

## **East Herts Council Non-Key Decision Report**

**Date:** 2 April 2025

**Report by:** Councillor Vicky Glover-Ward – Executive Member for Planning and Growth

**Report title:** East Herts Authority Monitoring Report (AMR) 2023-24

**Ward(s) affected:** All

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### **Summary**

- The purpose of this report is to seek approval to publish the Council's Authority Monitoring Report (AMR) 2023-24.

### **RECOMMENDATIONS FOR DECISION: that**

**A) The East Herts Authority Monitoring Report (AMR) 2023-24 contained in Appendix A be approved for publication.**

#### **1.0 Proposal(s)**

1.1 All local authorities are required to publish annually an Authority Monitoring Report (AMR). The principal function of an AMR is to show progress with local plan preparation, and to monitor the performance and effectiveness of the Council's planning policies in delivering the key objectives of the District Plan. The AMR can also include information about Neighbourhood Plans and the Duty to Co-operate.

#### **2.0 Background**

2.1 The requirement to prepare a Monitoring Report each year originated in the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 (Part 2, Section 35). This requirement was amended by the Localism Act 2011 (Part 6, Chapter 1, Section 113). Section 113 of the Localism Act 2011 requires every local planning authority to prepare a monitoring report, and the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012 set out regulations for Authority's Monitoring Reports.

2.2 Regulation 34 of the Town and Country (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012<sup>1</sup> states that a local planning authority's monitoring report should contain the following information:

- The title of the Local Plans or Supplementary Planning Documents (SPDs) specified in the local planning authority's Local Development Scheme (LDS).
- In relation to each of those documents:
  - the timetable specified in the Local Planning Authority's LDS for the documents' preparation;
  - the stage the document has reached in its preparation;
  - if the documents preparation is behind the timetable, the reasons for this.
- Where any Local Plan or SPD specified in the local planning authority's LDS has been adopted or approved within the period in respect of which the report is made, a statement of that fact and of the date of adoption or approval.
- Details of the net additional dwellings or net additional affordable dwellings in any part of the local planning authority's area.
- Where a local planning authority has made a Neighbourhood Development Order or a Neighbourhood Plan, the local planning authority's monitoring report must contain details of these documents.
- Where a local planning authority has adopted a Community Infrastructure Levy, the local planning authority's monitoring report must contain information on the amount of CIL collected and the amount spent.
- Where a local planning authority have co-operated (through the Duty to Cooperate) with another local planning authority,

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<sup>1</sup> [The Town and Country Planning \(Local Planning\) \(England\) Regulations 2012](#)

county council, or a body or person, the local planning authority's monitoring report must give details of what action they have taken during the period covered by the report.

2.3 The Authority Monitoring Report (AMR) the subject of this report covers the period 1<sup>st</sup> April 2023 to 31<sup>st</sup> March 2024. The format of the AMR reflects both the regulations set out above and a more localised approach to monitoring. The Council has updated its monitoring framework to reflect the adopted East Herts District Plan and it is likely that the format of future monitoring documents will continue to evolve as monitoring is adapted and new data becomes available.

2.4 The AMR can be viewed in **Appendix A**. The format of the latest AMR (2023-24) has been updated compared to the previous version (2022-23) to make the document more accessible and user friendly.

### **3.0 Reason(s)**

3.1 The AMR is split into a number of sections in order to address the requirements set out above. Below, is a summary of the information found within each chapter of the AMR.

3.2 The first section (Section 2) provides the social, economic, and environmental context within which the District Plan and its policies are assessed. This section highlights some of the key trends, issues and opportunities that face the district and contribute to its overall profile.

3.3 Sections 3 to 6 cover the following:

- Section 3: The Development Plan; this section provides a policy context and a description of the various Development Plan Documents and other Plans or strategies that are relevant to the AMR and form the statutory Development Plan in East Herts.
- Section 4: Local Development Scheme (LDS); this section monitors the progress made by the Council in producing the documents set out in the October 2024 LDS.

- Section 5: Duty to Cooperate; this section briefly outlines what the Duty to Cooperate is and signposts to further information on the Council's website.
- Section 6: Neighbourhood Planning; this section monitors the progress made in Neighbourhood Planning across the district.

