17 June 2015

To: All Councillors

As a Member of the Council, please treat this as your summons to attend the meeting on Thursday 25 June 2015 at 6.00pm in the COUNCIL CHAMBER, TOWN HALL, MATLOCK.

Yours sincerely

Sandra Lamb
Head of Corporate Services

AGENDA

OPENING ADDRESS

A presentation on the work of the Derbyshire Law Centre will be given by Tony McIlveen, Senior Solicitor and Councillor Michael Gordon, Chair of Derbyshire Law Centre’s Management Committee.

1. APOLOGIES

Please advise Democratic Services on 01629 761133 or e-mail committee@derbyshiredales.gov.uk of any apologies for absence.

2. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

To enable members of the public to ask questions, express views or present petitions, IF NOTICE HAS BEEN GIVEN, (by telephone, in writing or by electronic mail) BY NO LATER THAN 12 NOON OF THE DAY PRECEDING THE MEETING.

3. APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

28 May 2015

4. INTERESTS

Members are required to declare the existence and nature of any interests they may have in subsequent agenda items in accordance with the District Council’s Code of Conduct. Those interests are matters that relate to money or that which can be valued in money, affecting the Member her/his partner, extended family and close
friends. Interests that become apparent at a later stage in the proceedings may be declared at that time.

5. **CHAIRMAN’S ANNOUNCEMENTS**

Announcements of the Chairman of the District of Derbyshire Dales.

6. **COMMITTEES**

To receive the non-exempt minutes of the Committees shown below:

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**MINUTE BOOK TO FOLLOW**

7. **QUESTIONS (RULE OF PROCEDURE 15)**

Questions, if any, from Members who have given notice.

**Page Nos.**

8. **WIRKSWORTH NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN**

To consider the results of the referendum on the Wirksworth Neighbourhood Plan and a recommendation that the Plan be formally made and brought into use for the determination of planning applications with immediate effect.

9. **PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT – KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS OUTTURN 2014/15**

To note the outturn performance against the Key Performance Indicators for 2014/15.
10. **LOVER’S WALK**

To receive a report setting out the background to the recent closure of Lover’s Walk in Matlock Bath, the actions taken to date and progress made. The report also addresses the potential impact on the Matlock Bath Illuminations event.

**REPORT TO FOLLOW**

11. **REVIEW OF DEVELOPMENT MANAGEMENT**

To consider a report informing Members of the actions taken in respect of the review of Development Management and approval of the Action Plan attached as Appendix 1 to the report.

12. **ANNUAL GOVERNANCE STATEMENT 2014/15**

To consider approval of the Annual Governance Statement 2014/15 and also to note the significant governance issues and the actions to address them.

13. **GENERAL FUND OUT-TURN 2014/15**

To consider a report on the final expenditure for 2014/15 and the recommendation that the under-spending be transferred to reserves.


15. **SEALING OF DOCUMENTS**

To authorise that the Common Seal of the Council be affixed to those documents, if any, required to complete transactions undertaken by Committees or by way of delegated authority to others, since the last meeting of the Council.

16. **EXCLUSION OF PUBLIC AND PRESS**

At this point the Committee will consider excluding the public and press from the meeting for the remaining items of business for the reasons shown in italics. The Chairman will adjourn the meeting briefly to enable members of the public to speak to Councillors.
17. **EXEMPT MINUTES TO BE RECEIVED**

Licensing & Appeals Committee – Minute No. 345/14 – 30 April 2015.

*(This minute is excluded from the meeting because it results in exempt information being disclosed.)*

**NOTE**

For further information about this Agenda or on “Public Participation” call 01629 761300 or e-mail committee@derbyshiredales.gov.uk
COUNCIL
25TH JUNE 2015

Report of the Head of Regeneration & Policy

WIRKSWORTH NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN

SUMMARY

This report sets out the results of the referendum on the Wirksworth Neighbourhood Plan and recommends that the Wirksworth Neighbourhood Plan be formally made and brought into use for the determination of planning applications with immediate effect.

RECOMMENDATION

1. That the result of the referendum on the Wirksworth Neighbourhood Plan be noted.
2. That the Wirksworth Neighbourhood Plan be formally “made” as a Neighbourhood Development Plan, and form part of the Development Plan for Derbyshire Dales.
3. That the Wirksworth Neighbourhood Plan be used in the determination of planning applications that are situated within the Plan Area with immediate effect.

WARDS AFFECTED

Wirksworth

STRATEGIC LINK

The implementation of the Wirksworth Neighbourhood Plan will assist with all 4 of the District Council’s aims as stated in the Council’s Corporate Plan, these being to lead the communities of the Derbyshire Dales, improve quality of life, protect and enhance the environment and provide excellent services.

1 REPORT

1.1 Corporate Committee at its meeting on 13th December 2012 resolved to designate the whole of the Parish of Wirksworth as a Neighbourhood Area in accordance with the Section 61G of Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (As amended by the Localism Act 2011). The designation of a Neighbourhood Area is one of the statutory requirements needed to be in place to enable a Neighbourhood Plan to be adopted, and formally become a part of the Development Plan, and be used in the determination of planning applications by the District Council.

1.2 The draft Wirksworth Neighbourhood Plan was subject to local consultation from 4th June to 22nd July 2014, and was submitted to the District Council for its formal publicity stage on 26th September 2014. Following discussion with Wirksworth Town Council, in respect of the supporting documentation, the formal statutory publicity on the Wirksworth Neighbourhood Plan commenced on 30th October 2014 and finished on 11th December 2014.
An examination of the Wirksworth Neighbourhood Plan was undertaken by Dr Charles Mynors FRTPi FRICS IHBC, by written representations during February 2015.

