



NEWICK
PARISH
COUNCIL

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Dear Mr Banks

**Lewes District Local Plan Part 2 – Site Allocations and Development
Management
Examination of 2nd to 12th April 2019**

With reference to the Inspector's Discussion Note, my Council asks to be allowed to have a representative present to participate in the discussions of the Hearing sessions for Matters 3, 8 and 10.

Please also find as attachments to this letter, evidence from Newick Parish Council in response to the questions raised by the Inspector in Matters 3, 8 and 10 of his Discussion Note.

Yours Sincerely,

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**Lewes District Local Plan Part 2 Examination
Additional evidence from Newick Parish Council**

Matter 3: Does the Plan deliver the total housing provision set out in Part 1 of the Plan to meet the needs of the Plan area over the Plan period in accordance with national policy?

3.3 Housing Delivery

Question (iii): *Is the reliance of the Plan on **Neighbourhood Plans** (NPs) to deliver 75% of the residual need (1,250 dwellings) realistic?*

In respect of the element covered by Newick's Neighbourhood Plan (NNP), the progress so far indicates that reliance on it to deliver the 100 homes called for in the Local Plan is realistic. The NNP designates four sites to accommodate these homes. One of the four sites had its 31 homes (30 net) completed last year. A second, which is currently land owned by the Parish Council, has outline planning permission for 2 homes, and completion of the sale of the site to a developer is in progress. A third site is currently awaiting planning permission, but this has been delayed because the planning application proposes 30 more homes (68 net rather than 38 net) than specified in the Neighbourhood Plan, and use of an area almost twice that specified in the Plan. The developer of the fourth site has yet to submit a planning application but we have heard that this will be done this year.

Considering the fact that when Newick's Neighbourhood Plan was adopted in 2015, no progress was possible before a SANG was provided to mitigate the impact of development on Ashdown Forest, plus the fact that the Plan period runs until 2030, the state of progress to date is faster than might have been expected.

It should be added that windfall development has continued and planning applications have been made for further windfall sites in Newick.

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Matter 8: Are the Plan's provisions for planning boundaries in policy DM1 justified and effective?

Question 8.1: Is the policy sufficiently focused on protecting vulnerable gaps of countryside between settlements?

Newick Parish Council has expressed concern previously on this matter. Existing Policy CT1 is set to be replaced by Policy DM1 but, whereas the former seeks to avoid the coalescence of settlements, the latter does not. Policy CT1 states that development which would significantly erode the gap between settlements may not be acceptable. There is mention in the proposed Local Plan Part 2, in the preamble on Planning Boundaries, of important gaps of countryside between settlements, but avoidance of development in such areas should be included in the policy itself.

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Matter 10: Site Allocations in the Plan

Question 10.1: Are the Residential Site Allocations acceptable in terms of (a).....(g) sustainability, including bus services, shops, schools, healthcare provision.....

Since Newick was categorised as a Rural Service Centre because of its level of services, thus justifying Lewes District Council's requirement for it to accommodate 100 planned new homes, several of the most valuable services have disappeared and its bus services have deteriorated. (Indeed not all of the services with which Newick was credited were actually present when the categorisation as a Rural Service Centre was made.) Thus it is questionable whether Newick would today qualify as a Rural Service Centre. Nevertheless, the 100 new homes will be built as called for in the Newick Neighbourhood Plan. For any more homes to be planned in or around Newick, however, could not be justified with the present level of services.

10.3: Other suggestions for housing sites in the Plan

No doubt there will be suggestions from developers and others that various sites around Newick should be developed. However, since Newick has negligible employment opportunities, such development would inevitably lead to more commuting, most of which would be by private car. (The bus services start too late and finish too early for the many existing London commuters of Newick.) Thus any further development at Newick would inevitably contribute further to carbon dioxide emissions and climate change. Any further new housing should be built in or around towns with good public transport links.

Whilst this Council strongly believes that further planned development in or around Newick is not justified, if it were, nevertheless, to be deemed necessary, its location and type should be decided by local people, not imposed by developers. In preparing Newick's Neighbourhood Plan, twelve potential housing sites were considered. These were assessed by means of a thorough sustainability appraisal, in addition to which the views of local residents were obtained on the suitability of each site. The results of these two methods of assessing suitability/acceptability were so close that it was decided to give them equal weight and merge the two scoring systems. The three most suitable sites plus about half of the fourth site were then allocated for development. By contrast, the site judged to be least suitable, i.e. the twelfth of twelve, has been the subject of continued legal action seeking planning permission. If such sites were allowed to be developed rather than more suitable sites, the future of Neighbourhood Planning would be called into question.