

## Local Plan Committee

18<sup>th</sup> December 2017

Item  
**7**

Report of	Head of Policy and Corporate	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. 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.
- 1.2 Key statistics for the monitoring period 1<sup>st</sup> April 2016 – 31<sup>st</sup> March 2017 include:
  - 1705 planning applications received
  - 912 homes completed
  - 100 affordable unites completed
  - 73% of new and converted dwellings built on previously developed land
  - Net loss of 8,690 square meters of commercial floorspace, reflecting 10,978 sq metres of office floorspace changing to residential, which could potentially create 213 units.
  - 55% reduction in carbon emissions from the baseline year of 2008.

#### 2. Decision(s) Required

- 2.1 To approve the 2016-17 Authority Monitoring Report (AMR) for publication on the Council's website.

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

- 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 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.

#### **4. Alternative Options**

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

#### **5. Supporting Information**

- 5.1 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 2016 to March 2017 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.

- 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 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.

- 5.3 The AMR is divided into a number of Key Themes covering progress in meeting Local Plan policy aspirations across a variety of areas.

- 5.4 The housing section documents historic delivery rates and provides 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 is being addressed by the publication of a separate Five Year Housing Land Supply report. Officers are content that there is a 5 year supply of housing land.

- 5.5 Other key findings include:

- The total number of applications received between 1 April 2016 and 31 March 2017 of 1705 shows a slight increase on last year's total of 1,680 but is below the pre-recession figure of 2,015 in 2007-08.
- The report shows that a net of 912 homes were built between 1 April 2016 and 31 March 2017. This is slightly down on last year's total of 933 but is only marginally below 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. The table

based on projections from the monitoring year indicates the Council is projected to deliver 5,216 new homes over the five year period 2017/18-2021/22, which is a yearly average of 1043. This projection exceeds the Council's duty to maintain a five year supply of housing land in line with national planning policy requirements (920 per year plus a 5% buffer = 966). 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.

- During the monitoring year 2016/17 100 affordable housing units were delivered, 65 were affordable rent and 35 were shared ownership. This amounts to 10.96% of all new homes delivered. It should be noted however that affordable housing through S106 agreements is only required on sites above a certain threshold. The comparable figures for the previous two years were 106 (11.4%) in 2015/16 and 259 (26.2%) in 2014/15. 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, £276,000 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 73% of new and converted dwellings were on previously developed land. This is a decrease on the previous year's figure of 86% which indicates that the supply of brownfield land in Colchester is beginning to diminish, although those remaining will continue to be priority sites for development.
- 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 and a Colchester specific report in June 2017). 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 64 caravan/mobile units (not pitches), including 18 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 losses of retail floorspace within the Town Centre, the redevelopment of the Williams and Griffins department store and Lion Walk shops provides a more positive view 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. The Lower Castle Park and Balcerne Bridges were replaced during the monitoring year to enhance pedestrian connections to the Town Centre. 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 Councils latest greenhouse gas emissions report for 2016/17 calculated that the Council achieved a 55% 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 has exceeded this target three years ahead of schedule. 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.

## **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/12745/Policy-and-Corporate>
- 10.2 There are no particular Human Rights implications.

## **11. Community Safety Implications**

- 11.1 None

## **12. Health and Safety Implications**

- 12.1 None

## **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. Disclaimer**

- 14.1 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.