



# NEWICK PARISH COUNCIL

## Objection to application LW/25/0148

Phased outline development for up to 250 new homes (including 40% affordable), access, landscaping, open space and other associated infrastructure with all matters reserved except site access

Land At Goldbridge Farm Goldbridge Road Newick East Sussex BN8 4QP



## Introduction

- Since the 1960's Newick has been a plan-led village. What had once been a mainly fruit growing area, between the main road (A272) and Allington Road, became unviable and after detailed consultation with the residents, the Ashdown Estate was built on this site.
- Since then, most of the families have remained but their children have moved away, because in the subsequent decades, there was a lack of housing at prices that would attract further young families. Being plan led, NPC recognised this need and two exception sites Alexander Mead phase 1 (2003-2006) and phase 2 (2011) were built, all are affordable housing run by Hastoe, who specialise in providing sustainable and affordable rural housing to enable local people to remain within their communities.
- In 2012 NPC were asked by LDC (along with other settlements in the District) to find sites for an additional minimum 100 dwellings. Three years later in 2015 NPC produced a Neighbourhood Plan (NNP) following an exhaustive consultation process with all of the residents. Our Plan was not only the first in East Sussex it was also one of the first in the Country. Four sites were chosen by the residents, Vernons Close (2), Mantell Close (31), Berry Croft (39) and Oak Park Place (36) making a total of 108 the remainder of which are currently under construction.
- We are very aware since we made our NNP that there has been a growing frustration especially from young people that what is promoted as affordable is out of their reach. This is not what we planned for in 2015.
- To now receive this current application which will expand the Village by at least 25% with minimal consultation, has united the residents to object in a way unprecedented in living memory. At the time of writing LDC has received 267 comments of which 202 object and all are from Newick area. Of the 62 who are supporting only 20 live in the Newick area.
- Therefore NPC, representing our enraged residents, unanimously objects to this application and this document offers sound planning reasons to support our objection.
- The layout of these reasons follows the applicants design and access statement (D&A) where we lay out a detailed and evidence-based argument that the Goldbridge site is **Unsustainable**.

## Site location

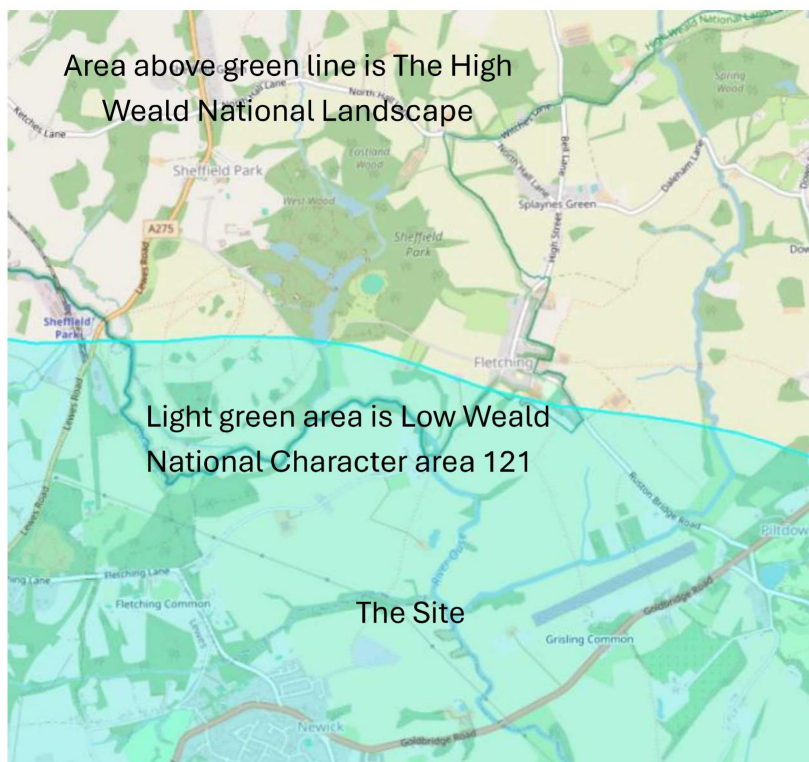
On page 1 of the D&A it states;

‘The document seeks to set out a transparent and methodical approach to the master planning process that responds to planning policy and best practice in **urban design** and placemaking’

NPC considers that describing their approach to this development as being **Urban** shows their total disregard of the importance of the site itself and its setting within the village of Newick.

The Parish of Newick is a largely rural area of just under eight square kilometres (three square miles) in the North of Lewes District (LDC). There has been a settlement here for well over a thousand years. At its centre is the Village of Newick, this being the only settlement of any size in the Parish. The Village has about 900 dwellings, plus the outlying rural properties in the Parish makes about 1125 properties in total. The land at Goldbridge Farm, the application site (the Site), lies to the east of the Village Green (one of two conservation areas) and considered by residents to be the heart of the village.

Therefore the application would add an additional 25% of properties to the Village and just over 22% to the whole Parish. This is a totally unacceptable increase on the already stretched infrastructure of the village which will be referred to again in this document.



Map 1



As can be seen from map 1 on page 2, the site lies in the Low Weald of East Sussex. The Low Weald is a recognised National Character Area number 121 that is under huge threat from unsympathetic and over-large proposed developments. It is also visible from the High Weald National Landscape, one of only 46 National Landscapes in the UK. These are places of national importance, protected for the nation's benefit, cherished by their communities and celebrated by the Nation.

If approved, the development suggested in this speculative application will fundamentally change the nature of Newick village and its environs.

The site has been written about a number of times in the last few years.

In the NPC Character Assessment, which formed part of the supporting research for NNP, the site is mostly in Area 11, Goldbridge Farm and is described in Italics below.

