

PLUMPTON NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN 2017-2030

Plumpton Neighbourhood Plan Examination,
A Report to Lewes District Council
and the South Downs National Park Authority

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Introduction

The Neighbourhood Plan

- 1 This Report provides the findings of the examination into the Plumpton Neighbourhood Plan (referred to in this Report as the Neighbourhood Plan).
- 2 It provides a recommendation in respect of whether the Neighbourhood Plan should go forward to a Referendum. Were this to be the case and were more than 50% of votes to be cast in favour of it, then the Neighbourhood Plan would be formally *made* by Lewes District Council and the South Downs National Park Authority. The Neighbourhood Plan would then form part of the development plan. As such, it would be used to determine planning applications and guide planning decisions in the Plumpton Neighbourhood Area.
- 3 Neighbourhood planning provides communities with the power to establish their own policies to shape future development in and around where they live and work.

“Neighbourhood planning gives communities direct power to develop a shared vision for their neighbourhood and deliver the sustainable development they need.” (Paragraph 183, National Planning Policy Framework)

- 4 The Neighbourhood Plan was prepared by a Steering Group established by Plumpton Parish Council. As set out in paragraph 1.3 on page 5 of the Basic Conditions Statement submitted for examination alongside the Neighbourhood Plan, Plumpton Parish Council is the *qualifying body*, ultimately responsible for the Neighbourhood Plan. The Neighbourhood Plan relates only to the designated Plumpton Neighbourhood Area and there is no other neighbourhood plan in place in the Plumpton Neighbourhood Area.
- 5 All of the above meets with the aims and purposes of neighbourhood planning, as set out in the Localism Act (2011), the National Planning Policy Framework (2012) and Planning Practice Guidance (2014).

Role of the Independent Examiner

- 6 I was appointed by Lewes District Council and the South Downs National Park Authority, with the consent of the Qualifying Body, to conduct the examination of the Plumpton Neighbourhood Plan and to provide this Report.
- 7 As an Independent Neighbourhood Plan Examiner, I am independent of the qualifying body and the local authorities. I do not have any interest in any land that may be affected by the Neighbourhood Plan and I possess appropriate qualifications and experience.
- 8 I am a chartered town planner and have more than five years' direct experience as an Independent Examiner of Neighbourhood Plans. I also have more than twenty five years' land, planning and development experience, gained across the public, private, partnership and community sectors.
- 9 As the Independent Examiner, I must make one of the following recommendations:
 - that the Neighbourhood Plan should proceed to Referendum, on the basis that it meets all legal requirements;
 - that the Neighbourhood Plan, as modified, should proceed to Referendum;
 - that the Neighbourhood Plan does not proceed to Referendum, on the basis that it does not meet the relevant legal requirements.
- 10 If recommending that the Neighbourhood Plan should go forward to Referendum, I must then consider whether the Referendum Area should extend beyond the Plumpton Neighbourhood Area to which the Plan relates.
- 11 Where modifications are recommended in this Report, they are presented as bullet points and are highlighted in **bold print**, with any proposed new wording in *italics*.

Neighbourhood Plan Period

- 12 A neighbourhood plan must specify the period during which it is to have effect. The front cover of the Neighbourhood Plan specifies that the document covers the period:

"2017 to 2030."

- 13 Further to the above, the Foreword to the Neighbourhood Plan, on page 4, states that the Neighbourhood Plan:

"...would lead development in the Parish through to 2030."

- 14 Taking the above into account, the Neighbourhood Plan meets requirements in respect of specifying the period during which it is to have effect.

Public Hearing

- 15 According to the legislation, *when the Examiner considers it necessary* to ensure adequate examination of an issue, or to ensure that a person has a fair chance to put a case, then a public hearing must be held.
- 16 However, the legislation establishes that it is a general rule that neighbourhood plan examinations should be held without a public hearing – by written representations only.
- 17 Further to consideration of the information submitted, I confirmed to Lewes District Council, acting on behalf of both Lewes District Council and the South Downs National Park Authority, that I was satisfied that the Plumpton Neighbourhood Plan could be examined without the need for a Public Hearing.
- 18 In making the above decision I was mindful that the Neighbourhood Plan has emerged through robust consultation (see *Public Consultation*, later in this Report) and that people have been provided with significant and appropriate opportunities to have their say.

2. Basic Conditions and Development Plan Status

Basic Conditions

- 19 It is the role of the Independent Examiner to consider whether a neighbourhood plan meets the “basic conditions.” These were *set out in law*¹ following the Localism Act 2011. A neighbourhood plan meets the basic conditions if:
- having regard to national policies and advice contained in guidance issued by the Secretary of State it is appropriate to make the neighbourhood plan;
 - the making of the neighbourhood plan contributes to the achievement of sustainable development;
 - the making of the neighbourhood plan is in general conformity with the strategic policies contained in the development plan for the area of the authority (or any part of that area);
 - the making of the neighbourhood plan does not breach, and is otherwise compatible with, European Union (EU) obligations; and
 - the making of the neighbourhood plan is not likely to have a significant effect on a European site or a European offshore marine site, either alone or in combination with other plans or projects.²
 - An independent examiner must also consider whether a neighbourhood plan is compatible with the Convention rights.³
- 20 In examining the Plan, I am also required, under Paragraph 8(1) of Schedule 4B to the Town and Country Planning Act 1990, to check whether:
- the policies relate to the development and use of land for a designated Neighbourhood Area in line with the requirements of Section 38A of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act (PCPA) 2004;

¹ Paragraph 8(2) of Schedule 4B of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990.

² Prescribed for the purposes of paragraph 8(2) (g) of Schedule 4B to the 1990 Act by Regulation 32 The Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012 and defined in the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2010 and the Offshore Marine Conservation (Natural Habitats, &c.) Regulations 2007.

³ The Convention rights has the same meaning as in the Human Rights Act 1998.

- the Neighbourhood Plan meets the requirements of Section 38B of the 2004 PCPA (the Plan must specify the period to which it has effect, must not include provision about development that is excluded development, and must not relate to more than one Neighbourhood Area);
- the Neighbourhood Plan has been prepared for an area that has been designated under Section 61G of the Localism Act and has been developed and submitted for examination by a qualifying body.

21 Subject to the content of this Report, I am satisfied that these requirements have been met.

22 In line with legislative requirements, a Basic Conditions Statement was submitted alongside the Neighbourhood Plan. This sets out how, in the qualifying body's opinion, the Neighbourhood Plan meets the basic conditions.