The key conclusions in the Examiner’s report were:

- Overall the plan is clearly structured and well written, and provides a positive vision for the future of Wirksworth.
- It provides a practical basis upon which decisions on planning applications can be made.
- Subject to a number of detailed recommended modifications that the Wirksworth Neighbourhood Plan is able to comply with the ‘basic conditions’ and other relevant statutory provisions.

As the conclusions of the examiner were that subject to modifications the Wirksworth Neighbourhood Plan was able to satisfy the ‘basic conditions’ as set out in Paragraph 8(2) of Schedule 4B to the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 as applied to Neighbourhood Plans by section 38A of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004, and that the plan could be submitted to referendum in the Parish of Wirksworth.

A referendum was held on 7th May 2015 at which the following question as defined in the Neighbourhood Planning (Referendums) Regulations 2012 was asked:

Do you want Derbyshire Dales District Council to use the neighbourhood plan for Wirksworth to help it decide planning applications in the neighbourhood area?

The results of the referendum were as follows:

| Those Voting in Favour | YES | 2,235 |
| Those Voting Against   | NO  | 471   |

The legislation requires that the local planning authority must make and bring into force a Neighbourhood Development Plan as reasonably practicable after the referendum has been held in the event that more than half of those voting have voted in favour of the plan,

Given the result of the referendum it is recommended that the Wirksworth Neighbourhood Plan be formally made and be used in the determination of planning applications within the plan area with immediate effect.

A copy of the final version of the plan is attached at Appendix 1 to this report for Members information.

RISK ASSESSMENT

Legal

In compliance with paragraph 6(2) of the Schedule 4B to the Town and Country Planning Act, this Council as the local planning authority designated Wirksworth as a Neighbourhood Area. Since this designation the Town Council (through Wirksworth Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group) has prepared and consulted on a neighbourhood plan for consideration. This Council has followed the publicity requirements set out within the Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012.
before submitting the Neighbourhood Plan to an independent examiner. The examiner reported that subject to certain modifications being made he is satisfied that certain basic conditions set out in paragraph 8 of Schedule 4B have been met.

The referendum was carried out in accordance with the requirements of the The Neighbourhood Planning (Referendums) Regulations 2012. As the outcome of the referendum indicated support for the use of the Wirksworth Neighbourhood Plan by more than half those voting the District Council is obliged by Section33A (4) of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990, as amended by the Localism Act 201 to make a Neighbourhood Development Plan as soon as practicably possible.

Although the preparation process could be challenged by a Judicial Review it is considered that all the relevant processes have been undertaken and that as a consequence the legal risk is therefore low.

2.2 Financial

The costs associated with the Neighbourhood Plan (mainly officer time, publicity, the independent examination, and referendum) is reclaimed through a government grant. The financial risk is, therefore, assessed as low.

3 OTHER CONSIDERATIONS

In preparing this report, the relevance of the following factors has also been considered: prevention of crime and disorder, equalities, environmental, climate change, health, human rights, personnel and property.

4 CONTACT INFORMATION

Mike Hase, Policy Manager
Tel: 01629 761251 E-mail: mike.hase@derbyshiredales.gov.uk

5 BACKGROUND PAPERS

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BACK TO AGENDA
Wirksworth is a special town, it will continue to grow and change. This Neighbourhood Plan guides that growth and change so that we keep what is special but improve our town for all who live and work here."
A NOTE ON THE DERBYSHIRE DALES LOCAL PLAN CONTEXT

The Plan's relationship with the development plan is important, and is set out in statute, regulations and Government policy. The development plan for the area including Wirksworth consists principally of those policies of the Derbyshire Dales Local Plan, adopted by the District Council in 2005, that were “saved” by the Secretary of State in his direction of November 2008, together with the related explanatory text. Those are here referred to collectively as “the Local Plan”.

This Plan is to be in general conformity with the strategic policies in the Local Plan – as well as guidance from central Government, EU obligations, and the need to achieve sustainable development. This relationship is explained in the Evidence and Explanations document that accompanies this Plan.

This Plan has also been prepared in the light of the emerging Replacement Local Plan, and in particular the pre-submission draft of that plan produced in June 2013, to which there are many references through this Plan (as “the 2013 Draft Local Plan”). That draft was withdrawn in October 2013, but is likely to re-emerge in a broadly similar form in 2015 or 2016; and it is now unlikely to be adopted soon.

Because the set-back is due to concerns that the 2013 Draft Local Plan may not have identified sufficient housing land, and there seem to be no other major concerns, it is likely that the policies in the replacement Local Plan, when it re-emerges, will prove to be similar to those in the 2013 draft (except that there may be more housing sites) – although they may be subject to further change in the course of the adoption process.

It is therefore expected that there will be few conflicts between the replacement Local Plan, once it has finally been adopted, and this Plan. However, the two plans will both be part of the development plan, and will both need to be taken into account in any future decisions on planning applications.
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1.0 INTRODUCTION TO THE NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN

1.1 WHAT IS THE WIRKSWORTH NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN?

1.1.1 This is a plan which promotes growth – the growth of our town alongside the preservation and development of our vibrant community in line with the strategic policies of the draft Derbyshire Dales Local Plan. The plan’s purpose is not to reduce development pressures on the plan area. It is designed to maintain and enhance the character of the plan area and enable improvements where they are needed, placing community vitality, environmental sensitivity and mitigation of climate change at its core.