*'Most of this area comprises a working farm (Goldbridge Farm) with large fields in an open landscape. Significant hedgerow removal has occurred in past years together with some woodland clearance. The north boundary is the stream, which is also the parish boundary. The stream is bordered by a strip of damp woodland (Goldbridge Wood) identified as ancient woodland. The east boundary is the River Ouse and its flood plain identified as a site of nature conservation importance. At two points the historic parish boundary still follows the old now redundant course of the river which was straightened in the 18th century to enable navigation by barges. An old lock once existed here as part of the navigation facilities, now listed as a 'monument' site.*

*In the south-east corner of the area lies the Grade 2 listed farmhouse, Goldbridge Farm, together with a cottage and the farm buildings complex. This spot is recognised as of archaeological interest. Other commercial uses operate at the farm with visible external storage. The south boundary is Goldbridge Road (A272) with its wide verge and hedgerow extending to the edge of the built-up area of Newick. The verge is identified by the East Sussex County Council as a 'notable road verge' designated for its wildlife interest. A small field at the western end is grassed and used on occasions for village events and activities. Most of the west boundary abuts the built-up area of Newick. A small lake lies near this boundary with surrounding trees and vegetation. In the core of the area lies the village sewage works with filter beds, sludge beds, a tall communications mast and some planted trees. Also in the core is an area which has been the subject of tipping of waste but which has now been planted with trees. East of this is a strip of woodland with a stream (The Ghyll) identified as ancient woodland.*

*Pylons and cables of the National Grid 400kV line cross this Goldbridge Farm area. Public footpath number 10 follows through the area from Cricketfield linking to Fletching parish footpaths.*

*Influences from beyond parish boundary*





*A surviving structure from World War 2 (pillbox type 28A) by the flood plain in Fletching parish is visible from Goldbridge. From the top of Goldbridge Hill to the east there are wide views westwards over this part of Newick parish.*

### *Main issues*

*This farmland, extending up to the edge of the built-up area makes a very important contribution to the rural setting of the village. The Landscape Capacity Study refers to this area in Appendix E as 'B1' and under 'management opportunities' states 'continue with agricultural use'. The long, wide view northwards from the south-western corner of this area (near Tollgate Cottage) has long been recognised by the District Council as of significance. The 1963 Newick Village Plan refers to 'good views to Fletching over very open country'. The Newick Green Conservation Area Appraisal 2006 shows it as an 'important view' illustrating 'Newick's position within a rural landscape' (paragraph 4.3.2 and section 6). The Landscape Capacity Study 2012 paragraph 3.2.5 refers to '...long and exposed views to the north'. The Rural Settlement Study 2013 refers to 'longer views towards the high ground of Ashdown Forest'. This view is significant because it firmly illustrates that Newick is a village set in countryside. There is also a fine, long view from the start of the public footpath number 10 as it leaves Cricketfield.*

*The wide roadside verge and the hedges alongside the A272, with native flora (anemones, celandines, violets, milkmaids etc in springtime) should be recognised as part of the rural landscape, providing a rural setting for the village. Urban features or non-native planting should be avoided. Some tree planting at the sewage works, for screening by the mast, has been of non-indigenous species, inappropriate to this countryside setting. Consideration could be given to any opportunities to ameliorate this. Opportunities should be taken when they arise to improve screening of external storage or associated non-agricultural features at the Goldbridge Farm complex of buildings. The high voltage electricity pylons and cables severely dominate and intrude upon the scene for their entire length across this area. The listed farmhouse, the nature conservation areas, the ancient woodlands and the archaeological interest deserve protection appropriate to their designation.'*

Many objections have been received concerning the Wastewater Treatment works which although not actually on the site are directly adjacent to it. In 2024 a proposed development on a brownfield site on the High Street received the communication below from Southern Water, one of the statutory consultees.

**Proposal:** Conversion of existing commercial building to provide 8 flats and erection of 11 new build residential dwellings with associated secure cycle storage provision, vehicle parking, bin storage and landscaping, demolition of existing buildings.

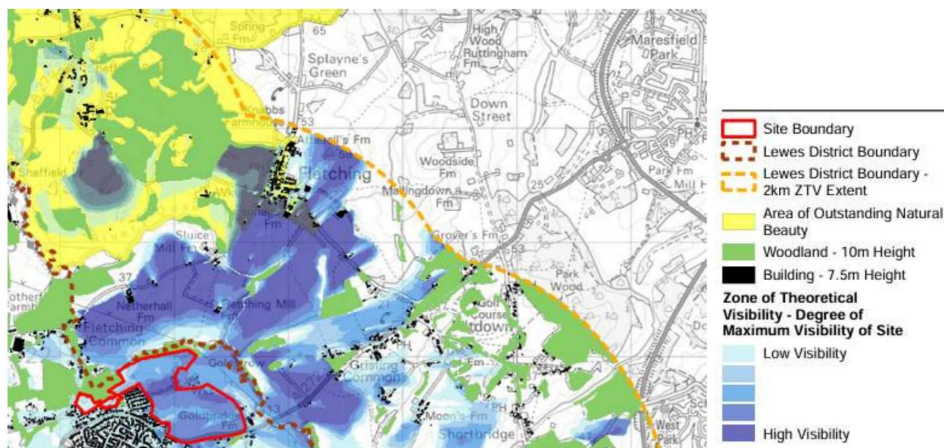
**Site:** LW/23/0606: - 16 High Street, Newick, East Sussex, BN8 4LQ.

