

Plumpton Parish Neighbourhood Plan Site Assessment Report

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1. Introduction

This report is produced as part of the evidence base for the Plumpton Neighbourhood Plan. It includes assessments of all the available sites that have been considered by the Steering Group and sets out the group's recommendations for the allocation of sites for future housing development.

Plumpton is a rural parish located north west of the town of Lewes and contains two primary settlements: Plumpton and Plumpton Green. The parish is partly located in the South Downs National Park, and its downland, rural character is very much valued by parish residents.

However, there is a need for new housing nationwide, which the Plumpton Neighbourhood Plan aims to address, in line with the targets set in the emerging Lewes District Joint Core Strategy.

This Site Assessment Report contains the detailed assessment of sites considered through the process and is a comprehensive and robust component of the Neighbourhood Plan evidence base for selecting the development sites allocated in the Neighbourhood Plan.

The report comprises a comprehensive, objective assessment of each site, alongside a consideration of the achievability and availability of the sites. This is then balanced against an 'acceptability' assessment that takes into account considerations that are important to the parish community.

The Lewes District Council (LDC) Emerging Joint Core Strategy sets a target of a minimum of 50 homes for the settlement of Plumpton Green in the period to 2030. However, it is likely that the parish will be required to meet a higher target, due to a district-wide shortfall in LDC housing allocation. The Neighbourhood Plan allocates sites in line with the latest housing need evidence for the parish and settlement of Plumpton Green.

2. Methodology

2.1 Identification of potential sites

The initial list of development site options was identified through two key sources: Lewes District Council's Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (SHLAA) and the Parish Council's Call for Sites process.

SHLAA

As the local planning authority, Lewes District Council is required to produce a SHLAA to identify sites throughout the district with potential for housing, assess their suitability and consider when they could potentially be developed. The document is updated annually and helps to inform judgements on future development and allocation of land for housing, but it does not allocate sites.

The Parish Council made the decision to consider 'suitable' SHLAA sites in the site assessment process although, as noted in the next section, some of these 'suitable' sites were also put forward by landowners/agents through the Call for Sites.

Call for Sites

Following designation of the Plumpton Neighbourhood Area and the formation of the Steering Group, a Call for Sites was required to identify further potential development sites in addition to those identified as 'suitable' in the SHLAA. The Parish Council wrote to parish landowners on 1 September 2014 offering the opportunity to put potential sites forward for consideration. A number of responses was received, including sites already identified in the SHLAA, as well as other, previously unidentified sites.

In addition to previously unidentified sites (some of which have subsequently been included in the SHLAA), some of the sites put forward through the Call for Sites were considered 'unsuitable' in the SHLAA (usually because of development constraints). The Parish Council considered it appropriate to consider sites that LDC had assessed as 'unsuitable' in the SHLAA, in order to form its own opinions of the sites, carry out its own assessments against community-led criteria, and ensure a fair and transparent process.

An additional site was put forward to the Steering Group by the owners of Plumpton Racecourse at a later stage than the other sites. Due to its late submission, the parish community was not consulted on this, unlike the other sites (see paragraph 2.2 below regarding the Land Sponsors Meeting), until the first Regulation 14 consultation. However, at the time of submission, the Steering Group concluded that the site should be given due consideration in the draft Neighbourhood Plan, as the development would help secure the future of the racecourse and so fulfil other Neighbourhood Plan policies and objectives (specifically the policy on the racecourse).

Following the first Regulation 14 consultation, one site (referred to in the 2016 draft plan as Site 11 – South of Railway) was withdrawn by the landowners, and another site (Site 9 – Land East of Noland's) was represented, as the developers were now able to provide access. This site, at 40 units, was also much larger than the original proposal.

The owners of Site 6 (Wells Close) agreed to a suggested change that would offer a development of small housing units for older people.

These changes, and wider policy changes at national level, prompted a review of the site assessments and allocation, and the outcomes of this review are presented here.

The Steering Group had also to be mindful that, as planning law currently stands, sites that are not included in the Neighbourhood Plan but are included in the LDC SHLAA may still successfully obtain planning permission. The sites chosen therefore reflect these important changes and considerations.

The sites assessed in this report are as follows:

- Site 1 – Riddens Lane (SHLAA Ref 14PL, 16 units);
- Site 2 – Little Inholmes Farm (SHLAA Ref 16PL, 20 & 40 units);
- Site 3 – Shaw/Inholmes Farm (SHLAA Ref 19PL, 20 units);
- Site 4 – Inholmes Farm (northernmost) (SHLAA Ref 18PL, 30 units);
- Site 5 – Lentrige/Old Police House (SHLAA Ref 20PL, 30 units);
- Site 6 – Wells Close (SHLAA Ref 13PL, 12 units);
- Site 7 – Glebe land (SHLAA Ref 04PL, 30 units);
- Site 8 – Land rear of Oakfield (SHLAA Ref 05PL, 30 units);
- Site 9 – Land east of Noland's (SHLAA Ref 10PL, 40 units);
- Site 10 – Land behind school (SHLAA Ref 21PL, 17 units);
- Site 11 – Land south-east of racecourse (19 units; withdrawn in 2016 so no assessment included);
- Site 12 – Racecourse land (not included in SHLAA, 19 units).

The housing unit numbers are as proposed by the landowners/developers. Subsequently some developers agreed to reduce the numbers of units to meet local preferences on density.