1.1.2 To discourage growth would be to put at risk the very shops, community facilities, employment opportunities and population balance on which the character of Wirksworth depends. Our town centre, schools and health provision are good but will continue to thrive only if the community accepts the changes that, during the plan period, will be necessary to support them and helps to resist causes of decline.

1.1.3 The plan covers the area of the Civil Parish of Wirksworth, which has a population of 5813\(^1\), and includes the town of Wirksworth, the settlement of Bolehill and other small settlements and a large area of countryside, as shown on the Proposals Map. It covers the period until 2028, the same period as the draft Derbyshire Dales Local Plan (DDLP)\(^2\).

1.1.4 This plan is required by law to be in general conformity with the strategic policies of the Local Plan. However, it has also been drafted so as to be in conformity with the 2013 Draft Local Plan. That draft was withdrawn in October 2013, but is likely to reemerge in a broadly similar form in 2015 or 2016.

1.1.5 This plan covers the period until 2028, which is likely to be the period covered by the replacement Local Plan when it reemerges.”

1.1.6 Neighbourhood plans give parish communities a say in what sorts of development should and should not be permitted in their area. The Consultation Statement that accompanies this plan describes how Future Wirksworth has consulted local people. Consultation has taken place in a variety of forms and over a considerable period of time. The plan is not just Future Wirksworth’s plan, nor the town council’s: it could not have been compiled without the involvement of local residents, businesses and organisations.

1.1.7 Our neighbourhood plan will be an important part of the “development plan” for Derbyshire Dales\(^3\). It will adjust the effects of the district council’s policies, to make them closer to what our area needs.

1.1.8 Neighbourhood plans may concentrate on just one issue, such as where the new housing sites should be, or on many. In preparing this plan, Future Wirksworth and the town council have asked local people about all aspects of development.

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\(^1\) Census 2011.

\(^2\) This plan is required by law to be in general conformity with the strategic policies of the adopted Derbyshire Dales Local Plan. However, when this plan refers to the local plan, the references are to the June 2013 draft, not the 2005 adopted plan, unless otherwise said.

\(^3\) For an explanation of “development plan”, see Evidence and Explanations Document.
Consequently, they have written into this plan policies and action points addressing many elements of Wirksworth life. The policies, if adopted, will have statutory force.

1.1.9 One thing that this plan does not do is to say where the main, new housing sites should be. That is because the district council is including the housing sites in the local plan that it is currently preparing. However, this plan accepts the sites that the 2013 draft of the local plan identified and includes policies to ensure that they are developed to a standard appropriate to Wirksworth.

1.2 A COORDINATED PLAN

1.2.1 Although the plan is divided into chapters, the chapters are not mutually exclusive. The plan should be read as a coordinated attempt to link all aspects of life in Wirksworth.

1.2.2 Given the way planning law works, it is not possible to have statutory policies on many of the things that are important to us, such as car parking fees or financing a youth centre. These have been highlighted by local people during the preparation of the neighbourhood plan but are not what is defined in planning law as “development”.

1.2.3 However, we have identified them as Town Council Action Points, making clear that they will be things the town council will try to achieve, in partnership with other councils and bodies, during the next few years because they have arisen as a direct consequence of preparing the plan. The town council will prepare a Wirksworth Town Plan, which will contain a programme to guide the carrying out of the Town Council Action Points.

1.3 HOW THE PLAN WILL BE USED

1.3.1 One of the main purposes of the plan is to help Derbyshire Dales District Council to make decisions on planning applications. The plan is also intended to guide land owners and developers, to encourage the right sort of development in the right places and to make the plan area a better place to live, work and visit.

1.3.2 Planners and decision-makers will be required by law to take account of the statutory policies of the plan. They will have to treat them with the same level of importance as the policies in the district council’s local plan.

1.3.3 When considering planning applications, the planners must treat all policies equally. Some policies (for example, policies which favour new sports facilities) may conflict with others (for example, policies which seek to protect the local environment). Only after considering all the policies and local circumstances should the planners decide which ones should be given most weight in a particular case.

1.3.4 By law, most planning applications have to be accompanied by a ‘design and access statement’. Where a design and access statement is provided, it should specifically address the policies of this plan, explaining how the proposed development accords with the policies or, if it does not, why it does not.

1.3.5 If to any extent a policy in the Neighbourhood Plan conflicts with any other statement or information in the Plan, the policy is to prevail.

1.4 GETTING THE PLAN APPROVED

1.4.1 In October 2014, Wirksworth Town Council submitted the plan, with the Evidence and Explanations Document, the Consultation Statement and the Basic Conditions Statement, to Derbyshire Dales District Council (‘the local authority’). The local authority checked that the town council

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4 For an explanation of “statutory policies”, see Evidence and Explanations Document.
5 For an explanation of “development”, see Evidence and Explanations Document.
6 The Town Council Action Points are explained in the relevant chapters but there is also a complete list in Chapter 8.
had followed the correct legal processes and then publicised the plan, making it available for 6 weeks, for anyone to comment, and appointed an independent examiner.

1.4.2 The examiner read the documents and the comments that people had made and decided that, subject to certain amendments (set out in his report) the ‘basic conditions’ had been met. The basic conditions require the examiner to consider whether:

- having regard to national policies and advice contained in guidance issued by the Secretary of State, it is appropriate for the plan to proceed;
- the plan will contribute to the achievement of sustainable development;
- the plan is in general conformity with the strategic policies in the local development plan;
- the plan is compatible with EU obligations; and
- the plan is compatible with the European Convention on Human Rights.

