the Authority Monitoring Report.

## **6. Strategic Plan References**

- 6.1 Effective strategic planning supports the Strategic Plan Action Plan which includes a commitment to make Colchester a vibrant, prosperous, thriving and welcoming place.

## **7. Consultation**

- 7.1 The Authority Monitoring Report considers the effectiveness of Local Plan policies which have been through a comprehensive consultation programme as set forth in the Council's Statement of Community Involvement (SCI).

## **8. Publicity Considerations**

- 8.1 The AMR provides a wealth of statistical information on the Borough which should warrant press attention.

## **9. Financial Implications**

- 9.1 There are no direct financial implications. The AMR, however, provides evidence to evaluate the effect of wider economic influences on Council planning policies and highlights the potential for the Council to benefit from Government funding linked to housing delivery.

## **10. Equality, Diversity and Human Rights Implications**

- 10.1 An Equality Impact Assessment has been prepared for the Local Development Framework and is available to view by clicking on this link:- <http://www.colchester.gov.uk/article/4962/Strategic-Policy-and-Regeneration> or go to the Colchester Borough Council website [www.colchester.gov.uk](http://www.colchester.gov.uk) and follow the pathway from the homepage: Council and Democracy > Policies, Strategies and Performance > Equality and Diversity > Equality Impact Assessments > Strategic Policy and Regeneration and select Local Development Framework from the Strategic Planning and Research section.
- 10.2 There are no particular Human Rights implications.

## **11. Community Safety and Health and Safety Implications**

- 11.1 None

## **12. Risk Management Implications**

- 12.1 Monitoring policies to ensure their effectiveness is intended to reduce the risk of inappropriate development. It will provide consistent advice to landowners, developers, officers, Councillors and members of the public.

## **13. Disclaimer**

- 13.1 The information in this report was, as far as is known, correct at the date of publication. Colchester Borough Council cannot accept responsibility for any error or omission.