

Maidstone Authority Monitoring Report

Final Decision-Maker	Strategic Planning and Infrastructure Committee
Lead Head of Service	Rob Jarman, Head of Planning and Development
Lead Officer and Report Author	Anna Ironmonger, Planning Officer (Strategic Planning)
Classification	Public
Wards affected	All

Executive Summary

It is a statutory requirement for the Council to publish an annual Authority Monitoring Report. Regulation 34 of the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012 (as amended) sets out what the Authority Monitoring Report (the "AMR") must contain. The AMR provides information on various matters including progress on engagement under the Duty to Cooperate; implementation of policies within an adopted local plan and progress towards the meeting of targets; as well as progress on the Local Plan Review.

The Maidstone AMR 2020-2021 (which can be found at Appendix 1 to this report) meets the statutory requirements and reports on progress made for the period 1 April 2020 to 31 March 2021. In monitoring the implementation of Maidstone Borough Local Plan policies, the AMR is a source of evidence for the Local Plan Review.

Purpose of Report

Noting

This report makes the following recommendations to this Committee:

1. That the Maidstone Authority Monitoring Report 2020-2021 be noted

Timetable

Meeting	Date
Strategic Planning and Infrastructure Committee	7 th December 2021

Maidstone Authority Monitoring Report

1. CROSS-CUTTING ISSUES AND IMPLICATIONS

Issue	Implications	Sign-off
Impact on Corporate Priorities	We do not expect the recommendations will by themselves materially affect achievement of corporate priorities. However, they will support the Council's overall achievement of its aims.	Head of Service or Manager – Rob Jarman
Cross Cutting Objectives	The report recommendations support the achievement of all four cross-cutting objectives as the Local Plan Review (which is monitored through the AMR) has consideration for the cross-cutting objectives.	Head of Service or Manager – Rob Jarman
Risk Management	Already covered in the risk section.	Head of Service or Manager – Rob Jarman
Financial	There is provision in the budget for preparation of the Maidstone Authority Monitoring Report and, more generally, for work on the Local Plan, so there are no additional financial implications arising from this report.	Section 151 Officer & Finance Team
Staffing	We will deliver the recommendations with our current staffing.	Head of Service or Manager – Rob Jarman
Legal	There are no legal implication arising from this report as it is for noting. Accepting the recommendations will however fulfil the Council's duties under the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012 (as amended).	Russell Fitzpatrick (MKLS (Planning))
Privacy and Data Protection	There are no implications for Privacy and Data Protection.	Policy and Information Team - Equalities & Communities Officer

Equalities	The recommendations do not propose a change in service therefore will not require an equalities impact assessment.	Equalities & Communities Officer
Public Health	There are no implications for Public Health.	Public Health Officer
Crime and Disorder	There are no implications for Crime and Disorder	Head of Service or Manager – Rob Jarman
Procurement	There are no procurement requirements	Head of Service or Manager – Rob Jarman & Section 151 Officer
Biodiversity and Climate Change	The implications of biodiversity and climate change are reported on in the <i>Sustainability Appraisal – Significant Effect Indicators</i> section of this report	Biodiversity and Climate Change Manager

2. INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

- 2.1 The Council have a requirement to publish an Authority Monitoring Report at least annually¹. Regulation 34 of the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012 (as amended) sets out what the Authority Monitoring Report must contain. In summary the Authority Monitoring Report must contain information on:
- a. Preparation of local plans;
 - b. Engagement under the Duty to Cooperate;
 - c. Implementation of policies within an adopted local plan;
 - d. Any policies which are not being implemented.
- 2.2 The report can also provide information on:
- a. Preparation of neighbourhood plans
 - b. Information on Infrastructure Funding Statements
- 2.3 The Maidstone Authority Monitoring Report 2020-2021 (AMR) covers the monitoring period of 1 April 2020 to 31 March 2021. The report can be found at Appendix 1 to this report. The AMR reports on the progress made on the Local Plan Review; progress made on Neighbourhood Plans; information on the Community Infrastructure Levy and Infrastructure Funding Statement; engagement under the Duty to Cooperate; implementation of policies within the adopted Maidstone Borough Local Plan (Local Plan Monitoring Indicators); and the effects of the Maidstone Borough Local Plan and implementation of the Sustainability Appraisal (Significant Effect Indicators).

¹ Planning Policy Guidance Paragraph: 073 Reference ID: 61-073-20190315

2.4 In monitoring the implementation of Maidstone Borough Local Plan policies, the AMR is a source of evidence for the Local Plan Review.