2.2 Assessment process

Parish questionnaire

The Plumpton Parish Neighbourhood Plan questionnaire was issued in January 2015 and provided valuable feedback to the Steering Group to inform the site assessment criteria and, ultimately, the allocation of sites in the Neighbourhood Plan. The main feeling among parishioners (57% responded to the survey) was the importance of the rural character of the parish and a feeling that the parish should not change or expand too rapidly. There was strong support (87%) for pockets of small-scale development of between 10 and 20 units, in keeping with the pattern of development in the last 100 years, rather than one or two large-scale development sites. The majority (81%) wanted these developments to comprise small and medium-sized units and provision for retirement/warden assisted homes; 80% of residents did not support larger 4/5 bedroom homes.

With regard to village layout, the questionnaire asked: "Plumpton can be described as a Scarpfoot or linear parish, being long and narrow and having developed from

the foot of the Downs. Would you:

- a. Prefer to maintain this characteristic with any development on a north-south axis? Yes/No
- b. Prefer to see the shape of the village change and expand widthways on an east-west axis? Yes/no”

The majority (63%) of respondents preferred a). However, a sizeable minority (39%) preferred b). This preference was a criterion in the first site appraisal process but was subsequently removed for two reasons. First, the extension of the village settlement northwards conflicted with other environmental policy objectives around sustainability, pedestrian access to village facilities and minimising car use; and second, while the parish itself is indeed linear, the Plumpton Green settlement long ago creased to develop along those lines and has in recent years developed only to the east and west. Linear development also contravenes established best-practice planning principles that discourage ribbon development and rural sprawl.

Further information on the Neighbourhood Plan questionnaire can be found at www.plumptonpc.co.uk/neighbourhood-plan/

Land-sponsor meetings

Following the identification of the above sites, two public land-sponsor meetings were organised so that landowners/agents could present their sites to the parish community. These events also provided an opportunity for residents to put questions to landowners/agents and voice any concerns. These events took place on 6 January and 3 March 2015 and provided valuable feedback for the Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group to inform the site selection process.

2.3 Assessment criteria

With these two key sources of evidence, the Steering Group, with assistance from planning consultants Action in Rural Sussex (AiRS) and the Lewes District Council (LDC) Neighbourhood Planning Officer, created an assessment criteria matrix against which to assess the sites.

The assessment criteria were derived from a number of relevant sources:

- Neighbourhood Plan Objectives and Vision;
- Issues and factors shown to be of key importance to the community through the Parish questionnaire and village consultations;
- Consideration of national planning policies (NPPF), guidance (NPPG) and LDC adopted (2003 Local Plan) and emerging (Joint Core Strategy) policies.

The assessment process comprises the following components:

Suitability (see Section 2.4)

A site is considered suitable for housing if it offers a suitable location for development and would contribute to the creation of sustainable, mixed communities. An objective assessment of the suitability of a site will give an indication of whether there are any constraints to development.

Sustainability

A Sustainability Appraisal (incorporating a Strategic Environmental Assessment) has been produced to comply with European and UK Regulations and inform the Neighbourhood Plan. A list of Sustainability Objectives and Indicators can be found in the Sustainability Appraisal report and these have been used to appraise and identify the environmental (and wider social and economic) impacts of the options and policies in the draft Neighbourhood Plan. These have then been fed into the assessment process.

Achievability

A site is considered achievable if the site is economically viable. Viability varies from site to site and can be influenced by considerations such as physical constraints and the numbers and proportions of market and affordable houses.

Availability

A site is considered to be available when there are no known legal or ownership problems and the landowner has expressed an intention to develop. All sites are considered to be available for development unless information to the contrary has been received or needs further investigation.

Acceptability (see Section 2.5)

Neighbourhood plans must be approved by a majority of electors voting in a local referendum. Thus, the site assessments must include consideration of the acceptability of the site to the local community, as expressed through consultation feedback.

2.4 Suitability assessment explanation and criteria table

National Planning Practice Guidance states the need to assess sites against clearly identified criteria.

The Suitability Assessment forms the objective part of the assessment process. The table below sets out the criteria and questions that have been used as a guide in carrying out this assessment.

2.5 Acceptability assessment explanation and criteria table

Site criteria – suitability factors
SOCIAL
1. Housing: affordable housing.
Does the site provide affordable housing?
2.Transport/accessibility: impact on highway network
Is there adequate car and pedestrian access?
3.Transport/accessibility: visibility

Is there suitable visibility from the potential access point?
4. Additional/improved community facilities
Does the development offer additional/improved facilities?
ENVIRONMENTAL
1.Biodiversity and ecology: protected plant, animal, insect life
Is there presence of protected species?
2.Biodiversity and ecology: wider species and habitats
Is there presence of significant wider species and habitats?
3. Geodiversity: geological, soil conservation, or mineral deposits
Is there geological interest?
4.Landscape and green infrastructure: ancient trees and hedges
Are there ancient trees/hedges on the site/within the vicinity?
5.Historical/archaeological assets
Are there listed buildings or archaeological evidence within the vicinity?
6. Flood Risk
Is the site within a Flood Zone?
7.Topography/ drainage/surface water
Is there evidence of surface water, and does it run into a natural water course?
ECONOMIC
1.Support of local business: is the site within 800m (estimated walking distance) of the shop?
2.Support of local business: loss of employment/facility
Would the site development result in loss of community/ services/ employment uses?

Site criteria – acceptability factors
Previous development
Is the site greenfield or has it previously been developed?
Size of the site – number of units
Is the site proposed for more than 20 units?
Impact on adjoining property
Will the development have a significant adverse impact on adjoining property/development?

Natural screening
Is the site naturally well screened?
Views from the South Downs
Is the site visible from the South Downs?

