

Authority Monitoring Report 2024

Date of issue:	6 January 2025		
Date of Decision:	14 January 2025		
Report to:	Cabinet Member - Housing and Highways		
Report of:	Chief Planning Officer		
Portfolio:	Planning Services		
Wards affected:	All		
Is this a key decision:	No	Included in Forward Plan:	No
Exempt/confidential report:	No		

Summary:

The purpose of this report is to seek the Cabinet Member's approval of the Authority Monitoring Report for 2023/24 for publication.

Recommendation(s):

- (1) The Authority Monitoring Report for 2023-24 for publication.

1. The Rationale and Evidence for the Recommendations

Introduction/Background

- 1.1 Local planning authorities must publish information, at least annually, through an Authority Monitoring Report [AMR] that shows progress with Local Plan preparation; reports any activity relating to the duty to cooperate; and shows how the implementation of policies in the Local Plan is progressing. Local Planning Authorities are encouraged to report as frequently as possible on planning matters to communities. This is important to enable communities and interested parties to be aware of progress. Local planning authorities can also use the AMR to provide up-to-date information on the implementation of any neighbourhood plans that have been made, and to determine whether there is a need to undertake a partial of full review of the Local Plan.

2022-23 Authority Monitoring Report

1.2 This AMR covers the period 1st April 2023 to 31st March 2024. It is evident that a number of trends are beginning to become established as the plan period progresses. The key messages coming from this year's AMR include:

1.3 Direct Impact Indicators

- The Council can demonstrate an 8.69-year supply of specific deliverable housing sites. This is very similar to the previous year's position of 8.7 years supply. This means that Sefton can comfortably meet its five-year supply requirement for deliverable housing sites. However, the draft Government housing methodology, if brought into force will result in a significant fall in the housing supply position and would see the Council no longer being able to demonstrate a five-year supply. If the new methodology is confirmed by the Government, the housing supply will be altered accordingly.
- During 2023/24 there were 748 net additional dwellings in Sefton. This compares to 745 the year before. It follows a pattern where for five years now, the net new dwellings have been very consistent and have been between 745 and 779. This has comfortably allowed the Council to meet the housing delivery test and has shown how successful the Council's Local Plan has proven to be in meeting the borough's housing need. This is a considerable success compared with the years pre-adoption of the Local Plan where delivery figures of around 400 per year were more typical.
- As of 31 March 2023, there have been 1,895 new homes completed on the Local Plan housing allocations, an increase of 442 in the past year, an increase on the 308 from the previous year. A number of large sites are building out at the moment and a number more are due to start delivering so this pattern should continue although it is not yet clear what the impact of the market slowdown might be.
- There has been a significant decrease in the number of new homes granted planning permission in 2023/24, particularly on large sites. It is not clear why this is the case. Generally, only a small number of large sites come forward each year and so one year's results should not be a concern but it is something to note for future years and whether the general market slowdown due to the cost of living crisis is a factor. This has had an impact on a number of indicators. For example, there was no affordable housing granted through s106 on larger schemes because there were no schemes eligible.
- During 2022/23 there were 159 new affordable homes completed. This is a decrease from the previous year (235) and a break from what had been a steadily increasing trend. This is likely to be an outlier, and this will be monitored closely moving forward.
- During 2023/24 there was a total of 5,522m² of floorspace developed for new employment use. This is a decrease on the exceptionally high previous year, but consistent with most years.
- The total area of land and premises lost from employment to other uses was 0.39ha, a considerable fall on the previous year and mostly consisting of changes of use to residential done under permitted development rights.
- During 2023/24 there were a number of changes of use and new developments in town centres, to a variety of uses. However one consistent pattern was that many of the changes of use were away from retail which shows a continuing pattern of change over many years, locally and nationally.

- During 2023/24 14 applications were submitted for HMOs. Two were approved, two were lawful development, two were withdrawn and eight were refused. Of those refused, to date, two had been appealed with both being dismissed. These are very similar figures to 2022/23.
- The number of Conservation Area Appraisals and Management plans adopted have both risen from 60% and 16% respectively to 72% and 28%.

1.4 Indirect Impact Indicators

- The most recently published data (base date of 2022) shows that there are 102,000 jobs in Sefton. The jobs density in Sefton of 0.61 (i.e. the ratio of total jobs to population aged 16-64). This is below the national average of 0,85. This in part reflects that much of Sefton serves as a commuter area for the wider Liverpool City Region.
- The unemployment rate in Sefton at March 2024 was 4.1%. This is a big rise from 2.8% the year before. The 2023 figure was significantly lower than any other figure.
- On 31st March 2024 the number of active applicants on the Sefton Housing Register was 3,630, a decrease from 3,310. However there has still been a longer term fall.
- The amount of CO2 emissions for Sefton fell to 4.1 kilotonnes. This is part of a long-term fall.
- The vacant home rate in Sefton at 31st March 2024 fell from 4% to 3,41%. The long-term vacancy rate (i.e. vacant 6 months+) has also fallen from 3.1% to 2.28%.
- Obesity rates for adults and children have stabilised despite the national pattern of the vacancy rate going up.

1.5 Work will begin on assessing the data for 2024/25 soon after 31st March 2025. There are a number of interesting results this year, (particularly on large housing sites granted permission). It will be of interest to see if 2023/24 was a one-off year.

2. **Financial Implications**

None

3. **Legal Implications**

None

4. **Risk Implications**

None

5 **Staffing HR Implications**

None

6 **Conclusion**

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Alternative Options Considered and Rejected

There are no reasonable alternatives as it is a requirement to produce an AMR annually.

Equality Implications:
There are no equality implications. The AMR monitors planning data and policies over time but does not create policies.
Impact on Children and Young People:
The AMR will have a neutral impact upon children.
Climate Emergency Implications:
The recommendations within this report will have a Neutral impact upon the climate emergency. The AMR monitors planning policies and does not in itself set policy. The results of the AMR may reflect impacts upon climate but does not influence them.

What consultations have taken place on the proposals and when?

(A) Internal Consultations

The Executive Director of Corporate Services & Commercial (FD.7838/24) and the Chief Legal and Democratic Officer (LD.5938/24) have been consulted and any comments have been incorporated into the report.

(B) External Consultations

The AMR is a monitoring report and so may require using some information from outside agencies but there is no external engagement.

Implementation Date for the Decision :

Following the expiry of the “call-in” period for the Cabinet decision.

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Appendices:

There are no appendices with this report:

Background Papers:

The Authority Monitoring report 2024