

# Plumpton Parish Neighbourhood Plan



## Vision Paper

December 2014

### Introduction

The purpose of this paper is to capture the outcome of the Plumpton Parish Neighbourhood Plan (PPNP) visioning workshop held with the Steering Group on 4<sup>th</sup> November 2014 and to make recommendations for the consideration of the Steering Group. These recommendations relate to:

- The vision, key objectives and land use planning policy scope of the PPNP
- Further community engagement activities and evidence analysis
- The project plan through to the submission of the PPNP

The recommendations reflect not just the outcome of the workshop but also initial insights into the national and local planning policy context of the PPNP. Specifically, the PPNP must meet a series of 'basic conditions' relating to its general conformity with that policy context. The examination of the PPNP in due course will focus on how those conditions have been met, before it goes to referendum.

The context indicates very clear environmental – natural, heritage and sustainability - parameters that should be used to guide growth and change within the Parish and prevent isolated growth elsewhere in the parish. It appears from the workshop that those parameters are likely to match the views of the local community on where and how change should happen.

The Draft PPNP will provide an outline of the policy context and the environmental parameters as a justification for its emerging policies. It will also be shaped by the recommended engagement activities set out below and by the anticipated adoption of the Lewes District Council Core Strategy.

Finally, the paper avoids a discussion at this stage about the number of houses to be planned for in the PPNP. It is estimated that the vision outlined below could provide a number of options for the delivery of an appropriate number of new homes over the plan period, but this will be dependent on there being an identified and agreed local need, and there being sites that are available and in acceptable locations. There has been no review of those capacities or of potential sites. This work will be done as part of the Draft PPNP preparation.

## **Vision**

The vision of the Parish in 2030 is:

*“The Parish of Plumpton will have retained its character and identity as a rural village with a strong sense of community and strengthened its relationship to the landscape setting through improved public access, the development of new open space amenities and the enhancement of its biodiversity and landscape assets.*

*Within the Parish, Plumpton and Plumpton Green will have retained their own distinctive characters with the quality of the landscape spaces between them continuing to define their shared identity.*

*Community facilities will have expanded and become more varied to meet the changing needs of residents, with the school, village hall, shops, station and recreation amenities all thriving and creating a stronger village centre. The Parish's natural assets will provide benefits for pedestrian and cycle movements through improved connectivity and additions to the network of footpaths, bridleways and public rights of way, many of which will directly connect to the new developments*

*The Parish will have a strong, positive and supportive working relationship with Plumpton Racecourse and Plumpton College, which in turn will have led to the Parish benefitting through an increase in tourism, visitors, support for local businesses and a greater range of facilities being available to the Parish.*

*The Parish will have continued to support local employment businesses and facilitated new employment opportunities within the Parish for local people and to support the services within the Parish.*

*The Parish will also enjoy a positive relationship with the SDNP which will have become more accessible to the community for recreation and leisure. The Parish and SDNP will have worked together to protect their shared setting and to define a role for the Parish as a gateway to the Park.*

*There will have been a modest growth in housing numbers through the provision of new homes, purpose designed to meet local needs including elderly downsizers and young families, and to provide a balance of dwelling types and ownership structures to serve the community over the long term. These new homes will have been provided in small clusters on sites that do not detract from the character and setting of the Parish.”*

## Key findings of the vision workshop

In the Settlement Hierarchy of the emerging Lewes District Core Strategy, the Parish has two identified settlement areas. The first, Plumpton Green has been identified as a *Service Village*. This means that villages of this category should provide for 30-100 new homes over the plan period up to 2030. This is based on the level of services, facilities, employment and public transport supporting the village. The second, Plumpton, is the older of the two. It is situated to the south of the railway line and has been identified as a *Hamlet*, due to its smaller population, historic core and social infrastructure. Because of its size and location, the settlement has not been allocated a housing number. The two settlements are part of one parish which stretches north from the Hamlet of Plumpton to the north and west of the Plough junction on South Road. The Settlement Hierarchy identifies only the portion to the far south as the hamlet, the remainder is unclassified. Plumpton Green, the service village, lies in the middle of the south and north boundaries of Plumpton.

Following the Core Strategy's reasoning for growth, Plumpton Green has a *Settlement Boundary*, whereas Plumpton, located in the SDNP, does not. The areas outside the settlement boundary in the part which is outside the SDNP is classed as *Countryside* which means that development is restricted.