2.6 Assessment of individual sites

An assessment table has been produced for each site considered through the Neighbourhood Plan process. The tables below form a summary of the various strands of the assessment process, including the following:

- Relevant site-specific information;
- Summary of the Suitability Assessment;
- Reference to and/or reference to the Sustainability Appraisal assessment;
- Achievability assessment;
- Availability assessment;
- Acceptability assessment.

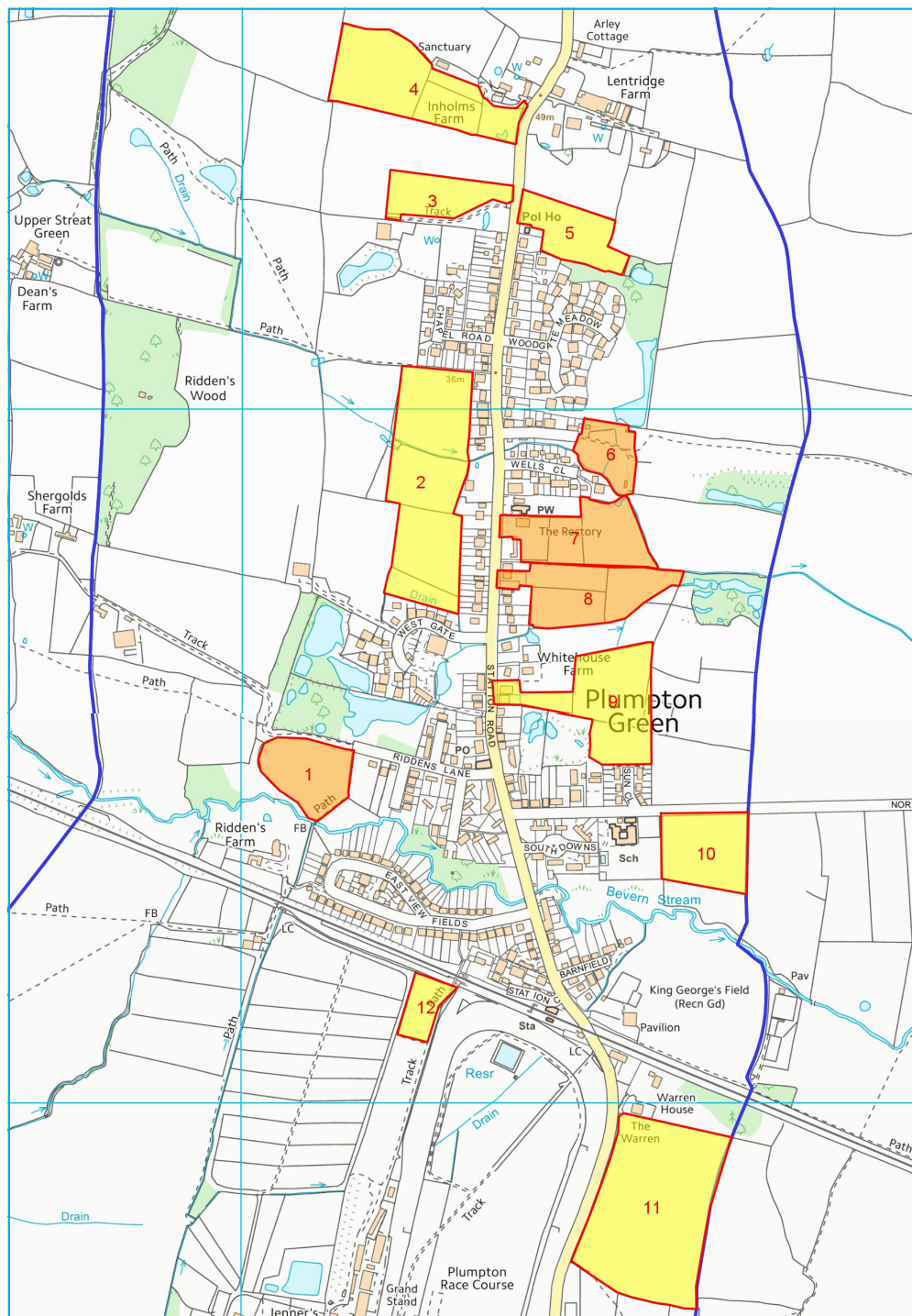
Site assessments are based on information available at the time of assessment. Further investigation will be required for all sites prior to development.

For some sites, more than one option for development has been put forward. Sites have been considered as broad areas. The Sustainability Appraisal considers different and distinct options ('reasonable alternatives') that have been put forward to the Parish Council for consideration. This data has been fed into the site assessment below.

Distances and areas are approximate but the same methodology has been applied to all sites.

Map of assessed sites

(Orange sites are recommended for inclusion in the Neighbourhood Plan)



Key to sites

- | | |
|------------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| 1. Riddens Lane (Policy 6.1) | 7. Glebe Land (Policy 6.3) |
| 2. Little Inholms Farm | 8. Land rear of Oakfield (Policy 6.4) |
| 3. Land at Inholms Farm | 9. Land east of Nolands Farm |
| 4. Inholms Farm North | 10. Land behind school |
| 5. Lentrige/Old Police House | 11. Land south-east of railway |
| 6. Wells Close (Policy 6.2) | 12. Racecourse land |