1.4.3 The examiner recommended that the plan proceed to a referendum. The referendum took place on 7 May 2015. It asked: “Do you want Derbyshire Dales District Council to use the neighbourhood plan for Wirksworth to help it decide planning applications in the neighbourhood area?” Because more than 50% of those voting voted “yes”, the local authority has resolved to ‘make’ the plan in accordance with the law and the plan is now a statutory document.

1.4.4 The examiner is entitled to recommend that the referendum area includes people beyond the boundary of the plan. The referendum will ask: “Do you want Derbyshire Dales District Council to use the neighbourhood plan for Wirksworth to help it decide planning applications in the neighbourhood area?” If more than 50% of those voting vote “yes”, the local authority will bring the plan into force.

1.5 VISION

1.5.1 This section sets out the town council’s Vision for the neighbourhood plan, as modified following progressive consultations with local people. The consultations are also reflected in the objectives and ambitions of the topic chapters.

The Vision for Wirksworth

1.5.2 The Town Council’s vision for the town and the parish sees:

- A vibrant and prosperous market town with a caring, tolerant and active community at its heart; and
- A place that is forward-looking and where people can live, work, shop, visit, and enjoy themselves in an outstanding environment that is cherished and cared-for.

1.5.3 That vision will be achieved by balanced growth, including:

- Addressing the declining youth population;
- Bringing forward sites for development to meet the current and future needs of the community; and
- Ensuring that such development is sustainable in its use of energy and complements the town’s character.

1.5.4 The following chapters of this Plan show how this vision will be achieved in relation to particular topics, by:

- Insisting that development enhances the natural and built heritage of the area to ensure it continues to be a special place to live and work and ensuring that development in Wirksworth is designed in accordance with guidelines that reflect the town’s distinctive character. (Chapter 2);
- Supporting the provision of new, well designed, low carbon housing to accommodate the needs of the community, across age and income levels and in particular encouraging young families to live here. (Chapter 3);
- Sustaining and improving a range of recreational and community facilities to support the health, education and well-being of all local people. (Chapter 4);
- Encouraging development and investment to build the local economy; Supporting growth and innovation within the local economy, in particular building on the area’s distinctive strengths, including its creative entrepreneurial community; and Striving to become a more energy-efficient / low carbon town (Chapter 5);
- Promoting sustainable transport that links to surrounding areas and includes a safe and convenient environment for pedestrians and cyclists. (Chapter 6);
- Maintaining a thriving town centre, with an independent retail offer, to ensure the needs of local people and visitors are met.
CHAPTER 2, contributing to our Vision by insisting that development enhances the natural and built heritage of the area to ensure it continues to be a special place to live and work and ensuring that development in Wirksworth is designed in accordance with guidelines that reflect the town’s distinctive character.

2.0 QUALITY AND CHARACTER OF DEVELOPMENT

2.1 INTRODUCTION

2.1.1 Wirksworth has a strong visual character and it is important that any new development recognises and respects that character and contributes to the quality of this special place. (References to “Wirksworth” in this chapter are to the built-up area (principally, the area within the settlement framework of Wirksworth and Bolehill) and to the surrounding landscape.)

2.1.2 The community supports growth in line with the strategic policies of the 2013 Draft Local Plan. Without such growth, Wirksworth will not be able to fulfil its social and economic potential. But people are aware that new developments, large or small, may erode the qualities that make the town special if they are not carefully managed in terms of their layout and design. It is important that the residential developments which are necessary to meet the housing supply targets should be both interesting and sensitive to their location. This is particularly true for the potentially large development of houses on the Middleton Road site. They should not be the “anywhere-type” estate that does not respond to the strong character of Wirksworth and does not have a sense of place. Similar considerations apply to developments of all kinds, including tourist developments and new places of employment.

2.2 WHO SAYS WIRKSWORTH IS SPECIAL? WHAT’S THE EVIDENCE?

2.2.1 Local people, when consulted by Future Wirksworth in the preparation of the neighbourhood plan, gave the following examples of why they consider Wirksworth to be special:
- local character and distinctiveness
- local landscape quality
- distinctive views and vistas
- access to the countryside
- heritage
- sense of community

2.2.2 Many outsiders also think Wirksworth is special and it is becoming increasingly attractive to tourists. There are several reasons which are discussed in Chapter 5, but, for the purposes of this chapter, the Wirksworth Project must be mentioned.

2.2.3 Wirksworth had been an important and populous town during the lead mining period but, by the mid 20th century, it was falling into decline, with fine buildings in ruination, shops serving a declining range of customers, limited local job opportunities and an air of neglect. In 1979, the town, district and county councils joined forces with the Sainsbury Monument Trust and the Civic Trust to set up The Wirksworth Project. The objectives of The Wirksworth Project were to:
- Increase awareness and pride of, and in, the town’s special qualities
- Encourage good care of the town’s historic buildings and townscape
- Encourage sustainable use of the town’s buildings
- Encourage the growth of job opportunities

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7 The settlement framework was a policy of the 2013 Draft Local Plan. Its boundary is shown for information on our proposals map.
8 See the Consultation Statement submitted with this plan.
- Encourage investment in the town’s shops
- Realise the town’s tourist potential for the economic benefit of its residents.

2.2.4 With the co-operation of local organisations, businesses and the people of Wirksworth, regeneration work was carried out, new factories and workshops were built, much of the town’s ancient character was restored and, on the whole, the aims were achieved. The project received national and international recognition. The regeneration has been sustained and this has been recognised by the receipt of a Commendation in the East Midlands RTPI Jubilee Awards in 2012. Wirksworth is, today, more visually appealing to visitors and more visited.

