



Interim Policy Statement for Housing Delivery March 2020

1 Introduction

- 1.1 This Interim Policy Statement sets out the criteria that the District Council will use to determine planning applications for housing development outside of the settlement planning boundaries, as defined in the adopted Lewes District Local Plan. It has been produced as a positive and pro-active way forward if the Council is unable to demonstrate a five year supply of deliverable housing sites after 11 May 2021 and was approved on 25 March 2021.
- 1.2 The Statement does not apply to land within the South Downs National Park, where the South Downs National Park Authority is the local planning authority.

2 Background

- 2.1 The adopted Lewes District Local Plan comprises two documents:
- Local Plan Part 1: Joint Core Strategy 2010-2030
 - Local Plan Part 2: Site Allocations and Development Management Policies
- 2.2 The Local Plan Part 1 (LLP1) sets out the long term vision and objectives for the whole of Lewes District and provides the strategic policies to guide development and change between 2010 and 2030. It identifies a housing requirement of 6,900 additional dwellings (345 dwellings per annum) across the whole district, including the area within the South Downs National Park, over the plan period. The LLP1 was adopted by the Lewes District Council on 11 May 2016 and by the South Downs National Park Authority on 23 June 2016.
- 2.3 The Local Plan Part 2 (LPP2) supports and seeks to deliver the strategic objectives of the LLP1, but only covers the area of Lewes District outside of the National Park. This is because the South Downs Local Plan has superseded the LLP1 in that part of the district within the National Park. The LPP2 identifies a housing requirement of 5,494 additional dwellings (275 dwellings per annum) for that part of the district outside the National Park. The LPP2 was adopted by Lewes District Council on 24 February 2020.
- 2.4 Since the adoption of the LLP1, the Government has made a number of changes to the planning system and published revisions to National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and Planning Practice Guidance. Most significantly,

the Government introduced a new standard method for calculating local housing need in 2018 and has instructed local planning authorities to identify a five year supply of housing land sufficient to meet this housing need if their adopted strategic policies are more than five years old.

- 2.5 From 11 May 2021 (five years after the adoption of the LPP1), the district's housing land supply will therefore be assessed against a provisional local housing need figure of 782 dwellings per annum, rather than the 345 dwellings per annum currently set out in the adopted Local Plan. The district's housing land supply and delivery position will be reviewed at that time, but it is unlikely that Council will be able to demonstrate a five year supply of deliverable housing sites sufficient to meet the need for 782 dwellings per annum, as required by the Government.
- 2.6 As a consequence, decisions on planning applications involving the provision of housing will be tilted in favour of sustainable development, in accordance with Paragraph 11 of the NPPF. This means that planning permission should be granted unless any adverse impacts of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits, when assessed against the policies in the NPPF taken as a whole.
- 2.7 The Council is currently reviewing and updating the policies of the adopted Local Plan, as required by Regulation 10A of the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012. However, it is not anticipated that the new, updated Local Plan will be adopted before 2023. In the meantime, the Council must continue to determine planning applications on their individual merits, having regard to the policies of the approved development plan and any other material considerations, including national planning policies.

3 Purpose and Status of this Document

- 3.1 The adopted Local Plan uses 'planning boundaries' to positively focus growth on the most sustainable settlements, reduce the need to travel, and protect the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside. However, these settlement planning boundaries were defined on the basis of accommodating a housing requirement of 345 dwellings per annum, as set out in Spatial Policy 1 of the Local Plan. If the Council is unable to demonstrate a five-year supply of deliverable housing sites, it is acknowledged that the planning boundaries may need to be breached in order to help meet local housing needs.
- 3.2 This Interim Policy Statement therefore applies to planning applications for the provision of housing on sites located outside of the planning boundaries (as defined on the Local Plan Policies Map). Its purpose is to facilitate the delivery of new housing by providing a clear and consistent approach to the assessment of development proposals on such sites over the period from 11 May 2021 until the adoption of the new Local Plan. It seeks to ensure that new homes are delivered in the right places, and at an appropriate scale, to help meet the needs of the

plan area in the short term.

