

Dear Planning Policy Team,

Thank you for inviting Plumpton Parish Council to submit its response to the draft LDF paper.

Of particular interest to Plumpton is Topic Paper number 5 page 6 where LDC sets out three options of where to place 562 new dwellings between now and 2027. One of the options is to 'Focus a significant proportion of the growth on Plumpton Green and Cooksbridge (i.e. where mainline train stations currently exist), and possibly Wivelsfield/Wivesfield Green.....'

Plumpton Green is a small rural community with unique countryside. The Parish Council is concerned that by suggesting that Plumpton would be a good place to put a significant amount of housing LDC is contradicting some of its key objectives and strategies within the LDF. These include:

Topic Paper 2: It states that LDC is committed to protecting and enhancing the environment and encouraging tourism. Plumpton Green is at the foot of the South Downs and forms the view from the top. If this is covered in swathes of housing it will threaten the viability of not just the SDNP as a tourist destination but also the unique countryside of our Low Weald village.

Topic Paper 3: Mentions linkages to Plumpton and Cooksbridge Stations will be improved. While we need an improved rail service to Plumpton the fact that this will be used as a means of a sustainable transport system for new householders is not an achievable objective. It is almost impossible to live in Plumpton without a car- our doctors surgeries, supermarkets for example, are nowhere near a train station. As the results from our recent Village Action Plan survey show 454 out of 469 householders use a car in Plumpton.

Topic Paper 4: States that LDC intends to maintain the character, identity and 'sense of place' of the District's towns, villages and countryside. It also states that LDC will conserve and enhance the natural beauty, wildlife and cultural heritage of the District. In the last four years almost 30 houses have been built in Plumpton and so we, as a PC or a village, are not in principle against housing. However, what we do not think are suitable are large new housing estates – they would change the unique nature of our village and our countryside forever.

LDC also states that it intends to prioritise brownfield and sustainable development as oppose to rural areas yet the South East Plan allocates higher housing growth to Low Weald villages than to the District's towns. This is contradictory. Why are the rural villages even being considered when two brownfeld sites (Topic papers 7&8) which would accommodate almost all of the 1000 houses are already available and much more suitable?

Topic Paper 5: According to LDC almost 1000 new houses are needed in the Low Weald. We believe that this figure is far too high and could be reduced to say 700. Of these 400 have already been built which would leave 300 left to be built in the next 20 years. Plumpton has already built 30 or so new houses which has helped LDC to meet its target significantly already. Plumpton is also currently completing a Housing Needs Survey and it may be that we will be required to build a small amount of affordable housing. If every village did so with small local piecemeal developments it could help LDC to easily meet its housing quota.

Topic Papers 7&8: Plumpton does not have the roads, infrastructure, or transport for any large housing developments. Topic papers 7&8 describe the brownfield sites in North St Lewes and Eastside in Newhaven. These areas could easily house the 1000 houses which need to be built. They have the roads, the schools, and the infrastructure for such development and would be much more sustainable than if they were placed in our rural villages.

In addition to our comments on the LDF we have a few Strategies that we would like to add. What the Strategy document fails to address is that it is current government policy to empower communities to make decisions that will affect them. Plumpton has recently done a survey of its residents as part of its Village Action Plan. They are as follows:

What types of housing would be acceptable to you in Plumpton?

	Yes	No
Single dwellings in controlled locations?	235	100
Small group/s of less than 10 houses?	196	146
Carefully designed larger groups of houses?	39	251
Conversion of redundant buildings?	311	59
Expansion of the village boundary?	52	263
Small groups of flats?	94	211

Do you think that there should be any building on green field sites in Plumpton?

Yes	No
55	397

This shows how our community feels about new housing. The much preferred options are single houses though small group/s of less than 10 houses are also acceptable. What is clearly not acceptable are large groups of houses, an expansion of the village boundary and the building on fields in the village. If Plumpton's housing needs survey suggests that we need to build some affordable housing we should as a community be empowered to choose how many, where and what type to build. We would welcome this empowerment of local communities Policy to be part of LDC's LDF Strategy.

Another policy that has been overlooked is one that addresses the needs of elderly residents in our rural villages. The vast majority of Plumpton's residents are elderly and have lived in the village for many years. When they are no longer able to stay at home they are forced to move out of the village. We have a need in Plumpton for smaller rented units for elderly residents and possibly a retirement home to free up some family homes. We would welcome a Policy that addresses this need.

Lastly, the PC is very concerned about where any new housing is to be delivered in Plumpton. We have seen the map of land which has been offered by local landowners for housing and understand that this is under review at this time. We would like to take this opportunity to stress that the land which is to the North of the village next to the Plough is wholly unsuitable for housing due to the fact that it has no mains water, sewage and is too near a very dangerous junction. It has only just recently been granted permission (inadvertently) for a barn. The land which stretches to the East side of the village behind White House Farm has recently been the subject of an extensive historical landscape study and is of significant importance. Other plots of land, which have been identified, have extremely dangerous points of access, i.e. North Barnes Lane, Riddens Lane. We hope that LDC will be very careful in choosing which plots of land to give permission for new housing and hope that the Planning department works closely with the PC and the village in identifying suitable sites.