2.5 The contents of the AMR are summarised below.

Development Plan and Associated Documents

2.6 Local Development Scheme – since the adoption of the Maidstone Borough Local Plan in 2017 there have been four iterations of the LDS setting out the delivery programme for the Local Plan Review. The Maidstone Local Development Scheme 2021-2023 was adopted in July 2021. The table below outlines the current timetable for delivering the Local Plan Review and whether the key milestones have been met.

Regulation	Stage of LPR Production	Target	Target met
19	Consultation	October 2021	On track
22	Submission	March 2022	-
24	Examination	August-September 2022	-
	Main Modification Consultation	November 2022	
26	Adoption	January 2023	-

2.7 Neighbourhood Plans – there are now seven made (adopted) Neighbourhood Plans within Maidstone Borough following the making of the Boughton Monchelsea, Lenham and Otham Neighbourhood Plans in 2021.

2.8 Community Infrastructure Levy – an extract of the Infrastructure Funding Statement (IFS) can be found at Appendix 2 of the AMR. The IFS provides information on CIL income and expenditure matters. The AMR outlines that the Council has committed to an annual review of the Infrastructure Delivery Plan.

2.9 Duty to Cooperate – the Council must demonstrate how it has complied with the duty at the independent examination of the Local Plan Review. The Duty to Cooperate Statement, as well as setting out the Council’s approach to cooperation on key strategic issues in the Local Plan Review, identifies the requirements set out in the NPPF, guidance, and legislation; and demonstrates how the Council has met those requirements. Appendix A of the Duty to Cooperate Statement provides a summary of meetings and correspondence with relevant authorities since 2017 (the adoption of the

Maidstone Borough Local Plan. Appendix 3 of the AMR provides a summary of those meetings and correspondence which has taken place during the monitoring year. Appendix 3 of the AMR provides information on how the Council has engaged with relevant authorities during the monitoring year.

2.10 The Duty to Cooperate Statement, as well as setting out the Council's approach to cooperation on key strategic issues in the Local Plan Review, identifies the requirements set out in the NPPF, guidance, and legislation; and demonstrates how the Council has met those requirements. Appendix A of the Duty to Cooperate Statement provides a summary of meetings and correspondence with relevant authorities since 2017 (the adoption of the Maidstone Borough Local Plan. Appendix 3 of the AMR provides a summary of those meetings and correspondence which has taken place during the monitoring year.

2.11 Supplementary Planning Documents – the Affordable and Local Needs Housing SPD was subject to consultation and adopted by the Council on 7th July 2020.

Local Plan Performance: Maidstone Borough Local Plan – Monitoring Indicators

2.12 General/Whole Plan – There were five reported departures from the adopted Maidstone Borough Local Plan. Paragraph 4.2 of the AMR provides detail on the nature of the departure and concludes that a review of the implementation of policies in the adopted Local Plan is not required. Between 2017/18 and 2020/21 the number of appeals lodged against the Council's planning decisions has fluctuated. In terms of delivery of schemes in the Infrastructure Delivery Plan a total of 48 schemes have been delivered since the first iteration of the IDP in 2016. The delivered schemes can be found in appendix to the Infrastructure Delivery Plan 2021 which will be published on the Council's website.

2.13 Housing – Sites allocated in the Maidstone Borough Local Plan have continued to make excellent progress in gaining planning permissions over the plan period to 2031.

2.14 Since 2011, a total of 9,095 dwellings have been completed. Previous years had seen a shortfall in delivery, however strong delivery in the year 2020/21 met this shortfall. In respect of the Council's five-year land supply there is a surplus of 512 dwellings above the target of 4,636. This represents 5.6 years' worth of housing land supply at the base date for calculations of 1 April 2021. 2020/21 saw a small decrease in the number of large site windfalls completed, which results in an average 13 year delivery of 181 dwellings.

2.15 The adopted Local Plan housing trajectory sets out a Town Centre broad location for 350 dwellings from the conversion of identified poor office stock to residential dwellings. In the monitoring year 2020/21 one application was permitted on the identified poor office stock. To date, 176 dwellings out of the 350 dwellings have been approved under permitted development rights (50% of target).