European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR) Obligations

- 23 I am satisfied that the Neighbourhood Plan has regard to fundamental rights and freedoms guaranteed under the ECHR and complies with the Human Rights Act 1998 and there is no substantive evidence to the contrary.
- 24 In the above regard, I note that Information has been submitted to demonstrate that people were provided with a range of opportunities to engage with plan-making in different places and at different times. Representations have been made to the Plan, some of which have resulted in changes and the Consultation Statement submitted alongside the Neighbourhood Plan provides a summary of responses and shows the outcome of comments.

European Union (EU) Obligations

- 25 There is no legal requirement for a neighbourhood plan to have a sustainability appraisal⁴. However, in some limited circumstances, where a neighbourhood plan is likely to have significant environmental effects, it may require a Strategic Environmental Assessment.
- 26 In this regard, national advice states:
- “Draft neighbourhood plan proposals should be assessed to determine whether the plan is likely to have significant environmental effects.”*
(Planning Practice Guidance⁵)
- 27 National advice then goes on to state⁶ that the draft plan:
- “...must be assessed (screened) at an early stage of the plan’s preparation...”*
- 28 This process is often referred to as a screening opinion, report determination or statement. If the screening opinion identifies likely significant effects, then an environmental report must be prepared.

⁴ Paragraph 026, Ref: 11-027-20150209, Planning Practice Guidance.

⁵ Paragraph 027, *ibid*.

⁶ Planning Practice Guidance Reference ID: 11-028-20150209.

29 Further to screening, Lewes District Council determined that the Neighbourhood Plan falls within the scope of the Strategic Environmental Assessment regulations and that consequently, a Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) was required. Subsequently, a Sustainability Assessment (SA), incorporating SEA, was undertaken. This was submitted alongside the Neighbourhood Plan.

30 The SA/SEA considered the social, economic and environmental impacts of the policy options and policies contained in the draft Neighbourhood Plan and concluded that:

“Overall, the policies in the draft Plumpton Neighbourhood Plan appraised well against the sustainability framework, indicating that implementation of the plan policies will not have a negative impact on the sustainability objectives of the parish and will contribute to the objectives of sustainable development within the parish.”

31 The statutory bodies, the Environment Agency, Natural England and Historic England, have all been consulted and none have raised any significant concerns with the above conclusion.

32 A Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA) is required if the implementation of the Neighbourhood Plan may lead to likely significant effects on European sites.

33 Lewes District Council issued a screening report which recognised that there are two protected sites, Castle Hill Special Area of Conservation (SAC) and Lewes Down SAC, within close proximity to the Neighbourhood Area.

34 The screening report concluded that a HRA was not required as the Neighbourhood Plan would not have any likely significant effects upon any European designations.

35 Further to all of the above, national guidance establishes that the ultimate responsibility for determining whether a draft neighbourhood plan meets EU obligations lies with the local planning authority:

“It is the responsibility of the local planning authority to ensure that all the regulations appropriate to the nature and scope of a neighbourhood plan proposal submitted to it have been met in order for the proposal to progress. The local planning authority must decide whether the draft neighbourhood plan is compatible with EU regulations” (Planning Practice Guidance⁷).

⁷ Planning Practice Guidance Reference ID: 11-031-20150209.

- 36 The South Downs National Park Authority has not raised any concerns in respect of European obligations and in its Submission stage representation, Lewes District Council stated that the Neighbourhood Plan:

"...is compliant with the relevant legal and statutory requirements at the national and European level...we believe that the making of the Neighbourhood Plan would not breach E.U. regulations."

- 37 Taking this and all of the above into account, I am satisfied that the Neighbourhood Plan meets the basic conditions in respect of European obligations.

3. Background Documents and the Plumpton Neighbourhood Area

Background Documents

38 In undertaking this examination, I have considered various information in addition to the Plumpton Neighbourhood Plan. This has included (but is not limited to) the following main documents and information:

- National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework) (2012)
- Planning Practice Guidance (2014)
- Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended)
- The Localism Act (2011)
- The Neighbourhood Plan Regulations (2012) (as amended)
- Lewes District Joint Core Strategy (Local Plan Part 1, 2016)
- Saved Policies of Lewes District Local Plan (2003)
- Basic Conditions Statement
- Consultation Statement
- Sustainability Appraisal (SA) Report incorporating Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA)
- Site Assessment Report
- Local Green Space and Green Infrastructure Report

Also:

- Representations received

39 In addition, I spent an unaccompanied day visiting the Plumpton Neighbourhood Area.

Plumpton Neighbourhood Area

- 40 The boundary of the Plumpton Neighbourhood Area corresponds with that of the Parish of Plumpton.
- 41 A plan showing the Neighbourhood Area is provided on page 7 of the Neighbourhood Plan.
- 42 Lewes District Council and the South Downs National Park Authority formally designated Plumpton Neighbourhood Area on 28th April 2014 following an application from Plumpton Parish Council. This satisfies a requirement in line with the purposes of preparing a Neighbourhood Development Plan under section 61G (1) of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended).

4. Public Consultation

Introduction

- 43 As land use plans, the policies of neighbourhood plans form part of the basis for planning and development control decisions. Legislation requires the production of neighbourhood plans to be supported by public consultation.
- 44 Successful public consultation enables a neighbourhood plan to reflect the needs, views and priorities of the local community. It can create a sense of public ownership, help achieve consensus and provide the foundations for a 'Yes' vote at Referendum.

Plumpton Neighbourhood Plan Consultation

- 45 A Consultation Statement was submitted alongside the Neighbourhood Plan. The information within it sets out who was consulted and how, together with the outcome of the consultation, as required by the neighbourhood planning *regulations*⁸. Several pages of the Neighbourhood Plan are also devoted to the consultation process.
- 46 Taking the information provided into account, there is evidence to demonstrate that the Neighbourhood Plan comprises a "*shared vision*" for the Plumpton Neighbourhood Area, having regard to Paragraph 183 of the National Planning Policy Framework.
- 47 Plumpton Parish Council established a Steering Group and commenced consultation in 2014. An initial consultation drop-in event was held in April 2014 and was followed by a second drop-in event in September of that year. The first drop-in event resulted in the submission of 168 comments by 108 residents and the second event was attended by 109 residents, who provided responses to various topics and questions.

⁸Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012.

