

# **REGENERATION COMMUNITY AND CULTURE OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

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## **LOCAL PLAN: AUTHORITY MONITORING REPORT**

Report from: Robin Cooper, Director for Regeneration, Community and Culture

Author: Catherine Smith, Planning Manager - Policy

### **Summary**

This report presents the Medway Local Plan: Authority Monitoring Report that is produced annually. It provides an assessment of development trends and wider social, economic and environmental indicators, together with progress on the preparation of a new Medway Local Plan.

A Housing Implementation Strategy has also been produced to set out the position on the supply of housing land and actions being taken to boost the supply of housing.

### **1. Budget and Policy Framework**

1.1 The Monitoring Report complies with the Policy Framework. It has no budget implications.

### **2. Background**

2.1 This is the tenth Monitoring Report for Medway. The requirement to produce an annual monitoring report was introduced by the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act, 2004. The Localism Act 2011 retained the requirement for local planning authorities to publish monitoring information, but removed the need to submit the report to government and a prescribed timetable. The council has adhered to a timetable for the publication of the Authority Monitoring Report on an annual basis each December. This provides a basis for comparison with previous years.

2.2 This report brings together a great deal of information about the area for the period 1 April 2013 to 31 March 2014. This includes statistics and indicators on Medway's population and development trends, and social, economic and environmental aspects of the local area. It is a valuable reference source for many services, external organisations and potential investors, and is of particular interest to the planning and development sector. 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 planned policy coverage in the new Local Plan.

- 2.3 In line with the requirements of the Town and Country (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012, the Monitoring Report provides an update on the progress of the preparation of the new Medway Local Plan, as set out in the Local Development Scheme approved by Cabinet in June 2014. It also gives details of actions undertaken by the council in fulfilling the Duty to Cooperate on strategic planning matters with other local planning authorities and other prescribed bodies in the Localism Act.

### **3. Options**

- 3.1 There is a statutory requirement to publish up-to-date information that the council has collected for monitoring purposes, and to report on progress against the Local Development Scheme. It is considered that the publication of the Authority Monitoring Report on an annual basis is an appropriate means of meeting this requirement.

### **4. Advice and analysis**

- 4.1 The Monitoring Report consists of three volumes. Volume 1 provides an overview of key population and development trends, social, economic and environmental indicators, and a commentary on progress with the preparation of the new Medway Local Plan. This is attached at Appendix 1. Volume 2 comprises detailed data tables that are summarised in Volume 1. Given its substantial length, it has not been reproduced with this report, but is available to view at:

<http://www.medway.gov.uk/planningandbuilding/planningpolicy/authoritymonitoringreport.aspx>

Volume 3 is the Local Aggregate Assessment, which assesses the supply of mineral aggregates from land won, imported and secondary and recycled sources in Medway in 2013. This is attached at Appendix 2. This reports that Medway is maintaining its landbank for land won sand and gravel against the 10 years sales average, and that its wharves continue to play a strategic role for the importation of aggregates, including crushed rock and marine dredged aggregates.

- 4.2 The main findings from the Monitoring Report include the completion of 579 dwellings in 2013/14, which is an increase from the previous year. The mid year population estimate for Medway in 2013 was 271,105, an increase of 2887 people, or 1.1% above the 2012 figure. There was a net loss of over 10,929 square metres of employment floorspace in 2013/14, with significant loss resulting from changes at a single site at Medway City Estate. There was also a net loss of retail floorspace in the town centres over this time, but the town centre vacancy rate remained below the national average. Regeneration activities continued with investments at Chatham Waters, Rochester railway station and the Historic Dockyard. Notable changes in environmental indicators included the designation of a Marine Conservation Zone in the Medway Estuary.

- 4.3 In addition to the standard content of the Authority Monitoring Report, officers have prepared an additional report, providing a Housing Implementation Strategy. This is attached at Appendix 3. This has been produced to meet the requirements of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), 2012, and sets out actions being put in place by the council to ‘significantly boost the supply of housing’ in line with national policy. As part of this assessment, the document provides an updated position on housing land supply in Medway. This addresses the NPPF requirement on local planning authorities to *“identify and update annually a supply of specific deliverable sites sufficient to provide five years worth of housing against their housing requirement”*.
- 4.4 In June 2014, Cabinet approved a Housing Position Statement that included the adoption of an annual housing requirement of 1000 dwellings, pending the outcome of a Strategic Housing and Economic Needs Assessment to report in 2015. This provides an update based on demographic analysis and addresses the need to review the annual housing target following the revocation of the South East Plan.
- 4.5 The Housing Implementation Strategy analyses past development trends, and outlines actions being put in place to bring forward housing delivery in coming years. It provides details on how key sites will be implemented and the components of land supply. The report concludes that the council has currently got a housing land supply of 5.4 years measured against the annual requirement of 1000 dwellings and accommodating a ‘backlog’ from recent recessionary years when the development industry was suppressed. Against this background, it should be noted that Medway has delivered 3918 homes over the 5 years to 2012/13, and has been the best performer in the Kent Thames Gateway authorities. Over the same period, the housing growth figures for the overall Kent Thames Gateway have exceeded both the national and the South East Local Enterprise Partnership area average. This shows that Medway is performing better than a local market, which is itself outperforming the national and regional context.

## **5. Risk management**

- 5.1 As the Authority Monitoring Report is a factual account of development indicators and statistics there are no specific risks associated with its production. Volume 1 considers risks in relation to the preparation of a new Local Plan and outlines steps being taken to address potential issues.

## **6. Consultation**

- 6.1 As the Authority Monitoring Report is factual there is no requirement to consult; it is however web published to inform the public and users of the planning system, to meet statutory requirements.

## **7. Financial and legal implications**

- 7.1 There are no financial or legal implications arising from this report. The preparation of the Monitoring Report is a legal obligation under section 35 of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 which requires every local planning authority to prepare reports containing prescribed information about the implementation of the local development scheme and the extent to which the policies set out in the local development documents are being achieved,

and the content of the Monitoring Report is prescribed by Regulation 34 of the Town and Country (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012.

- 7.2 There are no direct equalities impacts of the approval of the Monitoring Report. In preparing and approving local plan policies, the Council has had due regard to its equality duties under section 149 of the Equality Act 2010.

## **8. Recommendations**

- 8.1 That the members note the content of the Monitoring Report and supporting documents.

### **Lead officers contact**

Catherine Smith  
Planning Manager – Policy  
Housing and Regeneration  
Gun Wharf  
Telephone: 01634 331358  
Email: [Catherine.smith@medway.gov.uk](mailto:Catherine.smith@medway.gov.uk)

Tim Stephens  
Senior Planner (Research)  
Housing and Regeneration  
Gun Wharf  
Telephone: 01634 331533  
Email: [Tim.stephens@medway.gov.uk](mailto:Tim.stephens@medway.gov.uk)

### **Background papers**

None

### **Appendices**

- Appendix 1 Monitoring Report Volume 1  
Appendix 2 Monitoring Report Volume 3 (Local Aggregate Assessment)  
Appendix 3 Housing Implementation Strategy