2.3 WHAT ARE WIRKSWORTH’S DISTINCTIVE CHARACTERISTICS?

2.3.1 Wirksworth is an historic, rural market town within a dramatic and attractive landscape. It has a powerful sense of place in terms of both built environment and rural setting and there is a strong defining link between the two. The views of the settlement within the surrounding landscape, from outside the town, and the views outwards, from within the town, provide a constant and important visual connection between town and countryside. The location, landscaping and design of new development is therefore crucial to maintaining this critical balance between landscape and settlement.

2.3.2 Visitors to the town do not always find it immediately attractive. Prettiness is not its key characteristic and does not need to be, because Wirksworth has other qualities. For those who stay here, this place becomes more and more appealing. Wirksworth offers a dramatic and memorable experience for residents and visitors and it is important that this is not lost through inconsiderate development.
2.3.3 Wirksworth’s distinctive visual characteristics are considered below in two ways:

- The characteristics of its relationship as a settlement to the wider landscape (paragraph 2.3.4);
- The characteristics of the historic settlement itself (paragraph 2.3.5).

2.3.4 Characteristics of Wirksworth’s relationship to the wider landscape are:

- The location of the town in a bowl at the head of the Ecclesbourne Valley.
- The siting of the town on the meeting point of underlying carboniferous limestone and millstone grit, giving rise to different landscapes to east (wooded slopes on millstone grit) and west (more open, fewer trees, slopes with jagged rocky outcrops on carboniferous limestone).
- The strongly defined edges along Hannage Brook and the railway line and of Yokecliffe estate.
- Its position as a market town at the junction of north-south and east-west routes.
- The original historic settlement can be seen clustered around the town centre landmarks of St. Mary’s church and the Market Place.
- Historic fringe clusters of Bolehill in the north, Gorsey Bank and Millers Green in the south and The Dale/Greenhill more centrally.
- The strong contrast between the built form of the historic settlement and the considerable 20th century development to the south of the historic core where the valley widens out.
- Ribbon development along the arterial roads.
- The former quarry workings at The Dale (partially filled in), Stoney Wood (reclaimed), the National Stone Centre (worked out and revegetating) and Middlepeak (mothballed).
2.4 DERBYSHIRE DALES LOCAL PLAN (DDLP)

2.4.1 This section summarises the policies in the Local Plan, leading to an understanding of why it is necessary to have additional “quality and character” policies for Wirksworth. The policies in the 2013 Draft Local Plan were similar.

2.4.2 The local plan policies seek to secure high quality, locally distinctive design and to protect and enhance the natural, built and historic environment. They require development to “preserve” or “enhance” the character and appearance of the settlement or countryside. However, they mainly address the high quality of the environment of the plan area and situations where the locality has quality and local distinctiveness.

2.4.3 The local plan policies do not directly address situations which occur in Wirksworth where a locality is in poor condition (for example, a derelict site) and is actually in need of a development which improves its appearance or gives it a new character, perhaps reflecting a nearby, more admired part of the town or countryside. In such a case, “preserve” would not be an option and “improve” would be more appropriate than “enhance”. The layout and design of development in such locations should take its lead from the characteristics of Wirksworth recognised in the Character Guidance, which has been especially written for this plan.10

2.4.4 It is clear that the emerging local plan considerably improved local policy guidance in line with the NPPF but, of course, its policies were designed to address the local plan area as a whole. The neighbourhood plan policies address specific Wirksworth requirements.

2.4.5 The significant development sites in Wirksworth identified in the 2013 Draft Local Plan, with an associated extension of the settlement boundary, will impact on the balance between settlement and landscape.

2.5 ACHIEVING HIGH STANDARDS AND AVOIDING MEDIOCRITY

2.5.1 Any new development must honour the settlement’s qualities and characteristics. Future growth of the settlement, or extension of the settlement boundary, should not contradict the defining landscape and settlement qualities and wherever possible should seek to strengthen and improve them.

2.5.2 Wirksworth should receive only the very best development. That applies as much to the areas which are currently undistinguished as to those which display the distinctiveness of which we are proud. We should always seek improvement.

2.5.3 The NPPF gives support to this view, saying that planning policies should aim to ensure that development should add to the overall quality of the area and should avoid mediocrity.

2.5.4 As housing development is likely to be the largest new use of land during the plan period, its impact on Wirksworth’s visual environment will be significant. Therefore, it is important that the quality and character of new housing is of a high standard, and has a beneficial impact on Wirksworth’s townscape. Chapter 3 addresses this in the context of housing generally.”
2.6 CONTEMPORARY DESIGN\textsuperscript{12}

2.6.1 Wirksworth fosters innovation and local people understand that\textsuperscript{13} contemporary design could contribute diversity and interest to the town. It is often difficult for people, including decision-makers, to recognise quality in innovative forms of development and that may lead to developments being deemed unacceptable. In some circumstances, it can be as acceptable as more traditional forms and is often preferable to pastiche.

2.6.2 It will not necessarily be out of character in marginal cases to favour the innovative. There is a commitment to being a low-carbon town\textsuperscript{14}; designs with innovative, low carbon technology may help to move towards that aim. They may exceptionally be permitted in cases where the innovative technology requires innovative design. It will still be necessary for the development to take its lead from the Character Guidance and to seek to achieve twelve BfL12 greens. Policy NP2 allows for such cases.