- 48 A landowners/agents meeting was held in January 2015, at which there were formal presentations to more than 100 local residents in respect of six potential development sites. Proposals for a further three potential development sites were then informally presented to the Steering Group after the main meeting closed.
- 49 A second landowners/agents meeting was held in March 2015. This was attended by 110 local residents and proposals for a further six potential development sites were presented. Attendees were invited to ask questions and provide comments.
- 50 A questionnaire was distributed to all households in January 2015. Of the 632 questionnaires sent out, 358 were returned, representing a considerable 57% response rate. The questionnaire informed plan-makers about the location and type of new housing that was preferred; and the aspects of village life that residents wished to see conserved and enhanced. The questionnaire included a young persons' section and 65 completed young persons' sections were returned.
- 51 A further village consultation event was held in September 2015, at which the Steering Group presented its preferred sites for inclusion in the emerging plan. This was attended by 154 residents.
- 52 The Neighbourhood Plan underwent Regulation 14 consultation during May and June 2016. This was supported by public consultation events, at which Steering Group members were available to answer questions and receive feedback.
- 53 In response to consultations received, the Steering Group reviewed the site allocations. This necessitated the production of a significantly revised draft plan and a further Regulation 14 consultation was subsequently undertaken during June and July 2017.
- 54 As with the previous Regulation 14 consultation, this further consultation was supported by two drop-in events. Responses were collated, considered and informed the production of the Neighbourhood Plan submitted for examination.

- 55 Information has been provided to demonstrate that public consultation was well-publicised. As well as making use of posters and the distribution of questionnaires, consultation events were publicised via the Parish Magazine and through the Parish Council website. Also, minutes from meetings and associated documents were published on the Parish Council website and regular Neighbourhood Plan articles were published in the Parish Magazine.
- 56 The Consultation Report provides evidence to show that public consultation formed an essential part of the plan-making process. Matters raised were considered and the reporting process was transparent. I am satisfied that the consultation process was appropriate, effective and robust.

5. The Neighbourhood Plan – Introductory Section

- 57 The basic conditions are set out earlier in this Report. To avoid any confusion or misinterpretation, I recommend:
- **Page 12, Para 3.2, change to “...plans. The PPNP *must have regard to the provisions of the NPPF. The...*”**
- 58 Lewes District Council has commented that a legal challenge made by Wealden District Council to the Lewes Joint Core Strategy (JCS), and a subsequent High Court ruling, has resulted in the quashing of JCS policies SP1 and SP2 in relation to the South Downs National Park. In the interests of accuracy, I recommend:
- **Page 12, Para 3.5, add a footnote to the end of the Para, “*Further to a High Court ruling, it is noted that JCS policies SP1 and SP2, which relate to the South Downs National Park, have been quashed.*”**
- 59 The South Downs National Park Authority has raised the point that a significant part of the Neighbourhood Area lies within the South Downs National Park. Given this, I recommend:
- **Page 15, Para 3.11, add new second sentence, “*A significant part of the Neighbourhood Area lies within the South Downs National Park. The Environment Act 1995 establishes the statutory purposes of national parks as being to conserve and enhance their natural beauty, wildlife and cultural heritage; and to promote opportunities for the understanding and enjoyment of their special qualities. The Neighbourhood Plan recognises and supports these statutory purposes.*”**
- 60 The South Downs National Park Authority goes on to suggest that the protection of the National Park's special qualities should be named as an Objective. However, ultimately, the choice of Neighbourhood Plan Objectives lies with plan-makers. Whilst the South Downs National Park Authority's suggestion is a helpful one, I note that not including reference to the protection of the National Park's special qualities does not, in itself, result in the Neighbourhood Plan failing to meet the basic conditions, just as it does not mean that the special qualities of the National Park will not be protected in the Neighbourhood Area.

61 Map D on page 26 is incomplete. I recommend:

Replace the incomplete Map D with the correct, complete version, showing all of the assessed sites

62 The Neighbourhood Plan has no control over how the document might be monitored by local planning authorities. I recommend:

- **Page 28, Para 5.3, delete “...all statutory planning authorities and...”**

6. The Neighbourhood Plan – Neighbourhood Plan Policies

Policy 1: Spatial plan for the parish

- 63 Generally, Policy 1 establishes a positive framework to support development within the settlement of Plumpton Green and to prevent development in the countryside from resulting in significant harm. As such, the Policy is in general conformity with Lewes Local Plan saved policy CT1 (*“Planning Boundary and Key Countryside Policy”*).
- 64 Further to the above, the Policy seeks to protect local character and has regard to Paragraph 58 of the National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework), which amongst other things, seeks to protect local character.
- 65 The second paragraph of Policy 1 relies on other policies, in other documents, not part of the Neighbourhood Plan and I recommend:
- **Policy 1, delete *“Proposals for development outside...plan and the NPPF.”***

Policy 2: New build environment and design

66 Good design is recognised by the Framework as comprising:

“a key aspect of sustainable development...indivisible from good planning.”
(Paragraph 56)

67 National policy also requires good design to contribute positively to making places better for people (Chapter 7, The Framework) and Paragraph 58 of the Framework goes on to require development to:

“...respond to local character and history, and reflect the identity of local surroundings and materials, while not preventing or discouraging appropriate innovation...”

68 In addition to the above, Lewes Local Plan saved policy ST3 (*“Design, Form and Setting of Development”*) and JCS Core Policy 11 (*“Built and Historic Environment”*) promote good quality design.

69 Policy 2 supports high quality design that respects local character. As such, the Policy is in general conformity with the strategic policies of the development plan and has regard to national policy.

70 However, as worded, the Policy makes the statement that all development *“will complement”* architectural and historic character. In the absence of substantive information, it is not clear why all development needs to do this, how it will do so, who will monitor it and on what basis. Further, there is no evidence to demonstrate that all forms of development can achieve this requirement. Consequently, this part of the Policy fails to have regard to Paragraph 173 of the Framework, which states that:

“Plans should be deliverable.”

71 The Policy refers to *“the Design Statement”* without making it clear that this means the Plumpton Design Statement. This is a matter addressed in the recommendations below.