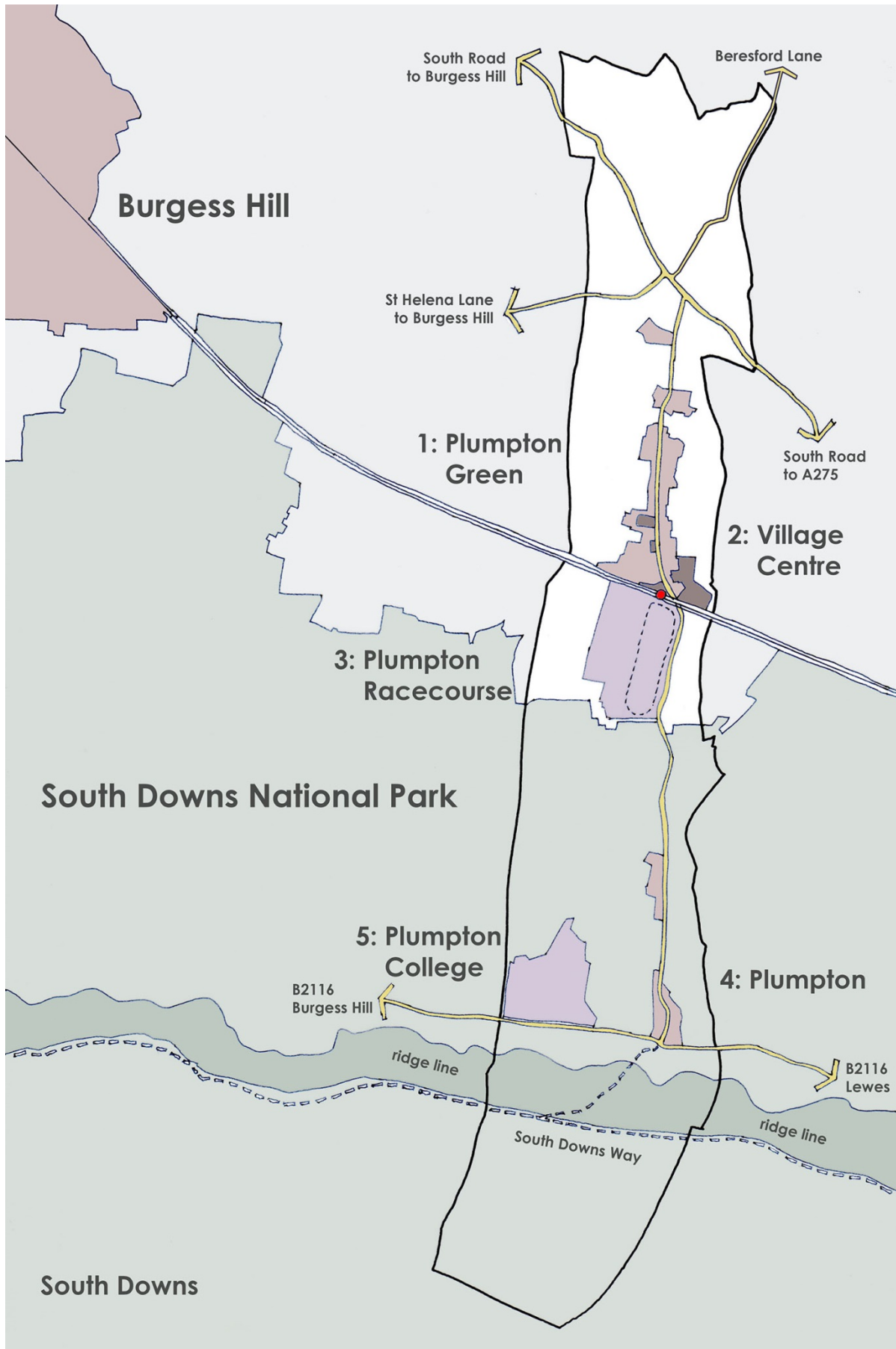
In *Spatial Policy 2 – Distribution of Housing*, Plumpton Green has been allocated a minimum number of 50 net additional dwellings over the plan period 2010 and 2030. The settlement of Plumpton has not been allocated a number and it is stated that such settlements should limit their residential growth to affordable housing on exception sites.

The retail and town centres policy of the forthcoming Core Strategy emphasises safeguarding existing facilities and services and does not focus on providing new facilities for *Service* size settlements such as Plumpton Green.

