

**Strategic Planning
Sustainability &
Transportation Committee**

13 September 2016

Is the final decision on the recommendations in this report to be made at this meeting?

YES

Authority Monitoring Report 2015/16

Final Decision-Maker	Strategic Planning Sustainability and Transport Committee
Lead Head of Service	Rob Jarman, Head of Planning and Development
Lead Officer and Report Author	Stuart Watson, Planning Officer, Spatial Policy
Classification	Public
Wards affected	All

This report makes the following recommendations to this Committee:

1. The Committee approves the Authority Monitoring Report 2015/16 attached at Appendix one to this report for publication on the Council's website.

This report relates to the following corporate priorities:

- Keeping Maidstone Borough an attractive place for all
The Authority Monitoring Report focuses on monitoring those indicators that help to illustrate the key features of the borough and also reports on the monitoring of policies in the submitted Local Plan.

Timetable

Meeting	Date
Strategic Planning Sustainability and Transport Committee	13/09/2016

Authority Monitoring Report (2015/16)

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT AND EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.1 This report considers the findings of the Maidstone Authority Monitoring Report (AMR) 2015/16 attached to this report at Appendix one.
 - 1.2 Members are recommended to approve the AMR 2015/16 for publication on the Borough Council's website.
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2. INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

- 2.1 The AMR is prepared in accordance with Regulation 34 of the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012 ("the Regulations"). It is also a corporate document not exclusive to planning, highlighting a number of important matters such as deprivation, crime, and housing delivery.
- 2.2 This is the first Maidstone AMR in three years due to resourcing issues being redirected to producing the draft Maidstone Borough Local Plan 2011-2031 ("the draft Local Plan") for submission to the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government, which took place on 20 May 2016.
- 2.3 Maidstone's AMR 2015/16 has been structured differently to previous AMRs to reflect the submitted draft Local Plan and the key monitoring indicators contained within it. Where possible, data from the years 2011/12 to 2015/16 has been used to monitor changes and to reflect the first 5 years of the submitted draft Local Plan.
- 2.4 The AMR 2015/16 focuses on monitoring indicators that help to illustrate the key features of the borough and monitors policies set out within the submitted draft Local Plan. The AMR comprises:
 - An introduction to the Authority Monitoring Report
 - A Maidstone Profile which demonstrates the wider demographic, social, economic and environmental characteristics of the borough;
 - Development plan progress which includes a review of the Local Development Scheme (LDS), Neighbourhood Development Plans, Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL), Duty to Cooperate and the adoption of the Kent Minerals and Waste Local Plan
 - Local Plan performance, monitoring the policies set out in the submitted draft Local Plan. The key indicators monitored in AMR focus on Housing Delivery, Affordable Housing, Nursing and Residential Care Homes, Gypsies and Travellers and Travelling Showpeople, Housing Density, Quality Design, Economic Delivery, Recreational Open Space, Transport and Air Quality, Built and Natural Environment and Local Services and Infrastructure.
 - A glossary of terms

- 2.5 The AMR draws on a wide range of data from the following sources:
- The 2011 census and updates
 - The Office for National Statistics (ONS) and the Government's Neighbourhood statistics website
 - The Environment Agency
 - Historic England
 - MBC's Spatial Policy department, the wider Planning department and GIS (Geographical Information Systems) department.

- 2.6 The Key findings from AMR:

