

13 December 2021

Report of	Assistant Director of Place and Client Services	Author	Bethany Jones
Title	Authority Monitoring Report		☎ 282451
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 2020 to 31 March 2021 include:

- The Section 1 Local Plan was adopted by Full Council on 1 February 2021
- 1,535 planning applications received
- 741 homes completed
- 40 new build affordable units delivered
- Tiptree Neighbourhood Plan Examination commenced in August 2020 with the Examiner issuing his report in October 2020 recommending that the plan cannot proceed to referendum. West Mersea Neighbourhood Plan Regulation 14 consultation was held in Autumn/Winter 2020. Marks Tey Neighbourhood Plan was submitted to the Council in December 2020 with the Regulation 16 consultation held in Spring 2021. Progress has continued for a number of other neighbourhood plans during the monitoring period
- 14,000 trees planted across the Borough as part of the Colchester Woodland Project
- Colchester has been awarded £19.2m from the Government's Town Deal Fund
- In November 2020, the Department for Transport announced Essex County Council were successful in its bid and awarded funding to improve walking and cycling in towns in Essex including Colchester, known as the Active Travel Fund
- The Council's No Idling Campaign - CAREless Pollution - was launched in October 2020. A Schools Toolkit has been developed and trailed with four schools in March 2021. A partnership has been formed with McDonalds who now have No Idling signage up in all car parks and drive-thrus across Colchester

2. Recommended Decision

2.1 To approve the 2020-21 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 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 (AMR) 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 1 April 2020 to 31 March 2021 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.
- 5.3 Although the Section 1 Local Plan was adopted in February 2021, there was not sufficient data available to cover the one month during this monitoring period. Upon adoption of the Emerging Local Plan, the monitoring indicators will require review in order to reflect the policies and targets within the new Local Plan. This is likely to occur in the AMR 2022.
- 5.4 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.
- 5.5 The AMR is divided into a number of key themes covering progress in meeting Local Plan policy aspirations across a variety of areas.
- 5.6 The Housing section documents historic delivery rates and provides a detailed list of housing units delivered in the 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 August 2021 and demonstrated that the Council has a five year land supply.

5.7 Other key findings include:

- The total number of applications (major, minor and others i.e., change of use and listed building consent) received between 1 April 2020 and 31 March 2021 of 1,535 shows a slight decrease on last year's total of 1,594. This figure however does not include all applications i.e., discharge of condition and preliminary inquiries. When these are added the total for the year is 2,673 which is higher than all applications figure of 2,475 last year.
- A net of 741 dwellings were built between 1 April 2020 and 31 March 2021. This is lower than the previous year's total of 1,124 and below the Objectively Assessed Need target of 920 dwellings a year for Colchester. However there has been much uncertainty surrounding the housing market as a result of Covid 19. Despite a slow start to 2020/21 monitoring period, construction resumed, and sales have been strong.
- During the monitoring period 40 new build affordable housing units were delivered consisting of 35 affordable rent, and 5 Shared Ownership. No new build social rent properties were delivered in this monitoring period. The total of 40 units represents 5.4% of all new homes delivered. The comparable figures for the previous three years were 202 (18%) in 19/20, 110 (9.4%) in 18/19 and 132 (12.5%) in 17/18. This demonstrates the lowest number of new build affordable housing units delivered in the last four years, the main reason for this being the Covid-19 pandemic.
- All 40 of the new build affordable homes were delivered through Section 106 obligations. No commuted sums were received for affordable housing in this monitoring period.
- Tiptree Neighbourhood Plan Examination commenced in August 2020 with the Examiner issuing his report in October 2020 recommending that the plan cannot proceed to referendum. The Tiptree Neighbourhood Plan has now returned to the Regulation 14 stage of the plan making process. West Mersea Neighbourhood Plan Regulation 14 consultation was held in Winter 2020. Marks Tey Neighbourhood Plan was submitted to the Council in December 2020 with the Regulation 16 consultation held in Spring 2021. Other neighbourhood plans have continued to progress during the monitoring period. Although outside of the monitoring period, the Marks Tey Examination commenced in August 2021 and the West Mersea examination commenced in October 2021. Both examinations are currently ongoing.
- The Colchester Travel Plan Club has continued to work with existing members during the monitoring period, and Essex County Council to further develop their travel plans, and to begin the process of gaining Modeshift STARS accreditations.
- A total of 122 Residential Travel Information Packs have been provided to new residents across 5 residential developments in Colchester in 2020/21.
- 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 2020/21.

- The Council have taken on an additional area of 21,972m² of open space during the monitoring year 2020/21. The adoption of this area is in the process of being legally formalised.
- A four week consultation was held from 8 February to 8 March 2021 to extend the Garrison Conservation Area to include the ABRO Site, Roman Circus House, adjacent open space and Artillery Folley. Following consultation, the Garrison Conservation Area was extended at Local Plan Committee in June 2021.
- At Local Plan Committee August 2020, 64 additions were made to the Colchester Borough Local List, bringing the total number of assets to 780.
- The Council's No Idling Campaign CAREless Pollution was launched in October 2020. A Schools Toolkit has been developed and trailed with four schools in March 2021. A partnership has been formed with McDonalds who now have No Idling signage up in all car parks and drive-thrus across Colchester.
- The Council have also been awarded further funding (£59,785) from DEFRA to undertake a feasibility study into driver facing traffic signal countdown timers and signage to encourage drivers to switch off their engines when stationary at traffic lights and rail crossings. Planning permission was granted in late 2020 for 9 signs positioned on Brook Street and East Gates, two of the most polluted parts of the borough. The signage was introduced in February 2021. The feasibility work found that a timer could not be integrated with the traffic light management system currently in operation in Colchester.
- A third bid to DEFRA was submitted in October 2020 for £248,700 in funding to run the CAREless Pollution campaign for another 12 months, to deliver a winter home-burning campaign and for the development of two shared transport hubs which will include electric bikes, electric cargo bikes and ecarclubs. The Council, where successful in its bid and work has begun in Summer 2021.
- In August 2020, Essex County Council submitted a bid for funding from the Department for Transport (DfT) Active Travel Fund to create safe walking and cycling routes in Essex. The proposals built upon experience gained from emergency measures set up in 2020 to facilitate social distancing and as part of the safe reopening of the town centre. In November 2020, the DfT announced ECC was successful in its bid and was awarded funding to improve walking and cycling in towns in Essex including Colchester.
- The Council updates the Climate Emergency Action Plan in June 2021 which covers the period 2021 to 2023 and sets out the Council's strategy for how to be carbon neutral in all its operations by 2030
- Since the Council declared a climate emergency in July 2019, 4,486 trees have been planted and 10,000 trees given to the public as part of the Colchester Woodland Project. 14,000 trees were planted across the borough in 2020/21. The Woodland Project has also been expanded to ensure tree planting and management of green space conserves and enhances biodiversity. The Council have also received funding to purchase 25 electric cargo (eCargo) bikes and 5 electric trailers which are being used for Council fleet operations and local businesses.

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 contributing to priorities under the themes:
- Delivering homes for people who need them; and
 - Growing a fair economy so everyone benefits.

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 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 Borough.

Appendices

Appendix A – Authority Monitoring Report 2021