Further to our response dated 26/07/2023 and additional information provided by the developer regarding onsite drainage. Southern Water would have the following comments to make:

#### Wastewater Treatment Works Proximity

In determining the application, we ask that the Planning Authority take into account the provisions of Paragraphs 180, 182 and 183 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) regarding the proposed location of development in relation to existing uses that may be a source of pollution (in terms of odour). We apply a precautionary buffer zone for any development located within 500 metres of the boundary of a WWTW. The proposed development is located approximately 330 metres from the Newick Wastewater Treatment Works, and as such we have applied this requirement to our planning consultation response. Please contact Southern Water to discuss and

Finally the LDC landscape sensitivity assessment 2023 (see map 2 ) clearly shows that the Site is highly visible and no amount of mitigation will protect this important area.



Map 2

NPC concludes that given the strength of evidence of the sites position it is totally unsuitable for any type of development at all.

### **Planning Policy. Local**

In the D&A, policies from the NNP have been listed and a map showing sites selected for our NNP with the inferred conclusion that this would make the Site a suitable choice. This is incorrect. The NNP sites were for about 100 houses rigorously consulted on by all of the residents from 12 sites which did not include the Site. Four were chosen for what ended up as 108 dwellings, the last of which is just under construction.

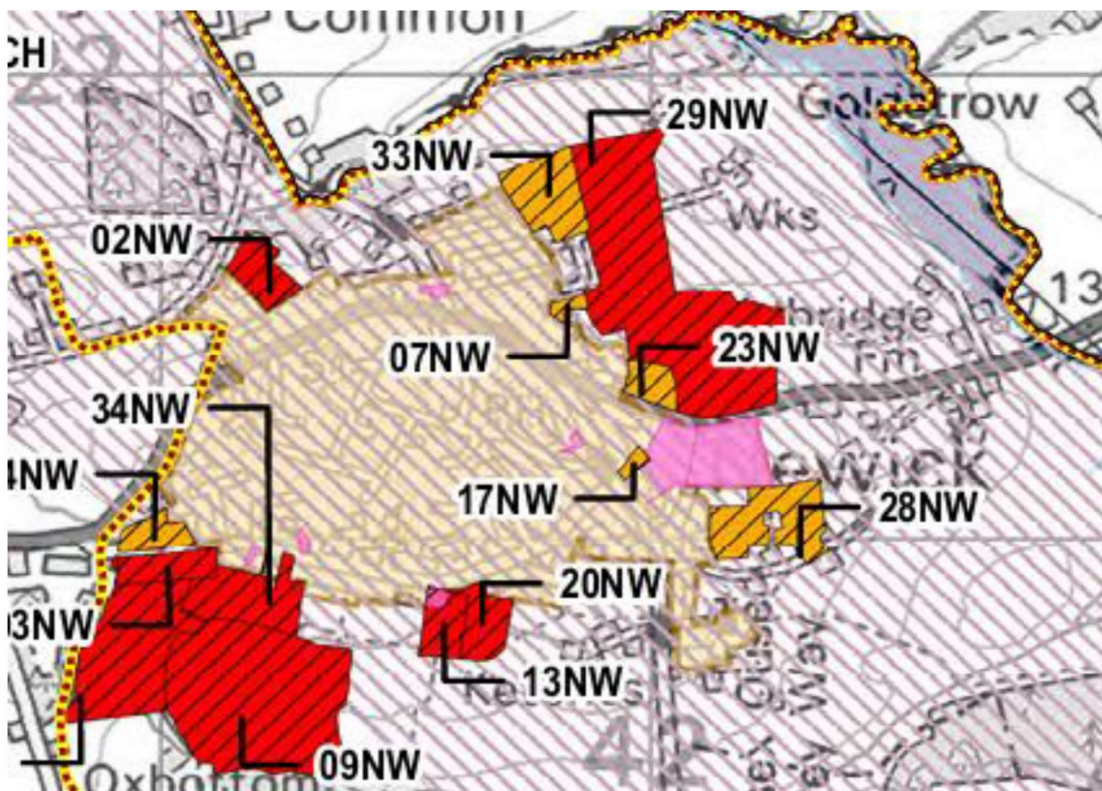
The Lewes Local Plan (LLP) emerging local plan evidence base refers to three important pieces of work but fails to include the most important one which is the Land Availability Assessment (LAA) where this Site is evaluated along with all sites put forward in the District.



The site is listed as 29NW and the conclusion is that it is neither deliverable or developable for residential development. Under the justification conclusion it states;

'The site is greenfield adjacent to the planning boundary of Newick. Unknown achievability of vehicle access with suitable sightlines if considering access from Goldridge Road. Within walking distance of local shop and public transport (bus stop). Site is in a visually sensitive location due to open views to the north. Adjacent to The Green Conservation Area. The Conservation Area Appraisal refers to the landscape setting as integral to the character of the conservation area with views out across open fields (specifically north east from Goldridge Road). Development would extend into the countryside detracting from the character of the village. There are also a number of Listed Buildings within the Conservation Area. The site falls within Parcel Newick B which is assessed to be of high-medium sensitivity to large scale residential development in the Landscape Sensitivity Study. Large scale residential development in this area would detract from the contained nucleated character of Newick and would conflict with the existing settlement pattern. It would also encroach on the character of the Ouse Valley corridor. Residential development within 7km of the Ashdown Forest would be required to provide mitigation of recreational pressure on the SPA. Ancient Woodland to the east, woodland on site should be retained, ecological investigation required.'

On the map of LAA appraisal for the area (see map 3 below) the vast majority of the site is shown in red meaning neither developable or deliverable.



Map 3

NPC is assured by LDC that the Site does not appear in their emerging local plan.



## National Policy

It has been widely reported in the media that the current government have a strong intention to build almost anywhere. However, the latest amendments to the NPPF December 2024 demonstrate that they have acknowledged this should not always be the case. Under 11 d) ii) (bottom of page 6) which refers to the tilted balance exercise, now directs that permission should be granted unless...

