

An Update on Building in Barcombe

Lewes District Council (LDC) is at the first stage of producing a revised Lewes District Local Plan. The first part of this process invited landowners to put forward their suggestions for where the Council should consider new development in the district. Locations put forward in this 'call for sites' will need to be assessed to see if they are suitable for consideration in the Local Plan. Individual landowners put forward their suggestions; sites suggested do not automatically make it into the formal plan. Each suggested site goes through a full, rigorous and objective assessment to determine whether, in principle, it could be capable of delivering development. Full consultation on the Local Plan and the sites being included will take place as part of the process.

Nine sites around in and around Barcombe have been put forward by landowners, and LDC have allocated indicative housing numbers against each site. The map of these sites is on the Parish Council's website – www.barcombepc.net. For clarity the proposed sites are:

- 02BA – The land behind the Fire Station and Weald View down to the edge of the woods/railway at Sidehills, (20 houses).
- 03BA – The old Hillside Nurseries site adjacent to the back of the Recreation Ground still appears although the existing planning application was withdrawn due to access issues (10 houses).
- 05BA and 07BA – The Hillside site (sloping field on the left of the High Street) currently presented by Rydon Homes for 26 houses. The LDC document has 35 houses allocated to the two sites.
- 06BA – The land behind Grantham Bank stretching as far as, and including, the field below the village hall (120 houses).
- 09BA – The small stretch of land between East Lodge and the Village Hall (6 houses).
- 10BA – Part of the field opposite the Village Hall (Blackcurrant Field) (50 houses).
- 11BA – Land behind the houses on the Spithurst Road from a corner of Knowlands Wood to the gates of Oak Tree Farm (20 houses).
- 12BA – The site of the farm buildings at Camoys Court Farm, (10 houses).

Sites 02BA, 06BA, 09BA and 10BA were put forward under a previous 'call for sites' and were assessed by LDC but were not added to the Local Plan. The current Lewes District Council Local Plan is being revised because it cannot accommodate the most recent housing targets and is thus, in regulatory language "out of date" from May 2021. LDC are in discussions with the government inspectors to find a way to revive the Plan, however this may take two years.

In the interim, planning applications will be considered under a process termed "presumption in favour of sustainable development" which tilts the balance in favour of granting permission. LDC is providing policy documentation to developers to encourage planning applications to meet appropriate criteria. A letter received by the Parish Council from Maria Caulfield MP (11/3/2021) explained: "...government officials have said if Lewes District Council are able to provide the evidence,

as they did previously with the original local plan that they cannot increase their numbers, this could be accepted by the inspectors. This would mean no increase in housing numbers across the district and would ensure Neighbourhood Plans would be protected.”

Explanatory documents will be uploaded to the Parish Council's website as and when available, and the Parish Council will provide updates on developments.

Alan Marler

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