- 2.16 Since the introduction of the self-build register there has been 120 applications for a self-build dwelling permitted. There has been a sustained low delivery of self-build plots. No suitable C2 sites were put forward during the Local Plan Review call for sites. Consequently, the plan review does not allocate specific sites for nursing and care-home bedspaces but instead allows a permissive approach to enable the development of C2 uses on the edge of settlements where C3 market housing would not normally be permitted. This approach recognises the specific requirements and arrangements for C2 uses which limit the practicality of delivering C2 use through larger general housing sites.
- 2.17 When looking at the target for affordable housing as a percentage, more intermediate affordable housing has been delivered during the monitoring year. Whilst the delivery of affordable housing units does not significantly deviate from the indicative policy target. The Council will continue to monitor the delivery of affordable homes against current and future indicative policy targets. The percentage of affordable homes secured in qualifying geographical areas remains broadly aligned with the percentage targets as set out in Local Plan policy SP20.
- 2.18 The adopted Local Plan sets out a gross requirement of 980 nursing and care home bedspaces (49 per year) to be provided over the plan period to 2031. Whilst nursing and care home provision falls under the C2 Use Class, this Use Class category also encompasses a much wider range of specialist accommodation. During the reporting year, a net total of 143 bed spaces were provided within the C2 Use Class. However, only 75 of those are considered to count towards the delivery of nursing and care home bed spaces for the elderly, as is the intention of Policy DM14 and indicator M14.
- 2.19 There has been a significant increase in the number of applicants who have applied to join the housing register during 2020/21. However, this hasn't resulted in an increase in the number of applicants on the register due to the number of unsuccessful applications to join the register combined with an increase in the number of applicants successfully housed from the register.
- 2.20 Employment – Since 2016/17 there has been a total net loss of 36,282 sqm of employment floorspace, thereby increasing the overall net floorspace requirement to 50,237 sqm by 2031. The current net pipeline supply of employment floorspace (i.e., extant permissions) is 49,288 sqm. In purely quantitative terms, this pipeline supply of floorspace results in an overall remaining need to provide just 948 sqm of additional employment floorspace to 2031. A considerable amount of this office floorspace loss since 2016/17 can be attributed to conversion to residential under permitted development rights.
- 2.21 Over the monitoring year there has been an increase in B class floorspace from completions within designated Economic Development Areas. It should be noted that although this indicator monitors B1, B2 and B8 use classes, changes were made to the national Use Class Order in 2020 and 2021. Use Class B1 has been deleted and replaced by Use Class E(g).

- 2.22 In respect of employment allocations, consents are outlined in table 4.14 of the AMR. Over the monitoring year, a net total of -1,860sqm of B Use Class floorspace was lost to other non- B Use Classes across the borough.
- 2.23 Across the Borough those who are unemployed has reduced from previous years, with a small increase in 2020.
- 2.24 Retail – In 2020 and 2021, changes were made to both the national Use Class Order and to Permitted Development Rights, including, among other things, the introduction of a new E Use Class (Commercial, Business and Service) and the deletion of the A Use Class. Retail shops previously falling under A1 Use Class are now E(g) Use Class. These changes will be reflected in the Local Plan Review indicators, but for the purposes of this adopted Local Plan indicator, reference is made to both old and new Use Class categories.
- 2.25 Since 2016/17 there has been a total net gain across the A1 use class retail floorspace of 2,065 sqm, thereby reducing the overall net floorspace requirement to 27,735 sqm by 2031.
- 2.26 In respect of retail allocations, there is an extant permission at RMX1 (1) Newnham Park, Bearsted Road, Maidstone for refurbishment and extension of existing garden centre buildings (including the enclosure of 2,570 sqm gross internal area of 31 existing external retail floor space). However, this permission is yet to be implemented. Temporary permission was previously granted for a mix of uses including offices (873sqm), warehousing (1,214sqm net gain) and retail (450sqm) at RMX1 (2) Maidstone East and former Royal Mail sorting office, Maidstone. This permission was completed in the monitoring year 2017/18. Permission was also granted for a foodstore at RMX1 (5) Powerhub Building and Baltic Wharf, St Peter’s Street, Maidstone. However, this has since expired.
- 2.27 The level of A1 Uses within primary frontages has remained at the same percentage with none of the primary frontages falling below the 85% threshold, indicating that the primary frontage still remains effective in focusing a core retail provision in Maidstone Town Centre.
- 2.28 Gypsy and Traveller – The adopted Local Plan outlines a 187 pitch target over the plan period. Since 2011, the base date of the Maidstone Borough Local Plan, a total of 246 pitches have been granted permanent consent. At the 1st April 2021, the rate at which permanent permissions have been granted exceeds the target. Additionally, 15 permanent pitches have been delivered on allocated sites (37% of the 41 pitch requirement). As a result of the Covid-19 pandemic the biannual caravan counts in July 2020 and January 2021 could not take place. This indicator relies on the caravan count to inform delivery. As such, where possible, delivery information has been taken from previous counts and information submitted at the application stage.
- 2.29 At 1st April 2021 the Council can demonstrate a 6.2 years’ worth of deliverable gypsy and traveller pitches.