- 72 Paragraph 5.15 of the supporting text reads as though it comprises a Policy, which it does not. Also, paragraph 5.17 simply contains a list of policies that plan-makers consider Policy 2 to be “*in line*” with. This list includes saved policies and is likely to become out of date as emerging policies become adopted policies. Also, whilst the list might have been helpful as the plan-making process evolved, it is the function of the examination process to consider whether or not policies are in general conformity with the adopted strategic policies of the development plan.
- 73 A representation has been made in respect of Policy 2’s aim to restrict development height to two storeys. I am mindful that this part of Policy 2 reflects the community’s desire to ensure that development is distinctive to the Neighbourhood Area and it is a requirement that has emerged from a detailed evidence base and significant public consultation. Consequently, is reflective of the local community expressing its direct power to plan for the sustainable development it needs, in accordance with Paragraph 183 of the Framework and Policy 2 meets the basic conditions in this regard.
- 74 Taking all of the above into account, I recommend:
- **Policy 2, change first Para to “*New development should reflect the scale, density, massing, landscape design and material of surrounding buildings, having regard to the Plumpton Design Statement. New development should:*”**
 - **Delete Para 5.15**
 - **Delete Para 5.17**

Policy 3: Provision of adequate parking

- 75 Policy 3 is entirely reliant upon East Sussex County Council (ESCC) guidance. It seeks to require development to be in accordance with ESCC guidance. The Neighbourhood Plan has no control or responsibility in this regard and I also note that the Policy is far less detailed than the robust, evidence based ESCC guidance in respect of car parking and as a consequence, it does not contribute to the achievement of sustainable development.
- 76 I note that the recommendation below will not change the fact that the ESCC guidance must be taken into account when determining planning proposals within the Neighbourhood Area.
- 77 I recommend:
- **Delete Policy 3 and supporting text**

Policy 4: Landscape and biodiversity

78 JCS Core Policy 10 ("*Natural Environment and Landscape Character*") provides for the conservation and enhancement of landscape assets and biodiversity, amongst other things.

79 In the above regard, the JCS reflects the strong national policy support for the protection of biodiversity and for the provision of net gains in biodiversity, where possible, as set out in Chapter 11 of the Framework, "*Conserving and enhancing the natural environment.*" It also aligns with Paragraph 17 of the Framework, which requires planning to recognise:

*"...the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside..." and to
"...contribute to conserving and enhancing the natural environment..."*

80 Generally, Policy 4 seeks to protect landscape quality and enhance biodiversity. In this way, the Policy is in general conformity with the JCS and has regard to national policy.

81 In setting out a list of principles that development should have regard to, Policy 4 provides detail whilst allowing for flexibility. However, the second of these principles, which simply requires "*characteristic landscape features to be preserved,*" results in an unduly vague approach as the Policy does not define what these are and no detailed explanation is provided in the supporting text. This part of the Policy fails to have regard to Planning Practice Guidance⁹, which states that:

"A policy in a neighbourhood plan should be clear and unambiguous. It should be drafted with sufficient clarity that a decision maker can apply it consistently and with confidence when determining planning applications. It should be concise, precise and supported by appropriate evidence. It should be distinct to reflect and respond to the unique characteristics and planning context of the specific neighbourhood area for which it has been prepared.

82 Similarly, the third principle requires new development to "*have regard to...considering*" providing for wildlife. This is a requirement so vague that it fails to contribute to the achievement of sustainable development and it is a matter addressed in the recommendations below.

⁹ Paragraph: 042 Reference ID: 41-042-20140306.

83 The fourth principle states that all developments must retain green corridors, ponds and other wildlife habitats. However, no information is provided in the Policy, or supporting text, to show where such features are located within the Neighbourhood Area; or even to define what might, or might not, fall within the term "*green corridor, pond and other wildlife habitats*" – which could apply to any number of things. Again, the Policy fails to have regard to national advice in respect of the need for policies to be precise.

84 No evidence is provided in Policy 4, the Neighbourhood Plan or the evidence base, to demonstrate that it would be viable and deliverable, or even possible, for all new development to "*provide appropriate and characteristic landscape features that mitigate landscape and visual impacts.*" This part of the Policy does not have regard to Paragraph 173 of the Framework, which requires:

"...careful attention to viability and costs in plan-making and decision-taking. Plans should be deliverable." (Paragraph 173)"

85 Paragraph 5.21 and part of Paragraph 5.22 of the supporting text, are worded as though they comprise Policies, which they do not.

86 Whilst the Environment Agency has suggested that the Policy should refer to protected species, which may be present in the Neighbourhood Area, I note that such species are already protected by statute. Whilst the suggestion is helpful, the absence of such a reference does not, in itself, mean that the Neighbourhood Plan fails to meet the basic conditions.

87 Taking the above into account, I recommend:

- **Policy 4, delete "2, Characteristic...preserved."**
- **Change part 3, to "*Provision for wildlife, particularly threatened species.*"**
- **Change first sentence of part 4 to "*The retention and where possible, enhancement of existing green corridors, ponds and other wildlife features will be supported.*"**
- **Delete part 5**

- Page 35, Para 5.21, change to ***“The Parish Council will not support development that would have a significant...and heritage. The Parish Council wishes to see the distinctive views...Green be protected and preserved. The Parish Council would also like to see developments ensure the conservation and...management plan.”***
- Page 36, Para 5.22, second sentence, change to ***“The Parish Council would like to see all development provide appropriate...biodiversity.”***
- Delete Para 5.23

Policy 5: Sustainable drainage and wastewater management

88 National policy, as set out in Chapter 10 of the Framework, *“Meeting the challenge of climate change, flooding and coastal change,”* requires planning to take account of the impacts of climate changes.

89 Policy 5 seeks to address issues related to drainage and wastewater management and has regard to national policy. It promotes sustainable urban drainage and in so doing, it has regard to Paragraph 100 of the Framework, which identifies the:

“...opportunities offered by new development to reduce the causes and impacts of flooding...”

90 Policy 5 opens with a reference to *“where relevant.”* However, the term *“relevant”* is undefined and fails to have regard to Paragraph 154 of the Framework, which states that:

“Only policies that provide a clear indication of how a decision maker should react to a development proposal should be included in the plan.”

91 Also, the penultimate paragraph of Policy 5 requires development to manage its impact on the sewerage network. This is effectively repeated by the following paragraph, but in a confusing manner, such that it appears that the Policy is, perhaps inadvertently, supporting the provision of on-site sewerage storage, an approach not supported by the Environment Agency.

92 Given the provisions in the penultimate paragraph, there is no need for the final paragraph of the Policy. In any case, this final paragraph raises matters of detail considered in the supporting text.

93 As with previous Policies, part of the supporting text is composed as though it comprises a Policy, which it does not.