‘any adverse impacts of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits, when assessed against the policies in this Framework taken as a whole, **having particular regard to key policies for directing development to sustainable locations, making effective use of land, securing well-designed places and providing affordable homes, individually or in combination.**’

The bit in bold type was only brought in the December 2024 edition and places more emphasis on developing in sustainable locations.

### A sustainable location

In order to access this section correctly we have referred once again to national guidance from the NPPF December 2024. Under paragraph 7, written by the United Nations;

the objective of **sustainable development** can be summarised as ‘meeting the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.’ The planning system has three overarching objectives, which are interdependent and need to be pursued in mutually supportive ways which are **economic, social and environmental**.

**Economic** includes according to the NPPF, identifying and coordinating the provision of infrastructure. For the Site application, this has received more objections than any other issue. **Social** asks for safe places, with accessible services and open spaces that reflect current and future needs and support communities’ health, social and cultural well-being; and **Environmental** is about protecting and enhancing our natural, built and historic environment; making effective use of land, improving biodiversity, using natural resources prudently, minimising waste and pollution, and mitigating and adapting to climate change, including moving to a low carbon economy.

As the NPPF suggests these 3 objectives are often interdependent. Below are the main issues raised by the residents in no particular order because of their interdependency.

- a) The local Health Centre is felt to be at crisis point with appointments being offered up to a month ahead, or at the ‘sister’ Heathfield practice 15 miles away and not on a direct bus route, therefore inaccessible to many of our residents.

- b) The Water and Sewage system is at breaking point with frequent low pressure and already this year the threat of water shortages. The sewage system is not fit for purpose, and fig.1 on page 9 shows a rising profile between 2021 and 2024 of 518 'Spills' over 4295 hours. The stations where the sewage spills are taking place are at Jackies Lane and the Waste Water Treatment Works at the Site.

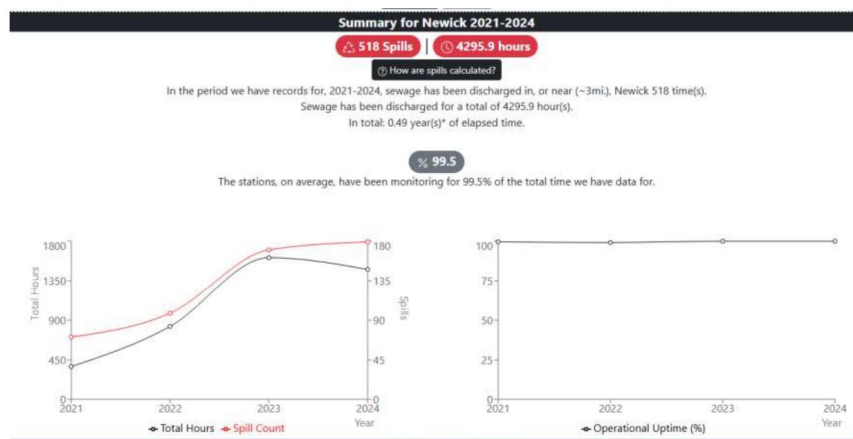


Fig. 1

- c) The schools are one of the most worrying statistics of infrastructure. Put simply all of our local schools are at breaking point. See below for the latest figures.

| Institution       | Spaces available for September 2025 | Applications received for September 2025 |
|-------------------|-------------------------------------|--|
| Newick Primary    | 30                                  | 43                                       |
| Fletching Primary | 15                                  | 22                                       |
| Chailey Secondary | 180*                                | 511                                      |
| Uckfield College  | 270                                 | 422                                      |

\*note the furthest offer made for someone out of catchment for space number 180 lived 6117 metres (about 3 miles) from the school.

- d) The most surprising category under the heading of Infrastructure is the Police. As one of the statutory consultees The Police and Crime Commissioner for Sussex (PCC) has responded forcefully in a 25 page document, saying,
- “The large numbers of housing being developed across Sussex and more specifically with Lewes District and Newick, will place a significant additional demand upon our police service. These impacts will be demonstrated in this submission and the necessity investment in additional police services is a key planning consideration in determination of this planning application.”
- She goes on to say that what is at present farmland has negligible effect on policing, but if developed into a 250 dwelling estate would create a significant impact on her police budget which does not currently exist. She then goes on in considerable detail a list of the financial implications for additional staff, training, equipment and office space etc. This would usually have been covered by CIL money, central government etc but the excessive house building programme nationally has exacerbated the problem and forces all over the country are saying the same thing.
- “This is already evident across Sussex due to the significant numbers of housing being developed and clearly shown by increasing numbers of recorded crimes in Sussex over the last year.”

#### Additional officers/staff required as a result of 250 additional homes

|  |      |   |
|--|------|---|
| Total Additional Officers Required             | 1.18 | 150 (expected No. incidents arising from development) / 127 (No. incidents attended per year by an officer) |
| Total Additional Support Staff (Local/Central) | 1.70 | (250 / 147)<br>(no. of new households / Existing no of support staff per household)                         |

The letter goes on to say that unless the developer makes significant contributions then the PCC will be **objecting** to the application. The full letter is available on the LDC planning portal.

NPC finds it shocking that should this application go ahead then our virtually crime free village will be lost forever.