3.4 Section 7 focusses on monitoring the policies within the East Herts District Plan 2018. It analyses the effectiveness of the District Plan policies using the indicators identified in Appendix 1 of the AMR. Analysis takes place on a chapter-by-chapter basis broadly synonymous with the District Plan format.

### **Key Findings**

- 3.5 Good progress has been made on all the District Plan site allocations since the previous monitoring year. The majority of the site allocations have either been completed, have started, or are awaiting a decision at the time of preparation of the report.
- 3.6 1,387 net dwellings were completed in the district, which is the highest year of delivery since adoption of the District Plan. Of these dwellings, 31.16% delivered were affordable homes, which is an increase of around 4% compared to the previous monitoring year. In addition, four of the eight Group 1 Villages have now met their 10% housing increase target (net completions by Parish).
- 3.7 33.4% of completions overall were on Previously Developed Land (PDL), which is an increase compared to the last three years.
- 3.8 The number of vacant retail units in town centres has reduced compared to the previous monitoring year, with Hertford seeing a large decrease in vacancy rates, and an increase in town centre floorspace, due to completion of the redeveloped Bircherley Green shopping centre area.
- 3.9 Over half of Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs) in East Herts are in 'favourable' condition. Of those in an 'unfavourable' condition, 60% are categorised as 'recovering' by Natural England.

### **Levelling-Up and Regeneration Act 2023 – Monitoring of Plans**

- 3.10 The government has set out a requirement for a clearer, more focused approach to monitoring in the future, to ensure that planning authorities have a better understanding of how their plan is performing.
- 3.11 It is proposed that monitoring under the new planning system will have two distinct elements:
1. **A light touch annual return.** This will include progress against plan making activities, and as a minimum it will also report on a small number of nationally prescribed metrics to assess the implementation of key policies against the output of the plan. This will support a more streamlined approach to monitoring as authorities will know exactly what they need to report against as a minimum requirement.
  2. **A detailed return to inform updates to the plan.** Four years after adoption of a local plan, at the latest, planning authorities will be required to prepare a fuller analysis of how planning policies and designations are being implemented, and the extent to which the plan is meeting the overall vision for their area.
- 3.12 The Levelling-Up and Regeneration Act 2023 sets out that regulations on monitoring will be published in due course. It is anticipated that these will give clarity on the specific requirements and will also set the nationally prescribed metrics to monitor implementation of policies. The Government has also indicated that they will be publishing a template to standardise the way in which this data is prepared and published.
- 3.13 Once the regulations have been published the Council will need to review how future monitoring information is presented.

## **4.0 Options**

- 4.1 The Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 (as amended by the Localism Act 2011) currently requires local planning authorities to prepare a monitoring report that set out the implementation of the Local Development Scheme (LDS) and the extent to which policies set out in the East Herts District Plan 2018 are being achieved.

## **5.0 Risks**

- 5.1 Failure to publish an Authority Monitoring Report would mean that the Council is not meeting the requirements of the 2004 Act (as amended).

## **6.0 Implications/Consultations**

- 6.1 None

### **Community Safety**

There are no community safety implications arising from this report.

### **Data Protection**

There are no data protection implications arising from this report.

### **Equalities**

There are no direct equality, diversity, or inclusion implications in this report.

### **Environmental Sustainability**

The purpose of the planning system is to contribute to the achievement of sustainable development, including the provision of homes, commercial development and infrastructure in a sustainable manner.

### **Financial**

There are no direct financial implications arising from this report.

### **Health and Safety**

There are no health and safety implications arising from this report.

### **Human Resources**

There are no human resources implications arising from this report.

## **Human Rights**

There are no human rights implications arising from this report.

## **Legal**

The requirement to prepare a monitoring report each year is set out in The Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 (as amended by the Localism Act 2011). The Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012 set out regulations for Authority Monitoring Reports.

## **Specific Wards**

All

## **7.0 Background papers, appendices, and other relevant material**

### **7.1 Appendix A: Authority Monitoring Report (AMR) 2023-2024**

#### **Contact Member**

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