94 Taking all of the above into account, I recommend:

- **Change first sentence of Policy 5 to *“The development of Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS) as part of new developments will be supported. These may include features such as:”***
- **Delete last Para (“New...users.”)**
- **Page 38, Para 5.28, change to *“The Policy requires developers to demonstrate...”***
- **Para 5.29, change to *“The Parish Council would like to see sustainable drainage systems be designed to...wildlife and that aim to protect...quality. Such initiatives can provide an increase...”***
- **Para 5.30, last sentence, change to *“The Parish Council will expect development to reflect...”***

Policy 6: New housing

- 95 Policy 6 seeks to establish criteria for the development of new housing. As set out, the Policy's repetitive use of the word "*will*" effectively predicts that something will happen but does not provide any substantive evidence to demonstrate that this will be the case. When combined with some of the onerous criteria contained in Policy 6, this results in a Policy that fails to have regard to Paragraph 173 of the Framework, in respect of viability and deliverability.
- 96 Furthermore, use of the word "*ideally*" in the first sentence results in considerable uncertainty as to whether or not the requirements of Policy 6 actually apply to windfall sites. The Policy is imprecise in this regard.
- 97 In respect of the first criterion, no up to date, substantive evidence is provided to demonstrate the local need for housing for young families and people wishing to downsize. From the information submitted with the Neighbourhood Plan, it appears that this simply reflects a general "*would be nice to have*" and is not a Policy criterion that is supported by evidenced need.
- 98 The second criterion is vague – no indication is provided of what "*a predominance*" actually equates to and consequently, the Policy does not provide a decision maker with a clear indication of how to react to a development proposal. In the absence of information or evidence, it is also unclear why, for example, the Policy prevents a five bedroom house from being built in the Neighbourhood Area.
- 99 No definition is provided of a "*small to medium cluster*." This results in an imprecise Policy. However, I am mindful that the allocations in the Neighbourhood Plan provide for developments of up to 20 dwellings and I take this into account in making the recommendations below.
- 100 National policy does not require the provision of affordable housing on sites of less than eleven dwellings. Criterion five is confusing, in that it indicates that affordable housing "*will be included*" on all sites. Thus, whilst it goes on to refer to "*the development plan*," the Policy fails to provide certainty in respect of whether or not affordable housing is required.

- 101 Criterion 6 comprises unnecessary repetition of an earlier Policy. Criterion 8 requires all housing developments to provide for the *"accommodation of wider species."* In the absence of detailed information, this appears as an unduly onerous requirement that is both ambiguous and fails to have regard to Paragraph 173 of the Framework, referred to above.
- 102 Further to the above, it is not clear why Criterion 8 would apply to, say a windfall site of one dwelling. In this respect, I am mindful that Paragraph 193 of the Framework requires that local planning authorities:
- "...only request supporting information that is relevant, necessary and material to the application in question."*
- 103 Criterion 8 does not have regard to national policy.
- 104 Criterion 9 is imprecise, as it fails to distinguish between the circumstances when a desk-based assessment will be required, or when more detailed information will be required. As a consequence, this part of the Policy fails to provide clarity.
- 105 Criterion 10 states that *"opportunities will be identified"* for new rights of way. However, there is no evidence to demonstrate that this will be viable, deliverable or even relevant in all circumstances. Also, it is not clear why the simple identification of opportunities is a relevant land use planning matter.
- 106 The final criterion is unnecessary as the development plan must, in any case, be read as a whole.
- 107 The Policy obscures appears to obscure some supporting text and as a consequence of this, the supporting text begins mid-sentence. This is addressed in the recommendations below. It is also unclear, in the absence of any detailed supporting information, why Para 5.36 states *"but these would be small developments"* when Policy 6 refers to all windfall development, albeit in a confusing manner.
- 108 Paragraph 5.37 of the supporting text provides little in the way of up to date, relevant housing needs information but simply indicates that some responses to consultation support the provision of a range of housing. Paragraph 5.38 goes on to refer to a selective and fairly random set of policies in support of Policy 6. It is an unnecessary inclusion that might have been helpful during the plan-making process, but which adds little of value to the Neighbourhood Plan at this stage.

- 109 Representations have been submitted in support of sites not allocated in the Neighbourhood Plan.
- 110 Whilst there is no legal requirement for the Neighbourhood Plan to allocate any land for development, plan-makers have allocated land for development that is capable of providing for in excess of the Neighbourhood Area's needs over the plan period.
- 111 Given this, there is no need for the Neighbourhood Plan to allocate additional sites for development.
- 112 Also, further to the above, the allocations in the Neighbourhood Plan have emerged through a site assessment process. I note earlier that the Neighbourhood Plan has, itself, emerged through robust public consultation and I am mindful that, Lewes District Council has itself stated:
- "The Plan is supported by a robust and consistent Site Assessment Report. It assesses potential residential sites against a set of clearly identified criteria as requested by National Planning Practice Guidance and reflects an objective, as well as subjective, analysis of potential residential sites which factors in issues that are of importance to parish residents. The Site Assessment Report identifies the key site-specific issues and it is clear that a balanced and robust assessment process has taken place."*
- 113 I concur with Lewes District Council's findings.
- 114 Taking this and all of the above into account, I recommend:

- **Change first sentence of Policy 6 to *"Subject to meeting the criteria set out below, where appropriate, residential development will be supported on the sites allocated in Neighbourhood Plan Policies 6.1 to 6.4 inclusive and on windfall sites within Plumpton Green:***
- **Delete criteria 1 and 2 and replace with *"Developments of more than two dwellings should provide a range of house types. The provision of one-to-three bedroom dwellings and/or dwellings that meet the needs of young families and those wishing to downsize will be especially welcome."***
- **Change criterion 4 to *"Developments should form small to medium sized clusters of no more than twenty dwellings and be located around the village centre."***

- Change criterion 5 to *“Developments of eleven or more dwellings must provide affordable housing in line with the requirements of the development plan”*
- Delete criterion 6
- Change criterion 8 to *“Proposals for the development of the allocated sites should be accompanied...All protected species must be protected and ancient hedges on a site must be protected.”*
- Delete last part of criterion 9, end sentence *“...desk-based assessment.”*
- Change criterion 10 to *“The provision of new footpaths and bridleways that connect with existing rights of way and/or support the green infrastructure network, will be supported.”*
- Delete criterion 11
- Page 41, delete all supporting text and replace with *“5.35 Whilst there is no requirement for a neighbourhood plan to allocate land for development, the Plumpton Parish Neighbourhood Plan allocates land for around 68 dwellings.*

5.36 Lewes District Council has indicated a requirement for the Neighbourhood Area to provide around 50 dwellings over the plan period. In addition, land for a further 200 dwellings needs to be found elsewhere across the District. In allocating land for around 68 dwellings, the PPNP is providing for significantly in excess of the anticipated need, as well as contributing towards the wider needs of the District. This comprises positive planning. It will provide for the sustainable development of the Neighbourhood Area over the plan period.”