- 3.3 The Statement identifies the factors that are considered critical to achieving ‘sustainable development’ in relation to the provision of housing outside of the planning boundaries. It has been prepared within the context set by the vision and objectives of the adopted Local Plan, in particular the need to actively manage patterns of growth to make the fullest possible use of walking, cycling and public transport. It also reflects the Council’s declaration of a climate emergency in 2019, and its aim to deliver new homes and promote access to housing for all groups whilst creating sustainable communities (*LDC Corporate Plan 2020-2024*).
- 3.4 The Statement does not form part of the development plan and does not alter the statutory planning framework for that part of Lewes District outside of the South Downs National Park. Nor does it set out the full range of relevant national or local planning policy and practice that may be applied by decision-makers when considering applications for the provision of housing. It has been prepared to provide clarity and guidance for applicants and should be read alongside the relevant development plan policies for the area. However, the Statement will be used as a material consideration in the determination of planning applications.
- 3.5 As the Statement has been prepared to address concerns about the anticipated shortfall in housing land supply prior to the adoption of the new Local Plan, the Council expects applications to be accompanied by evidence of deliverability at the time they are submitted. Sites should be fully within the applicant’s control and their development should not be dependent upon the delivery of significant off-site infrastructure which is not yet programmed. They should be capable of delivering housing completions within the period up to the end of 2023, i.e. the anticipated adoption date of the new Local Plan. The Council will seek to attach conditions to planning permissions, requiring commencement of development within 2 years from the date of the grant of planning permission.

4 Interim Policy Statement for Housing Delivery

- 4.1 The Council recognises the presumption in favour of sustainable development, as set out in the National Planning Policy Framework, and its application where a local planning authority cannot demonstrate a five year supply of deliverable housing sites. While the presumption applies, the Council will take a positive approach to planning applications for the provision of housing outside of the adopted settlement planning boundaries, subject to compliance with all appropriate development plan policies and the following criteria:

1. The site boundary is contiguous with an adopted settlement planning boundary, as defined on the Local Plan Policies Map.

Relevant Local Plan Policies:

- *LPP1 Spatial Policy 2 (Distribution of Housing)*

- *LPP1 Core Policy 10 (Natural Environment & Landscape Character)*
- *LPP1 Core Policy 11 (Built & Historic Environment and High Quality Design)*
- *LPP2 Policy DM1 (Planning Boundary)*
- *LPP2 Policy DM25 (Design)*

2. The scale of development is appropriate to the size, character and role of the adjacent settlement, having regard to the settlement hierarchy set out in LPP1 Table 2 (attached as an Appendix). In deciding whether the scale is appropriate, the Council will take account of the cumulative impact of extant unimplemented permissions in the relevant settlement.

Relevant Local Plan Policies:

- *LPP1 Spatial Policy 2 (Distribution of Housing)*
- *LPP1 Core Policy 11 (Built & Historic Environment and High Quality Design)*
- *LPP2 Policy DM1 (Planning Boundary)*
- *LPP2 Policy DM25 (Design)*

3. The proposed development will provide safe and convenient pedestrian and cycle access to key community facilities and services within the adjacent settlement.

Relevant Local Plan Policies:

- *LPP1 Core Policy 13 (Sustainable Travel)*
- *LPP1 Core Policy 11 (Built & Historic Environment and High Quality Design)*
- *LPP2 Policy DM25 (Design)*

4. The proposed development, individually or cumulatively, will not result in the actual or perceived coalescence of settlements. Where appropriate, this should be demonstrated through the submission of a visual and landscape character impact assessment.

Relevant Local Plan Policies:

- *LPP1 Core Policy 11 (Built & Historic Environment and High Quality Design)*
- *LPP2 Policy DM25 (Design)*

5. Within the setting of the South Downs National Park, an assessment is undertaken to demonstrate that the proposed development will conserve the special qualities of the National Park. This assessment should be informed by the SDNP View Characterisation & Analysis Study 2015, the SDNP Tranquillity Study 2017, and the SDNP Dark Skies Technical Advice Note 2018.

Relevant Local Plan Policies:

- *LPP1 Core Policy 10 (Natural Environment & Landscape Character)*
- *LPP1 Core Policy 11 (Built & Historic Environment and High Quality Design)*

- *LPP2 Policy DM25 (Design)*

6. An ecological impact assessment is undertaken and appropriate measures identified and implemented accordingly to mitigate any potential adverse impacts of the development on biodiversity and secure biodiversity net gain in accordance with the Council's Biodiversity Net Gain Technical Advice Note (February 2021).

Relevant Local Plan Policies:

- *LPP1 Core Policy 10 (Natural Environment & Landscape Character)*
- *LPP1 Core Policy 11 (Built & Historic Environment and High Quality Design)*
- *LPP2 Policy DM24 (Protection of Biodiversity and Geodiversity)*
- *LPP2 Policy DM27 (Landscape Design)*

7. The proposed development will make the best and most efficient use of the land, whilst responding sympathetically to the existing character and distinctiveness of the adjoining settlement and surrounding rural area. Arbitrarily low density or piecemeal development, including the artificial subdivision of larger land parcels, will not be acceptable.

