

February 2021: Update for Residents from Plumpton Parish Council on Additional housing targets for Lewes District Council (LDC)

 [Call for Sites Map](#)

 [Updated Q&A document](#)

Whilst the parish council is apolitical, we must operate within prevailing law and at times that can create difficulties that appear political but are not.

The government has made no secret of wanting to build more houses, and to ‘level up’ the country by not concentrating investment in the south east. Planning changes made in 2019 were intended to prevent unplanned development but appear to be having the opposite effect. Lewes District Council (LDC) had a local plan that should have provided the long-term certainty to residents that they were safe from unplanned development. That plan already puts 70 new houses in Plumpton, and they have started to be built, with 40% regarded as ‘affordable’ – LDC will acquire 8 of the 20 houses at the Oakfield site.

Now, simply because that plan reaches 5 years old in May, the carefully considered local housing need is replaced with a national calculation aimed at increasing housebuilding – for LDC that means 606 houses a year, not the 275 planned.

LDC regard that as ‘undeliverable’, but developers can now potentially exploit any shortfall to justify unplanned developments. Of course, LDC could deliver it by concreting over all the green fields in the district, but many would regard that as unsustainable.

LDC recently issued a call for land, and within Plumpton alone, sites that could extend to over 1000 houses have been identified. We are not alone, as most if not all the LDC parishes outside the national park boundary are at threat of increased development. One example is the Eton land to the east of Plumpton that has come forward, with potential for a new 3000 house rural town. This site is labelled 11PL on the LDC [‘call for sites’ map](#).

Whilst we would not expect all the sites across LDC to be suitable, it is regarded as important that they are assessed within a representative local need, and prioritised so that parishes can have some certainty. That is what the neighbourhood plan was supposed to achieve, and after much consultation it was passed with 80% of voters in favour.

That is why your parish council regards the Nolands development as speculative, and if brought forward before May we are assured by LDC that it will be refused again. After May, weight given to local plans may reduce, and the outcome could be different.

We accept that the site should be considered, but only as part of a new district plan, and not in isolation. Even within that new plan, we would argue strongly against any development eastward that extended beyond Sun Close as we want to retain the identity of Plumpton separate from any new town that may appear in the future.

Until LDC concludes its current land availability assessment and clarifies its housing need, we are not in a position to meaningfully consult with you on what it could mean for Plumpton. On the Nolands site, there is not yet a planning application to comment on. In the meantime, developers can directly consult with you, and we would urge you to make your voices heard again in support of the principle of plan-led development.

Please keep watching the Parish Council Website for updates to the [Q&A document](#).

Update 30 January 2021

Given PPC is still trying to understand all the implications, and as the limitations of the current pandemic preclude any public meetings, attached is a list of some of the questions asked or anticipated to try and help you understand the situation. PPC, together with your District Councillor Rob Banks, met via Zoom with the developers, Fairfax Acquisitions Ltd., and their planning consultants Parker Dann, on Thursday 21st January.

 [PPC questions answered 29th January 2021](#)