3. Site Assessments

Site 1 – Riddens Lane	
Background Information	<p>The site was identified by the Lewes District Council SHLAA and the Neighbourhood Plan call for sites.</p> <p>It is located to the west of the village, off Riddens Lane, and is approximately 0.6 hectares currently Grade 3 agricultural use.</p> <p>The site is being promoted for 16 units.</p>
Suitability	<p>This is a greenfield site adjacent to the planning boundary that could provide affordable housing.</p> <p>Vehicle and pedestrian access to Riddens Lane and Station Road would need to be upgraded with a suitable surface and traffic slowing measures.</p> <p>There are concerns about the impact of additional vehicles on traffic flow at a busy intersection with Station Road, in the centre of the village, by the village shop. There is poor visibility at the brow of the hill approaching Riddens Lane from the north.</p> <p>The centre of the site is 260m from the shop and near to other village amenities.</p> <p>There is presence of protected species and wider species and habitats that should be preserved, along with ancient hedges and geological interest also in evidence. There are no known ancient trees. The site is within an Archaeological Notification Area.</p> <p>The higher northern part of this site is within Flood Zone 1. The lower southern part falls within Flood Zone 3 where it slopes down to a natural water course (no development is planned for this area). Evidence of surface water issues would need to be addressed and wastewater/sewage infrastructure put in place.</p>

Achievability	Plumpton Green is located in an area of strong housing market demand and so the site is considered to be commercially viable.
Availability	The site has been promoted through the Lewes District Council SHLAA and the Neighbourhood Plan Call for Sites and has been confirmed in subsequent discussion with the developer.
Acceptability	<p>This is a greenfield site that would have a minimal impact on existing adjoining properties. It is naturally well screened and not visible from the Downs.</p> <p>The site is small in scale and nature.</p>
Strategic Environmental Assessment	This site scored well when appraised against the sustainability framework, in particular against the social objectives due to its central location near to village services. However, there are concerns about the safety of the proposed shared pedestrian and vehicle access to the site.
Steering Group Recommendation	<p>The site scores well against the suitability and acceptability criteria, although some adverse environmental impacts were identified that will need mitigation. Following the review of site allocations, this site is now recommended for inclusion in the Neighbourhood Plan.</p> <p>However, this allocation is subject to steps being taken to mitigate the effects on wildlife and the provision of suitable vehicle and pedestrian access to Station Road. Development must be kept to the higher, northern part of the site, and the area within Flood Zone 3 preserved as green space. Mitigation measures may be needed to avoid exacerbating flood risk to properties downstream.</p>

Site 2 – Little Inholmes Farm	
Background Information	<p>The site was identified by the Lewes District Council SHLAA and the Neighbourhood Plan Call for Sites.</p> <p>It is located to the west of the village, north of West Gate, and is approximately 4.53 hectares currently Grade 3 agricultural use.</p> <p>The site is being promoted for approximately 20 units within the Neighbourhood Plan period. A larger option of approximately 40 units was also put forward to the Parish Council for consideration.</p>
Suitability	<p>This is a greenfield site adjacent to the planning boundary that could provide affordable housing.</p> <p>Vehicle and pedestrian access is via West Gate onto Station Road. The centre of the site is 610m from the shop and within walking distance of other village amenities.</p> <p>There is presence of protected/wider species and habitats that should be preserved, with ancient trees and hedges also in evidence. There is no indication of geological interest and no knowledge of archaeological interest.</p> <p>There is a listed building immediately adjacent to the site. Mitigation measures may be needed to protect this building against damage from subsidence and flooding.</p> <p>The site is within Flood Zone 1. There is a history of surface water flooding on the site, which slopes to a natural watercourse running through the centre of the village to other proposed sites. Wastewater/sewage infrastructure improvements would need to be addressed.</p>
Achievability	<p>Plumpton Green is located in an area of strong housing market demand and so the site is considered to be commercially viable.</p>

Availability	<p>The site has been promoted through the Lewes District Council SHLAA and the Neighbourhood Plan Call for Sites and has been confirmed in subsequent discussion with the developer.</p> <p>The site carries a Section 106 agreement limiting development to agricultural purposes only until 26 September 2074.</p>
Acceptability	<p>This is a greenfield site.</p> <p>The scale of Option A (20 units) reflects the Parish preference for small-scale development. The developers are also proposing a larger Option B of 40 units, and a Phase 2 development of 60+ houses.</p> <p>The developer is offering potential public recreation amenities.</p> <p>Of all the proposed sites, this would affect the greatest number of adjoining existing properties.</p> <p>The site is exposed and visible from the South Downs.</p>
Strategic Environmental Assessment	<p>Two options (one for approximately 20 units and the other for approximately 40) were considered for this site and both scored similarly, with a mix of positives and negatives, when appraised against the sustainability framework. Both options would provide housing to meet parish housing needs (Option B more so) and both scored well against the social objectives, due to their central location, close to village facilities.</p> <p>Both appraisals identified concerns over landscape impact, the National Park and the village's built environment and heritage assets. Option B, being of a higher density and greater scale, is likely to have a more pronounced adverse impact on these objectives.</p> <p>This area also suffers from surface water flooding. Option A, with a lower density of development, may offer more scope to mitigate this adverse effect; Option B scores negatively against Env/4 of the Sustainability Appraisal and Strategic Environment Assessment.</p>