The Parish is made up of a number of clearly defined elements that have grown up initially at the foot of the South Downs and latterly around the railway and brick pit locations and all are connected by the road network. These are illustrated on the Vision Diagram with the following key;

1. Plumpton Green; the main residential body of the Parish laid out in a north-south linear pattern along Station Road and concentrated towards the railway line. To the north, development is less dense and includes the old brickworks industrial estate, and that part lying to the north of Plumpton Green, and on South Road, St Helena Lane and Beresford Lane, which is primarily an undefined area of scattered housing.
2. The Village Centre; an area along Station Road containing the main facilities but lacking clear definition. Facilities here include: the station, pavilion and recreation ground, allotments, school, shop and post office, village green and village hall.
3. Plumpton Racecourse; located on the southern side of the railway line and including a number of outbuildings, it provides facilities for race meetings during the autumn, winter and spring seasons and premises for weddings, parties, private functions and exhibitions throughout the year.

4. Plumpton; that part south of the railway line has developed in two groups. Firstly along Plumpton Lane with the older part being at the junction with the B2116 and Plumpton Bostall, a public right of way that leads up onto the South Downs Way and secondly, on the western side of the Parish, a network of lanes linking to the B2116 with connecting clusters of agricultural and residential buildings being the farm attached to Plumpton College.
5. Plumpton College; is a further education part-residential establishment that provides a wide range of courses related to land management including Agriculture, Horticulture, Viticulture, Countryside Management, Forestry and Arboriculture. It also offers business services and conferencing facilities.



**Vision Diagram – Plumpton Parish**

The north-south linear layout of the Parish along with the east-west features of the South Downs ridgeline, the B2116 road, the railway line and watercourses give the Parish a very clear and distinctive structure that is fundamental to its character and identity. The settlement is a Scarp Foots Parish which has the following characteristics:

- It forms a transition between the steep chalk scarp to the south and the Low Weald to the north.
- It has developed as a string of nucleated settlements along the foot of, and north from, the Downs.
- It has developed in a generally linear pattern north to south.
- The landscape is a mosaic of farmland comprising irregular fields of arable and pasture, and woodland.
- Streams arising from springs at the foot of the chalk downs flow northwards and west to east in narrow, hidden stream valleys.
- The steep chalk scarp of the Downs forms a dramatic backdrop to the Parish.
- There are impressive panoramic views onto the footslopes from the Downs
- Traditional building materials are varied; flint, brick, sandstone, clunch, rendering and half-timber.

Together, the structure of the Parish and these characteristics create a strong sense of place with a landscape that is rich in ecology and biodiversity. In addition to this, the setting benefits from 'dark skies' and low levels of noise pollution which reinforces the valued rural nature of the Parish.

Although the two identified settlements have their own individual identity, they share this common asset - the character and quality of this landscape setting - which is an important part of their individual identities. It is therefore considered important that the PPNP should seek to protect and retain the quality, character and extent of the landscape setting and ensure the relationship of each settlement to this setting and of each settlement to its neighbour is not diminished through unsympathetic growth or change.

The roads within the Parish are a network of rural lanes that are generally unmarked, unlit and without pavements and their character contributes to the attractive rural identity of the wider landscape setting with hedge lines, verges and embankments. The Parish also has a comprehensive network of north-south bridleways and east-west footpaths.

The north-south route of Station Road/Plumpton Lane which runs through the Parish provides connectivity with Burgess Hill and Haywards Heath/Burgess Hill to the west and Lewes to the east, providing access to a wider range of services and shops.

The SDNP covers the southern part of the Parish and is a recreation and leisure resource connected by footpaths and bridleways. Views of the Downs from the Parish are part of the character and setting of the Parish, and any development within the Parish will need to be considered in terms of the impact of the setting of the Park.

The Parish has a number of facilities that help meet basic day to day needs, most of which are in Plumpton Green and this settlement includes; access to public transport by bus and train, a primary school, a pre-school, a shop and post office, a church and a pub, a modern village hall, a sports pavilion with football and cricket pitches,

tennis courts, skateboard park and children's play area, other open spaces including a village green and allotments. Plumpton has one pub and a further church at the southern end of the Parish and one pub to the north of the Parish.

There are a number of employment uses and opportunities in the Parish including; the Old Brickworks, Organic Farms, Plumpton College and Plumpton Race course. Plumpton College and Plumpton Racecourse both have a significant physical, social and economic presence in the Parish and it will be important that they are engaged in the neighbourhood plan process.