Maidstone Profile

- 2.7 Maidstone's population in mid-2015 was estimated as 164,499 persons made up of 51% females and 49% males. The largest age groups are 40-44, 45-49 and 50-54 which make up 22% of the total population. In the ten years to 2013/14 the average total net migration of persons moving to the borough was 1,317 per year.
- 2.8 There are 68,040 dwellings in Maidstone borough and the average household size is 2.4 people. Between 2011 and 2015, the total number of house sales increased from 1,997 to 2,692 dwellings, an increase of 45%. Between 2011 and 2015 there has been a 39% fall in vacant dwellings in Maidstone. Vacant dwellings make up 1.49% of total dwelling stock.
- 2.9 From the resident population of Maidstone, associate professional & technical workers (18%) are the largest employment group followed by administrative and secretarial workers (14%), which is a reflection of the County Town's key role as an administrative centre.
- 2.10 30,693 economically active people live and work within the borough. There is a high proportion of workers commuting out to Tonbridge and Malling and all London metropolitan boroughs. Medway has a high proportion of persons commuting to work in Maidstone.
- 2.11 Maidstone's education results in 2013/14 showed a greater percentage of students gaining 5 or more GCSE subjects at grades A* to C compared to county, regional and national results. The school year 2013/14 saw education reforms including the move towards end of course exams, downgrading of course work and schools not being able to repeatedly enter candidates resitting exams. This may account for the significant fall in students gaining 5 or more GCSE subjects at grades A* to C grades (excluding Mathematics and English).
- 2.12 36% of Maidstone residents over the age of 16 years have a degree or above. This is the largest proportion of residents with qualifications obtained. The smallest proportion (6%) have no formal qualifications.
- 2.13 Maidstone has a consistently lower unemployment rate (3.8%) than the Kent average (5.0%) and was comparable to the South East (3.7%) but was lower than the national average (4.9%) in April 2016.

- 2.14 Between 2014 and 2015 Maidstone did not follow regional and national increases in crime statistics but reported a small fall (0.31%). The percentage of domestic burglaries fell by (17.08%), with an increase in Robbery (18.62%) and Violence without injury (15.29%).
- 2.15 The Maidstone urban wards of Park Wood, Shepway South and High Street contain the highest levels of deprivation in the borough and rank in the top 10% in Kent and the South East. Park Wood ward is also in the top 10% most deprived wards nationally.
- 2.16 Four of Maidstone's most picturesque parks have been awarded Green Flag Status: Mote Park, Whatman Park, Cobtree Park and Clare Park. Three Local Nature Reserves are planned for Fant Wildlife Area, Sandling Park/Cuckoo Wood and Cross Keys, Bearsted.

Development Plan Progress

- 2.17 The Borough Council is meeting its timetable for plan production set out in the LDS 2015. The draft Maidstone Borough Local Plan 2011-2031 was submitted to the Secretary of State on 20 May 2016 for public examination, which is due to commence in October 2016.
- 2.18 The Borough Council currently has one adopted Neighbourhood Plan which forms part of its Development Plan: the North Loose Neighbourhood Plan. Two further Neighbourhood Plans are currently at examination: Staplehurst has received examiner's findings and Headcorn's findings are anticipated at the end of September.
- 2.19 The Kent Minerals and Waste Local Plan 2013-2030 has completed its statutory stages of public consultation and independent examination, and was adopted on 14 July 2016. It now forms part of Maidstone's Development Plan.
- 2.20 Consultation on the Preliminary Draft Charging Schedule for the Community Infrastructure Levy was carried out in Spring 2014. The consultation on the CIL Draft Charging Schedule will commence on Friday 5 August 2016 for six weeks, closing on 16 September 2016.
- 2.21 Maidstone Borough Council submitted a Duty to Cooperate Compliance Statement to support the draft Local Plan in its Examination in Public.

Local Plan Performance

- 2.22 The Borough Council is meeting its objectively assessed needs for housing and, as at 1 April 2016, it has a five-year supply of readily available housing sites;
- 2.23 Affordable housing is being secured in accordance with the draft Local Plan policies but completion rates are low this year, in part due to the loss of affordable housing on a redeveloped housing association sites and the completion of a number of prior notification conversions that do not attract affordable housing contributions;