- 2.30 In terms of the number of caravans recorded in the bi-annual caravan count in July 2019 there were 744 caravans and in January 2020 there were 727 caravans recorded.
- 2.31 Natural Environment – Biodiversity – There has been no loss or gain of designated wildlife sites or ancient woodland as a result of development during 2020/21.
- 2.32 Agricultural Land – In 2020/21 there has been no loss of best and most versatile agricultural land as a result of development.
- 2.33 Good Design and Sustainable Design – Of the 99 applications permitted during 2020/21 that qualify to provide BREEAM very good standards, 95 did so. Only four applications failed to do so, two of those applications have conditions which require a final certificate to be submitted to certify that a very good BREEAM rating has been achieved. During 2020/21 there has been an increase in the number of applications allowed on appeal following a refusal on grounds of design quality since 2016/17.
- 2.34 Open Space – During 2020/21 qualifying residential and mixed-use sites provided over 3.2 hectares of on-site open space provision.
- 2.35 Air Quality – When looking at indicator M42 and applications accompanied by an Air Quality Impact Assessment which demonstrate that the air quality impacts of development will be mitigated to acceptable levels the council focused on the 19 permissions granted on large sites (5+ dwellings) within Maidstone urban area. Of this number, 9 of the developments were found to have no specific air quality implications and 9 proposals made provision for air quality.
- 2.36 Infrastructure – There were 9 planning consent applications that had S106 agreements signed off in the 2020/21 reporting year. All 9 provided contributions sought in accordance with the priorities outlined in Policy ID1(4). In addition to the provision of affordable housing (where required), a total of £1,563,242.52 of developer contributions were agreed towards the provision, improvement or enhancement of community infrastructure.
- 2.37 In this reporting year, the total amount of money from planning obligations received towards infrastructure was £5,256,410. Of this amount £4,996,714 was spent (£3,885,101 of which was transferred to a third party by Maidstone Borough Council).
- 2.38 In terms of CIL, over the monitoring year 1st April 2020 to 31st March 2021, 127 planning applications were received that were potentially liable for the CIL charge. In reality, this figure may be lower due to various exemptions and relief options available. e.g. self-build exemption or charitable relief. In total over the monitoring year, £1,226,382 (gross) was collected by the Council in CIL payments.
- 2.39 Transport – In total 16% of the actions within the Integrated Transport Strategy (ITS) have not been actioned. A total 27% are on track to be actioned and 57% are being appropriately actioned. This has meant there has been an increase in the number of actions categorised as not being

actioned due to growing concern at the lack of delivery of the highways schemes identified in the Maidstone Integrated Transport Package (MITP). Whilst the majority of sustainable transport measures to support the growth identified in the Local Plan remain broadly on track to be delivered within the time periods identified within the Infrastructure Delivery Plan, the MITP schemes are now at risk of being delivered beyond the timeframes identified in the IDP.

- 2.40 Indicator M50 has 3 components. In terms of worsening of congestion as a result of development on five main A roads in the Borough between 2019 and 2020 average speeds have increased on all five roads. Looking at reduced long stay town centre car park usage there were 108,546 transactions in the town centre long stay car parks a decrease of 69% from the previous year. This was in most part due to the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic and several nationwide lockdowns which both restricted and discouraged members of the public visiting the Town Centre to improve public safety. Finally looking at ratio between car parking costs and bus fares all car park options remain more expensive than travelling by bus, with the exception of the Mall (4-5 hours).

