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**Maldon District Local Development
Plan Examination**

Hearing Statement

**Strategic Housing Growth
– Overall Numbers**

January 2015

Strategic Housing Growth – Overall Numbers.

We have consistently registered concern regarding the focusing of the majority of new housing provision into a few large sites requiring major initial investment on infrastructure – with the inherent danger that this will delay and/or limit the amount of housing that can be delivered within the first 5 year period.

1. The Council's strategy focusing on a limited number of large sites is coupled to a policy of restraint elsewhere in the District where, for example, the amount of development in the villages (other than North Fambridge) amounts to only 345 dwellings – less than 8.0% of total housing growth. We do not consider a contingency strategy of identifying Reserve Sites removes the potential danger of future housing land shortage as such sites will also be unable to deliver housing as if turning on a tap. Nor will the delivery of replacement provision in the short term be possible elsewhere having regard to the limited amount of housing intended outside the main centres and allocations and to the current absence of any comprehensive review of Settlement Boundaries and site specific proposals for these areas – to be discussed later in the Examination.
2. Whilst we note the Timetable of Expected Planning Applications in Table 3 of EBO98c, it is already clear that not all these sites will be granted planning permission and it would be conjecture to estimate the quantum and timing of housing delivery from these sites. Similarly, little by way of firm conclusions can be drawn from Table 3 Planning Applications received since April 2014 (10+ dwellings only). The Hall Road, Great Totham site for 55 dwellings, for example, has already been refused.
3. Having regard to the requirement of Para.177 of the NPPF, we remain concerned that the heavy reliance on a few large sites and the lead-in time to cover the planning stages, the investment in infrastructure, and all the subsequent construction phases - will result in the failure of the Plan to facilitate the delivery of the quantum of housing required now and in the early years of the Plan period. Any delays in bringing forward these large allocations will therefore prejudice the ability to meet the needs of the District which include the housing undersupply from the past. Indeed, the strategy being pursued may well inadvertently extend the current housing land supply shortage which has bedevilled the supply of new housing in Maldon District over recent years.



**Chartered Town Planner
January 2015**