Steering Group Recommendation	<p>This site was assessed as only partially suitable due to its visibility from the Downs and impact on neighbouring properties.</p> <p>Acceptability to the parish was deemed to be very poor, due to the Section 106 agreement in place.</p> <p>The larger Option B does not meet the parish preference for small-scale developments.</p> <p>Without clarity about who will pay to maintain the potential recreational amenities offered by the developer, there is a concern that this responsibility will fall to the parish.</p> <p>Both options would require surface water flood risk mitigation. Option B would present more significant surface water flood issues that would be harder to mitigate.</p> <p>For all these reasons the Steering Group does not recommend this site for allocation in the Neighbourhood Plan.</p>
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Site 3 – Shaw/Inholms Farm	
Background Information	<p>The site was identified by the Lewes District Council SHLAA and the Neighbourhood Plan Call for Sites.</p> <p>It is located to the north of the village, west of Station Road, and is approximately 0.8 hectares currently Grade 3 agricultural use. Development would be in the south-eastern section of the designated area.</p> <p>The site is being promoted for 12 units.</p>
Suitability	<p>This is a greenfield site adjacent to the planning boundary that could provide affordable housing.</p> <p>Access would require the current 30mph zone on Station Road to be extended northwards to ensure safe entry/exit for traffic.</p> <p>The pavement would also need to be extended for pedestrian access.</p> <p>The centre of the site is 895m from the village shop.</p> <p>There is no indication of protected/wider species or habitats, ancient trees or hedges or evidence of archaeological interest. There is presence of minor geological interest.</p> <p>There are no Listed buildings within the vicinity.</p> <p>The site is within Flood Zone 1. Evidence of surface water issues would need to be addressed and wastewater/sewage infrastructure put in place.</p>
Achievability	<p>Plumpton Green is located in an area of strong housing market demand and so the site is considered to be commercially viable.</p>
Availability	<p>The site has been promoted through the Neighbourhood Plan Call for Sites and confirmed in subsequent discussion with the site owners.</p>

Acceptability	<p>This site would have an impact on a small number of neighbouring properties.</p> <p>It is not naturally well screened and is visible from the South Downs.</p> <p>It meets the local preference for pockets of small-scale developments.</p>
Strategic Environmental Assessment	<p>This site scored neutrally against the sustainability framework. There is some risk of adverse environmental impact as the site would encroach into the green gap between the built-up boundary of the village and the farmstead to the north. There is also currently no pedestrian access to the site.</p>
Steering Group Recommendation	<p>The site scored well against the suitability and acceptability criteria.</p> <p>However, its distance from village facilities and current lack of pedestrian access means it scored poorly against social and environmental objectives; it is less sustainable than sites closer to the centre of the village. For these reasons the Steering Group does not recommend its inclusion in the Neighbourhood Plan.</p>

Site 4 – Inholms Farm north	
Background Information	<p>The site was promoted through the Lewes District Council SHLAA and the Neighbourhood Plan Call for Sites.</p> <p>It is located to the north of the village, west of Station Road, and is approximately 2.45 hectares currently Grade 3 agricultural use.</p> <p>The site is being promoted for a flexible number of units.</p>
Suitability	<p>This is a greenfield site, remote from the planning boundary, but it could provide affordable housing.</p> <p>The site is more than 800 metres from the village shop.</p> <p>Access is dependent on Site 3 to the south coming forward, and would need to cross the 'green gap' at the northern end of the village settlement. It would require the current 30mph zone on Station Road to be extended northwards to ensure safe entry/exit for traffic.</p> <p>The pavement would also need to be extended northwards for pedestrian access.</p> <p>There is no knowledge of protected/wider species or habitats, ancient trees or hedges or archaeological interest on the site, but some minor geological interest is in evidence.</p> <p>The site is within Flood Zone 1. Evidence of surface water issues would need to be addressed and wastewater/sewage infrastructure put in place.</p>
Achievability	<p>Plumpton Green is located in an area of strong housing market demand and so the site is considered to be commercially viable.</p>
Availability	<p>The site has been promoted through the Neighbourhood Plan Call for Sites and has been confirmed in subsequent discussion with the site owners.</p>

Acceptability	<p>This site is likely to have an impact on the small number of existing properties nearby.</p> <p>It is not naturally screened and is visible from the Downs.</p>
Strategic Environmental Assessment	<p>This site assessed negatively against Soc/2 and Soc/3 of the Sustainability Appraisal and Strategic Environment Assessment due to its remote location. It is also likely that development of this site could have an adverse landscape impact (Env/2), again due to its remote location, access issues and its visibility from the Downs.</p>
Steering Group Recommendation	<p>The site assessment, and in particular the sustainability appraisal, highlighted significant adverse landscape and environmental effects as a result of the site's remote location, visibility from the Downs and the impingement on the green gap between the current settlement boundary of the village and the farmstead to the north. Without development of Site 3, there is no access to this site. For these reasons the Steering Group does not recommend inclusion of this site in the Neighbourhood Plan.</p>

Site 5 - Lentridge / Old Police House	
Background Information	<p>The site was identified by the Neighbourhood Plan Call for Sites.</p> <p>It is located to the north of the village, east of Station Road, and is approximately 1.1 hectares currently Grade 3 agricultural use and is the southern half of a larger field.</p> <p>The site is being promoted for approximately 15–20 units.</p>
Suitability	<p>This is a greenfield site adjacent to the planning boundary that could provide affordable housing.</p> <p>The centre of the site is 880m from the village shop.</p> <p>Although visibility is good, access onto Station Road would require the current 30mph zone to be extended northwards to ensure safe entry/exit for traffic.</p> <p>There is currently no pedestrian access.</p> <p>There is no known presence of protected species or archaeological interest (no survey data is available) on the site, but there is evidence of wider species, habitats, ancient trees and hedges and minor geological interest.</p> <p>There are no listed buildings within the vicinity.</p> <p>The site is situated within Flood Zone 1. It slopes to a natural watercourse that connects to a brook running through the centre of the village to other proposed sites. Surface water issues would need to be addressed and wastewater/sewage infrastructure put in place.</p>
Achievability	<p>Plumpton Green is located in an area of strong housing market demand and so the site is considered to be commercially viable.</p>
Availability	<p>The site has been promoted through the Neighbourhood Plan Call for Sites and has been confirmed in subsequent discussion with the site owners.</p>