There has been a relatively steady rate of growth and change within the Parish with little pressure for additional housing given the scale of the settlement, the level of supporting facilities and the sensitivity of the setting. However, like many rural communities, the Parish does have limitations in its mix and type of housing, in particular, due to smaller properties having been extended over the years, there are few properties suitable for young cost conscious families and there are few properties suitable for the needs of an ageing population.

The emerging Lewes District Local Plan (Core Strategy) sets a target of a minimum of 50 homes at Plumpton Green during the Plan period. These 50 units must relate (preferably either within or adjacent) to the Parish's existing settlement boundary. Also, any sites which are granted planning consent prior to the adoption of the Core Strategy and/or the PPNP (known as windfall sites) will not count towards the allocated number of dwellings.

Within the rest of the Parish including Plumpton, the emerging Local Plan will only support new affordable housing that meets a local need on exception sites and infill developments.

## **Summary**

The underlying structure of the Scarp Foot Parish is a model for sustainable development, with settlements planned to be integrated with and benefit from the local natural resources; water, land, climate and ecology. This relationship provides for agriculture, materials and employment to sustain the local community whilst preserving its resources.

The challenge for the PPNP will be to safeguard and enhance these resources whilst planning for change and growth through new development such that it does not diminish the character of the Parish, its setting, open spaces and biodiversity. Any new development will need to be evaluated as part of this wider context and not on an insular site by site basis.

## Key Objectives

In addition to providing a general development plan for the parish, this vision translates into a framework of key objectives for the PPNP:

1. Protect the character, qualities and identity of the landscape setting to manage the impacts of any future growth and maintain the spatial and qualitative relationships between the areas.
2. Retain and enhance existing community services and amenities to support a wider range of Parish needs and reinforce the identity and purpose of the village centre.
3. Identify sites for the delivery of the PPNP that are sympathetic to the scale, topography and character of the Parish and that will not have a detrimental impact on the setting.
4. Plan for some housing to meet local needs, in particular for young families and local elderly downsizers.
5. Secure the future of the existing employment uses within the Parish and plan for their growth to serve Parish needs.
6. Work with Plumpton College and Plumpton Race course to integrate their longer term plans with these objectives.
7. Plan for increased public access to, and enjoyment of local green spaces and the SDNP as a recreation, education and leisure amenity whilst recognising that some areas of significant biodiversity should be retained and enhanced.
8. Ensure the protection, preservation, restoration and enhancement of wildlife habitats
9. Ensure new development is designed to offer potential for wildlife habitat maintenance and enhancement
10. Integrate the existing network of rural lanes, bridleways and footpaths, to improve and extend safe pedestrian and cycling routes.
11. Identify local green spaces, safeguard and improve their biodiversity and integrate them with the pedestrian and cycle network
12. Consider the scope for sustainable energy generation
13. Developers who win contracts are required to pay money into a Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) fund. By producing a Neighbourhood Plan, the Parish is entitled to at least 25% of the CIL from future developments in the Parish. The Parish Council commit to consulting the Parish on how this money will be



used at a later date and this outcome will be proposed through the Neighbourhood Plan.

## **Planning for change**

Lewes District Council's Core Strategy has allocated a minimum of 50 dwellings over the plan period 2010 - 2030 for Plumpton Green. Although it is not the intention of this paper to propose the number of dwellings that should be planned for in the PPNP, the paper sets out three spatial options for discussion showing where and how additional dwellings might be accommodated;

### Option 1: expanding the village centre

The village centre is centred to the south around the railway station, school and shop. Development in this area would have the benefit of good accessibility making cycle and pedestrian journeys more likely with possible impacts on traffic generation. However, this option would erode the linear pattern of the village and 'village edge' relationship to the landscape setting.