2.7 QUALITY AND CHARACTER OF DEVELOPMENT POLICIES

2.7.1 Policy NP1 applies where development is proposed that involves the growth of the settlement beyond the boundary shown on the Proposals Map. Policies NP1 and NP2 both seek to apply the character guidance set out in Appendix 1 to the determination of all planning applications. All new development will be expected to comply with these two policies, as appropriate.

2.7.2 Policy NP3 applies the concept statements in Appendixes 2 to 5 to the determination of applications affecting the following sites:
- The Middleton Road housing site identified in the 2013 Draft Local Plan (Appendix 2);
- Coneygreave House, Cromford Road (Appendix 3);
- Haarlem Mill, Derby Road (Appendix 4); and
- Wards Yard, Derby Road (Appendix 5).

2.7.3 The concept statement in each of the Appendices provides supplementary guidance on what will be expected in a development proposal for the site in question. It is not a detailed design proposal, but a set of guiding principles and ideas, allowing flexibility in proposals whilst ensuring that fundamental priorities are delivered. The concept statements should be considered alongside the other policies of this Plan and the Local Plan.

2.7.4 In order to demonstrate compliance with policies NP1 to NP3, all applications for development should explain:
1 How the development relates to the site and the wider area, in the context of the Character Guidance, and how that has affected the design of the proposed development; and
2 How the development and its proposed soft and/or hard landscape design will contribute positively to the quality of development in Wirksworth.

2.7.5 The policies in this Chapter apply to all new development. In addition, Policy NP4, in Chapter 3, will apply to new residential development.

\textsuperscript{12}“Contemporary” is defined in the Evidence Document.
\textsuperscript{13}See Chapter 5 of this plan and the Consultation Statement.
\textsuperscript{14}See Vision, in Chapter 1 of this plan.
\textsuperscript{15}The Character Guidance is contained in Appendix 1. It describes the significant characteristics and qualities of the area.
\textsuperscript{16}Validation checklist is explained in the Evidence and Explanations Document.
Policy NP1  
*Setting and shape of the settlement*

Planning permission will be granted for development which involves the growth of the settlement, but normally only if it:
1. is in line with the vision for Wirksworth set out in Chapter 1 and
2. strengthens and improves on the defining landscape and settlement qualities identified in the Character Guidance in Appendix 1 to this Plan, so far as relevant.

Policy NP2  
*Quality and character of development within the settlement*

Planning permission will be granted only if the proposal accords with A or B below:

A  
In cases where the immediate environment of the site has less visual, social, natural or historic quality or little sense of place, or where the proposed use of innovative technology requires innovative design, the development:
1. should take its lead from the characteristics of Wirksworth recognised in the Character Guidance, so far as relevant; and
2. should contribute positively to the quality of development in Wirksworth.

B  
In other cases, the development:
1. should respect the local character and historic and natural assets of the surrounding area;
2. should take every opportunity, through its use of appropriate materials and landscape design, to reinforce local distinctiveness and a strong sense of place as identified in the Character Guidance; and
3. should take every opportunity to achieve ecological sustainability and a carbon neutral development, including the use of energy efficiency measures and low-carbon energy generation.

Policy NP3  
*Sites with concept statement*

In cases where there is a concept statement for a site, in Appendices 2 to 5 of this Plan, proposed development should be generally in accordance with that statement.
CHAPTER 3, contributing to our Vision by supporting the provision of new, well designed, low carbon housing to accommodate the needs of the community, across age and income levels and in particular encouraging young families to live here.

3.0 SOCIAL SUSTAINABILITY AND HOUSING

3.1 ACCOMMODATING THE NEEDS OF THE COMMUNITY

3.1.1 Local people are concerned that Wirksworth is moving towards being a town which has an older population and an absent population. Although there is evidence that the trend is not as serious as in some other parts of Derbyshire Dales, people agreed that, if possible, the trend needs to be reversed in order to achieve a socially mixed and vibrant town where a large proportion of the population comprises families with children.

3.1.2 It is not easy to establish the most desirable housing mix nor is it easy to persuade developers to provide a particular housing mix which may be less profitable than the one that they prefer. Also, it is currently not legally possible to prevent people from buying existing houses to use as second homes.

3.1.3 In view of the importance attached to those issues by local people and with a view to preventing them from getting more serious in the future, it is strongly in the interests of localism that there should be policies addressing them in order to foster a socially sustainable town. Policies should encourage the building of family homes, starter homes and sheltered housing and seek to achieve a minimum increase in second homes.

3.1.4 The Local Plan contains a suite of policies supporting the provision of affordable housing. The 2013 Draft Local Plan also addressed the issue of social sustainability, and sought “a mix of housing that contributes positively to the promotion of sustainable and inclusive communities” … including “a proportion of housing suitable for newly forming local households. Policy DMP17 in the 2013 Plan sought “to maximise the delivery of affordable housing”, and set out clearly the proportions of housing that would be required in new residential developments. Strongly supporting that approach, this Plan does not need to have a suite of policies addressing affordable housing or housing mix. In order that the opportunities which arise to provide affordable housing on development sites are fully exploited, the possibility of setting up a Community Land Trust is put forward as a means to provide affordable homes for local people.

3.1.5 However, it is necessary to have a policy that aims for a high proportion of family homes. Complementary to that policy, there must be a policy ensuring that homes that are intended as family homes are large enough to be so. It is possible to build a four-bedroom house which is actually too small for a family to live in. For example, if the bedrooms are small, the downstairs living rooms may be too cramped for a
family to share easily. Such homes would be prime targets for second homes or for retired people moving into the area, in conflict with the purpose of our proposed policy. There is evidence that this is happening in Wirksworth.

