

The Parish Council would like to thank all residents who responded to the Draft Neighbourhood Plan. In raw numbers, there were more positive responses than negative and, as might be expected, the replies expressed conflicting views on some elements of the plan. A lot of questions and concerns are already addressed in the supporting documents, particularly the [Strategic Environment Assessment](#) and [Site Assessment reports](#), although it is understandable that not everyone has the time to wade through these.

First, it is worth restating that a neighbourhood plan can only guide the planning process. It does carry some weight, but cannot override national planning policy, or local (Lewes District Council and East Sussex County Council) strategic and planning policies.

Here, we'll try to answer some of the most common themes and concerns that came out of the consultation process.

1. Why can't we put a cap on the numbers of houses?

*Unfortunately, neighbourhood plans cannot dictate a maximum number of houses that can be built.*

2. Why has the plan exceeded the 50 demanded by Lewes District Council?

*This was always a minimum number, and LDC has told us that they may still have a shortfall in the total number of houses they are expected by the government to build in the planning period. Therefore, LDC is advising parishes preparing a neighbourhood plan to allocate housing above their minimum to ensure that the minimum requirement is fulfilled and protect us, if additional housing is needed, from speculative development outside the plan.*

3. The sewage infrastructure is inadequate to cope with the extra housing.

*Planning laws require that no development can be granted planning permission without the necessary infrastructure capacity in place. We are continuing to raise these concerns with Southern Water.*

4. Why is there no policy for the school?

*A neighbourhood plan does not have any powers over provision of school facilities. This is the remit of East Sussex County Council and the education authorities.*

5. The plan would mean removal of the Brighton Garage, yet it claims to support local businesses.

*Some time ago the landowner of the site was granted planning permission for the demolition of the garage building and the development of two homes to replace it. The plan supports viable businesses. The premises are on a short-term lease, and can be terminated at short notice, so the business is not viable in the long term. Residents have also expressed concern that it causes congestion on Station Road, as it has no parking and cars waiting to be serviced are parked along Station Road.*

6. The access to Riddens Lane onto Station Road is not safe to accommodate additional traffic.

*The Parish Council acknowledges concerns about this junction but the overriding authority here is East Sussex Highways, who have already given their approval to the proposed development. Therefore, we cannot prevent development on these grounds.*

7. Why is the Glebe included when it may not be available for five years?

*This site may not be available for several years, but it will become available within the planning period (to 2030) and therefore it meets the criteria for availability. We do not expect all the sites to be developed at once.*

8. Why is the Nolands site excluded?

*The Nolands site was assessed with the other sites in the revised development plan. The Parish Council decided that the density of housing proposed for the site was unacceptable (45, according to the leaflet delivered around the village), and that the 40 houses spread across the Glebe and Oakfield sites are at a more acceptable density that is in keeping with the rural nature of our village. The developers of these sites have agreed to a density far lower than is permitted by planning law, allowing much greater accommodation of wildlife habitats and landscape features. Furthermore these sites will not be developed at the same time, unlike Nolands.*

7. How can the Rectory and Church environs be protected?

*The plan already includes a policy to protect the Rectory. The Parish Council is in discussion with developers to ensure any development proposals respect the environs of the Rectory and Church, which are an important historical feature in the village.*

8. The three sites together, at Wells Close, the Glebe and Oakfield, exceed the residents' expressed wishes to have distinct, smaller developments.

*Only two sites have a common boundary (the Glebe and Oakfield), and the Plan policies include the requirement that the developments should be separated by landscape buffers. The three sites will not be developed at the same time.*

9. The racecourse site would give a precedent to further possible development on the site.

*We recognise residents' concerns about this site. We also recognise the importance of supporting the survival of the racecourse. Unless the access problem is resolved, this site cannot go forward as the plan cannot recommend a site that is not deliverable.*