Relevant Local Plan Policies:

- *LPP1 Core Policy 2 (Housing Type, Density and Mix)*
- *LPP1 Core Policy 11 (Built & Historic Environment and High Quality Design)*
- *LPP2 Policy DM25 (Design)*
- *LPP2 Policy DM27 (Landscape Design)*

8. It can be demonstrated that the proposed development is deliverable and viable, having regard to the provision of necessary on-site infrastructure, including affordable housing, green infrastructure and other requirements. Where the proposed development would create the need to provide additional or improved off-site infrastructure, a programme of delivery should be agreed with the relevant infrastructure providers to ensure that these improvements are provided at the time they are needed.

Relevant Local Plan Policies:

- *LPP1 Core Policy 1 (Affordable Housing)*
- *LPP1 Core Policy 7 (Infrastructure)*
- *LPP1 Core Policy 8 (Green Infrastructure)*
- *LPP1 Core Policy 12 (Flood Risk, Coastal Erosion, Sustainable Drainage and Slope Stability)*
- *LPP1 Core Policy 13 (Sustainable Travel)*
- *LPP1 Core Policy 14 (Renewable and Low Carbon Energy and Sustainable Use of Resources)*
- *LPP2 Policy DM15 (Provision for Outdoor Playing Space)*
- *LPP2 Policy DM16 (Children's Play Space in New Housing Development)*

This Interim Policy Statement does not apply to planning applications for rural exception sites, accommodation for agricultural and other rural workers, the conversion of redundant rural buildings to residential use, or the replacement of existing dwellings in the countryside. Such applications will continue to be determined in accordance with LPP2 Policies DM2, DM3, DM4 and DM5.

Appendix: LPP1 Table 2 – Settlement Hierarchy

Settlement category	Function	Settlements within this category
Primary Regional Centre	A large settlement accessible by road and public transport with a centre containing a large range of retail units, including the sale of higher order goods, a range of leisure opportunities, significant levels of employment and facilities such as a hospital with A & E services. Such settlements meet all of their own needs for higher level services.	Brighton and Eastbourne (both settlements are outside Lewes District, but they exert a strong influence on the district)
Secondary Regional Centre	A settlement accessible by road and public transport with a centre containing a range of retail units, including high street chains. A reasonable range of leisure opportunities are available and the town contains significant levels of employment. Key facilities, such as a hospital, are available. Such settlements meet the majority of their own needs.	Haywards Heath (this settlement is outside Lewes District, but it exerts a strong influence on the northern part of the district)
District Centre	Accessible settlements by road and public transport containing a range of shops, employment opportunities and facilities including a secondary school. Such settlements are not reliant upon other centres to meet day to day needs, but they require support from nearby secondary or primary centres to meet the higher level	Burgess Hill (this settlement is outside Lewes District, but it immediately borders the eastern boundary and is an influence on the north western part of the district), Uckfield (outside Lewes District, but is a strong influence on the north eastern part of the district), Seaford, Lewes, Newhaven, Peacehaven & Telscombe

	needs of their residents.	
Rural Service Centre	Sustainable locations (with either a frequent bus or rail service) with a number of key services and facilities that meet many day to day needs of their residents and those from the wider rural hinterland. Some employment opportunities are available.	Newick, Ringmer
Service Village	Villages that have a basic level of services and facilities, public transport provision (possibly not frequent) and limited employment opportunities. Residents can have some of their day to day needs met in such locations, although higher order settlements need to be accessed to enable this to be fully achieved.	Barcombe Cross, Ditchling*, Firle*, Glynde*, Plumpton Green, Wivelsfield Green
Local Village	Villages that have very few facilities and services and have poor levels of accessibility to higher order settlements. Few, if any, employment opportunities are available.	Broyle Side, Cooksbridge, Chailey North, Chailey South, Falmer*, Kingston*, Piddinghoe*, Rodmell*, South Street (Chailey Parish), South Heighton
Hamlet	Settlements that generally have a population of less than 100, have an historic core (generally with a church), but are generally lacking social infrastructure and ease of accessibility to higher order settlements.	Barcombe, Bishopstone*, Norton*, Chailey Green, East Chiltington*, Hamsey*, Offham*, Plumpton*, Iford*, Streat*, Southease*, Tarring Neville*, Telscombe Village*, Wivelsfield, Westmeston*

* Settlements within the South Downs National Park where this Policy Statement is not applicable.