

I would like to ensure that all the previous comments we have made in writing, through our petition, verbally at council meetings and during the Examination in Public, still stand. The lack of exploration of all reasonable alternatives is still a main area of concern. Another of our main concerns during the EIP was the allocation of reserve sites within the main areas of development (Maldon) when a cumulative impact assessment had not fully been explored. In the 'Proposed Main modifications' document, in section 045 there is still a mention of releasing reserve sites. Yet in 078a, the references to reserve sites have been removed. There are also several mentions of allocating 'additional' sites. It is a welcome modification that the main references to reserve sites (particularly Hall Farm) have been removed but we would like to ensure that the additional sites do not just become the reserve sites by another name. The monitoring and reviewing process needs to be very robust and we are still very concerned that should any of the previous reserve sites be released, the infrastructure will not be in place to support this because there are limits to which any alterations can be made e.g. capacity of Plume, changes to A414 are limited.

You will probably receive very few responses to this current consultation. You must not think that this is because people do not care or are not really concerned about the plans. Over 3700 residents signed our petition requesting the MDC withdraw the LDP (more than the total respondents for the MDC consultation in 2013) and we have more than 600 Facebook page users. But people have given up. It's not that the residents of Maldon and Heybridge don't care, it's that MDC have engaged with us too late in the process and we feel powerless to make any difference. We do not agree with plan, yet we have been ignored, therefore it is not worth responding to further consultations. They feel that the major decisions have been made before any consultation is conducted and that it is little more than a tick box exercise. There have been so many examples of this during this process;

Not consulted on full range of options- In 2012 the council published a Plan that was not of options all coherently presented for public consultation but an already huge and costly pursuit of the councillors' "preferred" option of suburban sprawl around the town of Maldon. A plan presented to us as if it were the only possible option. We, as residents, were not consulted on the options for the district as a whole and did not sign up to these enormous garden suburbs. The Royal Town Planning Institute makes the sensible assessment that if the public feel that engagement has happened too late for their views to be implemented then they may cease to continue their engagement. In other words, we were consulted after all the major decisions had been made so we didn't bother replying.

Leading and misleading questions - The public have been given the impression that by agreeing to this plan all sorts of gains would follow and were asked leading and misleading consultation questions. For example, Q11 of the draft plan consultation asked 'would you support an appropriate greenfield location at the edge of Maldon if it were to deliver a new Community Hospital'. To answer that you agree with a new hospital you had to agree to the development. There is no hospital planned within the LDP.

Ignoring consultation results - There is doubt in people's minds as to whether the consultation process is anything more than a tick box exercise for MDC. Many of the people we have spoken to think it's a done deal so they haven't bothered responding. For example, MDC reordered the agenda of the Full Council meeting (10th July 2014) so that they had already taken a vital vote on actively encouraging planning applications before SMAG had presented the opinions of over 3,700 of the residents.

Misrepresentation of the results of consultation - With 65% of the development affecting Maldon and Heybridge, but with 2/3 of the districts population living outside of these towns, of course we were outvoted by the rest of the district. We should have been consulted as a separate group. MDC have misrepresented the results of the Consultation in their SD05 Statement. For example, if you look at para 8.15 (c) they state that 47% of the public agree with the proposed distribution of growth in Maldon. Our calculations based on the raw data obtained from Appendix A of the report to the P&L Council Meeting on 10th December 2013 shows that the actual figure is 8%. They state in the report that accompanies this that "117 respondents (3.2%) disagree with the level of growth proposed in South Maldon". However, when you analyse the results of the Appendix, actually only 192 people answered this question therefore 117 is actually 61% of people who answered the question disagree with the development in Maldon. Residents in 2007 may have indicated a preference for development near existing centres but they believed it "should be of a modest scale". We, as residents, did not sign up to these enormous garden suburbs.