Matter 2/Arlington Parish Council.

Arlington Parish Council challenges the evidential basis of the Wealden District Council's allocation of only 10 houses to the parish in the LDF Core Strategy. Such evidential basis appears to be lacking: instead, a decision has apparently been made to allocate 10 new houses to all settlements of a certain size, apparently for theoretical reasons which do not take account of projected need, and do not allow real local variations in circumstances to inform a proper planning-led decision. The Parish Council contends that this distribution strategy is flawed and unsound. The appended statement by the local Dicker Residents' Association sets out the evidential basis of the actual need for at least 30 houses in the parish of Arlington over the period to 2030. The Council requests the Inspector to permit 30 houses to be provided in this parish in the period to 2030.

Matter 2/Arlington Parish Council – Appendix

The Dicker Residents Association was formed in 2008, to represent the interests of Upper Dicker Village and those who reside there. We currently have some sixty members from forty households in the village, and as a fully constituted organisation we are normally consulted by the Parish, District and County Authorities on planning matters. Despite this, the DRA was not included by WDC when the Core Strategy was consulted on with Town and Parish Councils and other interested bodies at the beginning of the year, and we were not aware of the consultation process until the opportunity to comment had closed. However, having learned of the Inspector's recent critical examination of Wealden's Strategy, this Association not only strongly supports the Parish Council's submission on the matter in April of this year, but in view of the village's special circumstances we would add to it the following reasons:

1. The accelerating rate at which agricultural land is being changed to business use, resulting in previously agricultural/rural properties being converted for office/commercial/leisure purposes.
2. St. Bede's School is now the biggest employer in Wealden District, with significant staff housing needs of its own to fulfil. This places its own pressures on the availability and price of property in the village, leaving local people at a distinct disadvantage.
3. In addition to the on-going need for staff housing, St. Bede's School has purchased a number of properties both large and small which have been converted to student or office accommodation.
4. In this changing environment with its lack of affordable housing it is increasingly difficult for both young and older people to move into the village where their family often is, or even to remain in the village as their needs change. The only course open to them in most cases is to reside in the surrounding Hailsham, Polegate or Eastbourne area. – The availability and price range of suitable village property makes moving here difficult or impossible.

For these reasons this Association completely rejects Wealden's plans for only 10 houses, and strongly supports Arlington Parish Council's call for 30 houses in the Parish by 2030.