3.1.6 There are no national standards for space within dwellings but the issue is being considered at a national level because it is an important factor in the social and educational development of residents. Dwellings built using public money (affordable and social housing) and dwellings built in the area covered by the Greater London Authority are built to mandatory space standards. In 2011 the RIBA published an important report which says that space standards set in Greater London are “the best available benchmark from which to assess whether a home is big enough”. This plan adopts those standards as suitable for new housing built in Wirksworth.

3.1.7 It would be unreasonable and might prejudice viability to impose the highest standards on small-site developments and on the entire area of large-site developments. Therefore, paragraphs A and B of Policy NP3 apply only to larger-site developments and to 65% of the dwellings to be built (thus, in a three-dwellings development, one dwelling can be smaller size and the paragraphs do not apply to developments of one or two dwellings). Such apportionment has the benefit of enabling a satisfactory housing mix because up to 35% of dwellings may be two-bedroom or smaller and, for example, suitable for retired or single people. The requirements relating to marketing material in paragraph C can reasonably be required of all housing developments and will ensure that young families and others buying or renting a home will be clearer about what exactly they will be getting.

3.1.8 The policy sets a figure of 65% because that is the current proportion of 3+ bedroom dwellings in the area and it should be maintained.

3.1.9 The policy does not seek to prevent special residential developments, such as sheltered housing with extra care for the elderly.

3.1.10 Part B of NP3 requires applicants to submit certain information. Such a requirement is not normally contained within planning policy but is part of the planning authority’s “validation checklist”. The Evidence and Explanations Document explains the checklist and why the requirement is in this policy.

**Policy NP4**

*Size of new homes and space standards*

**A**
Residential developments of three dwellings or more should include a high proportion of family homes, to the following requirements:-

1. At least 65% of the dwellings should have three bedrooms or more.
2. The dwellings to which sub-paragraph A.1 refers should be of a size equal to or greater than the Greater London standards.

**B**
Planning applications for residential developments of three dwellings or more should include the following information about each dwelling in the application:-

1. The number of bedrooms.
2. The number of people the dwelling is designed to house/number of bedspaces (bunk type beds cannot be included).

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18 See Evidence Document
20 Census 2011
21 The Greater London standards may be found at http://TinyURL.com/oy7265f
3 The gross internal area (measured using the RICS Code of Measuring Practice).
4 The net internal area (measured using the RICS Code of Measuring Practice).

3.2 LIMITING THE NUMBERS OF SECOND HOMES

3.2.1 The phrase “second homes” does not adequately describe the kind of houses that stand empty in the plan area during a high proportion of the year. The empty houses include houses bought by people for their own occasional use and houses that are rented out as holiday lets. A term that is often used is “intermittently occupied houses” but we will use the phrase “second homes” for all these situations.

3.2.2 There is no official figure for the number of second homes in the plan area. There is some data for council tax purposes and some other data for business rates purposes but it is likely that the numbers registered for those purposes (4 to 5% of the homes in the plan area) underestimates the actual number of second homes.

3.2.3 There are residential areas in Wirksworth which contain older, more quaint properties, where the proportion of second homes in a particular street is well above the apparent 4 to 5% average for the town. These areas include Wash Green, The Puzzle Gardens and North End. This can be unpleasantly isolating for people who live on a street where they are surrounded by empty houses.

3.2.4 This plan aims to have a sustained, varied and vibrant community that uses local shops and community facilities throughout the year. To achieve this, new opportunities must be provided for people to live in the plan area. This plan restricts new development to “principal residence homes”: homes which have to be used as the principal residence of the household living in it.

3.2.5 Chapter 5 makes a case for encouraging tourism, which benefits the local economy and Chapter 7 addresses concerns about the local retail economy. In that regard, holiday homes in particular and second homes to some extent do help the local economy by spending in the shops and on local attractions. However, principal residents are a more reliable economic resource and are more likely to play a part in the life in the community and help us to maintain the shops and services which depend on a resident population.

3.2.6 A policy restricting the use of residences to “principal residence only” can apply only to new planning applications. Nevertheless it is useful. There are a number of cases where new houses, particularly houses designed with some respect to the local distinctiveness of Wirksworth, have been bought as second homes. As the policies of both the draft local plan and the neighbourhood plan are likely to encourage the building of more dwellings which respect the local distinctiveness, that trend may increase. A policy is necessary, if only to stabilise the current balance of principal and intermittently occupied homes, even though it may apply only to new developments.
3.2.7 There is an understandable tendency for estate agents to advertise properties as ideal for investment as holiday lets. It may be that sellers would sometimes prefer to sell their homes to others who would like to live with them as a main residence but leave the issue in the hands of the estate agents. It will be a Town Council Action Point to enter into a dialogue with the local estate agents to seek to change attitudes.

3.2.8 There may be a few cases where developments are specifically intended to be for other residential type uses, e.g. log cabins as holiday homes. The policy will not apply to such developments.

Policy NP5
Principal Residence Homes
Planning permission for new dwellings will be subject to a restriction to ensure their occupation only as principal residence homes.

3.3 ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT OF NEW HOUSING DEVELOPMENTS

Visual Impact

3.3.1 As housing development is likely to be the largest new use of land during the plan period, its impact on Wirksworth’s visual environment will be significant. Therefore, it is important that the quality and character of new housing is of a high standard, and has a beneficial impact on Wirksworth’s townscape.

