

**From Councillor Rob Banks, Plumpton, East Chiltington, Streat and St John Without ward**

**I would like to submit my objections to the planning application at Nolands Farm in Plumpton Green for 89 houses (LW/21/0262) on the following grounds;**

1. The cumulative impact of the 87 net houses in the Nolands Farm application would negatively affect the character of the village, added to the three sites already planned on the Eastern side of Plumpton Green but not yet all implemented, (The Glebe, Strawlands, and land to the rear of Oakfield House). This includes:
  - An unacceptable impact and pressure on the open countryside and the intrinsic rural character of the existing settlement of Plumpton Green and nearby area.
  - The 2018 Plumpton Parish Neighbourhood Plan (Policy 5) deliberately chose smaller sites so that it would be easier for new residents to integrate with the wider community. This development, by contrast, with its own community hub would in effect be “a village within a village” and harm community cohesion.
  - The pressure on infrastructure which cannot cope with the existing housing including sewerage, a poor power supply and narrow rural roads. Indeed the rural road which serves the village would be urbanised.
  - The impact on people’s mental health and well-being resulting from the loss of yet more green space.
2. This development is outside of the 2018 Neighbourhood Plan which was a democratic process and voted on by local people. This site was considered and rejected and there is no demonstrable local demand for any further housing outside of this plan which already allows for 70 more houses to be built.
3. The application (LW/17/0885) for a smaller number of houses (48) on this site was refused in February 2019 because the development would represent “incursion of development and urbanisation of open countryside”. Nothing has changed and this reason for refusal still applies. LW/21/0262 does not accord with any of the relevant made plans, namely the existing Local Plan Part 1, Local Plan Part 2 (passed only in 2020) and the Plumpton Parish Neighbourhood Plan.
4. This proposed development goes against policies adopted in the Lewes District Local Plan, including Policies DM1 and DM2.
5. Visibility from and proximity to the South Downs National Park where there is supposed to be a “soft boundary”. Sun Close on North Barnes Lane consists of 12 dwellings and is very visually prominent to the surrounding area including from the

Downs (as noted by the Neighbourhood Plan steering group); 89 houses in the surrounding fields would have significantly greater impact on the landscape – the developer admits this is just 1km from the South Downs National Park border.

6. Insufficient and deficient infrastructure to support the current housing numbers let alone additional large development. Plumpton Green suffers now from frequent overflowing mains sewage system, no mains Gas, frequent mains power supply cuts and poor broadband. It has no GP surgery.
7. LDC already has a five-year housing supply. This is a speculative application outside of the plan led process.
8. Local youth (Scouts) amenity that has been used for decades would be lost and this would be to the detriment of young people. Uses for this amenity include for the Duke of Edinburgh awards for Scouts and local schools.
9. The main road through the village will see a huge increase in vehicular traffic (I am concerned about the level of car parking proposed with an additional 210 spaces being provided – but this itself proves the developers accept most people will use their cars. Even if the developers reduce this figure slightly there will still be a large increase in traffic). It will reduce the safety for villagers walking to the school and other amenities. It will cause immense traffic congestion and pollution, not just at a key junction in the heart of the village around the village shop but the length of the single street through the village and leading into the level crossing. The associated parking restrictions for other residents in Plumpton which accompany this application if it were to go ahead would have a significant impact on current residents' lives and could create serious access to their own homes for some residents with mobility problems.
10. The application talks of minimising light pollution, but goes on to speak of street lighting lampposts limited to 3.5m in height. The Parish has a "dark skies" policy which does not favour street lighting.
11. The area has a history of flooding due to the relatively flat land east of Station Road, there is no indication how the hard road surfacing and accompanying development would not make matters worse.
12. North Barnes farm track is unsuitable as an access road for construction vehicles. Its use would severely affect residents living on the track, and on Plumpton Lane, as it would walkers, cyclists and horse riders, who all currently use the track.

13. It is surely wrong that a development of this scale has such little detail attached to it, with wider implications around layout, landscaping, visibility and traffic generation. Surely such detail should be scrutinised by democratically elected councillors.
14. If this application is passed, the village would see a 128% increase over planned growth. Plumpton would have to accommodate village expansion of 25% over a much shorter timespan than the original plan period, threatening community cohesion. The planning boundary would also be extended significantly to the east, opening up the potential for further speculative applications.
15. Lewes District Council planning officers have stated that high weight will still be accorded to both the Neighbourhood Plan policies and the Local Plan policies. The 'made' Neighbourhood Plan along with the policies in the Lewes District Local Plan Part 1 and Part 2 still comprise the development plan for the application site, and should still be considered the starting point for determination of the application.
16. I believe that the policies within the adopted development plan are in broad conformity with the NPPF and therefore that the negative impacts of the application *"Would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits, when assessed against the policies in this Framework when taken as a whole."* (NPPF Para 11.d.ii)
17. In summary, I support a Plan-led local development system. While a new one is being drawn up, Lewes District Council should use every available means to robustly defend the existing Local Plan which includes saying "no" once again to this site.