### Option 2: continuing the linear pattern

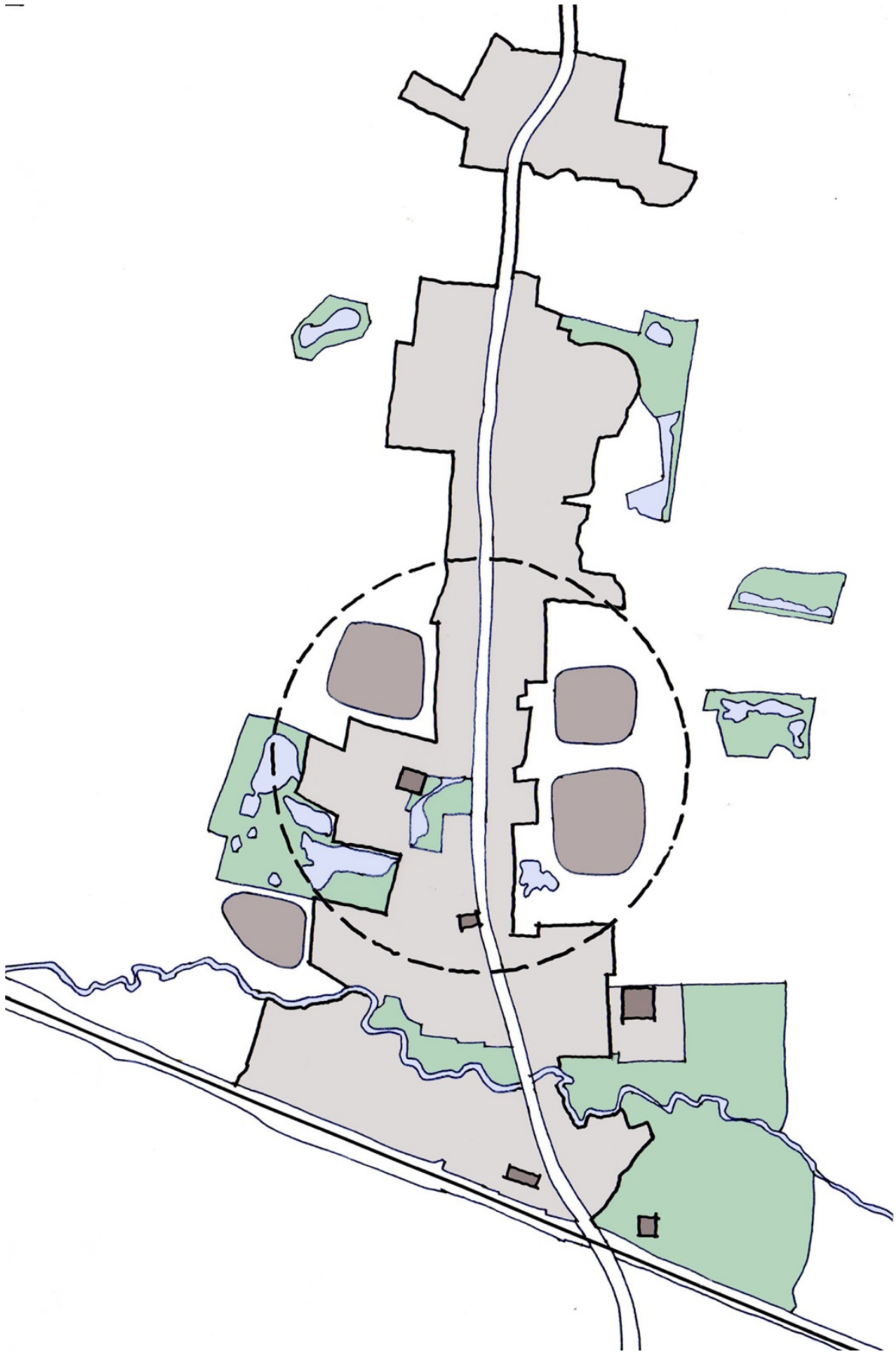
The undeveloped gap along Station Road between Inholms and Lentridge Farms, and the northern residential extent of the Parish could be developed if the land was available which would extend the linear pattern of the village and retain the 'village edge' relationship to the landscape setting. Filling this gap will also provide an opportunity to consider the sense of entrance and arrival into the village. However, this area is more remote from the village centre which may make cycle and pedestrian journeys less likely.

