

CABINET

18 DECEMBER 2018

LOCAL PLAN: AUTHORITY MONITORING REPORT

Portfolio Holder: Councillor Jane Chitty, Planning, Economic Growth and Regulation

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Summary

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

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. The report is produced to meet statutory requirements on the local planning authority to publish information about development in the area and the implementation of the Local Plan.

2. Background

2.1 The Planning Service has been compiling and publishing annual Monitoring Reports for the last 14 years, following the statutory requirement introduced in the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act, 2004. 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 The report brings together substantial information about the area for the period 1 April 2017 to 31 March 2018. 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 data, 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 The Authority Monitoring Report also provides an update on the progress of the preparation of the new Medway Local Plan. With the imminent introduction of the Housing Delivery Test, this year the Planning Service will include information to set out the actions the council takes to support the delivery of housing.

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 Authority 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 presented at Appendix 1).
- Volume 2 comprises detailed data tables that are summarised in Volume 1. (Due to the length and format of the report, this is web-published only and is available at:
https://www.medway.gov.uk/info/200149/planning_policy/597/local_development_scheme_and_monitoring/2)
- Volume 3 comprises the Medway Local Aggregate Assessment, which assesses the supply of mineral aggregates from land won and imported sources in Medway in 2017. (This is presented at Appendix 2).

- 4.2 The main findings from the Monitoring Report include the completion of 680 new dwellings in 2017/18, which is a 6% increase from the previous year. 19% of the homes built were Affordable Housing. 88% of the new builds were on previously developed land, indicating Medway's focus on regeneration and making the best use of brownfield sites. There is a land supply for over 8000 homes, and work on the new Local Plan is seeking to identify new allocations for growth in Medway. Housebuilding rates are still running much lower than the levels of housing identified as needed for the area. The Local Housing Need figure calculated in September 2018 was 1310 homes a year, but this is expected to rise, following further Government changes to the methodology that councils are required to use. As part of Government's ambition to boost the supply of housing, councils will be subject to additional scrutiny on housing delivery rates, through a new Housing Delivery Test. This potentially imposes penalties on local planning authorities, despite the principal factors influencing housebuilding sitting in the wider economy. The Planning Service is pre-empting the requirements for preparing an action plan arising from the Housing Delivery Test, by setting out information in this year's AMR on the comprehensive range of measures it promotes to support the delivery of

housing in Medway. This is set out in an expanded section on Delivering Development.

- 4.3 Despite rates of housebuilding being lower than levels of identified needs, there are clear signs of success in Medway's development, and that Medway is attracting investment. Over the past year, we have seen increased interest in Medway with a widening range of volume housebuilders and SMEs entering the market. The limited number of housebuilders was identified as a key factor in the Letwin report contributing to the delay in the delivery of new homes. Significant regeneration projects are underway at Rochester and Strood Riversides, Gillingham Pier and Kitchener Barracks. We have seen growth in provision of modular homes in locations across Medway. In addition mhs homes continue their regeneration programme, redeveloping areas of poor social housing in their ownership, including adjacent to Chatham centre and at Corporation Street in Rochester. The council is investing in bringing forward development on major regeneration sites such as the flood defence works at Strood Riverside, and refreshed development briefs. The Medway Development Company and initiatives such as Medway 1 signal the council's leadership and confidence in the area's future growth and economic success.
- 4.4 There is an increasing trend for a higher proportion of flats to be built than houses, and this is above the national average. However, this is likely a reflection of the success in year of development on our regeneration sites in inner urban areas. House prices have been rising more rapidly in Medway, than in Kent or the wider south east over the past five years. However, property prices in Medway are still significantly lower than in neighbouring areas – in March 2018, average house prices in Medway were 84% of the average for properties across Kent.
- 4.5 Demographic data shows that Medway is continuing to grow at a slower rate than seen earlier in the decade. The mid year population estimate for Medway in 2017 was 277,616, which reflects a downward revision of population data for 2016. Projections for Medway's population up to 2035 have also seen a reduction in the rates and scale of growth. There has been a continued pattern in internal migration rates (moves within England) showing more of the local moves being out of Medway, rather than into the area. Migration from London continues to be an increasing trend over the last five years.
- 4.6 There was a net loss of employment land in 2017/18, showing the impact of redevelopment plans in areas such as at Chatham Maritime and regeneration sites in Strood. The opening of the Innovation Studios, Strood was a positive contribution to employment floorspace.
- 4.7 In town centres, there has been a loss of floorspace for main town centre uses. In comparison there was a net gain of A1 (shops) uses in locations outside of the town centres, such as Strood Retail Park and Gillingham Business Park. Areas of growth in the town centres were in A3, A5 and D1¹ uses. Changes in planning policy introduced by government, have in some cases facilitated loss of employment and retail floorspace to other uses.

¹ A3 – Restaurants and cafes; A5 – Hot food takeaways; D1 – Non-residential institutions (eg health centres and community halls)

4.8 The information collated in the Authority Monitoring Report provides context to the preparation of the Local Plan. The annual report will have an ongoing function in considering how the council's objectives to strengthen the economy, improve quality of life and opportunities and to enhance the natural and built environment are being met.

5. Risk management

5.1 As the Authority Monitoring Report is a factual account of development, social, economic and environmental data, there are no specific risks associated with its production.

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 implications

7.1 There are no financial implications arising from this report.

8. Legal implications

8.1 The Monitoring Report fulfils the requirements set out in the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004, Localism Act 2011 and the Town and Country (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012. There are no legal implications arising from this report. There are no direct equalities impacts. Equalities are considered in the context of preparing local plan policies.

9. Recommendation

9.1 That the 2018 Authority Monitoring Report be approved for publication.

10. Suggested reasons for decision

10.1 To comply with the duty to compile and publish a planning monitoring report.

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Appendices (Supplementary Agenda No.1)

Appendix 1 Medway Authority Monitoring Report 2018 Volume 1

Appendix 2 Medway Authority Monitoring Report 2018 Volume 3: Medway Local
Aggregate Assessment 2017

Background papers

None