

Notes of PPC Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group held in the Village Hall
18th April 2017 at 7.30pm

Present: Nick Beaumont (Joint Acting Chair and Chair for the meeting), Catherine Jackson (Joint Acting Chair), Estelle Maisonnial (LDC), Denise Miller, Gail Murphy, Paul Stevens (Secretary), Simon Ward.

Members of the Public: 6

1. Apologies for absence

Simon Farmer, and Reg Stone.

2. Declaration of interests

None.

3. Previous minutes

The minutes were agreed and signed by the Chair.

4. New Steering Group members

NB reported that since the last meeting both Catherine Dampney and Tony Hutson had resigned from the Steering Group. To ensure the meeting was quorate, NB welcomed the return of Councillor GM to the Steering Group.

In addition Dominic Williams and Steve Long had responded to the invitation for new members, and would both join the Group after completion of the Declaration of Interest forms.

5. Update on revision of SA/SEA and draft Plan documents

- NB reported that the key development since the last meeting had been the announcement of revised preferred sites following the meeting between the Steering Group and EM on the morning of 16th March which had clarified a number of issues regarding the status of the plan, and had resulted in a decision not to revert to the parishioners with a short questionnaire regarding the possible move away from smaller scale (up to 20 houses) developments.
- As indicated at the 15th March meeting, NB communicated that outcome in the April Parish Magazine rather than wait for discussion at this meeting, as this put the information in the public domain more quickly, and also would reach more people in a more easily read form than the minutes of the Steering Group. For completeness, the text of the parish magazine update is appended to these minutes.
- CJ reported that the revised SA/SEA was close to completion, and PS stated that the revised Draft Pre-Submission plan was also under review. EM confirmed that she was syndicating this within LDC to ensure consistency of understanding before its formal submission.

6. Agree process for Public Consultation

- EM laid out the basic process as:
 1. Complete the base documents – Site Assessment, SA/SEA and Draft Plan
 2. Prepare Consultation Statement (which sets out how the base documents had been developed)
 3. Complete Basic Condition Statement (a document which confirms that the Plan meets the basic conditions to be regarded as complete and valid)

4. Draft Plan is formally approved by Parish Council
 5. Consult with residents and statutory bodies
 6. Revise base documents as necessary
 7. Submit to LDC (at which point ownership moves from Plumpton Parish Council to LDC)
 8. LDC review, and if appropriate:
 9. LDC appoint examiner to review. If approved:
 10. Conduct parish referendum
 11. If supported, plan is adopted
- PS requested details of the Basic Condition Statement; EM to provide
 - EM confirmed that whilst there were some typical timescales for the process, some steps (notably 8) could differ widely in how long they lasted. As such, it was not possible to put a definitive timetable on the process.

7. Questions from members of the Public

A resident of Wells Close questioned the choice of the new sites, and why if they were previously rejected (e.g. on grounds of flooding, detriment to local businesses) were they now suitable. The density of development resulting from the three eastern sites being so proximate was also questioned.

NB acknowledged the impact on residents, but there were very limited options to meet the requirements of a defensible plan.

Members of the Steering Group repeated the reasons as set out in the parish magazine, including the feedback from LDC and other statutory bodies, and the practical issues arising from the withdrawal of the south-eastern site, and the continuing issues with the access for the racecourse site which meant that the site was not yet considered deliverable and so could not be included.

None of the current preferred sites are new, and all have previously been included as deliverable in the LDC strategic planning documents (SHELAA) for some time. Some of the reasons that these sites were not preferred in the first draft plan have subsequently been confirmed as issues for development, rather than a hurdle criteria that would prevent development of a site – flooding being one example.

The Nolands site had been re-evaluated but at a minimum number of 50 houses, the density and scale was considered inappropriate and out of scale with the village.

A second question concerned the timing of the consultation, referendum and adoption process. As discussed earlier, there were reasons why a definitive timetable could not be stated, but the intention was to move this forward as quickly as possible to both complete the process, but also to allow LDC to give the draft plan some weight in any development decisions between now and formal adoption.

The previous plan had assumed a referendum in December 2017, and completion in April 2018. Given the slippage of 4-6 weeks, the best estimate at the moment was for a referendum by June 2018.