- e) Effect on public rights of way, we have over 8 miles of public rights of way (PRoW) across the Parish ; there are two which lead from the site – footpath 10 which goes to Fletching starts on firm surface until the wastewater treatment works when it heads north eastward across arable farm land. The Owners of the neighbouring farmer expressed their concerns, “we own the farm the other side of the woods, Fletching Mill Farm, and the increased level of footfall on the footpath with dogs not being kept under control causing immense stress to our sheep and cattle - people not clearing up behind their dogs which can cause Neospora to our animals which is a great worry to us. Would the developers be prepared to fence in the entire footpath on our farm to try and keep our animals safe and compensate us for our loss of income and to the security in general to our farm? We have over many years had the hedges on the farm laid to encourage wildlife and farm in a way that is sensitive to wildlife and this amount of housing is likely to destroy all our hard work over many years it is very upsetting. The photographs (below) demonstrate how water laden the land becomes in winter compared to summer, heavy footfall would make this even worse.” See photo montage 1 on page 11

Footpath 11 is the other RoW leading from the site up to Newick Hill. Whilst on firm ground as it starts on the Green, it is very narrow in places and unlikely to accommodate a disability scooter. By the time it leaves Cricketfield it is once again a muddy footpath adjacent to Mantell Close where it joins Newick Hill which sadly, since recent development is used as a shortcut by many car drivers.





Photo montage 1

Concern has been raised that the planned access through Cricketfield using the wastewater treatment access along the concrete road for emergency vehicles could lead to a disaster. Cricketfield is one of the worst roads in the village for on street parking and is difficult at the best of times to access. See photos below. Photo 2 is looking east on the north side of Cricketfield on a typical day and Photo 3 is on the east side of Cricketfield with an arrow showing the entrance to the concrete road leading to the Wastewater treatment works. As the road will have to remain open as it is the planned route for emergency vehicles. Residents are also concerned that it will end being used as a way of avoiding the inevitable traffic jams with vehicles trying to exit onto the A272.





Photo 2



Photo 3

- f) Poor roads – we know that this is a national problem however it is not mentioned by the applicant that the A272 which runs through the village is categorised as an A road, it is, in the main a single carriageway country road. It is 90 miles long starting in the east of the County ending up in Winchester. The A272's route is described as predominantly rural, despite being only 40 miles (64 km) from the centre of London at its nearest point. Most of it passes through countryside, villages and small towns, and the only built-up area of any size that it traverses is Haywards Heath and its surrounding villages. There is very little dual carriageway, just three very short sections between Petworth and Midhurst and it

therefore gives the driver an experience which is reminiscent of English country roads as they were in the middle of the 20th Century. Since the increase in housing and commercial development e.g. at Maresfield, the road is now frequently jammed and very dangerous. There are virtually no footpaths alongside the road as the land doesn't allow for it and certainly no cycle paths. Cycling on the road itself is only for the most experienced and certainly out of the question for secondary age children to go to school.

- g) Poor public transport. Newick has two public bus services 121 (Uckfield to Cuckfield stopping at Haywards Heath mainline station) and 31(Newick to Lewes, with 0.3 mile, an 8 minute walk to the Lewes mainline railway station), both run by Compass. For the last three years a Sunday service began, subsidised by a local developer as part of the building conditions. Sunday services will finish next year, 2026. Below, fig 2 shows a summary of the existing service, for more information visit [Timetables & Routes – Compass Travel](#) The information in Fig.2 below demonstrates the inadequacy of the service which unsurprisingly is not well used.

|  | 121   | 31   |
|--|---|--|
| Weekday first and last bus<br>Approximately hourly                                       | 07:22 arr Lewes 08:02<br>18:55 arr Newick 19:20 | 05:56 arr HH 06:22<br>18:35 arr Newick 18:58 |
| Saturday first and last bus<br>Approx every 1 hr 15 mins<br>121 and hourly 31            | 8:10 arr Lewes 8:42<br>17:20 arr Newick 17:55   | 07:57 arr HH 08:23<br>18:25 arr Newick 18:48 |
| Sunday first and last bus<br>only 4 buses approx every<br>3 hours. Service stops<br>2026 | 9:45 arr Lewes 10:25<br>17:10 arr Newick 17:35  | No service                                   |

Fig. 2

## Active travel

Active travel is a fundamental requirement for Sustainability, affecting all three of the objectives, economic, social and environmental.