- 2.24 An additional 13.19ha of open space has been secured through planning permissions granted during the monitoring period;
- 2.25 There has been some progress delivering new employment floorspace on allocated sites: outline consent has been granted for the Maidstone Medical Campus and new premises have been completed on one of the allocated sites in Marden;
- 2.26 Retail monitoring shows good rates of delivery of comparison floorspace, and that there is also an adequate pipeline supply of convenience floorspace already permitted to respond to demand as it arises;
- 2.27 There has been an increase in the extent of the indicative flood plain, and a refresh of the Strategic Flood Risk Assessment is underway;
- 2.28 The North Loose Neighbourhood Plan has been 'made', and the Kent Minerals and Waste Local Plan has been adopted, so both documents form part of the Borough Council's Development Plan;
- 2.29 Consultation on the CIL Draft Charging Schedule commenced on Friday 5 August 2016 for six weeks.
- 2.30 Five schemes within the Infrastructure Delivery Plan (IDP) have progressed, these include:
- Provision of a bridge gyratory bypass through Fairmeadow to reduce congestion in the Town Centre.
 - Improvements to the existing towpath on the eastern and western banks of the River Medway.
 - Improvements to Maidstone East Rail Station forecourt and ticket office, together with improvements to the public realm at the northern end of Week Street.
 - Provision of a new roundabout to provide access to site H1 (5) Langley Park, situated off the A274.
 - Provision of new 2FE primary school on site H1 (5) Langley Park, Maidstone

3. AVAILABLE OPTIONS

- 3.1 **Option A:** The Committee could opt to approve the AMR 2015/16 for publication on the Borough Council's website.
- 3.2 **Option B:** The Committee, conversely, could resolve not to approve the AMR 2015/16 for publication on the Borough Council's website
- 3.3 **Option C:** The Committee could resolve to defer approval of the AMR 2015/16 pending amendments and reconsideration at a future meeting.
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4. PREFERRED OPTION AND REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

4.1 Option A is recommended.

The guidance on preparing Annual Monitoring Reports has been withdrawn and the duty to submit the document to the Secretary of State has been removed. However under the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012, the Borough Council is still required to produce a monitoring report for local people on locally determined issues.

The AMR 2015/16 reports on the monitoring framework for the submitted draft Local Plan policies. The submitted draft Local Plan monitoring framework ensures the delivery of the amount and type of development required whilst also protecting and enhancing the aspects of the historic and natural environment that contribute to the form and character of the borough.

An up-to-date AMR will likely be considered as part of the examination of the draft Local Plan which is scheduled to commence in October 2016

5. NEXT STEPS: COMMUNICATION AND IMPLEMENTATION OF THE DECISION

5.1 Following approval of the Committee, the AMR 2015/16 will be published on the Borough Council's website.

6. CROSS-CUTTING ISSUES AND IMPLICATIONS

Issue	Implications	Sign-off
Impact on Corporate Priorities	The Authority Monitoring Report focuses on monitoring those indicators that help to illustrate the key features of the borough and also reports on the monitoring of policies in the submitted Local Plan.	Rob Jarman, Head of Planning and Development
Risk Management	Completing the requirement to produce a monitoring report for local people on locally determined issues	Rob Jarman, Head of Planning and Development
Financial	None	Mark Green, Section 151 Officer & Finance Team

Staffing	None	Rob Jarman, Head of Planning and Development
Legal	None	Kate Jardine, Team Leader (Planning), Mid Kent Legal Services
Equality Impact Needs Assessment	None	Anna Collier, Policy & Information Manager
Environmental/Sustainable Development	None	Rob Jarman, Head of Planning and Development
Community Safety	None	Rob Jarman, Head of Planning and Development
Human Rights Act	None	Rob Jarman, Head of Planning and Development
Procurement	None	Rob Jarman, Head of Planning and Development & Mark Green, Section 151 Officer
Asset Management	None	Rob Jarman, Head of Planning and Development

7. REPORT APPENDICES

The following documents are to be published with this report and form part of the report:

- Appendix 1: Authority Monitoring Report 2015/16