### Option 3: a combination of small scale pockets

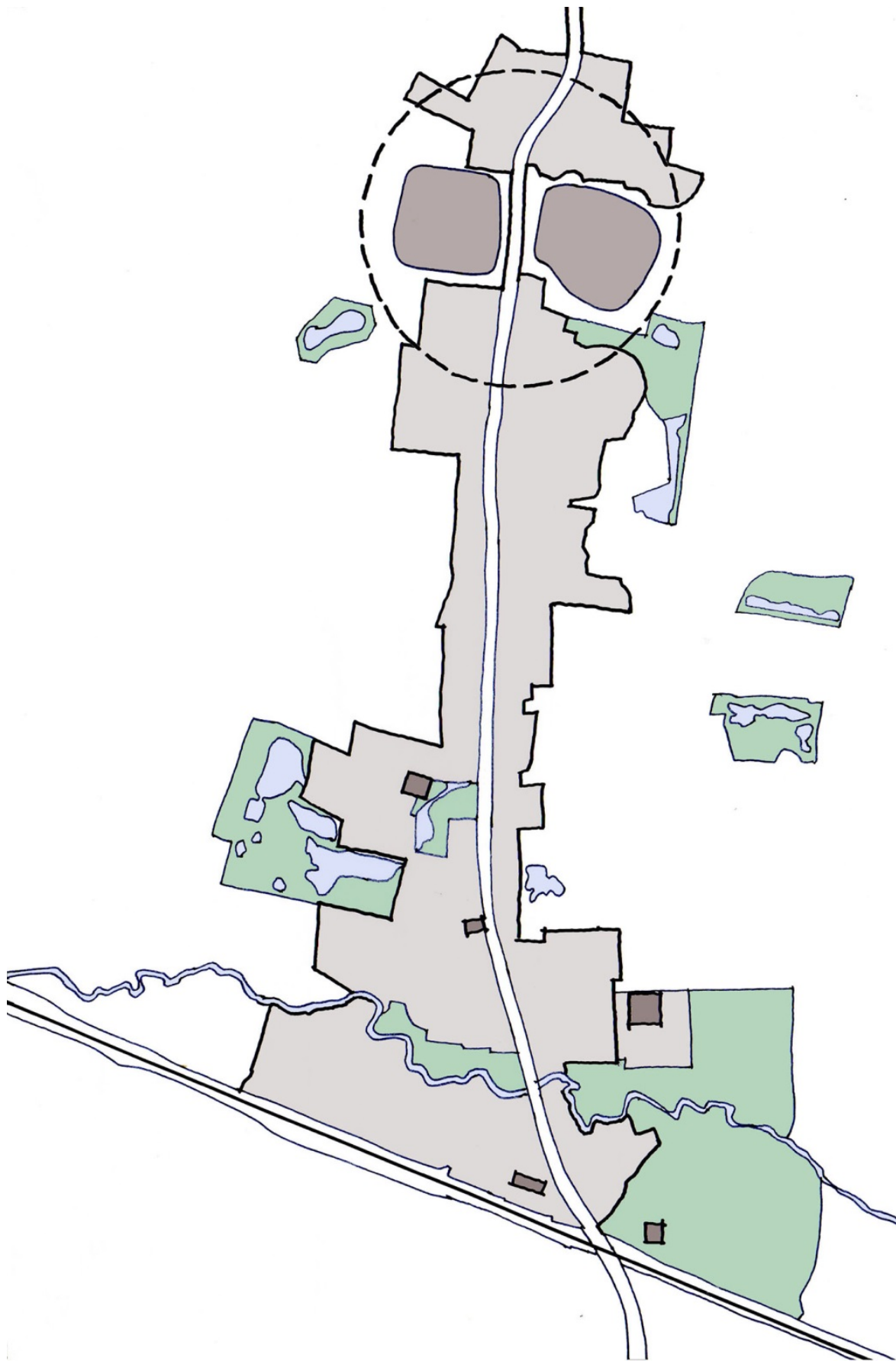
Depending on the number of sites available, there may be a third option of a collection of smaller scale developments in a number of locations. These may involve partial development of sites and could give a more organic sense of change, particularly if planned incrementally across the plan period, in comparison to two or three larger scale developments. However, smaller scale developments may provide a lower level of contribution via the CIL than larger scale developments.

Before committing to any option, land availability will need to be confirmed through a local call for sites. All sites will also need to demonstrate that they can resolve any technical constraints, are viable and deliverable. This work may need to be carried out by landowners if they wish their land to be considered as part of the neighbourhood plan, and should be undertaken before committing to any site. Consideration should also be given to the level of detail any allocation policies should contain in the PPNP to address the layout, design, and type of dwellings.

