

BARCOMBE NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN

DRAFT HOUSING POLICIES - GENERAL

Policy 1: Parameters for Housing Allocation

The Barcombe Neighbourhood Plan supports new housing development of at least 30, and up to no more than 50, new housing units in the Neighbourhood Plan Area on allocated and windfall sites during the period from 2010 to 2030. Development, other than windfall, extensions and conversions, will be in Barcombe Cross.

Justification for Policy 1.

Policy 1 makes provision for an appropriate level of new housing to support the future needs of the Parish in line with the Lewes District Council Joint Core Strategy Policy 1 and anticipated Local Plan Part 2. Core Policy 1 of Part 1 stresses that the overall and parish/town specific housing allocations, which in the case of Barcombe is 30 units at Barcombe Cross, are minimum values. The Barcombe Neighbourhood Plan supports this provision but the small scale development involved is expected to result in a total of up to 50 units, a level which it is considered the community and the landscape and infrastructure can absorb, i.e. through social and environmental sustainability. The reasons are set out below.

The current housing stock associated with the settlement of Barcombe Cross represents 55% (342) of the dwellings identified in the Parish in the 2011 Census; most (98%) are located within the Village Planning Boundary defined in the 2003 Lewes Local Plan. This situation has arisen through gradual additions to the original post WW1 village, first of local authority housing and then subsequently by both local authority and private housing schemes in the 1960s, 1970s and 1980s. As a result, with the exception of a few small unconnected parcels of land amounting in total to less than 1 ha (?), substantial sites with potential for housing no longer exist within the Boundary. In order to meet the requirements of the housing allocation in Part 1 of the JCS, areas outside the present Boundary will require to be identified and the Boundary itself enlarged.

However, on environmental and landscape grounds the land surrounding Barcombe Cross is considered to be capable of accommodating a limited amount of additional development. The 2014 Joint Core Strategy background paper, "Justification for the Housing Strategy", stated "the ridge-top location of the village, which offers extensive views north and east across the countryside of the Low Weald, limits opportunities for further housing growth in the village without substantial harm to its rural character and landscape setting". These features were outlined in the District Council's 2012 Landscape Character Assessment and 2013 Rural Settlements Study, the former concluding that the capacity of the landscape surrounding the Village to accommodate development was in the main low to negligible, and the ability of the landscape to cope with the visual effect of development was regarded as being from medium to low. Barcombe Cross was therefore not included in the Assessment paper's group of Low Weald villages considered to have the greatest potential for growth.

As judged by the 2015 Barcombe Housing Survey, the Barcombe Community demonstrates a positive response to the prospect of future housing development, a reflection of the understanding that communities need to change in order to survive. For example, 67% of respondents indicated their willingness to accept no more than 50 additional houses (cf. 8% for not more than 100 houses; 25% against any extra homes) over the plan period of 20 years. This degree of housing growth is roughly similar to that experienced, and accommodated by, Barcombe Parish during the past 5-6 decades and thus represents an escalation in housing provision.

As described in the Section "Community Profile" the village of Barcombe Cross has, or is in close proximity to, a number of basic facilities which are well used by the existing population. However, together with a limited public transport system (bus) and served by an extensively used network of C and minor roads, these facilities would be overwhelmed by a large increase in population. This was recognized in the Core Strategy's relatively limited allocation of new housing to the village, a reflection of the sustainability of the settlement. (N.B. The allocation to Barcombe in the original draft of Part 1 of the JCS consisted of 10 additional houses. The

allocation was subsequently increased to “at least 30” only in the final adopted Strategy.) There is, therefore, an argument to be made for growth at a level which is not only appropriate to the sustainability characteristics of the location but which can be absorbed by the settlement and the community. For the reasons given above, it is envisaged that the additional housing development in Barcombe during the period 2010 to 2030 will be in the range 30-50 units.

Policy 2: Housing – General Principles

Proposals for new housing will be supported provided the following criteria are met:

2.1 Scale, massing and height of buildings

Scale: individual developments (excluding windfalls) consisting of at least 11 and no more than 30 houses would be preferred.

Density: between 20 and 30 units per hectare as set out in the LDC Joint Core Strategy

Height: buildings to have a maximum of two stories, plus roof space which may provide living accommodation.

2.2 Design and Layout

- Variety of design in a proposed development will be supported but it must respect the design of any adjacent buildings and the spatial, visual and historical context in which it resides, including Barcombe Cross Conservation Area, and as described in the Barcombe Neighbourhood Plan Character Assessment.
- Housing design based on sustainable homes criteria* will be supported
- The general shape and size of buildings, including roof pitches, to respect the local character of the surrounding area as described in the Barcombe Neighbourhood Plan Character Assessment and Village Design Statement.
- New housing to be built to Lifetime Homes standards.

