

# **MAIDSTONE BOROUGH COUNCIL**

## **LEADER OF THE COUNCIL**

### **REPORT OF THE HEAD OF SPATIAL PLANNING**

**Report prepared by Louise Taylor and Sue Whiteside**

**Date Issued: 9 December 2010**

#### **1. Annual Monitoring Report 2009/10**

##### **1.1 Key Issue for Decision**

1.1.1 To consider the submission of the Annual Monitoring Report (AMR) to the Secretary of State, in accordance with Regulation 48 of the Town and Country Planning (Local Development)(England) Regulations 2004.

##### **1.2 Recommendation of the Head of Spatial Planning**

1.2.1 That the Annual Monitoring Report for 2009/10 (attached as Appendix A to this report) be approved for submission to the Secretary of State.

##### **1.3 Reasons for Recommendation**

1.3.1 The production of an AMR is required under the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004. The Report covers the policy monitoring period 1<sup>st</sup> April to 31<sup>st</sup> March and the calendar year of progress of the Local Development Scheme to date. The Council has a duty to submit the AMR to the Secretary of State by 31<sup>st</sup> December each year.

1.3.2 The AMR assesses whether policies and related targets or milestones in local development documents have been met and, if not, what progress is being made to address this. The AMR contains:

- Contextual Indicators that demonstrate the wider social, environmental and economic characteristics of the Borough;
- Core Output Indicators, which are defined through national policy guidance and collected on a consistent time frame;
- Local Indicators that address policies and local issues not covered by Core Indicators; and
- A review of the Local Development Scheme to assess the progress of the timetable for the production of local development documents and to identify any changes required.

- 1.3.3 Since the end of the 2009/10 monitoring period the new coalition government has been elected, which has set out its intention to abolish regional strategies and to publish further changes to the planning system in due course. As a consequence of the imminent demise of the South East Plan, the Council is undertaking work that will allow it to set a locally derived housing target for the borough. Three potential housing targets for the period 2006 to 2026 of 8,200, 10,080 and 11,000 are currently being modeled and tested and, where appropriate, the AMR includes data for all scenarios.
- 1.3.4 Population in the borough is forecast to increase between 11.7% and 17.0% within the plan period. All three scenarios show the largest increases in population fall within the age group 85+, reflecting national trends of an ageing population. Overall, the population of working age is declining and retirement age population is increasing.
- 1.3.5 Unemployment levels decreased in Maidstone Borough between September 2009 and September 2010, and the percentage of resident unemployment in Maidstone remains lower than in Kent, the South East and England.
- 1.3.6 Prices of all dwelling types continued to fall during 2009/10. There has been a net loss of employment floorspace in the borough overall. 59% of employment floorspace and 86% of dwellings were completed on previously developed land. Changes to PPS3 were published in June 2010, to exclude private residential gardens from the definition of brownfield land. If this new definition had applied in 2009/10, the 86% figure would reduce to 75% (still in excess of the government's target of 60%).
- 1.3.7 Maidstone can demonstrate a minimum 5-year housing land supply for each of the three scenarios tested, in accordance with PPS3 requirements.
- 1.3.8 Maidstone continues to make best use of its available land: 88.85% of dwellings were constructed at densities in excess of 30 units per hectare. The coalition government has removed the national minimum density targets for residential development. This change is aimed at restricting inappropriate development proposals that, in some cases, have the potential to damage an area's character by increasing the density of development to unsuitable levels.
- 1.3.9 Of all planning consents granted in 2009/10, 57.30% affordable units were secured through planning consents, meeting the requirements of Policy AH1. 46.99% of all units completed in the monitoring year were affordable dwellings.
- 1.3.10 The Local Indicators explain the work that is being undertaken to protect and enhance the quality of the river and the Kent Downs AONB. Regeneration of the town centre is a key local issue and, by contrast, replacement dwellings in the countryside and conversion of rural buildings for residential purposes are closely monitored.

1.4 Alternative Action and why not Recommended

1.4.1 Under current plan making regulations, the Council is required to submit the AMR to the Secretary of State by 31<sup>st</sup> December each year. The format and content of future AMRs will be reviewed as new government guidance on plan making emerges.

1.5 Impact on Corporate Objectives

1.5.1 The AMR monitors the success of a range of policies that will have an impact on corporate objectives.

1.6 Risk Management

1.6.1 A number of factors, which are clearly set out in the AMR, have delayed the timetable for the preparation of LDF documents, namely the Core Strategy and the Gypsy & Traveller Pitch Allocations DPDs. A new programme for the production of local development documents will be published in 2011.

1.6.2 Further risks to the programme can to a certain extent be mitigated, but the impact of proposed changes to the plan making system can only be assessed once new guidance is published. Meantime, government advice is to continue with the preparation of Core Strategies under current regulations.

1.7 Other Implications

1.7.1

1.	Financial	X
2.	Staffing	X
3.	Legal	
4.	Equality Impact Needs Assessment	
5.	Environmental/Sustainable Development	X
6.	Community Safety	X
7.	Human Rights Act	
8.	Procurement	
9.	Asset Management	

1.7.2 Financial

1.7.3 There will be general costs involved in the production of the AMR, such as printing, but these can be accommodated within the LDF budget.

1.7.4 Staffing

1.7.5 These can be accommodated within the existing staff structure.

1.7.6 Environmental/Sustainable Development

1.7.7 When assessing the implementation of policies, the AMR must have regard to the effects on social, environmental and economic objectives, which are the key indicators in defining sustainability.

1.7.8 Community Safety

1.7.9 Community safety is inherent in the policies that are the subject of monitoring in the document.

1.8 Relevant Documents

1.8.1 Appendices

Appendix A: Annual Monitoring Report 2009/10

1.8.2 Background Documents

None

**IS THIS A KEY DECISION REPORT?**

Yes

No

If yes, when did it first appear in the Forward Plan?

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This is a Key Decision because: .....

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Wards/Parishes affected: ...All.....

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**How to Comment**

Should you have any comments on the issue that is being considered please contact either the relevant Officer or the Member of the Executive who will be taking the decision.

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