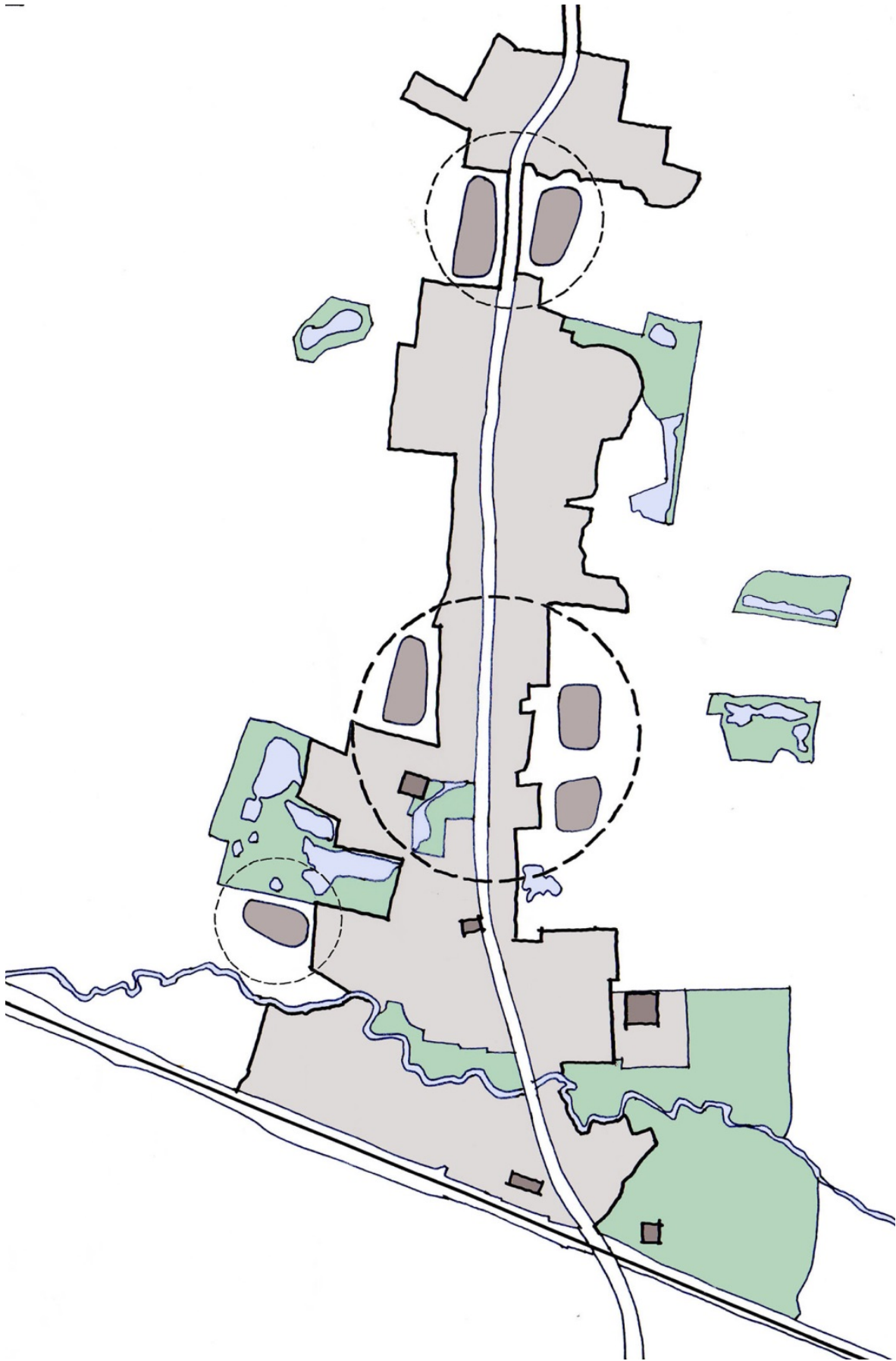
Alongside this, the PPNP has the ambition of providing improvements to community facilities and infrastructure and consideration will need to be given to the scale and programme of residential development to meet these needs.



**Option 1: expanding the village core**



**Option 2: continuing the linear pattern**



**Option 3: a combination of small scale pockets**

## **The Pit Stop**

Any residential development in Plumpton and the SDNP area generally will be limited to rural exception sites which can only come forward if they can be demonstrated to meet a local affordable need and if there are sites available.

There is however the opportunity to consider the redevelopment of the Pit Stop building and site which is currently derelict having a negative impact on the village and the setting of the SDNP. This site is in an important location in relation to the park and potentially part of a gateway to the South Downs Way. The redevelopment of this site could bring the building back into and provide activities that would support the enjoyment of the park for residents and visitors. These might include; a café, bike hire, a small shop. It may be necessary to consider some small scale residential enabling element to bring the building back into use.