Sustainability Appraisal – Significant Effect Indicators

- 2.41 The Significant Effect Indicators enable the Council to monitor the effects of the Maidstone Borough Local Plan. Like the local plan indicators above (2.11 to 2.38), the significant effect indicators cover a range of topics. A summary is provided in the following paragraphs. In some instances, there is overlap in the topics covered between the two sets of indicators and therefore have not been replicated below.
- 2.42 Housing – There were 1,354 dwellings (net) completed during the monitoring year 2020/21, bringing the total completed dwellings to 9,095 for the plan period 2011/21. This represents an over delivery of +265 against the ten year target of 8,830 dwellings.
- 2.43 Health – Of the RSCs and Larger Villages within the revised Settlement Hierarchy 100% had access to retail & service facilities and community & public facilities. Only 60% of the RSCs and Larger Villages had access to libraries.
- 2.44 Poverty – As of 2019, according to the Index of Multiple Deprivation, the least deprived lower layer super output area (LSOA) in Maidstone Borough is in Bearsted ward and has a ranking of 32,648. The LSOA is amongst the 10% least deprived areas in the country. The most deprived LSOA in the Borough is located in Parkwood ward and is ranked as 2914. The LSOA is amongst the 10% most deprived areas in the country.
- 2.45 Education – Secondary schools in 2017 were operating at a 90% level which has increased to 98% in 2021. The capacity for primary schools has only changed by 1%. Since 2011, the base date of the Maidstone Borough Local Plan, there has been an increase in the number of pupils achieving NVQ 2 or above of 14.8%, and this is in above the level for the rest of the south east (10.0%).

- 2.46 Crime – Overall between July-September 2017 and January-March 2021 there has been a decline in crime in the High Street ward from 1109 to 877 reported crimes. Looking at Maidstone as a whole and the crime rates per 1000 population, there has been a reduction of 11% between 2019/20 and 2020/21.
- 2.47 Vibrant Community – During 2020/21 there has been a net gain of three community facilities.
- 2.48 Accessibility – In 2018/19 15.9% of adults in the Borough walk as their mode of travel at least three days per week, compared to 18% of adults in 2017/18. A further 2.4% of adults cycle for travel at least three days per week. There has been an increase since 2017/18 (1%).
- 2.49 Culture – In a report on Economic Impact of Tourism Maidstone – 2019 Results there has been a decrease in the number of visits to Maidstone Borough which contrasts with the county as a whole.
- 2.50 Land Use – Out of 1,354 dwellings (net) completed during the monitoring year 2020/21 a total of 351 dwellings were completed on previously developed land. This equates to 29%.
- 2.51 Congestion – A total of 25 highways and transportation schemes from the Infrastructure Delivery Plan have been completed since the adoption of the Maidstone Borough Local Plan.
- 2.52 Climate Change – Between 2011 and 2019, CO₂ emissions per capita in Maidstone has declined, a trend which is reflected in the Kent average.
- 2.53 Waste – Across Kent there has been a reduction in the amount of non-household waste disposed of between 2014/15 to 2019/20 of 59%, with 16,742 tonnes in 2019/20. In Maidstone there has been a decrease of 61% with 220 tonnes of non-household waste collected in 2019/20. There has been a decrease in the amount of household waste generated in Maidstone of 4%.
- 2.54 Water Management – In total, 73% of water bodies within Maidstone have been classified as moderate in terms of ecological status or potential (this figure excludes groundwater bodies). With a further 85% of water bodies have a chemical status of good.
- 2.55 Energy – Between the end of 2014 and end of 2020 there has been an increase in the number of renewable energy installations from 1,484 installations to 2,416 in Maidstone Borough. Between 2011 and 2019 there has been an overall decrease in energy consumption.
- 2.56 Economy – There has been an increase of 101,884 sqm of commercial floorspace (A1, A2, A3, A4, A5, B1a, B1b, B1c, B2, B8, D1, D2 and Sui Generis) based on completed and consent permissions during 2020/21.

Summary

2.57 The AMR is a corporate document, with inputs from a range of Council departments and uses both internal and external data sources. The Council continues to make good progress towards the delivery of the objectives and targets set out in the adopted Maidstone Borough Local Plan, as well as minimising the effects of the Local Plan. The AMR is an important source of evidence for the Local Plan Review and demonstrating what policies may need to address as part of the review.

3. AVAILABLE OPTIONS

3.1 This report is for noting.

3.2 As the Local Planning Authority, the Council has a statutory duty to produce an annual AMR monitoring the progress of the adopted Local Plan and the Local Plan Review.

4. PREFERRED OPTION AND REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

4.1 This report is for noting.

5. RISK

5.1 This report is for information only and has no risk management implications.

6. CONSULTATION RESULTS AND PREVIOUS COMMITTEE FEEDBACK

6.1 There is no duty to undertake consultation on an Authority Monitoring Report.

7. NEXT STEPS: COMMUNICATION AND IMPLEMENTATION OF THE DECISION

7.1 The Maidstone Authority Monitoring Report 2020-2021 is located at Appendix 1 to this report and will be published on the Council's website.

8. REPORT APPENDICES

Appendix 1: Maidstone Authority Monitoring Report 2020-2021

9. BACKGROUND PAPERS

None