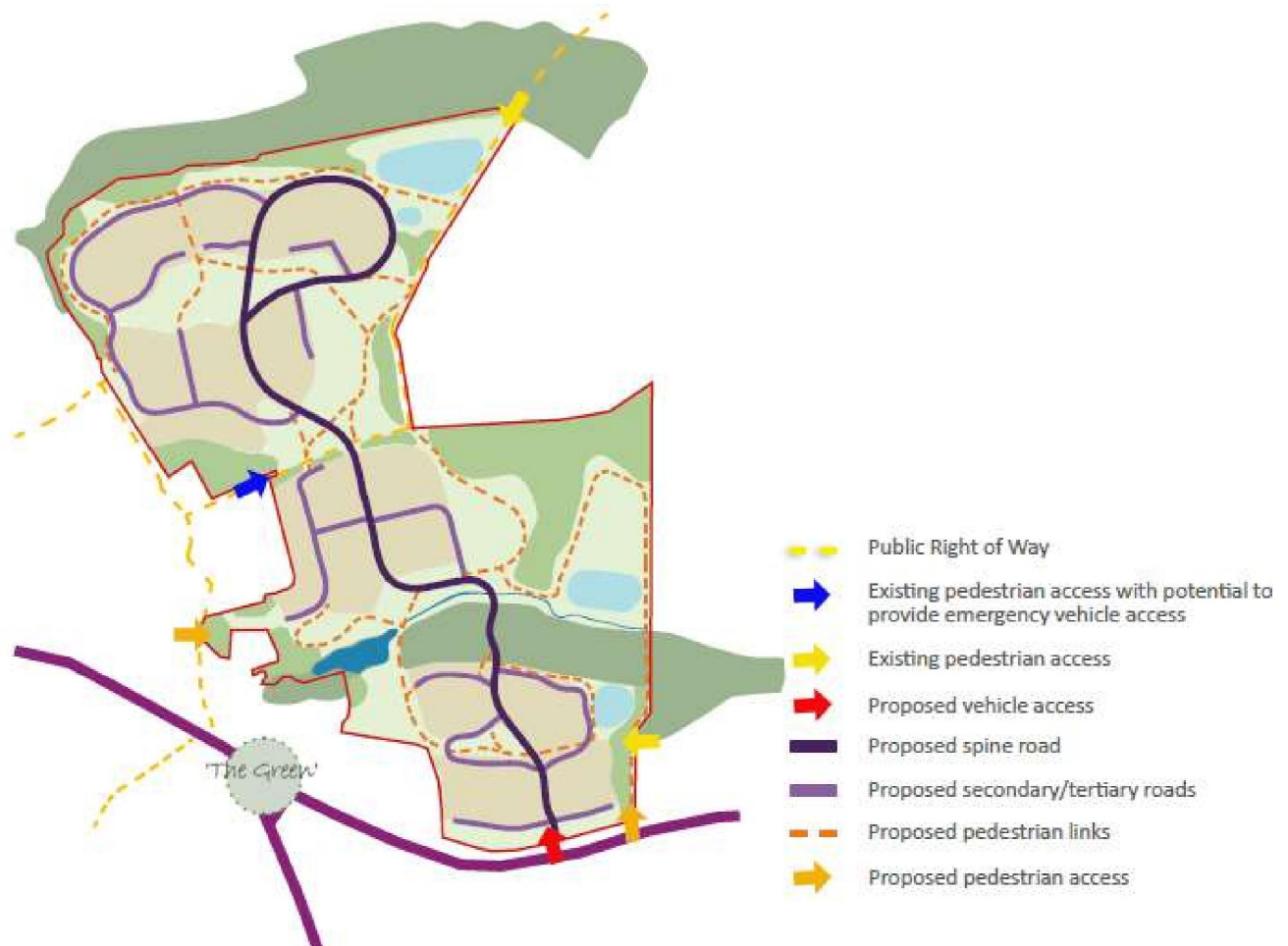
Active Travel England, a statutory consultee, has requested that following a high level review the local authority should follow their guidance for local planning authorities on how planning applications should be assessed for Active Travel.

Active Travel England (ATE) offer a toolkit of 10 criteria to be assessed under. As we do not have access for the data required for criterion 1 and 2, we will start under Criterion 3 (C3);



### Pedestrian access to local amenities C3

Map 6 below shows the proposed pedestrian movement round the site and to the services of Newick. Using the toolkit for C3 it asks that 'A mix of local amenities should



Map 4

be located within an 800m walking and wheeling distance'. We should start by saying that the pavements on the Green range between 0.7 and 1.42 metres; this is a small village in a conservation area and in keeping.

Back to the toolkit exercise; walking from the site to access the A272 is going to be difficult especially when at each point of this exercise 250 dwellings will have a mixed but large footfall, such as twice a day during school time; secondary age pupils walking to access the school bus from the south side of The Green; Primary school children plus a carer needing also to go to the south side of the A272; Pre school children plus a carer and likely a pushchair/buggy to access the Pre school on Church Road, also on the south side of the A272.

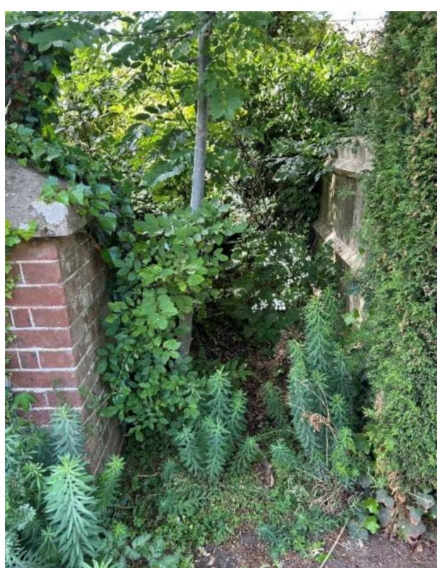


Photo 4



Photo 5

Photo 4 above is taken looking towards The Green and illustrates well the difficulty of doing this. On the North side of the road is Tollgate Cottage a listed building with no opportunity to have a footpath alongside it (see photo 5 above). Residents of the new development Berry Croft (39 dwellings), across the road from the Site have already complained about the inadequate width of the path. We are not surprised as C3 requires paths to have a minimum width of 2m, with limited pinch points no less than 1.5m. the width of this path at its widest is 1.6 metres (but only outside Brettscend House) and at the pinch point is 0.6 metres as is shown in the photograph. Further towards the proposed site still on the south side of the A272, the width is



1.87metres wide beside the new development still under construction, Oak Park Place and then onto Berry Croft the footpath becomes at its widest 1.9 metres but then the footpath comes to an abrupt end after about 100 metres! As decision makers may be aware the Oak Park Place development currently under construction (Land at Telephone Exchange) Design and Access statement includes a twitten for residents to cut through to Church Road. However this is not a viable option from pedestrians coming from the proposed Goldbridge Farm development as it is for the use of Oak Park Place residents only and narrows to 1 metre in width (photo 6 left)