Acceptability	<p>This site would have an impact on a small number of neighbouring properties.</p> <p>It has some natural screening and is not visible from the Downs.</p>
Strategic Environmental Assessment	<p>This site assessed neutrally against the Sustainability Appraisal and Strategic Environment Assessment, although there are questions about some of the objectives due to the lack of pedestrian access to the site and the potential landscape impact of development, which would impinge on the green gap between the built-up area of the village and the farmstead to the north. The site would need a rigorous ecological survey.</p>
Steering Group Recommendation	<p>The site is one of the furthest from village facilities, and so scores poorly against social and environmental criteria.</p> <p>It would also impinge on the green gap at the northern end of the village.</p> <p>Its distance from village facilities and current lack of pedestrian access means it scored poorly against social and environmental objectives and is therefore less sustainable than sites closer to the centre of the village. For these reasons the Steering Group does not recommend its inclusion in the Neighbourhood Plan.</p>

Site 6 – Wells Close	
Background Information	<p>The site was identified by the Lewes District Council SHLAA and the Neighbourhood Plan Call for Sites.</p> <p>It is located to the east of the village between Wells Close and Strawlands and is approximately 0.45 hectares currently vacant.</p> <p>The site is being promoted for 12 units for older residents.</p>
Suitability	<p>This is a greenfield site adjacent to the planning boundary that could provide affordable housing.</p> <p>The centre of the site is 590m from the village shop.</p> <p>Vehicle and pedestrian access to Station Road would be via Wells Close.</p> <p>There is presence of protected/wider species and habitats, which should be preserved, but no ancient trees or hedges or evidence of geological or archaeological interest.</p> <p>There are no listed buildings in the vicinity.</p> <p>The site is within Flood Zone 1. There is evidence of surface water running into a natural water course, and mitigation and wastewater/sewage infrastructure would need to be put in place.</p>
Achievability	<p>There is known demand for move-on homes for older people in the village and wider area.</p> <p>As a former coal yard, there may be some land remediation required, although this should not affect viability.</p>
Availability	<p>The site has been promoted through the Lewes District Council SHLAA and the Neighbourhood Plan Call for Sites and has been confirmed in subsequent discussions with the owner and developer.</p>

Acceptability	<p>This is a greenfield site that was previously used as a coal yard.</p> <p>Building on previously developed land was deemed more acceptable than agricultural sites in the parish consultations.</p> <p>The site is likely to have an impact on several neighbouring properties.</p> <p>The site has some natural screening but is partially visible from the Downs.</p> <p>The site offers designated housing for older people, which is explicitly supported by parish residents.</p>
Strategic Environmental Assessment	<p>This site scored well against the sustainability framework, scoring a number of positives against the social and environmental objectives. This was particularly the case for Soc/1, as the site would provide additional housing on a vacant former coal yard site. The site is centrally located and within easy reach of existing village services and facilities. The site is also well screened and unlikely to have an adverse landscape impact. However, the site is located in an area of surface water flood risk and so scored negatively against objective Env/4.</p>
Steering Group Recommendation	<p>This site is currently vacant and, due to its former use as a coal yard, could be considered previously developed. Access to Station Road is good, and it is within walking distance of the village centre and amenities.</p> <p>A small-scale development of homes for older people is strongly supported by the parish and for these reasons the Steering Group recommends that it is included in the Neighbourhood Plan.</p>

Site 7 – Glebe land	
Background Information	<p>The site was identified by the Lewes District Council SHLAA and the Neighbourhood Plan Call for Sites.</p> <p>It is located to the east of the village, behind All Saints Church, and is approximately 1.5 hectares currently Grade 3 agricultural use.</p> <p>The site is being promoted for 20 units within the Neighbourhood Plan period.</p>
Suitability	<p>This is a greenfield site adjacent to the planning boundary that could provide affordable housing.</p> <p>The centre of the site is 500m from the shop.</p> <p>Access would be directly onto Station Road at a point where visibility is good.</p> <p>There is presence of protected species, along with the ancient trees and hedges, which should be preserved, and minor geological interest also in evidence. There are no known significant wider species or habitats or evidence of archaeological interest. There are three Tree Preservation Orders (TPOs) associated with the site, two at the proposed access.</p> <p>There are no listed buildings in the vicinity of the site. However, development is likely to affect the environment of the church and adjacent cemetery.</p> <p>The site is within Flood Zone 1. There is evidence of surface water issues which would need to be addressed, and waste water/sewage infrastructure put in place.</p>
Achievability	<p>Plumpton Green is located in an area of strong housing market demand and so the site is considered to be commercially viable.</p>
Availability	<p>The site has been promoted through the Lewes District Council SHLAA and the Neighbourhood Plan Call for Sites and has been confirmed in subsequent discussions with the agent.</p>

Acceptability	<p>This site would have an impact on a small number of adjoining properties and, notably, on the church and cemetery.</p> <p>It is partially screened and partially visible from the Downs.</p> <p>It is adjacent to another proposed site (Site 8), also promoting 20 houses; both sites have potential for further development.</p>
Strategic Environmental Assessment	<p>Overall, this site scored well against the social objectives due to its central location near to village amenities.</p> <p>Mitigation measures would be needed for protected species, trees (including Tree Preservation Orders) and hedges on the site.</p> <p>The site is partially visible from the Downs and will impact on the environment of the church, rectory and adjacent cemetery. A potential adverse impact against Env/4 objective was identified due to surface water flood risk.</p>
Steering Group Recommendation	<p>The site assessment and, in particular the Sustainability Appraisal, highlighted surface water flood issues on the site, which is located in an area with a 1 in 30-year surface water flood risk. This would require mitigation.</p> <p>The site would also impact on the church, rectory and burial ground.</p> <p>However, the site is recommended for inclusion in the Neighbourhood Plan, subject to necessary mitigation of these adverse impacts, as it scores well on sustainability, due to its proximity to the village centre.</p> <p>Its proximity to Site 8 means that careful planning will be needed to manage the density of development, in association with Site 8. The two developments should not be built to their respective boundaries and should preserve a green landscape buffer between them, incorporating any existing boundary hedgerows.</p>

