

CABINET

17 DECEMBER 2013

LOCAL DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK: MEDWAY MONITORING REPORT

Portfolio Holder:	Councillor Jane Chitty, Strategic Development and Economic Growth
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Summary

This report seeks authority to publish the Medway Monitoring Report that is produced annually.

This is the Council's ninth Monitoring Report, which analyses progress against a range of indicators associated with the adopted development plan and the draft Core Strategy that applied at the end of the monitoring period.

1. Budget and Policy Framework

- 1.1 The Monitoring Report complies with the Policy Framework. Approval of publication of the Monitoring Report is a matter for Cabinet. It has no budget implications.

2. Background

- 2.1 Prior to the publication of the 2012 Annual Monitoring Report, in accordance with the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004, all local planning authorities were required to submit to government an Annual Monitoring Report by the end of December each year.
- 2.2 The Localism Act, which came into effect from January 2012, removed the need for reports to be submitted to the Secretary of State. However the act still requires local authorities to produce a monitoring report for public consumption.
- 2.3 The intention is therefore to continue to publish the Monitoring Report in the same way as before, using an end of December deadline.

- 2.4 This report brings together a great deal of information about the area for the period 1 April 2012 to 31 March 2013. It is a valuable reference source for many services, external organisations and potential investors.

Copies of Volume 1 of the Annual Monitoring Report have been sent to Cabinet members, Group Rooms and the Chatham Community Hub. Further copies are also available from the following link:

<http://democracy.medway.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=115&MId=2887&Ver=4>

Volume 2 comprises detailed data tables, the results of which are reported in Volume 1. Volume 3 contains a 'Local Aggregates Assessment'. This is a new requirement introduced by the National Planning Policy Framework. It assesses the supply mineral aggregates (hard rock, sand and gravels), including marine dredged aggregates. Both of these volumes are available via the following links:

<http://www.medway.gov.uk/pdf/Medway%20Monitoring%20Report%202013%20vol%202-%20-%20Tables.pdf> (Volume 2)

<http://www.medway.gov.uk/pdf/Medway%20Monitoring%20Report%202013%20vol%203-%20-%20LAA.pdf> (Volume 3).

- 2.5 The report is based around a large collection of performance indicators, focusing on the progress made against a number of planning policy themes. In general terms these reflect the policy coverage in the now withdrawn Core Strategy.
- 2.7 The Core Strategy was withdrawn on 21 November following the decision by the Board of Natural England to confirm the site of the proposed new settlement at Lodge Hill as a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI). Ordinarily the Monitoring Report would assess progress against the individual policies in that plan. However, given its withdrawal, it is instead arranged under the themes in the Core Strategy and it will be re-formatted in future years to reflect the emerging replacement local plan.

3. Options

- 3.1 While the Monitoring Report no longer needs to be submitted to the Secretary of State it must still be published and it is a standard reference for various bodies interested in the Council's performance.

4. Advice and analysis

- 4.1 Some of the main findings of this year's report are summarised below.
- 4.2 The number of new homes built in Medway at 565 was the lowest annual since formal monitoring began in 2006. However this is against a background where housing completions in Medway significantly out performed other growth areas during the downturn, including Milton Keynes and Chelmsford.
- 4.3 One third of homes built were classified as 'affordable' – this was again above the target of 25%.

- 4.4 Housing is more affordable now than in 2006 (ratio of incomes to average prices). Medway is also more affordable than the national average and significantly so compared to most parts of the southeast.
- 4.5 Progress with the regeneration programme continued despite the economic downturn and Phase 1 at Rochester Riverside was completed.
- 4.6 An overall town centre vacancy rate of 10% remained substantially below the national average of 14%. Vacancies were highest in Chatham and lowest in Rainham.
- 4.7 There was a 5% increase in the number of Medway businesses.
- 4.8 Community volunteering increased significantly with a rise of 45%.
- 4.9 There were significant increases in the number of people visiting the Guildhall Museum and other attractions.
- 4.10 In 2012/13 five sites retained their Green Flag status - Hillyfields, Capstone Country Park and Broomhill Park plus Riverside Country Park and The Vines for the fifth consecutive year.

5. Risk management

- 5.1 As the Monitoring Report is a factual account of performance achieved there are no specific risks associated with its production.

6. Consultation

- 6.1 Again because the Monitoring Report is factual there is no requirement to consult on it but it is published to inform the public and users of the planning system.

7. Financial and legal implications

- 7.1 There are no financial or legal implications arising from this report. Under the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 the Council is required to prepare reports which must be in respect of a period which the Council considers appropriate for transparency (being not longer than 12 months from the most recent report) and which are made available to the public. Under the Localism Act 2011, the Secretary of State has the power to make further regulations on the timing, content and form, with a recommendation that the interval between reports should be no longer than 12 months. The Localism Act also replaces the name of Annual Monitoring Reports with 'Authorities Monitoring Reports' and this is reflected in this year's report.
- 7.2 There are no direct equalities impacts. Equalities are considered in the context of preparing local plan policies but are not relevant to the Monitoring Report, which monitors the performance of such policies.

8. Recommendations

8.1 That the 2013 Medway Monitoring Report be approved for publication.

9. Suggested reason for decision

9.1 To comply with the duty to compile and publish an annual report.

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Background papers

None.