**A REMINDER OF THE BACKGROUND TO THIS CONSULTATION**

**This was the Planning article in the recent Parish Council Newsletter**

**Looks like we are up and running again with the Local Plan**

Yet again it’s all change in the world of planning. You will no doubt have read headlines in the national news such as 1.5 million new homes to be built before the next election, but wading through what this actually means for us and the wider District is not easy to unpick. So let me share with you what I have understood is happening so far. In the last newsletter I wrote that Lewes District Council (LDC) had been instructed by government to pause its Local Plan-making process and revise it to meet even higher housing targets. With the latest news, these numbers appear to have increased by 3% more than I reported in September, meaning that for LDC they would now have to deliver 657 homes per year (853 including South Downs National Park). I should say that LDC is not the only Council to have an out of date plan, or increased targets, over half the country has.

We have an out of date local plan (LLP) and therefore an out of date neighbourhood plan (NNP) which makes us vulnerable to speculative developments. Lewes District Council (LDC) are starting regulation stage 18 of developing the LLP and the consultation advertised on the front of this newsletter is part one of a two-phased consultation which looks at ‘*identified development needs and the policies that it will use when making decisions*’. This includes an initial set of sites which are being considered for allocation. However **not included** in this phase, but **will be** included in a second phase consultation later in 2025, are the large sites! We have some idea of what these could be for Newick as we saw those in the last ‘technical consultation’ in July, this was a Council only consultation. Back to the one which is advertised on the front cover, this is stage 1 and starts in January. It is consulting on proposals in a new document, ‘defining our policies and early site allocation proposals’. This is based on the government’s proposed changes to the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) published very recently on 12th December. LDC are trying hard now to follow best practice by heavily involving the community at every stage. I cannot stress enough how important it is to have your voices heard, please come in your hundreds as you did this time last year and have your say. The document is large and we still have work to do on it to understand exactly what this means for Newick but we will be there on the day to help and before on Newick Talk and in the Parish News. To give you some idea here are a few headlines;

* The classification of towns and villages in the Settlement Hierarchy has changed and Newick is now classified as Tier 3 (with Plumpton Green) as a SERVICE VILLAGE,  Ringmer has been classified as Tier 2 with smaller towns as a SERVICE CENTRE. North Chailey and Cooksbridge are Tier 4. Overall this is a good thing as we were previously classified along with Ringmer. However we still consider that LDC should be true to their green principals by including areas in the lower tiers of the settlement hierarchy for some potential for growth as those which can access main towns without the need of a car. Newick is car dependent.
* Policy NE5 looks at the coalescence of villages specifically naming the land between Newick and North Chailey as a Strategic Green Gap, which is excellent. However one of the suggested sites for development is right on the parish boundary! We need to ensure that we strongly point this out in our responses. The more voices we have the more they will take note. Where we agree we need to say that loudly too!

Cllr Cathy Wickens, Chair of Planning