A resident questioned why development of the racecourse was necessary for parking to be achieved, and was there any option for the racecourse to provide parking facilities independently of housing. A short discussion highlighted that this had been investigated previously with no success, due to access problems as the racecourse does not own the access road, but given the passage of time it was worth re-evaluating; NB would progress via the Parish Council

8. Update as published in April Parish Magazine

PLUMPTON PARISH NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN UPDATE 2

Readers will remember from the February update that a steering group (SG) of the Parish Council has been working on a Neighbourhood Plan for the parish for the past two and more years, and last June we published a draft plan for consultation. The consultation generated a lot of feedback from residents, statutory bodies, landowners as well as developers. In addition, we have had to be mindful of other factors, including change of policy climate at government level, recent challenges to local planning decisions, and the loss of one site and addition of another. As a result, the SG has had to substantially reconsider this draft plan. This update aims to explain why the plan has changed and give some background as to how the SG arrived at the recommended sites listed below.

We want to emphasise that this new plan will go out to formal consultation, so all residents will have plenty of time to give us their responses to it, should they wish. Then, after the consultation stage, the plan has to be accepted by Lewes District Council before going before the independent examiner. Only if it passes these stages does the plan go to referendum, when all residents of the Parish will have a vote. A simple majority in favour will mean the plan becomes real.

Challenges

1. In November last year, Sajid Javid, the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government, granted planning permission for a housing development in Newick that was not in its Neighbourhood Plan. This decision was appealed and the Secretary of State has, very recently, accepted that his ruling was inconsistent with a previous decision and decided not to fight the appeal. However, this does not mean that the developer, as an interested party, will do the same. At the time of writing, the implications for other neighbourhood plans are unclear. What is clear is that decisions made in a plan can be challenged and have to be defensible.
2. We have had clear guidance from Lewes District Council that it regards some of the sites in our original plan as less sustainable than others in the LDC Strategic Housing and Economic Land Availability Assessment (SHELAA). We also know that sites that are deemed sustainable, achievable and available could still be given planning permission, even if they are not in our neighbourhood plan. If a site is considered less sustainable, then clearly its inclusion in our neighbourhood plan is less defensible, especially when other more sustainable sites are available.
3. LDC has also advised us that they would prefer any development to be within a notional planning boundary extending from the railway in the south to the Old Police House and Trillium in the north, as they wish to preserve the current green space around the village settlement.
4. As already reported, one site south of the railway has been withdrawn and the Racecourse site has not yet resolved the issue of pedestrian access so cannot be included as a primary site.
5. The site at Nolands Farm, which was initially submitted to the neighbourhood plan process for a development of 20 units, was at the time unable to provide access. A solution has now been found for access, making this site now deliverable. The site initially submitted to us has been withdrawn and the owners have put forward a new proposal for a larger site that would offer approximately 50 units.
6. The settlement of Plumpton Green is required to provide a minimum of 50 units up to 2030 through allocation. We are aware that LDC will have to allocate 200 additional units across the district in its Local Plan Part 2 process. As the SHELAA process revealed, there are several sites in

Plumpton Green that are sustainable, available and deliverable. Therefore, we believe that some of these additional homes could be allocated on sites in the parish. Even though LDC has not made any decision to date on this matter, it has advised us that allocating sites for more than the minimum required would put us in a stronger position to guide development in our parish up to 2030.

Discussion with developers and changes made

Throughout this process there has been constant dialogue with developers and their planning agents and they have shown some flexibility and goodwill to fit in with the wishes of the village. However, it has to be recognised that commercial realities mean not all our preferences can be met. That said, some landowners have accepted a reduction in housing density to fit in with our wishes and, in the case of the Strawlands site, we have agreement on a provision for low-cost housing specifically for our older residents.

The new plan and allocation

You told us in the village survey that you wanted sites to be small in scale and spread across the village.

After much discussion, the SG has decided not to include any development on the Nolands site. The density of the site was not considered in keeping with the rural character of the village and, at 50, the number of units proposed substantially exceeded the preferred '20' limit expressed by residents in our original survey. The developers did show a degree of flexibility to try and help the SG but the development would not have been commercially viable at just 20 units.

The sites to the north of Trillium and the Old Police Houses are less sustainable (in terms of access) than those nearer the village centre, and they are also outside LDC's notional planning boundary. We have therefore decided it is unwise to include them in the plan as other, more sustainable sites nearer to the village centre might then successfully get 'windfall' planning permission.

The land at Little Inholmes Farm is covered by a section 106 agreement preventing development until 2074. The Steering Group considers the agreement was made in good faith and should be honoured.