Policy 6.1: Riddens Lane, Plumpton Green

- 115 There is confusion in respect of the plans. There are two version of “Map D” in the Neighbourhood Plan, the first of which is incomplete. For clarity, I recommend below that each land allocation Policy is accompanied by a plan showing the precise boundary of the land allocated.
- 116 Further to the above, there is also confusion in respect of the size of land allocations, leading to representations at Submission stage. As part of the process of creating individual plans for each allocation, the precise area of the land allocated should be calculated. This will become the definitive size of the site and should be quoted in the relevant Policy itself.
- 117 Each land allocation Policy uses the phrase “up to.” This places a restriction on the number of dwellings that might come forward on a site, but it is not based on a detailed masterplan. Consequently, there is little way of knowing whether or not the approach makes the most effective use of land to achieve sustainable development. Consequently, and in the absence of substantive evidence to the contrary, and also subject to the comment below, I find that the phrase “up to” runs the risk of preventing the Neighbourhood Plan from contributing to the achievement of sustainable development.
- 118 Further to the above, I am also mindful that, in any case, a previous recommendation, in respect of Policy 6, limits individual developments to no more than 20 dwellings. In combination with other Policy criteria, including the need for landscape buffers, I note that this approach contributes to the safeguarding of local character and has regard to the community’s intention to limit the development of two of the larger land allocations to “up to 20 dwellings.”
- 119 There is no need for the Policy to refer to the development plan, the policies of which must be considered as a whole.
- 120 The Environment Agency has raised a concern in respect of Flood Risk and has suggested a clearer approach. This is taken into account in the recommendations below.
- 121 Part of the supporting text reads as though it comprises a land use planning Policy, which it does not.

122 I recommend:

- Provide a new Map below Policy 6.1 showing the precise boundaries of the site and refer to the title of the Map in the first line of the Policy (replacing "X")
- Calculate the land area of the allocation and replace "Y" in the first sentence with the size of the site
- Policy 6.1, change first sentence to *"The land shown on Map X below, amounting to Y ha, is allocated for the residential development of around 16 dwellings."*
- Change second sentence to *"Development in this location should:"*
- Change criterion 2 to *"Locate housing within Flood Zone 1."*
- Para 5.43, change to *"...2 to 6. The Parish Council would like to see obtrusive features...lighting to be kept...The Parish Council would also like to see natural screening being preserved and...The Parish Council is concerned to see that full regard is paid to managing..."*
- Para 5.44, change to *"The Parish Council notes that the site will be expected to provide..."*
- Delete last sentence of Para 5.47

Policy 6.2: Wells Close, Plumpton Green

- 123 Policy 6.2 provides accommodation for older people and has regard to the Framework's requirement for the delivery of a wide choice of homes.
- 124 It is not the role of a Neighbourhood Plan Policy to place a requirement upon another authority. Consequently, Policy 6.2 cannot require East Sussex County Council approval. In making the recommendation in this regard below, I note that public rights of way are protected.
- 125 Part of the supporting text reads as though it comprises a land use planning Policy, which it does not. Taking the above into account, I recommend:
- **Provide a new Map below Policy 6.2 showing the precise boundaries of the site and refer to the title of the Map in the first line of the Policy (replacing "X")**
 - **Calculate the land area of the allocation and replace "Y" in the first sentence with the size of the site**
 - **Policy 6.2, change first sentence to *"The land shown on Map X below, amounting to Y ha, is allocated for the residential development of around 12 dwellings."***
 - **Delete Policy 6.2, part 2.**
 - **Change second sentence to *"Development in this location will be limited to the provision of 12 one and two bed units specifically designed for older people."***
 - **Para 5.50, change to *"...2 to 6. The Parish Council would like to see obtrusive features...lighting to be kept...The Parish Council would also like to see natural screening being preserved and...The Parish Council is concerned to see that full regard is paid to managing..."***
 - **Para 5.51, change to *"The Parish Council notes that the site will be expected to provide..."***
 - **Para 5.54, change to *"...habitats, which the Parish Council would like to see preserved..."***
 - **Delete Para 5.56**

Policy 6.3: The Glebe, Plumpton Green

126 This site is immediately adjacent to site 6.4 and the local community is concerned to ensure that the two sites appear distinctive from one another. However, the requirement in Policy 6.3, for the two sites to share a vehicular access through site 6.4 appears to be in direct conflict with other Policy requirements in respect of separation.

127 In the above regard, detailed information has been provided to demonstrate that this site can be accessed directly in a safe and secure manner, whilst conserving heritage assets in a manner appropriate to their significance. Furthermore, evidence has been submitted to demonstrate that the provision of a direct access can provide for the enhancement of non-vehicular connectivity. Given this and the above, I am concerned that, as worded, Policy 6.3 runs the risk of failing to contribute to the achievement of sustainable development and I address this point in the recommendations below.

128 Neither the Policy nor the supporting evidence demonstrates how the Neighbourhood Plan will control site management by a shared ownership scheme. This part of the Policy is imprecise.

129 Much of the supporting text to Policy 9 reads as though it comprises a land use planning policy, which it does not.

130 I recommend:

- **Provide a new Map below Policy 6.3 showing the precise boundaries of the site and refer to the title of the Map in the first line of the Policy (replacing "X")**
- **Calculate the land area of the allocation and replace "Y" in the first sentence with the size of the site**
- **Policy 6.3, change first sentence to *"The land shown on Map X below, amounting to Y ha, is allocated for the residential development of up to 20 dwellings."***

- Change second sentence to *“Development in this location should:”*
- Delete penultimate paragraph of the Policy (*“To protect...Station Road”*)
- Delete last paragraph of the Policy (*“Communal...scheme”*)
- Para 5.58, change to *“...is not supported by the Parish Council...further development, which would not be supported by the Parish Council.”*
- Change Para 5.59 to *“...It is noted that access would be direct from Station Road.”*
- Para 5.60, delete *“...which should be preserved,...”*
- Para 5.61, delete *“...This would require mitigation.”*
- Para 5.62, change to *“...2 to 6. The Parish Council would like to see obtrusive features...lighting to be kept...The Parish Council would also like to see natural screening being preserved and...The Parish Council is concerned to see that full regard is paid to managing...”*
- Para 5.63, change to *“The Parish Council notes that the site will be expected to provide...”*
- Para 5.65, delete last sentence (*“Vehicular...Road.”*)

