



Local Plan Committee

Item

11

11 December 2023

Report of

Laura Goulding

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Title

Authority Monitoring Report 2023

Wards
affected

All wards affected

1. Executive Summary

- 1.1 The Authority Monitoring Report provides an annual summary of key statistics that allows the Council to monitor the effectiveness of its Local Plan and report on other key information.
- 1.2 Key statistics for the monitoring period 1 April 2022 to 31 March 2023 include:
 - Colchester awarded City Status with Colchester Borough Council becoming Colchester City Council on 23 November 2022
 - The King and Queen Consort visit Colchester during the Year of Celebration.
 - Section 2 Colchester Local Plan adopted by Full Council on 4 July 2022
 - Colchester City Council awarded £19.66m funding for Levelling Up to support improvements to Colchester's city centre.
 - 711 new dwellings were built in Colchester City
 - 1,722 planning applications received
 - 172 new affordable homes were delivered in Colchester (of which 42 homes were Council new builds or acquisitions)
 - 100 E-bikes launched in Colchester

2. Recommended Decision

- 2.1 To approve the 2023 Authority Monitoring Report for publication on the Council's website.

3. Reason for Recommended Decision

- 3.1 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 and Annual Monitoring Report 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.

3.2 The Localism Act removed the requirement for local authorities to submit their Annual Monitoring Report to Government but retains 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 providing the opportunity for updates as and when data is available.

4. Alternative Options

4.1 There are no alternatives as the Council needs to provide a monitoring source of information on the delivery of its planning functions.

5. Background Information

5.1 The Authority Monitoring Report (AMR) provides key information that helps the City Council and its partners evaluate planning policies in the context of current trends and delivery levels. The full report covering the period 1 April 2022 to 31 March 2023 is attached as Appendix 1 and will be available to view on the Council's website, and in hard copy upon request to the Planning Policy team. Some information has been included outside of the monitoring period to provide a more accurate and up to date position.

5.2 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 in the Local Plan, grouped by themes.

5.3 The AMR measures progress on the adopted Local Plan for the monitoring period, which was the Section 1 Colchester Local Plan 2021 and Section 2 Local Plan 2022. Although three months of the monitoring period covered the Core Strategy 2010 (amended 2014), Site Allocations DPD 2010, Development Policies DPD 2010 (amended 2014), these indicators have not been reported as they are no longer relevant having been superseded by adoption of the Section 2 Colchester Local Plan.

5.4 As a result, the indicators have been updated this year in accordance with the monitoring framework of the Section 2 Colchester Local Plan.

5.5 Indicators relating to the Tendring Colchester Borders Garden Community (TCB GC) have not been included this year as there is not sufficient information available to monitor these currently. Once the DPD has been examined and adopted, this position will be updated and likely reflected in the 2025 AMR.

5.6 Indicators relating to travel to work patterns have not been included as the Office for National Statistics (ONS) collected information for the Census 2021 which has been impacted by coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic which have affected the reliability of the data. Officers will continue to find alternative sources of data to enable this indicator to be monitored in the future.

5.7 Under Section 102 of the Environment Act it introduces a strengthened duty under s40 of Natural Environment and Rural Communities (NERC) Act 2006 for Councils to conserve and enhance biodiversity. Public authorities must periodically consider what actions they can take to conserve and enhance biodiversity and then take that action. A section has

been included under the Environment chapter, setting out the first considerations of what action to take for biodiversity.

5.8 The Housing chapter outlines historic delivery rates and provides a detailed list of housing units delivered during the monitoring period. The requirement for the Council to demonstrate how it intends to meet the five year housing land supply requirement has been addressed by the publication of a separate [Housing Land Supply Statement](#) which was published in November 2023 and demonstrated that the Council has a five year land supply.

