

Matter 2: Strategic Housing Growth – overall numbers

1. What is the basis, justification, assumptions and methodology for the proposed level of housing provision, having regard to the supporting evidence.
2. Does policy S2 establish an appropriate, clear, effective and soundly based distribution of development and growth to the towns and settlements in the District, which is fully justified with robust and up-to-date evidence and which will deliver development in sustainable locations? How else should it be done?

It seems to us neither appropriate nor sound. There may be other ways but creating a new settlement nearer to sustainable transport links seems the more obvious. At say 40 dwellings per hectare, 4,600 houses could have taken a mere 115 hectares and that is less than the size of many single ownership areas of land all over the district. By comparison the land-take of the Plan is profligate.

3. Is this the right strategy in policy S2 to meet the objective assessment of housing need (OAN)? Are there other housing growth options that have not been properly explored (If so, what?)

It is not the right strategy given any objective assessment of the extent of housing need; not only for the District over the next 15 years but over the next generation, and not only for the District but the region as a whole. When you have to allocate green land to accommodate most of those houses then it is an opportunity to be positive and make as much of the advantages that larger scale development presents, for planning and strategic regional gain, indeed for competitive acquisition of land; and rather than as it were 'lifting the skirts' of existing country towns and violating their character.

4. Are the strategic allocations too large and complex to be delivered on time? If so, why?

We suggest the possibility that they are too numerous in number and ownership interests both for certainty of delivery to a plan and for certainty in securing sufficient planning gain to mitigate negative effects; a situation that could be worsened where the disposition of sites and ownership are capable of being steered into greater complexity over time.

9. Do I understand correctly that the Plan's housing target in S2 is to fully meet the OAN? Does this take account of the known constraints in the District, such as flooding and highway issues?

It is becoming clear to ordinary residents of Maldon that MDC have clearly pursued their chosen option, using a predetermined 'policy on' approach, rather than taking an objective, open-minded approach. This has led to them glossing over the severe constraints (including transport and flooding) of the chosen sites and at the same time neglecting to take a positive approach to the alternatives for the scale of growth or to fully assess the actual housing need itself, local and regional.