Site 8 – Land rear of Oakfield	
Background Information	<p>The site was identified by the Lewes District Council SHLAA and the Neighbourhood Plan Call for Sites.</p> <p>The site is located to the east of the village and is approximately 1.5 hectares in size and currently Grade 3 agricultural use.</p> <p>The site is being promoted for 20 units within the Neighbourhood Plan period.</p>
Suitability	<p>This is a greenfield site adjacent to the planning boundary which could provide affordable housing.</p> <p>The centre of the site is 385m from the shop.</p> <p>Access would be directly onto Station Road at a point where visibility is good.</p> <p>Development of this site would result in the loss of the garage service.</p> <p>There is presence of protected/wider species and habitats which should be preserved along with the ancient trees or hedges and minor geological interest also in evidence. There is no known evidence of archaeological interest.</p> <p>There is a listed building within the vicinity, but any adverse impact is unlikely.</p> <p>The site is within Flood Zone 1. There is evidence of surface water issues which would need to be addressed, and wastewater/sewage infrastructure put in place.</p>
Availability	<p>Plumpton Green is located in an area of strong housing market demand and so the site is considered to be commercially viable.</p>
Availability	<p>The site has been promoted through the Lewes District Council SHLAA and the Neighbourhood Plan Call for Sites and has been confirmed in subsequent discussions with the developer.</p>

Acceptability	<p>Development of the site will affect a number of adjoining properties.</p> <p>It is partially screened and partially visible from the Downs.</p> <p>It is adjacent to another proposed site (Site 7), also promoting 20 houses; both sites have potential for further development.</p>
Strategic Environmental Assessment	<p>Overall, this site scored well against some of the social objectives (Soc/3) due to its central location near to village amenities.</p> <p>There are concerns over the presence of protected species, trees and hedges on the site, and the potential landscape impact and visibility from the Downs.</p> <p>A potential adverse impact against Env/4 objective was identified, due to surface water flood risk.</p>
Steering Group Recommendation	<p>The site assesses poorly against environmental objectives, due to presence of protected species, trees and hedges on the site, and its partial visibility from the Downs.</p> <p>Mitigation measures would be needed to manage surface water flood issues on the site and to protect species and habitats.</p> <p>Its proximity to Site 7 means that careful planning will be needed to manage the density of development, in association with Site 7. The two developments should not be built to their respective boundaries and should preserve a green landscape buffer between them, incorporating any existing boundary hedgerows.</p> <p>The site's development would mean the loss of the garage business. However, the garage is understood to be on a short-term lease.</p> <p>However, the site is recommended for inclusion in the Neighbourhood Plan, subject to necessary mitigation of these adverse impacts, as it scores well on sustainability, due to its proximity to the village centre.</p>

Site 9 – Land east of Nolands Farm	
Background Information	<p>The site was identified by the Lewes District Council SHLAA and the Neighbourhood Plan Call for Sites.</p> <p>It is located to the east of the village and Nolands Farm and is approximately 2.5 hectares of currently Grade 3 agricultural use.</p> <p>The site is being promoted for a minimum of 40 units within the Neighbourhood Plan period.</p>
Suitability	<p>This is a greenfield site which could provide affordable housing.</p> <p>The centre of the site is 280m from the shop.</p> <p>Proposed access would be onto Station Road and would necessitate the demolition of two existing houses. Visibility on exit from the site is limited, due to its proximity to the brow of a hill and existing parking for housing on the other side of the road.</p> <p>There is no known presence of protected/wider species and habitats and no known evidence of ancient trees or hedges or geological interest.</p> <p>There is a listed building within the vicinity.</p> <p>The site is within Flood Zone 1. Evidence of surface water issues would need to be addressed and wastewater/sewage infrastructure put in place.</p>
Achievability	<p>Plumpton Green is located in an area of strong housing market demand and so the site is considered to be commercially viable.</p>
Availability	<p>The site has been promoted through the Lewes District Council SHLAA and the Neighbourhood Plan Call for Sites and has been confirmed in subsequent discussion with the site owner.</p>

Acceptability	<p>This is a greenfield site.</p> <p>Proposed access would mean loss of two existing properties on Station Road. There are concerns about the access onto Station Road.</p> <p>Development would be at the eastern side of the site and will not therefore impact directly on any other properties. There will be impact on properties adjoining the proposed access road.</p> <p>The site is partially visible from the Downs.</p>
Strategic Environmental Assessment	<p>Overall this site scored a mix of positive, negative and neutral impacts against the sustainability framework. While scoring positively against the social objectives due to its central location, access would require two existing houses to be demolished. Of concern is the potential adverse landscape impact due to the exposed nature of the site and partial visibility from the Downs.</p>
Steering Group Recommendation	<p>The site is within easy distance of village facilities, but requires demolition of two properties to provide access.</p> <p>The Sustainability Appraisal highlighted potential adverse landscape impacts due to its visibility from the Downs.</p> <p>At 40 houses, the site does not meet the policy preference for small-scale pockets of development.</p> <p>For these reasons, the Steering Group does not recommend this site for inclusion in the Neighbourhood Plan.</p>