Policy 6.4: Land rear of Oakfield, Plumpton Green

131 The main points considered in respect of Policy 6.3, above, also apply to this adjacent site.

132 I recommend:

- Provide a new Map below Policy 6.4 showing the precise boundaries of the site and refer to the title of the Map in the first line of the Policy (replacing "X")
- Calculate the land area of the allocation and replace "Y" in the first sentence with the size of the site
- Policy 6.4, change first sentence to *"The land shown on Map X below, amounting to Y ha, is allocated for the residential development of up to 20 dwellings."*
- Change second sentence to *"Development in this location should:"*
- Delete sixth paragraph of the Policy ("To help protect...through to site 6.3.")
- Delete penultimate paragraph of the Policy ("Communal...scheme")
- Change last paragraph of the Policy to "...minimise impact on the SDNP."
- Para 5.67, change end of Para to "...which would not be supported by the Parish Council."
- Para 5.68, first line, delete ", which should be preserved,"
- Para 5.68, change second sentence to "...south west corner, which the Parish Council would like to see evaluated..."
- Delete Para 5.69

- **Para 5.71, change to “...2 to 6. *The Parish Council would like to see obtrusive features...lighting to be kept...The Parish Council would also like to see natural screening being preserved and...The Parish Council is concerned to see that full regard is paid to managing...*”**
- **Para 5.72, change to “*The Parish Council notes that the site will be expected to provide...*”**
- **Delete Para 5.74**

Policy 7: Local Employment

133 Paragraph 28 of the Framework supports the creation of a prosperous rural economy and in so doing, it supports:

"...the sustainable growth and expansion of all types of business and enterprise in rural areas..."

134 JCS Core Policy 4 ("*Encouraging Economic Development and Regeneration*") seeks to support the rural economy and safeguard existing employment sites.

135 Policy 7 seeks to prevent the loss of employment and to promote its growth. It therefore has regard to national policy and is in general conformity with the development plan.

136 The final part of the Policy refers to the need to "*conform with all relevant policies in the development plan.*" There is no need for such a sweeping reference, as the policies of the development plan must, in any case, be considered as a whole. However, I note that a clear reference to local character, residential amenity and highway safety would prevent the Policy from appearing to provide unfettered support for any form of economic development.

137 I note that Paragraph 5.77 provides a confusing reference to part of the Framework concerned with community facilities rather than employment uses.

138 Taking this into account, I recommend:

- **Policy 7, change last sentence to "*...will be supported, subject to development respecting local character, residential amenity and highway safety.*"**
- **Delete Paragraph 5.77**

Policy 8: Plumpton Green Village Centre

139 Paragraph 28 of the Framework seeks to:

"...promote the retention and development of local services and community facilities in villages, such as local shops...public houses..."

140 In addition, the Framework goes on to recognise the importance of local services and facilities to the health of communities and requires planning policies to:

"...plan positively for...community facilities (such as local shops, meeting places, sports venues, cultural buildings, public houses and places of worship)..."

141 Policy 8 seeks to prevent the loss of shops and commercial units in the village centre and has regard to the Framework.

142 Recent changes to permitted development rights mean that some changes of use no longer require planning permission and the recommendation below takes this into account.

143 Paragraph 5.80 provides a confusing reference to the sequential test for retail, which is not relevant in the context of Policy 8.

144 I recommend:

- **Policy 8, change first sentence to "New development proposals requiring planning permission that result in the loss of existing shops..."**
- **Delete Para 5.80**

Policy 9: Plumpton College

- 145 Paragraph 72 of the Framework requires a proactive, positive and collaborative approach to:
- “...development that will widen choice in education.”*
- 146 Further, JCS Core Policy 7 (“Infrastructure”) supports the protection, retention and enhancement of existing community facilities.
- 147 Policy 9 establishes a positive planning framework for Plumpton College and has regard to national policy, and is in general conformity with the JCS.
- 148 The opening paragraph of Policy 9 is ambiguous. In the absence of any detail or substantive evidence, it is not clear how development *“will preserve the special qualities”* of the South Downs National Park. Furthermore, national planning policy recognises heritage assets as irreplaceable and in Chapter 12 of the Framework, *“Conserving and enhancing the historic environment,”* requires them to be conserved in a manner appropriate to their significance.
- 149 Policy 9 introduces a different approach, whereby the *“significance or setting”* of heritage assets will be *“preserved.”* No explanation is provided for this departure from national policy.
- 150 The Policy goes on to require all new development (although presumably only that within the grounds of Plumpton College, although this is not stated) to be *“appropriately located and necessary for the sustainable growth of the college.”* No indication of what an *“appropriate location”* might be is provided. Similarly, no detail is provided in respect of what development might be *“necessary for the sustainable growth of the college.”* This part of the Policy is vague and fails to provide a decision maker with a clear indication of how a decision maker might react to a development proposal, having regard to Paragraph 154 of the Framework.
- 151 As set out, the final paragraph of Policy 9 appears largely as supporting text, rather than a land use planning policy requirement. The Policy does not require production of a masterplan, but goes on to suggest what one might include and then states that a masterplan supported by the Local Planning Authority would be *“regarded positively.”* These are matters addressed in the recommendations below.

152 The plan following Policy 9 is incorrectly titled as "*Map D.*"

153 I recommend:

- **Change title of Map D on page 53 to "*Map E.*" This will require subsequent changes to the title of the Maps in the Neighbourhood Plan. For clarity, these should follow alphabetical order.**
- **Policy 9, change first sentence to "*New development at Plumpton College that meets the purposes of the SDNP and conserves heritage assets in a manner appropriate to their significance, will be supported.*"**
- **Delete second Para ("*New...college.*")**
- **Delete second and third sentences of the last Para and replace with "*Development at Plumpton College should be masterplan/estate plan led. The masterplan/estate plan for the site should identify how the understanding and appreciation of the separation between the two areas to the east and west of St Michael's Church will be conserved and enhanced by any development.*"**

Policy 10: Plumpton Racecourse

- 154 Policy 10 attempts to provide a positive planning framework for Plumpton Racecourse. Such an approach has regard to Chapter 3 of the Framework, which seeks to support a prosperous rural economy.
- 155 However, the two criteria in Policy 10 detract from the clarity of the Policy. Whilst the second criterion requires development to be considered as part of a wider approach, the first criterion requires all development to be necessary for "*sustainable operational*" purposes. However, no detail, or even indication is provided of what the sustainable operational purposes of the Racecourse might be.
- 156 In the above regard, I am mindful that the supporting text identifies a whole range of things associated with Plumpton Racecourse – local employment, visitor economy, providing footfall for village businesses, rail station maintenance, a base for the Rugby Club. It is not clear how or why development limited to "*sustainable operational*" purposes might be relevant in this context, or might provide for the wider approach proposed by the policy and supporting text.
- 157 In the absence of any definitions or information, it is difficult to understand what the first criterion actually means, or why it is a viable and deliverable land use planning policy. This uncertainty is exacerbated by the criterion's reference to "*appropriately located*," without any further information in respect of what might or might not comprise an appropriate location. Consequently, this part of the Policy is imprecise and fails to provide a decision maker with a clear indication of how to react to a development proposal, having regard to Paragraph 154 of the Framework.
- 158 The second criterion of Policy 10, along with its supporting text, require development to be considered within estate business plans. In the absence of any information, it is not clear why business plans might comprise a relevant land use planning matter; or how such business plans might be assessed, on what basis, and who by.
- 159 Taking all of the above into account, I recommend:
- **Policy 10 delete Criteria 1.1 and 1.2**