Photo 6





Photo 7



Photo 8

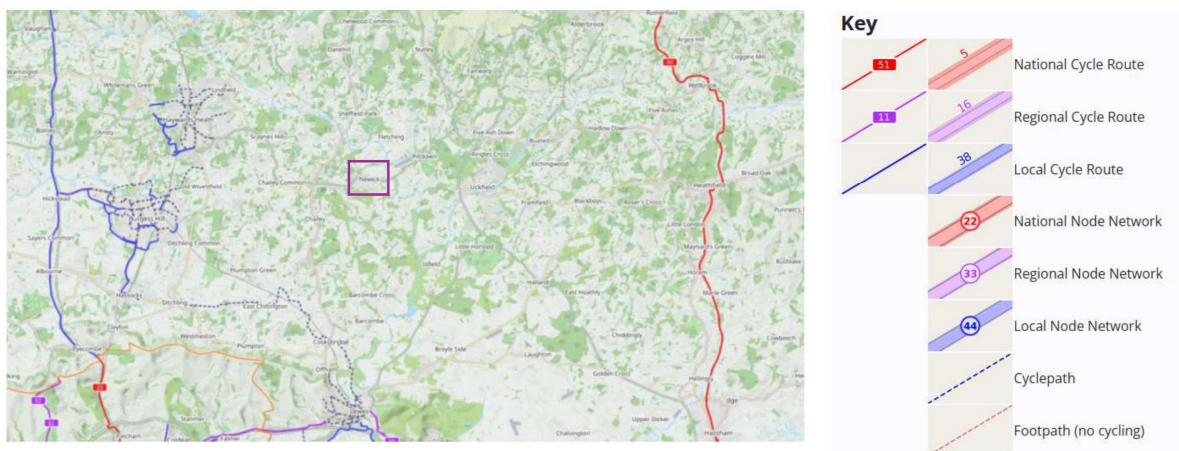
Both of the pedestrian access points on the west side of the Site require using footpath 11 to access the Green. Photo 7 above is leading from the Green with a brick wall one side and scrubby vegetation on the other (although recently cut back). This is the narrowest point and measures 0.8 metres, it continues up a steep gradient with a very enclosed feel about halfway down, it widens out near the allotments to 0.9 metres eventually coming out into Cricketfield as shown in photo 8 (above right) also at 0.9 metres but a pinch point slightly further down with a dog waste bin. The footpath is impossible for a disability buggy and cyclists are banned as shown in the photo.



Criterion 3 (C3) states that the National Design Guide standards of being safe, direct, convenient and accessible for people of all abilities. We have marked with an **X** if we consider Newick doesn't meet the criteria:

- have a minimum width of 2m, with limited pinch points no less than 1.5m; **X**
- are step-free; **X**
- have a smooth, even surface; **X**
- have seating at regular intervals; **X**
- are uncluttered; **X**
- have good natural surveillance and clear lines of sight; **X**
- have street lighting; (we are a dark village) **X**
- have wayfinding; **X**
- have crossing points suitable for the speed and traffic flow of the road(s). **X**

Another constant objection is that the application is misleading about people cycling in the village or beyond. NPC has for several years been saying that we are a car dependant village. There is no continuous footpath or scope for putting one in let alone a cycle path and the A272 is simply too dangerous for the average cyclist. The map 5 below shows however much we would prefer this not to be the case, Newick is isolated from any notion of cycling.



Map 5 National and local cycle routes from [OpenCycleMap.org - the OpenStreetMap Cycle Map](https://openstreetmap.org/cyclemap)

- C4 Cycling accessibility is therefore not met **X**
- C5 Access to public transport is not met **X**
- C6 Off-site transport contributions which we understand to be that the developer could pay to have this active travel isolation would not work **X**

(We would love to have Newick and Chailey railway station reinstated since the Beeching cuts of the 1960's! Its 6.5 miles by car to Haywards Heath railway station.)

- Does not comply with C7 which asks that the development should provide / safeguard pedestrian and cycling connections to neighbouring sites including future phases of development and that routes for pedestrians and cyclists should be at least as direct – and preferably more direct – than the equivalent by car. We have already demonstrated that this is impossible **X**

We have no comment to make about C8 but are confident that C9 Cycle parking and trip-end facilities are included in all new developments. They are rarely if ever used for cycles though as we have already explained.

Finally, although active travel is mentioned four times in the D&A, it is only related for movement around the site and the developers appear to have no understanding of its importance, both now and for the future. On page 22 they claim, “The site is in a very sustainable location for public and active transport.” Put simply the residents from 250 dwellings who want to walk, wheel or cycle from the site to the rest of the village will either have to;

- risk crossing the A272 and then squeeze through the pinch point of 0.6 metres before arriving on the Green, or
- access one of the two western access points from the site and then squeeze through the 0.8 metres of footpath 11 before arriving on the Green on the north side of the A272
- cyclists will probably leave their bikes at home!

NPC consider that the Site is unsustainable because it is unable to support Active Travel.

### **Concerns over changing character of Newick.**

- Four distinct neighbourhoods have been proposed for Goldbridge

On page 8 we looked at the changes to the NPPF looking at directing development to sustainable locations, making effective use of land, securing well-designed places and providing affordable homes. This section looks at the existing and proposed land use and the affordability of the proposed housing. It also looks at the effect on biodiversity.

## Nature and effective land use



Photo 9 (left) taken May 2025 looking south from the cement road to the sewage farm, shows the NNP sites in the distance and the large expanse of field with cattle maize just showing.



Photo 10 (left) is taken from the same spot looking north east towards Fletching village National Landscape and Ashdown Forest Special Area of Conservation (SAC).

The whole site is at present actively farmed, it has already been ploughed and sown for this year's crop, as seen in the photos. The loss of viable food producing farmland is short-sighted given current global food insecurity. This farmland has produced viable crops and grazing for as long as it has been farmed. The soils built up over many generations lock up enormous amounts of carbon, that will be unlocked by development and cannot be replaced by "greenwashing" schemes developers may wish to put forward to mitigate against such damage. Lose this stretch of countryside, the plan is to cover all that is shown in the photos with houses, and you lose Newick Village.

