

17 December 2018

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

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 1st April 2017 – 31st March 2018 include:

- 1,674 planning applications received
- 1,048 homes completed
- 132 new build affordable units delivered
- 62% of new or converted dwellings built on previously developed land (brownfield)
- Potential net loss of -14,172 square metres of commercial floorspace, and potential net gain of +13,345 square metres of commercial floorspace; resulting in a net balance of -827sqm
- Completion of Fixing the Link Phase 1 in November 2017 to encourage walking from the Rail Station to the Town Centre.
- Successful bid to the Clean Bus Technology Fund to enable a minimum of 18 buses that will be operating in Colchester town centre area to be retrofitted with SCRT technology.

2. Recommended Decision

2.1 To approve the 2017-18 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 (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 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 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 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 2017 to March 2018 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 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 June 2018 and demonstrated that the Council had a five year land supply. However, since this date national policy changes from the revised NPPF and PPG and current consultations have suggested the Councils target in the interim may need to be reviewed. The Position Statement will be updated as required following these consultations.
- 5.5 Other key findings include:
- The total number of applications received between 1 April 2017 and 31 March 2018 of 1,674 show a slight decrease on last year's total of 1,705, and remains below the pre-recession figure of 2,015 in 2007-08.
 - A net of 1,048 dwellings were built between 1 April 2017 and 31 March 2018. This is higher than both last year's total of 912 and the Objectively Assessed Need target of 920 dwellings a year for Colchester.

- During the monitoring year 2017/18, 132 new build affordable housing units were delivered consisting of 70 affordable rent, 43 Intermediate Rent and 19 Shared Ownership. This amounts to 12.5% of all new homes delivered. The comparable figures for the previous two years were 100 (10.96%) in 16/17 and 106 (11.4%) in 15/16. 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 2017/18, £351,414 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 1,048 dwellings completed in the monitoring period, 62% were on previously developed land (brownfield). This is a decrease on the previous years' figure of 72%. 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 Council worked with other districts in the County 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 July 2017 there were 68 caravan/mobile units across 12 sites within the Borough. This includes 12 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 as a result of permitted development, to the extent that net development rates have been negative in recent years.
- There has been a potential net loss of - 14,172sqm of commercial floorspace across the Borough from planning permissions issued in this monitoring period. The majority of this net loss is from B1(b)-B8 uses accounting for -10,454sqm, relating to the conversion of a former Warehouse to residential and various change of use applications. There remains a loss in B1(a) floorspace in this monitoring period, however this is not as significant in comparison to the loss of 16,729sqm in 2016/17, as a result of the 2013 national changes to permitted development rights allowing the change of use from offices to residential.
- There has also been a potential net gain of 13,345sqm of commercial floorspace across the Borough. If all applications were implemented, this

would result in an overall net balance of -827sqm as a result of planning applications granted between April 2017 and March 2018.

- While AMR figures show continued losses of retail floorspace within the Town Centre (-1,106sqm in 2017/18), the redevelopment of the Williams and Griffins department store and Lion Walk shops provides a more positive longer term prospect of the Town Centre. Additionally, the commercial property market for existing Town Centre property is buoyant.
- During this monitoring period, there has been a large potential gain in D2 leisure floorspace outside of the town centre, totalling 19,018sqm. Majority of this relates to a large scale proposal as part of the Northern Gateway development to provide a cinema, trampolining, indoor golf and climbing centre (application number 160825).
- The challenging issue of transportation is being tackled through a number of approaches including new transport infrastructure (i.e. Colne Bank Avenue widening and Lexden Road upgrades completed this monitoring period). The Fixing the Link project phase 2 was completed in November 2017 and creates a welcoming and exciting first impression of Colchester, encouraging more people to work the one-mile route from the Station to the Town Centre and encourages visitors to stage longer and return again. A successful bid was made to the Clean Bus Technology Fund which will enable a minimum of 18 buses that will be operating in Colchester town centre area to be retrofitted with SCRT technology to operate at EURO VI standard.
- 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, with Cygnet Hospital, St Helena Hospice and the Colchester Art Centre joining the Colchester Travel Plan Club as full members this monitoring period, and Purcell and Red Lion Books becoming associate members. 7 Establishments have been accredited through the ECC Travel Plan Accreditation Scheme during 2017/18.
- 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.
- The Council did not adopt any additional areas of open spaces during this monitoring period.

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: -

<http://www.colchester.gov.uk/article/12745/Policy-and-Corporate>

7. Strategic Plan References

- 7.1 The Strategic Plan is relevant in particular in contributing towards priorities under the themes Opportunity;

Growth – Ensure residents benefit from Colchester’s economic growth with skills, jobs and improving infrastructure;

Opportunity- Ensure a good supply of land available for new homes through our Local Plan.

8. Consultation

- 8.1 The Authority Monitoring Report 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 should 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. Community Safety Implications

- 11.1 There are no 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.