- Delete second sentence of Para 5.86 and replace with ***“The Parish Council supports the masterplan-led growth and development of the racecourse and its continued integration with the village.”***
- Para 5.87, change to ***“...SDNPA policies. The Parish Council would like to see development plans at Plumpton Racecourse be considered within...”***

Policy 11: Community facilities

- 160 Chapters 3 and 8 of the Framework ("*Supporting a prosperous rural economy*" and "*Promoting healthy communities*") support the retention of community facilities.
- 161 Generally, Policy 11 seeks to retain and improve community facilities and has regard to national policy.
- 162 However, the Policy includes a confusing reference to Map H (note the earlier recommendation in this Report in respect of changing map titles, as appropriate), such that it would, for example, support proposals to improve the viability of existing park benches; or the community use of existing housing. It is unclear how this might occur or why it is a relevant land use planning matter.
- 163 Taking the above into account, I recommend:
- **Map H and Assets Map Key. Remove "Benches" and "Public housing." Also, remove reference to "Extensive network of footpaths" which are not shown on the map. (NB, public rights of way are protected by law).**

Policy 12: Local Green Space

164 Local communities can identify areas of green space of particular importance to them for special protection. Paragraph 76 of the Framework states that:

“By designating land as Local Green Space local communities will be able to rule out new development other than in very special circumstances.”

165 Consequently, Local Green Space is a restrictive and significant policy designation. The Framework requires the managing of development within Local Green Space to be consistent with policy for Green Belts. A Local Green Space designation provides protection that is comparable to that for Green Belt land.

166 National policy establishes that:

“The Local Green Space designation will not be appropriate for most green areas or open space.” (Paragraph 77)

167 Thus, when identifying Local Green Space, plan-makers should demonstrate that the requirements for its designation are met in full. These requirements are that the green space is in reasonably close proximity to the community it serves; it is demonstrably special to a local community and holds a particular local significance; and it is local in character and is not an extensive tract of land. Furthermore, identifying Local Green Space must be consistent with the local planning of sustainable development and complement investment in sufficient homes, jobs and other essential services.

168 Policy 12 seeks to protect five areas of Local Green Space. Evidence is provided, in the *“Local Green Spaces and Green Infrastructure”* document that forms part of the Neighbourhood Plan evidence base, to demonstrate that each designation meet the national policy tests.

169 Whilst the largest Local Green Space, *“Fields on Little Inholmes Farm,”* covers some 6.8 hectares, but find that, in relation to Plumpton Green as a whole, this does not appear as an extensive tract of land. I also note that its larger size, in relation to the other areas of Local Green Space in the Neighbourhood Area, is simply reflective of its nature and importance to the local community as a connected series of fields separated by hedgerows and shaws close to the centre of the village.

- 170 Taking all of the above and the fact that the Neighbourhood Plan has emerged through robust consultation into account, I find that the inclusion of the five areas of Local Green Space in the Neighbourhood Plan meets the basic conditions.
- 171 The wording to Policy 12 simply refers to national policy. This detracts from the precision of the Neighbourhood Plan and it is a matter addressed in the recommendations below.
- 172 As a very important designation, it is essential that the precise boundaries of each Local Green Space are clearly identifiable. Whilst the plan on page 62 of the Neighbourhood Plan provides a good indication of the location of the designations, it is important to provide plans of each Local Green Space at a scale such that the detailed site boundaries cannot be mistaken.
- 173 I recommend:
- **Policy 12, delete last sentence and replace with “*The development of Local Green Space is ruled out other than in very special circumstances.*”**
 - **Provide a new plan at a large enough scale to clearly identify the detailed boundaries of each Local Green Space**
 - **Para 5.95, delete the second sentence, which does not have regard to the way in which national policy requires Local Green Space to be protected**
 - **Delete Para 5.96, which is not the case**

7. The Neighbourhood Plan: Other Matters

174 There is no evidence to demonstrate that the second part of Para 6.1 will be delivered, or is a matter controlled by the Neighbourhood Plan. I recommend:

- **Para 6.1, change to *“The PPNP will be implemented through the consideration and determination of planning applications for development in the parish by the relevant local planning authority.”***

175 There is no information to demonstrate how the Parish Council will *“work together with LDC”* in respect of monitoring, or to demonstrate that Lewes District Council is committed to such a joint approach. I recommend:

- **Para 6.3, delete final sentence**

176 Para 6.8 is worded as though it comprises a Policy, which it does not. I recommend:

- **Delete Para 6.8**

8. Summary

177 Having regard to all of the above, a number of modifications are recommended in order to enable the Neighbourhood Plan to meet the basic conditions.

178 Subject to these modifications, I confirm that:

- having regard to national policies and advice contained in guidance issued by the Secretary of State it is appropriate to make the neighbourhood plan;
- the making of the neighbourhood plan contributes to the achievement of sustainable development;
- the making of the neighbourhood plan is in general conformity with the strategic policies contained in the development plan for the area of the authority (or any part of that area);
- the making of the neighbourhood plan does not breach, and is otherwise compatible with, European Union (EU) obligations; and
- the making of the neighbourhood plan is not likely to have a significant effect on a European site or a European offshore marine site, either alone or in combination with other plans or projects.

179 Taking the above into account, I find that the Plumpton Neighbourhood Plan meets the basic conditions. I have already noted above that the Plan meets paragraph 8(1) requirements.

9. Referendum

180 I recommend to Lewes District Council and the South Downs National Park Authority that, subject to the modifications proposed, **the Plumpton Neighbourhood Plan should proceed to a Referendum.**

Referendum Area

- 181 I am required to consider whether the Referendum Area should be extended beyond the Plumpton Neighbourhood Area.
- 182 I consider the Neighbourhood Area to be appropriate and there is no substantive evidence to demonstrate that this is not the case.
- 183 Consequently, I recommend that the Plan should proceed to a Referendum based on the Plumpton Neighbourhood Area approved by Lewes District Council and the South Downs National Park Authority on 28th April 2014.

Nigel McGurk, January 2018
Erimax – Land, Planning and Communities