The proposal is so large that it is unlikely that any one developer will carry out the works - there are many examples where large developments are part completed then sold on in phases leading to protracted disruption, noise, pollution and danger to the local environment. Ancient woodland, old established hedgerows and watercourses abut and cross the land. Even allowing for buffer zones these semi-natural habitats will be damaged during and after development, from run-off, noise, light pollution and as soon as a development becomes inhabited, domestic cats wreak havoc on local wildlife. This would adversely affect the neighbouring countryside and its wildlife. Skylarks sing territorially over the countryside here and the ghyll woodland to the south is a mass of bluebells, ramsons and other ancient woodland indicators in the spring. The stream and its accompanying woodland,



forms a vital wildlife corridor, as indeed does the current farmland, linking the open spaces of Chailey Common SSSI to the Ouse Valley. The Ancient Woodland to the north (Goldbridge Wood) is classic Wealden Ghyll Woodland with many Ancient Woodland indicators with well-established ground flora plant communities. Even allowing for statutory buffer zones it is difficult to see how the wood will be protected against: run-off and pollution during construction, trampling by humans, devastation of bird, small mammals, reptiles and amphibian inhabitants by domestic cats.

CPRE has identified about 1000 acres over 700 brownfield sites which are suitable for development in Sussex. [State of brownfield report 2022 - CPRE](#) Until all these have been used up, our greenspace should be left untouched. This proposal would have a significant detrimental effect on biodiversity.

NPC consider that this application is not an effective or appropriate use of the land. Greenfield agriculture sites should not be developed into housing estates but encouraged to remain as actively used farmland.

### **Providing affordable homes**

The frustration felt by many young families in particular is of great concern to NPC. We understand that it seems to them, however hard they work, however hard they save they simply cannot afford to continue to live in the village that they were brought up in and where they would like to bring up their own children. We firmly believe that their dream should be a reality and yet we know that what is the biggest selling point from the developers and owners of the site, is just that, a dream.

As stated on page 1 of this objection, NPC recognised this need in early 2000 and two exception sites Alexander Mead phase 1 (2003-2006) and phase 2 (2011) were built and then in 2015 all of our sites except for the one with only 2 houses contained affordable housing. However, it has become obvious over the last 10-15 years that 'affordable' mostly means unaffordable. The common misconception is that it will be the same as Council Housing (now referred to as social rents) which was so available post war right up until the 1990's or even 2000 when the reality of right to buy began to show and private rents began to rise.

We conducted research in Newick to understand what amounts we are actually talking about so as to inform our residents honestly. The results were a surprise to all concerned and grateful thanks to those residents who were prepared to share and talk about their financial commitments.

## **Affordable housing in Newick – shared equity**

From April 2025 minimum wage will be £12.21. If working 37 hours per week and contributing 5% to a pension this gives a net salary of £1624.52 per month. This does not include any child benefit, working families tax credit etc.

A couple both working full time on minimum wage with no childcare costs or student loan would have a joint income of £3248.04.

Stonewater is the developers Shared Ownership provider. Their scheme works as follows. A property with a market value of £510,000 which would be a larger 2 bed or a smaller 3 bed new build in Newick works out as the following;

40% share purchased at £204,000. Would need at least a 5% deposit (£10,200) and a mortgage of £193,800.

Assuming an interest rate of 5% (which is what you would expect for a 95% mortgage 2 or 5 year fixed). 25 years repayment would be £1133 per month.

The rent on the remaining 60% is £701.25 per month.

Service charge is variable but on current Stonewater builds is £93 per month for a £510,000 property.

So that is £1927 per month combined leaving £1321.04 before paying Council tax, utilities, food, transport, childcare etc

## **Current Affordable housing in Newick - rented**

Private rental market. A three bed semi on the Ashdown estate in Newick is about £1695 pcm.

The 'Rent to Buy' version of affordable homes with Stonewater offer properties at 80% of market rental for 5 years. The idea is that the remaining 20% you save and then after 5 years you use that as a deposit to buy the house. The onus is on the renter to save the 20% which will be tricky for some people. Therefore, a similar Affordable rental property in Newick would be about £1356 pcm

An affordable one bedroom flat would be about £880 pcm with an annual review of rent to reflect the private market increase or decrease.

**Social rent** in Newick is approximately £400 pcm for a 1940's 2 bedroom flat, about £600 for a 3 bedroom 1940's house, £598 for a 1960's 2 bedroom house and about £770 for a 1980's 2 bedroom dwelling with assisted living.

## What could happen...

The emerging local plan affordable housing policy, includes a 'Viability test' (developers must be allowed to make 20% profit). It could mean that the total affordable housing allocation is not in Newick but perhaps Newhaven or Seaford where the need is greater and the land is cheaper. It could also mean that there will be no dwellings or very few on social rents.

NPC feels that this an unfair system which is weighted heavily in favour of the developers and landowners making a lot of money. We know that a small number of affordable homes on social rents would go a long way towards meeting the desperate needs of, especially, our young people in Newick. To promote this site as being the answer to their dreams, saying it will boost the footfall in local pubs, eateries, shops and sports clubs and societies will have more active members is simply untrue. Those who support this application are likely to be disappointed when affordable homes are still not affordable to them in reality.

It is difficult to draw this multifaceted objection to a meaningful conclusion, so we will return to the overarching Policy Makers and the current NPPF.

NPC considers that the adverse impacts of approving the Goldbridge development for up to 250 new homes (including 40% affordable) would significantly and demonstrably outweigh any benefits, when assessed against the policies in the NPPF taken as a whole, having particular regard to key policies for directing development to sustainable locations, making effective use of land, securing well-designed places and providing affordable homes, individually or in combination. We believe that NONE of which are demonstrated in this application.