

## Questions for Maria Caulfield

1. Please can you confirm that your understanding of the current situation is unchanged from your email response to the Parish Council on 16th February 2021. Three weeks have past and LDC have not changed their understanding of the position. The Standard method appears to be the only calculation allowed under policy which means LDC housing target went from 800/year amended to 782/year. It is presently 345/year. (Local Plan inspector thought 500/year was undeliverable in Lewes, which it is, and set the target at 345/year). You were not specific in your email; what is the exact number that you understand LDC has to meet?
2. These figures are centrally imposed. Is there a legal basis for the numbers or is it simply policy?
3. On the understanding that there is no increase in housing numbers from the 345 originally allocated, of which 275 is the LDC target in LPP1 and that LDC has met the minimum threshold for performance at 86% that was accepted in the High Court and has met the Housing Delivery Test during 2020 Housing Delivery Test: 2020 measurement - GOV.UK ([www.gov.uk](http://www.gov.uk)) , do you have an understanding of what is preventing LDC just updating the existing plan or relying on the sites within it for the new plan?
4. We believe that there is a statutory duty on local authorities to produce and maintain an up-to-date local plan. We are disappointed that the NPPF policy requirement has been changed to shorten the effective life of plans that has meant the process cannot realistically meet the requirements. Indeed, it is as if local councils have been set up to fail by changes in policy that mandate unrealistic/unachievable timescales to implement a new plan. We do not think it right that LDC are penalised by being given unachievable numbers from the Standard Method. LDC believes their new plan will be in place in late 2023 which is a long way off and presents an opportunistic window for development that is not plan-led.

Given these changes referred to above, what efforts are being made by you and the Ministry to ensure that the new Local Plan will be in place as quickly as possible? Specifically, can you tell us what action has been taken thus far and what further actions are planned to bring forward this date in a significant way?

5. Given that plan-led development is of maximum priority for the government, please provide some specific guidance on the weight likely to be attributed to the Plumpton Parish Neighbourhood Plan and current Local Plan post May for new planning applications prior to the new local plan being completed? We are advised that just because a plan is out of date it does not mean it is not up to date, your thoughts on this please.
6. Given that our communities and green spaces are at risk through no fault of our own, and that the government has implemented changes in the NPPF that were not practical to execute in such a time frame, what is the government going to do to protect our communities and green lands from speculative development? Please give specifics
7. Can you please advise what work is being done to appeal the housing number required under the Standard Method?

8. Please can you provide us with your understanding of what 'exceptional circumstances' might be attributed and faced by the District that can be used to appeal the numbers under the Standard Method? Please give specifics
9. Plumpton already suffers from frequent capacity and reliability issues on most infrastructure. Even before the threat of significant speculative development we already have a 10% increase in dwellings under planned growth, with no commitments to bring the existing infrastructure up to spec. Who is responsible for, and going to meet, the governments manifesto commitment of 'infrastructure first' in planning?
10. What was the substance of your 16th December meeting? The increase arose from the Standard Method, which is the only calculation available to LDC unless exceptional circumstances apply - does 16th December reflect that exceptional circumstances have been allowed? Surely, as you yourself have confirmed the Standard Method target should not be implemented and won't be if there is a current plan, in place, what will you do to protect your local parishes from over development given the figure is unachievable?
11. We have been advised that LDC was not failing in any legal duty, only a policy one, please confirm your understanding?