

MAIDSTONE BOROUGH COUNCIL

RECORD OF DECISION OF THE LEADER OF THE COUNCIL

LEADER OF THE COUNCIL

Decision Made: 17 December 2010

ANNUAL MONITORING REPORT 2009/10

Issue for Decision

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.

Decision Made

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

Reasons for Decision

The production of an AMR is required under the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004. The Report covers the policy monitoring period 1st April to 31st 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 31st December each year.

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.

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 modelled and tested and,

where appropriate, the AMR includes data for all scenarios.

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.

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.

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%).

Maidstone can demonstrate a minimum 5-year housing land supply for each of the three scenarios tested, in accordance with PPS3 requirements.

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.

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.

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.

Alternatives considered and why rejected

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

Background Papers

None

Should you be concerned about this decision and wish to call it in, please submit a call in form signed by any two Non-Executive Members to the Head of Change and Scrutiny by: 24 December 2010
