

16 December 2019

Report of	Assistant Director of Policy and Corporate	Author	Bethany Jones
Title	Authority Monitoring Report		☎ 282541
Wards affected	All wards affected		

1. Executive Summary

- 1.1 The Authority Monitoring Report provides an annual summary of key statistics that allow the Council to monitor the effectiveness of its Local Plan.
- 1.2 Key statistics for the monitoring period 1 April 2018 to 31 March 2019 include:
 - 1,659 planning applications received
 - 1,165 homes completed
 - 110 new build affordable units delivered
 - 41% of new or converted dwellings built on previously developed land (brownfield)
 - Potential net loss of -2,587 square metres of commercial floorspace, and potential net gain of + 5,820 square metres of commercial floorspace; resulting in a net balance of +3,233 sqm if all applications were implemented.
 - Council adoption of 46,182m² additional areas of open spaces.
 - Funding from DEFRA to manage a two year community project focusing on behavioural change by encouraging walking and cycling for short journeys and switching off engines when not moving (idling).

2. Recommended Decision

- 2.1 To approve the 2018-19 Authority Monitoring Report (AMR) 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 an 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 AMR 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 (AMR) instead of an Annual 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 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 2018 to March 2019 is attached as Appendix 1 and will be available to view on the Council's website, 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 in the Local Plan and provides 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 financial year. 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 Position Statement which was last published in April 2019 and demonstrated that the Council has a five year land supply. The Councils 15 year supply is/will be included the AMR when published.
- 5.5 At the time of publication for Local Plan Committee, data from Essex County Council regarding Travel Plans and Traffic Count was still awaited. A verbal update will be provided at Committee and this information will be included in the AMR when published.
- 5.6 Other key findings include:
- The total number of applications (major, minor and other i.e. discharge of condition and preliminary inquiries) received between 1 April 2018 and 31 March 2019 of 1,659 shows a slight decrease on last year's total of 1,674; and remains below the pre-recession figure of 2,015 in 2007-08.
 - A net of 1,165 dwellings were built between 1 April 2018 and 31 March 2019. This is higher than the previous year's total of 1,048 and the Objectively Assessed Need target of 920 dwellings a year for Colchester.
 - During the monitoring year 2018/19, 110 new build affordable housing units were delivered consisting of 87 affordable rent, and 23 Shared Ownership. No new build social rent properties were delivered in this monitoring period. The total of 110 units represents 9.4% of all new homes delivered. The comparable figures for the previous two years were 132 (12.5%) in 17/18 and 100 (10.96%) in 16/17. This year's total is a continuation of recent trends where the majority of new build affordable housing is being delivered through Section 106 obligations. It is still difficult for Registered

Providers to deliver affordable housing led developments in Colchester. For the year 2018/19, £178,922.13 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.

- Of the 1,165 dwellings completed in the monitoring period, 41% were on previously developed land (brownfield). This is a decrease on the previous years' figure of 62%. The Council seeks to continue to make brownfield sites a priority for redevelopment within the Borough, however many of the larger, less constrained sites have now been redeveloped.
- 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 as a result of permitted development, to the extent that net development rates have been negative in recent years.
- If all applications that have been granted during the monitoring period were implemented, there would be a net loss of - 2,587sqm of commercial floorspace across the Borough, of which 1,586 sqm is as a result of office to residential developments from 3 applications (182609; 181014 and 181881). There would also be a net gain of 5,820 sqm of commercial floorspace, with 1,681 sqm from the introduction of 2 storage buildings (application reference: 180551). Overall, this would result in a net balance of a gain of 3,233 sqm. This is much more positive than the overall balance of a loss of 827sqm from 2017/18.
- While AMR figures show continued losses of retail floorspace within the Town Centre (overall net loss of 343 sqm in 2018/19), there has been an overall net gain of office floor space of 177sqm, permitted over this monitoring period. This demonstrates the variety of uses within the Town Centre.
- During the monitoring period, there has been a continued gain in D2 leisure floorspace outside of the town centre, totalling 1,968sqm. Majority of this relates to a large scale proposal for the change of use of a vacant unit at Colchester Retail Park to a gym.
- The Colchester Travel Plan Club has continued to work with existing members during the monitoring period, and 6 new full members have joined the partnership including the Mercury Theatre and the Hythe Mills and Avon Way student accommodations.
- The AMR shows that there was no loss/damage to Scheduled Monuments, Designated Sites (including SSSI, SAC, SPA, SINC and RAMSAR) or key community facilities in 2018/19.
- The Council adopted 46,182m² additional areas of open space during this monitoring period.
- Two Conservation Areas have been adopted during the monitoring period. These are Mill Field Estate and North Station Road and Environs Conservation Areas.
- The Council have been awarded funding (£249,100) from DEFRA to manage a two year community project focusing on behavioural change by encouraging walking and cycling for short journeys and switching off engines when not moving (idling).

- Following the declaration of a Climate Emergency in July 2019 by the Council, a Conservation and Environment Sustainability Task and Finish Group have been formed to undertake a number of projects including developing a roadmap for the Borough to be carbon neutral by 2030 and the launch of the Colchester Woodland Project; to plant 200,000 trees across the Borough over the next five years to help offset 32,000 tonnes of carbon in the lifetime of the trees.

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 on this link:

<https://cbccrmdata.blob.core.windows.net/noteattachment/Equality%20Impact%20Assessment%20June%202017.pdf>

7. Strategic Plan References

- 7.1 The Strategic Plan is relevant in particular to contributing towards priorities under the themes Growth: ensure residents benefit from Colchester's economic growth with skills, jobs and improving infrastructure; and Opportunity: ensure a good supply of land available for new homes through our Local Plan.

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 the Borough 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 Carbon 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 reduce the impacts of climate change across the Borough.

Appendices

A - Authority Monitoring Report 2019

Background Papers

None.