

# Loxwood Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group

## Progress Update 03.03.26

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 met (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 (including a Sustainability Appraisal) 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 and are due to present their proposal to Loxwood PC on 3<sup>rd</sup> March 2026. LNPSG believe that 18 of these dwellings can be counted towards the required 220 homes allocation from Loxwood.

## **Hawthorn Cottage**

LNPSG's present view of this site is that although it is well located in the central part of the parish, the original proposal for 19 homes is not sustainable at this time.

The Hawthorn Cottage planning application was refused by the CDC planning committee on Wednesday 5<sup>th</sup> November. This decision is now the subject of an appeal by the proposers.

However, the proposers have now submitted a revised plan that is intended to address most of LPC's objections. The planning application will be considered by LPC at the planning meeting on 3<sup>rd</sup> March 2026.

## **Headfoldswood Farm**

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

## **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

The owners of these sites have been notified.

## **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 have been reviewed and assessed against CDC's Matrix. Owners of the buildings identified have been notified of their inclusion.

## **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.

JG has reviewed the plan taking into account the new NPPF and advises that so as long as we remove any major areas of friction he does not see a need to wait for the publication of the NPPF before proceeding with the Reg 14. There may be some changes to the NPPF but we wouldn't expect anything significant to be added (more likely taken away or watered down) and these can be factored in after the Reg 14 consultation.

## **2021 Census Data**

The 2021 Census Data has been reviewed and prepared for inclusion in the revised NP document.

### **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.

Review of the document was the subject of the LNPSG meeting on 10<sup>th</sup> February. Further feedback comments have been sent to JG who will issue a revised document shortly.

### **Next Steps**

- NP policies continue under reviewed by LNPSG and JG 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.