## **Outline Policy Scope**

The PPNP should consider policies with the following intent:

- Define the settlement boundary of Plumpton Green to incorporate proposed site allocations of the PPNP
- Make site allocations for housing, community uses, recreation/leisure and employment
- Using existing and new assets, establish a green infrastructure network of paths, cycleways and wildlife corridors within which sites allocated will fit
- Create design assessments and other relevant information, including screening, and integrate into design policies
- Develop spatial guidelines identifying the relationship between existing and new developments
- Define opportunities and conditions for sustainable energy generation

## **Engagement Activities**

The Topic Groups should inform the Draft PPNP by testing the vision and objectives. The output should be 1 to 2 sides of A4 bullet points summarising insights, opinions, data etc. The following topics arose from the workshop and should be investigated by the different Topic Groups:

1. Housing – local need, location, scale/design, type mix, price
2. Village centre – community facilities, sport and recreation
3. Green infrastructure – local green spaces, footpaths and bridleways
4. SDNP – integration with the Park’s developing Plan, opportunities to improve access and connections as part of gateway to the Park
5. Employment – existing facilities, retention and expansion, local opportunities
6. Sustainable energy – land use and development related opportunities

There should also be consultations with the following:

- Lewes DC Planning – keep updating as the PPNP progresses through meetings set in project plan (Action: NPSG/AirS)
- Lewes DC Housing – data on local housing need and supply/affordability (Action: NPSG/AirS)
- SDNP – notify of PPNP direction and programme and request positive input to help achieve key objectives (Action: NPSG/ AirS)
- The following adjoining parishes to identify common interests and manage boundaries/interfaces (Action: NPSG)
  - Wivelsfield Parish (NP)
  - Chailey Parish
  - East Chiltington Parish
  - Ditchling Parish (NP)
- Local employers and businesses to notify of PPNP direction and programme and request positive input to help achieve key objectives (Action: NPSG)
- Landowners of preferred sites, once agreed (Action: NPSG/AirS)
- Local organisations and other stakeholders – exhibition and/or open meeting to comment on Draft Plan (Action: NPSG/AirS) (see below)
- The Statutory Consultees for the SA/SEA scoping report, the Reg. 14 Consultation period of the Pre Submission Neighbourhood Plan and the Reg. 16 the publicity period on the Submission Neighbourhood Plan.
  - Highways Agency
  - Natural England
  - English Heritage
  - East Sussex County Council
  - Lewes DC and the SDNP.

### **Project Plan: Key Milestones**

This is an indicative project plan with the key milestones outlined. A more detailed project plan will be agreed with the Steering Group.

#### Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA)

- A request by Plumpton PC for a formal SEA screening opinion has been sent to Lewes DC and awaits confirmation of status
- Prepare and complete consultation on an SEA Scoping Report by end of December
- Prepare and consult on Draft SEA Report (as below)
- Prepare Final SEA Report for submission (as below)

(Note: Plumpton PC need to agree who will undertake this work).

#### Call for Sites

- Alongside the Call for Sites the Steering Group should contact owners of sites of interest to the PPNP
- Invite developers and landowners to pitch their ideas at an open event and give the community a chance to give feedback. This will help raise the awareness of the Neighbourhood Plan and show the communities views on housing sites.

- The preferred sites will be agreed by end February 2015 by the steering committee using a set of criteria.
- Once a shortlist is selected Plumpton residents will be invited to a further consultation event where they can express opinions of particular sites/developments
- The sites will be finalized and be included in the Draft Plan

#### Draft Plan

- All engagement activities to be completed by end of February 2015
- RCOH to prepare draft plan for Steering Group consideration by beginning of March 2015
- Informal consultations on Draft Plan mid March 2015
- Steering Group meeting in mid March 2015 to agree any changes for Pre Submission Plan

#### Pre Submission Plan

- RCOH prepares draft Pre Submission Plan and Draft SEA Report (subject to agreement) for Steering Group consideration and then Plumpton Parish Council approval for public consultation (Reg. 14) by early/mid April 2015
- Statutory six week public consultation period (Reg. 14) finishes late May 2015
- Analysis of representations and Steering Group approval to modifications in early June 2015

#### Submission Plan

- RCOH prepares final Plan and SEA reports and Basic Conditions Statement for submission plan to Lewes District end of June 2015 (depending on the changes required)
- Plumpton PC/AirS prepares Consultation Statement for submission at the same time

*RCOH December 2014*