5.9 Key findings within the AMR include:

- The total number of applications (major, minor and others i.e., change of use and listed building consent) received between 1 April 2022 and 31 March 2023 of 1,722 shows a decrease on last year's total of 1,982. This figure however does not include all applications i.e., discharge of condition and preliminary inquiries.
- Decision rates remain high with 96% of minor applications decided within 8 weeks; a slight increase from the previous figure of 95% recorded in the previous year.
- A net of 711 dwellings were built between 1 April 2022 and 31 March 2023. This is lower than the previous year's total of 1,034 and below the Objectively Assessed Need target of 920 dwellings a year for Colchester, this is largely caused by a short delay to completion of a student accommodation development at the University of Essex.
- A total of 172 affordable homes have been delivered across Colchester. During the monitoring period 130 new build affordable housing units were delivered consisting of 49 Affordable Rent, 20 were Social Rent, 10 First Homes and 51 were Shared Ownership. The comparable figures for the previous three years were 117 in 21/22, 42 in 20/21, 202 in 19/20. This demonstrates a rise in the number of new build affordable housing units delivered since the Covid-19 pandemic.
- 100 of the new build affordable homes were delivered through Section 106 obligations. with the remaining 30 units delivered via the Council's Development Company – Amphora Housing Ltd.
- Outside of Section 106 and the Council's development company, a further 42 affordable units have been delivered through the Council's acquisitions programme.
- Colchester City Council were awarded £310,770 by the Department of Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA) to fund schemes that aim to reduce air pollution and make Colchester's air cleaner for residents and visitors.
- The Council have taken on an additional area of 157,595.58m² of open space during the monitoring period. This includes a large open space of 154,944m² at Iron Latch Lane and 2,587m² at Maximus Drive.

5.10 Neighbourhood planning has remained high on the national government's agenda since regulations were introduced in 2012. Revisions to national policy, guidance and regulations continue to demonstrate the importance of Neighbourhood Plans for housing provision and local planning matters.

5.11 A number of Neighbourhood Plans have progressed during the monitoring period.

- Great Horkesley Neighbourhood Plan area designated in June 2022;
- Copford Neighbourhood Plan Regulation 16 Consultation held from 4 August to 19 September 2022. Examination commenced in October 2022;
- Tiptree Neighbourhood Plan Regulation 16 Consultation held from 30 August to 12 October 2022. Examination commenced in October 2022 concluding subject to modifications, the Plan can proceed to Referendum; and
- Myland and Braiswick Neighbourhood Plan review Regulation 14 consultation commenced in August/September 2022. Regulation 16 Consultation commenced 27 March 2022.

5.12 The following key milestones have occurred in the next monitoring period (2023/24) but for completeness have also been recorded:

- Tiptree Neighbourhood Plan proceeded to a successful referendum and was made in May 2023;
- Myland and Braiswick Neighbourhood plan review commenced its examination in July 2023. The Examiner issued his final report on 13 September 2023 and concluded that the Review Plan meets the Basic Conditions, and a referendum is not required. The plan was formerly made by Full Council on 17 October 2023; and
- Copford Neighbourhood Plan examiner concluded, subject to modifications it could proceed to referendum which took place on the 21 September 2023. The plan was formerly made by Full Council on 17 October 2023.

6. Equality, Diversity and Human Rights implications

6.1 An Equality Impact Assessment has been prepared for the Local Plan, and is available to view by clicking [here](#).

7. Strategic Plan References

7.1 [The Strategic Plan 2023 – 2026](#) is relevant in particular contributing to priorities under the following themes:

- Respond to the climate emergency
- Deliver modern services for a modern city
- Improve health, wellbeing and happiness
- Deliver homes for those most in need
- Grow our economy so everyone benefits
- Celebrate our city, heritage and culture

8. Consultation

8.1 The AMR considers the effectiveness of Local Plan policies which have been through a comprehensive consultation programme as set out in the Council's Statement of Community Involvement (SCI).

9. Publicity Considerations

- 9.1 The AMR provides a wealth of statistical information on Colchester which may warrant press attention.

10. Financial implications

- 10.1 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.

11. Health, Wellbeing and Community Safety Implications

- 11.1 There are no health, wellbeing or community safety implications for the Council.

12. Health and Safety Implications

- 12.1 There are no health and safety implications for the Council.

13. Risk Management Implications

- 13.1 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.

14. Environmental and Sustainability Implications

- 14.1 The Council has declared a Climate Emergency and has committed to being carbon neutral by 2030. The purpose of the planning system is to contribute to the achievement of sustainable development as defined in the National Planning Policy Framework. Achieving sustainable development means that the planning system has three overarching objectives, which are interdependent and need to be pursued in mutually supportive ways. These are economic, social and environmental objectives.
- 14.2 The AMR includes a chapter titled 'Climate Change' which highlights the Council's latest initiatives in relation to reducing the impacts of climate change across the City.

Appendices

Appendix A – Authority Monitoring Report 2023