*Sustainable homes criteria:

Energy Use and CO2 emissions; Water-saving measures; Sourcing and environmental impact of materials; Surface water run-off; Waste management and recycling; Pollution; Health and well-being; Management; Ecology

2.3 Materials

Materials used in external elevations and roofs must respect the local character of the surrounding area as described in the Barcombe Neighbourhood Plan Character Assessment. Hard and soft landscape materials to be used to reflect local landscape character and distinctiveness and the use of locally characteristic native planting to maximise landscape and wildlife benefits. (*see LDC landscape character assessment ?*)

2.4 Types of Housing

Small houses with 1-3 bedrooms are the preferred type of development.

Proposals for new housing development in the Parish must follow the Affordable Housing Target/Threshold in Core Policy 1 of the Lewes JCS Part 1, viz. schemes with 11 or more units to have 40% affordable housing. All proposals of five or more units should contain a proportion of smaller units with 2-3 bedrooms to meet the needs of young families, starter homes and smaller homes for the elderly and disabled.

2.5 Car Parking

All new housing developments to include a minimum number of off-street car parking spaces per dwelling relevant to the size of the property, e.g. 1 and 2 spaces for 1 and 2-3 bedrooms respectively, the final number being determined by the County Council's parking calculator.

Justification for Policy 2.

Barcombe Cross is a small “hill-top” village located in the Sussex countryside, a large proportion of which is contained in a long established Conservation Area. For many years development has been confined in the main to the area within a Planning Boundary defined by the previous Lewes District Plan. Subsequent development within this Boundary has resulted

in a lack of available land capacity to allow further significant expansion of the village. In order to satisfy the housing numbers allocated in the new Lewes District JCS additional development will have to occur on the periphery of Barcombe Cross with an amended Planning Boundary. Consequently, such new development should be required to integrate with the spatial, visual and historical context in which it resides, and reflect the design and layout of adjacent buildings, particularly in locations bordering the Barcombe Cross Conservation Area.

The general principles described in Policy 2 are designed to provide a statutory basis for such physical integration to occur. In addition, Policy 2 defines a necessary role for new development to provide affordable housing including homes for both young families and retired residents, a substantial number of the latter having expressed an interest in “down-sizing” to smaller accommodation (*Reference to Demographics Section*).

Policy 3: Housing on “Windfall” Sites and Backland Development

Windfall development is defined as any residential development that is given approval on land or buildings not specifically allocated in Part 2 of the JCS. It may include backland and tandem development.

3.1 Proposals for developments on previously developed “brownfield” or unallocated sites will be supported provided they are small, well designed residential schemes which do not have a detrimental effect on the surrounding area and neighbouring properties.

3.2 In principle development will be supported on sites of less than 5 dwellings on previously developed land.

3.3 Proposals for backland and tandem development in gardens of existing properties will be supported provided no potential loss of amenity of neighbouring properties can be shown, e.g. privacy, daylight, visual intrusion, car parking, landscape screening, additional traffic, resulting from the development

3.4 Any windfall development must have a direct highway frontage

3.5 Housing on sites identified in Clauses 3.1 – 3.4 should comply with all relevant aspects of Policy 2.

Justification for Policy 3

In order to integrate new development with existing properties and buildings, it is necessary that all new housing on windfall and backland sites should follow the general principles set out in Clauses 3.1 – 3.5 and in Policy 2.

Policy 4: House extensions

Proposals for extensions to existing dwellings will be supported provided the following criteria are met:

- The general principles set out in Policy 2 should be followed so that the scale, height and form fits unobtrusively with the existing building and the character of the street scene.
- Spacing between buildings to respect the character of the street scene
- Gaps which provide public views out of the village to surrounding countryside to be maintained
- Materials to be compatible with the materials of the existing building
- The traditional boundary treatment of an area to be retained and, where feasible, reinforced
- The privacy, daylight, sunlight and outlook of adjoining properties are safeguarded

Justification for Policy 4

The criteria outlined above are required to allow integration of new development with existing properties and buildings.

Policy 5: Conversions to housing

Proposals for conversion of buildings to housing will be supported provided the following criteria are met:

- The general principles set out in Policy 2 should be followed so that the scale, height and form fit unobtrusively with existing buildings and the character of the street scene, and there is no adverse and unacceptable impact on the landscape and visual amenity of the area
- Spacing between buildings to respect the character of the street scene
- Gaps which provide public views out of the village to surrounding countryside to be maintained
- The traditional boundary treatment of an area to be retained and, where feasible, reinforced
- The privacy, daylight, sunlight and outlook of adjoining properties are safeguarded
- Safe and convenient access arrangements to the site exist or can be created
- Sufficient off-street parking can be provided to ensure that highway safety is maintained

Justification for Policy 5

The criteria outlined above are required to allow integration of re-developed buildings with existing properties and buildings and/or prevent adverse and unacceptable impact on the landscape and visual amenity of the area.