Site 10 - Land behind school	
Background Information	<p>The site was identified by the Lewes District Council SHLAA and the Neighbourhood Plan Call for Sites.</p> <p>The site is located to the east of the village and the school and is approximately 1.2 hectares currently Grade 3 agricultural use.</p> <p>The site is being promoted for approximately 17 units.</p>
Suitability	<p>This is a greenfield site adjacent to the planning boundary, which could provide affordable housing.</p> <p>The centre of the site is 290m from the shop.</p> <p>Access to Station Road is via North Barnes Lane, which is considered by residents to be already used to capacity. There is only shared vehicle/pedestrian access on North Barnes Lane, which is an unadopted road, and no room for pavement access to be provided.</p> <p>There is no presence of protected/wider species and habitats and no evidence of ancient trees, hedges or geological interest. There is no known evidence of archaeological interest.</p> <p>The higher northern part of the site, where development is proposed, is within Flood Zone 1. The lower southern part falls within Flood Zone 3 where the site slopes down to a natural water course. Evidence of surface water issues would need to be addressed and wastewater/sewage infrastructure put in place.</p>
Achievability	<p>Plumpton Green is located in an area of strong housing market demand and so the site is considered to be commercially viable.</p> <p>However, access is a concern as North Barnes Lane is relatively narrow.</p>
Availability	<p>The site has been promoted through the Lewes District Council SHLAA and the Neighbourhood Plan Call for Sites and has been confirmed in subsequent discussion with the developer.</p>

Acceptability	<p>This is a greenfield site which could potentially have an adverse impact on adjoining existing properties</p> <p>The site is very exposed and fully visible from the Downs.</p> <p>There is no safe pedestrian access to the site.</p> <p>Vehicle access would be via North Barnes Lane, which is inadequate for additional traffic and would impact negatively on existing traffic flows at a busy intersection with Riddens Lane and the village shop.</p>
Strategic Environmental Assessment	<p>Overall this site scored a mix of positive, negative and neutral impacts against the sustainability framework. While scoring positively against the social objectives due to its central location, access is a concern for vehicles and pedestrians. Also of concern is its exposed position, which is fully visible from the Downs.</p> <p>A potential adverse impact against Env/4 objective was identified due to flood risk.</p>
Steering Group recommendation	<p>As highlighted in the site assessment and the Sustainability Appraisal, this site is subject to a number of concerns, such as landscape/ environmental impact, flood risk and absence of suitable, safe access for pedestrians and vehicles.</p> <p>Access onto North Barnes Lane would be problematic as this route is already heavily used, and would increase the traffic flows at the centre of the village.</p> <p>The Steering Group therefore does not recommend its inclusion in the Neighbourhood Plan.</p>

Site 11 – Land south-east of railway

This site was withdrawn by the landowner in 2016 and so the site assessment has been removed.

Site 12 – Racecourse land	
Background Information	<p>The site was put forward to the Steering Group at a later stage of the site assessment process than other sites.</p> <p>It is located at the north-western corner of the racecourse, to the south of the village and the railway line, west of Plumpton Lane, and is approximately 0.7 hectares, currently vacant.</p> <p>The site is being promoted for approximately 19 units and car parking for the railway station.</p>
Suitability	<p>This site is currently primarily amenity grassland, incorporating some hard standing and a large bund of industrial hard waste. The site is adjacent to the planning boundary, which runs north of the railway line.</p> <p>It could provide affordable housing.</p> <p>The centre of the site is 260 metres from the shop, via the station bridge and East View Fields; or 350 metres via the railway crossing.</p> <p>Access to Plumpton Lane for vehicular traffic would be via a new road at the northern end of the racecourse, running parallel with the railway and exiting onto Plumpton Lane by the level crossing.</p> <p>Pedestrian access to the village would need to be provided.</p> <p>There is presence of protected species, which should be preserved, but no evidence of ancient trees and hedges. There is no indication of significant wider species and habitats or geological interest and no knowledge of archaeological interest.</p> <p>The site is within Flood Zone 1, although a small area is also within an area of 1-in-30-year surface water flood risk.</p>

Achievability	Plumpton Green is located in an area of strong housing market demand and so the site is considered to be commercially viable.
Availability	<p>The site has been promoted through the Neighbourhood Plan Call for Sites and has been confirmed in subsequent discussion with the site agents.</p> <p>The site is being promoted by the racecourse as an enabling development option that would help fund necessary improvements to the racecourse and ultimately secure its future.</p>
Acceptability	<p>Although part of the racecourse and adjoining the station, development would be clearly visible from properties in East View Fields.</p> <p>The site is partially screened and partially visible from the Downs.</p> <p>The site offers car parking for the station, which could relieve on-street parking congestion around the station.</p>
Strategic Environmental Assessment	<p>This site scored a number of positive and neutral outcomes against the sustainability framework. It scored well against the social objectives due to its close proximity to village services and the potential for additional car parking for the village.</p> <p>The site would also have a positive impact on the local economy and would help to secure the future of a key village business.</p> <p>The site is contained within the boundary of the racecourse and so would not result in the development of open greenfield land.</p>
Steering Group Recommendation	<p>This site assessed well against both suitability and acceptability criteria and is close to the station and other village amenities with potential for relief of the current excessive car parking in the village.</p> <p>However, as safe pedestrian access cannot be provided, the Steering Group does not recommend its inclusion in the Neighbourhood Plan.</p>

