

# **Loxwood Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group**

## **Progress Update 03.02.26**

Progress on the NP is summarised on the Loxwood PC website with copies of questionnaires and presentation material:

<https://www.loxwood-pc.gov.uk/neighbourhood-plan.html>

## **Consultancy Support**

LNPSG are scheduled to meet (Teams) with James Garside (JG) on 10<sup>th</sup> February 2025.

## **SEA and HRA**

Two technical documents are required, an SEA (Strategic Environment Assessment) and an HRA (Habitats Regulations Assessment).

The SEA scope has been extended slightly to include a Sustainability Appraisal and has been submitted to the statutory consultee bodies - Natural England, Environment Agency and Historic England. Some general comments have been received none of which require any significant revisions.

The draft SEA Report completed by JG has been reviewed by the Steering Group (SG). Following discussion with CDC (Valerie Dobson) JG is addressing issues related to site allocations and will issue an update shortly.

Consultants have been engaged to complete the HRA. Substantive progress on this is dependent on completion of the draft NP.

## **Farm Close**

The Farm Close was allocated under the original 2015 version of the NP for 17 homes. However, for various reasons including Water Neutrality it remains undeveloped.

The developers are now expected to propose a development of up to 35 homes. LNPSG believe that 18 of these dwellings should be able to be counted

towards the required 220 homes allocation from Loxwood - JG will confirm this with Valerie Dobson at CDC.

### **Hawthorn Cottage**

LNPSG's present view of this site is that although it is well located in the central part of the parish, it is not sustainable at this time for the following reasons:

- No provision of affordable housing
- Marginal financial viability means it may not progress
- Lack of adequate foul water drainage pending reinforcement of the highway drain.
- Lack of sewerage treatment capacity
- To protect the habitat of barbastelle bats, 10M bat protection corridors are required on the N,W and S borders of the site – if these are fully implemented, as they should be, the site will not support the number of houses proposed.

The Hawthorn Cottage planning application was refused by the CDC planning committee on Wednesday 5<sup>th</sup> November.

Although they do intend to appeal the refusal decision by CDC (and expect to win) the proposers are expected to propose a revised plan that they believe addresses most of LPC's objections.

This revised proposal is expected to be submitted early in 2026.

### **Headfoldswood Farm**

There is an issue with groundwater flood risk that JG will include in the SEA.

### **Land South of Loxwood Farm Place**

This site for 24 homes received approval before the cut-off date for inclusion within the 188 homes allocation required of Loxwood by the CDC Local Plan. However, the site would provide access to the Loxwood Place site and revised plans have been submitted and approved by CDC that would provide this access.

### **Local Green Spaces**

Four local green spaces will be identified in the LNP:

- Land at North Hall
- Loxwood Sports Association Playing Fields
- Jubilee Gardens
- Land at the front of Nursery Green

It is anticipated that additional green spaces will be designated in future developments.

The owners of these sites will be consulted in due course.

### **Non-Designated Heritage Assets (NDHA)**

In the revised LNP 2019 – 2037, 48 Non-Designated Village Heritage Assets are identified. These include not only buildings but also ‘spaces and outlooks’. These are being reviewed and assessed against CDC’s Matrix. Owners of the buildings identified will be consulted upon their inclusion in due course.

### **NPPF 2026 and National Decision Making Policies (NDMP)**

The government has published an updated National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) together with a new National Decision Making Policies(NDMP) document.

There are changes to the NPPF but NDMPs are a new concept. They are policies that will apply everywhere in the country when applications are being considered. The government’s aim is to introduce a more consistent and ‘rule-based’ approach to decision making which gives local planning authorities less scope to produce their own variations and additions to planning requirements.

To enforce this top down approach, new local plans and new or revised neighbourhood plans cannot include any policies that ***duplicate, substantively restate or modify NDMPs***. With a few exceptions they cannot set standards or benchmarks for applicants to meet which differ from those in building regulations or NDMPs unless this is for a very specific local reason. Once NPPF 2026 is in effect, any policy in an existing neighbourhood plan or local plan that is inconsistent with something in an NDMP will carry ‘very little weight’. In practical terms those policies will be ‘over-written’ by the new NDMPs.

Both the NPPF 2026 and NDMP are not yet 'adopted' and could change before they are so we cannot yet assess the Plan against them. However, it is clear that if NPPF/NDMP stay in their current form then it will put a number of policies at risk.

We do have a number of locally specific policies that should stand up against the NPPF/NDMP. For example, the Wey and Arun Canal Policy, traffic calming, site allocations and local green space policies are all very much locally specific. Policies relating to street lighting, flooding/foul water/drainage, broadband and new policies relating to sustainable construction and biodiversity may be more at risk.

## **2021 Census Data**

The 2021 Census Data has been reviewed and prepared for inclusion in the revised NP document. However, one significant anomaly in the data needs to be investigated. This is an apparent fall in the population from 1,827 in 2011 to 1,720 in 2021 despite over 100 additional homes built and occupied since 2011.

## **Neighbourhood Plan Document**

JG has produced an updated document but more work is required on the document formatting, review of policies and incorporation of updated 2021 Census data. All of these will be the principal subject of the LNPSG meeting on 10<sup>th</sup> February.

## **Next Steps**

- NP policies continue to be reviewed by LNPSG taking note of expected NPPF and NDMP impact.
- Draft NP to be updated with 2021 Census data.
- Draft NP formatting to be addressed and revised draft issued.
- NDHA to be reviewed and updated.
- An update to residents on the NP needs to be planned.