

Adrian Tofts
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Dear Adrian,

MDC Five Year Land Supply

I have reviewed the data contained within the above and have spotted some issues that I would like to bring to your attention.

I write as the owner and developer of 3 of the sites listed in your statement and confirm that the position is as follows;

10/00260/Ful – correct entry

10/00261/Ful – 2 units completed in Monitoring Year, 2 Units completed 2016/17

10/00981/Ful – 1 unit completed monitoring year, 1 unit completed 2016/17, 0 units completed 2017/18, 4 units completed 2018/19

The reason for the delay is the recent refusal by committee against officer recommendation in respect of a re-plan to increase the consented units by 2 plots. An appeal is in the course of preparation and will lead to an inevitable delay.

Perhaps you could amend your notes to “works suspended on site pending appeal against refusal for re-plan.” To reflect the current position.

With regard to the strategic allocations in Appendix G, I have some reservations as to whether the numbers suggested to be deliverable over the five year period are achievable, and I believe that given their importance to the delivery of the plan, they should be subject to some more detailed scrutiny. I suggest that a detailed critical path timeline is prepared for each site to establish that the projections are realistic.

I speak from experience as the former Managing Director of two of the most active National Housebuilders in Essex with over 30 years of experience from a residential developers perspective.

I believe that all developments projected to deliver more than 40 units per annum should be the subject to this more detailed scrutiny by the authority to determine the viability of the output. A simple critical path timeline should be produced to back up the initial assertion which can be used to monitor site performance more accurately and to predict possible delays.

Key stages are;

- Site Marketing and Developer selection (if site is not already owned by a developer)
- Grant of Consent – Resolution to grant
- Completion of Planning Agreement
- Clearance of Reserved matters
- Selection of additional Developer/s (there may need to be more than one on multi developer sites)

- Offsite Infrastructure (improvement of roads/upgrading services/diversions/drainage)
- Pre-development – design/procurement
- Construction Period
- Sales Period Commencement/Rate of Sale

I appreciate that these stages are not necessarily sequential, and some activities could run in parallel which can be shown on the timeline.

I am aware that some of the developments planned to deliver significant numbers over the coming years are not currently owned by housebuilders eg S2(b) or are currently being marketed by agents on behalf of the landowner. Others have had outline applications lodged since December last year and a committee date has not yet been set, with some sites having had reserved matters applications refused or where consent has been granted the S106 Agreements are currently being negotiated. Once the reserved matters have been approved and the S106 is in place, the sites will then have to be subject of detailed design, subcontractor procurement and physical build before they can come on stream to show as completions in any given period.

Once on stream the ongoing rate of sale must be measured against market demand to determine realistic rate of build if you are not going to significantly undershoot the projections.

I note that in the 13 years between 2001 and 2014, the District delivered on average 127 units per annum across all sites throughout the district. This historic rate of delivery needs to be set against a projection where on 3 sites in Burnham on Crouch (S2i, S2j, S2k) you are expecting to deliver 120 units in Burnham on Crouch alone. In my view this projected rate of completion is wholly unrealistic based on past performance, even taking into account the affordable housing content. For this projection to be credible I would like to see supporting evidence in the form of a market report from an independent marketing agent or clear evidence from sites in similar locations that have achieved this rate of sale consistently. Burnham on Crouch as you know is not in one of the most accessible parts of the district and I have serious doubts as to whether this rate of completion, which would have to be backed by sales if it is to be sustained, is realistic.

I would also suggest that the private/affordable delivery stream is separated so that it can be monitored more closely as the private element is likely to be more sensitive to a changing economic climate particularly in the light of the Brexit decision.

I hope these observations are useful, and I would be happy to meet to discuss if this would be helpful. In the meantime I have some concerns regarding the deliverability of the 5 year housing land supply. Of course it may be that the above points have already been taken into consideration and that you will be able to refer me to the appropriate evidence base?

I look forward to your response.

Yours sincerely

Ian Jeffrey