

Question	Answer
<p>Why does the local plan 'expire' in May?</p>	<p>The Lewes Local Plan Part 1, which contains the strategic policies including the housing target, covers the period 2010 to 2030 and was adopted in May 2016.</p> <p>The local plan does not 'expire' after five years as the plan period covers 20 years between 2010 and 2030. However, a legal requirement was introduced in 2018 to review a local plan within five years of adoption to determine if it is still up to date. Since the adoption of LPP1, there have been significant changes to national planning policy, and in following the government's guidance on reviewing a local plan, we could not conclude that the local plan is still up to date. Therefore work has commenced on the preparation of a new local plan to update LPP1.</p> <p>As well as this, national planning policy requires that local authorities need to demonstrate that there is sufficient supply of land to deliver five years' worth of the local plan housing target. However, once a local plan is more than five years old, this five year housing land supply is calculated against the local housing need (as determined by the Government's standard method) rather than the local plan housing target. If five years supply of housing land supply cannot be demonstrated, the local plan policies that are applicable to determining application for housing development are considered out of date and applications are determined in accordance with the NPPF's presumption in favour of sustainable development, which tilts the balance in favour of granting permission.</p> <p>In the recent appeal decision on Mitchelswood in Newick, the Inspector concluded that a five year housing land supply could not be demonstrated, despite the fact that it was calculated against the current local plan target.</p>

<p>Why not just renew the local plan?</p>	<p>If a local plan cannot be considered up to date, it is not possible to just ‘renew’ it. There is a statutory process for the preparation of local plans that needs to be followed. This includes gathering evidence, consulting with the community, and submitting the plan to the Secretary of State to arrange an independent examination by a Planning Inspector. Failure to follow the correct procedure would mean that local plan would fail examination. The Government’s own Planning White Paper published in summer 2020 identifies that this process of local plan preparation takes an average of 7 years under the current system.</p>
<p>Why the delay in updating the local plan?</p>	<p>The Council has moved as fast as it is able to in seeking have an up to date local plan.</p> <p>The requirement for five year reviews of local plans was introduced in 2018 when Lewes District Council were in the middle of the preparation of the Lewes Local Plan Part 2, which itself was delayed due to the need for the Council to fight a legal challenge to the adoption of the Local Plan Part 1.</p> <p>Local Plan Part 2 was adopted in February 2020, at which point work commenced on the process of reviewing Local Plan Part 1. A Local Development Scheme, which sets out a timetable for the preparation of a new local plan to update LPP1, was adopted in July 2020. In September 2020, a ‘Call for Sites’, which is the first step in evidence gathering for potential development sites, commenced. In February 2021, consultation on these sites was undertaken with Town and Parish Councils. A full public consultation on the Issues and Options for the new local plan will take place in summer 2021, and subsequent stages up to the submission of the local plan to the Secretary of State to arrange examination in 2023.</p>
<p>What is the situation with housing numbers / standard</p>	<p>In 2018, the Government introduced a standard method for calculating local housing need, which is the starting point for determining how many homes a local plan should plan for.</p>

<p>method?</p>	<p>This standard method uses 2014-based household projections and adjusts this number based on the affordability on the area (ratio of average house prices to average earnings). A cap is applied to this number in certain circumstances, including when a plan is less than five years old. Once a local plan is more than five years old and not 'up to date', this cap no longer applies.</p> <p>In summer 2020, the Government published a consultation on amending the standard method. One of the changes proposed was the removal of any capping. However, in December 2020, the Government announced that it would not be going ahead with these proposed changes, and instead the standard method would remain the same as the original method, except for the top 20 urban authorities who would each have a 35% increase applied to their number.</p> <p>Therefore, once the Local Plan Part 1 is five years old in May 2021, the cap that currently applies to the local housing need will be removed. When the five year cap is removed, the local housing need figure for the District will increase to 782 homes per year. This will be the number that the local plan is assessed against when it gets to examination by a planning inspector.</p>
<p>Is this unique to Lewes District Council?</p>	<p>This situation is not unique to Lewes District Council. The Government's own Planning White Paper published in summer 2020 identifies that over half of local planning authorities in England do not have an up to date local plan (although research by CPRE suggests that it is more like two-thirds of authorities who do not have an up to date local plan). All other local authorities in East Sussex (with exception of SDNP) do not currently have an up to date local plan, and all have timetables for the preparation of new local plans that follow similar timescale.</p>