We are offering a recommendation that delivers 68 housing units:

- 1 Strawlands 12 (for older people only)
- 2 Glebe 20
- 3 Oakfield 20
- 7 Riddens Lane 16

We are proposing the racecourse site (6) for 19 units, as a reserve site. Despite being south of the railway and so outside LDC's notional planning boundary, it offers the significant benefit of parking for station users and would support the racecourse as an important Parish business by providing a much-needed cash injection. As reserve site, it would only be used if one of the sites included in the plan proved to be undeliverable and the current issues around access are resolved to the satisfaction of the statutory bodies, or if LDC required us to deliver more houses.

The SG will aim to get the new plan and associated documentation published for consultation as soon as possible.

Thank you for your support.

Steering Group Plumpton Parish Neighbourhood Plan

Map of sites

Site 1
Wells Close/
Strawlands
12 units for
older people

Site 2
The Glebe
20 units

Site 3
Land behind
Oakfield
20 units

Site 4
Nolands Farm
50 units

Site 5
Land behind school
20 units

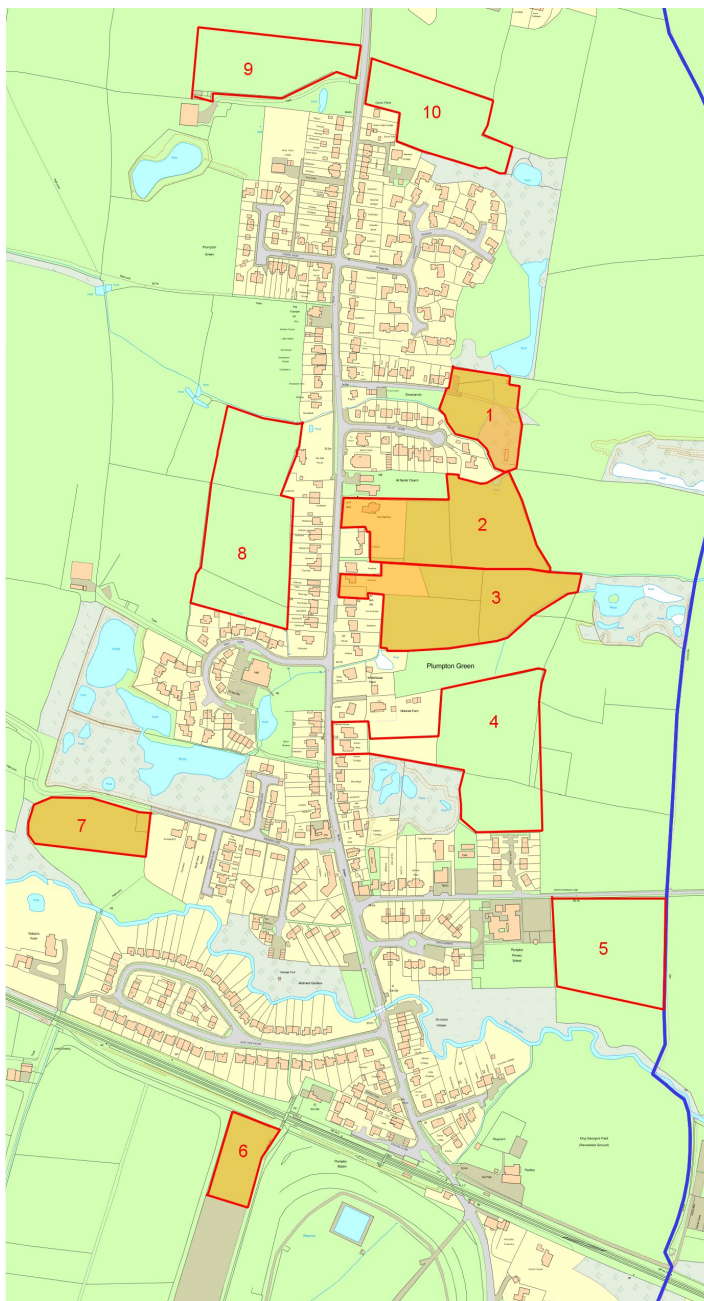
Site 6
The Racecourse
19 units plus car
parking

Site 7
Riddens Lane
16 units

Site 8
Little Inholmes Farm
20 or 40 units

Site 9
Land below
Inholmes Farm
12 units

Site 10
Land north of the
Old Police House
15–20 units



9. AOB

None

10. Dates of future meetings

16th May, Village Hall. GM sent her apologies in advance.

Meeting closed 20:25.