3.3.2 An excellent way of getting residential development to add to the overall quality of the area and avoid mediocrity is to apply Building for Life 12 (BfL12), a Government-backed standard for well-designed homes and neighbourhoods which can help ensure that a high standard of design is achieved for new development.

Policy NP6
Quality of residential development
Planning permission will normally only be granted for residential development if it scores 12 greens under the criteria in Building for Life 12 (BfL12).²²

The Impact of Carbon Emissions

3.3.5 One of the aims of this plan is to minimise the use of carbon fuels. It aspires to set a high standard for the energy rating of new homes, up to the highest level – conformity with Level 6 of the Code for Sustainable Homes. However, there are concerns expressed in the local plan and a warning in the NPPF to ensure deliverability.

²² The Building for Life (BfL) criteria may be found at http://tinyurl.com/pdlpwqq
References to BfL 12 refer also to any successor documents which may replace or modify it.
3.3.6 The NPPF says that development identified in the plan should not be subject to such obligations and policy burdens that their viability is threatened. Policy SP9 in the 2013 Draft Local Plan required new homes, except for those on small sites, to achieve the highest viable rating in the Code for Sustainable Homes (CSH) – in particular, to meet or exceed the requirements of the Building Regulations, which currently do not require a higher rate than Level 3. It did not set a specific standard.

3.3.7 There is evidence that higher levels would (in the same way envisaged by the Green Deal) produce savings which could be set against the initial cost of the development and also attract grant and/or loan facilities. Furthermore, it is the government’s ambition, expressed in Next Steps to Zero Carbon Homes and elsewhere, to implement zero carbon homes from 2016. Therefore, during the neighbourhood plan period, it will be necessary and increasingly possible for developers gradually to improve the energy-saving performance of the dwellings they build.

3.3.8 New-build homes will have a lifetime of perhaps 100 years. If new homes in Wirksworth are built to a lower than achievable standard, they will be consuming energy in a less than optimal way throughout their lifetime at a cost to the finances of the residents and to our local environment. They will not constitute the “sustainable development” which the NPPF seeks. The retro-fitting of improvements is difficult and expensive. The extra costs of building for a high standard will be more than recouped over the lifetime of the houses.

3.3.9 To achieve our aim of making the neighbourhood plan area a low-carbon area, the neighbourhood plan can be more demanding than the local plan and can still be realistic. The neighbourhood plan policies cannot require existing buildings to be upgraded and therefore it must set ambitious targets for new buildings, to be met through planning permission requirements, and it must set a context for land in the plan area to be developed for renewable or low carbon energy production.

3.3.10 How is that to be done? Rather than introduce the highest standards immediately, the plan phases their introduction. The phasing seeks to achieve Level 6 before the end of the plan period in our plan area, to help promote the government’s ambition of eventually implementing zero carbon homes nationally. The evidence document explains that we consider the proposed standards to be viable. If an applicant considers the standards would make the development unviable, the policy requires the applicant to provide open-book evidence of that.

Policy NP7
Energy-saving standards for new dwellings
All new dwellings should achieve the following standards:
- In the period ending June 2017, CSH L4;
- In the period from July 2017 to June 2020, CSH L5;
- In the period from July 2020 onwards, CSH L6.

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23 NPPF paragraph 173.
24 The Code for Sustainable Homes may be found at www.planningportal.gov.uk
25 See Evidence Document.
26 Department for Communities and Local Government, 6 August 2013.
3.4 COMPLEMENTARY SITES AND SELF-HELP DEVELOPMENT

3.4.1 The two main sites identified for housing development in the 2013 Draft Local Plan, Middleton Road and Coneygreave House, have constraints which could cause development to be slower than anticipated or result in fewer homes being built. It is wise to consider whether there are other sites which could provide some housing to help achieve the target in the Draft Plan for this area. Possible candidates for selection as “complementary sites” include land in the curtilage of Haarlem Mill at Derby Road/Cinder Lane, the former Ward’s Nursery on the east side of Derby Road and land at Station Yard.

3.4.2 The district council is satisfied that the two main sites make adequate provision. If this neighbourhood plan was to allocate the additional complementary sites for residential development, that could encourage the early development of housing on those sites, resulting in the delaying of development on the sites in the Draft Plan. There is much to commend the development of the sites but, to avoid such conflict, this plan does not allocate them for residential development.

3.4.3 Whatever the policies may be, they have to be implemented. There is a feeling amongst the local community that the best way to get the houses you want is to build them yourselves. The town council will pursue means of achieving the community construction of affordable and low carbon homes, including the possibility of creating a Community Land Trust or other social benefit organisation; this will be a Town Council Action Point.

3.5 TOWN COUNCIL ACTION POINTS

- To foster housing diversity, e.g. set up a Community Land Trust.
- To enter into a dialogue with the local estate agents about not advertising properties as ideal for holiday lets.
CHAPTER 4, contributing to our Vision by sustaining and improving a range of recreational and community facilities to support the health, education and well-being of all local people.

4.0 COMMUNITY WELL-BEING

4.1 NEEDS

4.1.1 This chapter seeks to improve the health and social well-being of the community and therefore deals with open space, sport and recreation and with places and buildings which are important to local people living and working in Wirksworth and the surrounding rural area.

4.1.2 The consultation exercise identified:

– a desire amongst local people that there should be an indoor place for young people to get together;
– a need for more community open space, playgrounds, playing fields and sports facilities
– a list of community spaces and places which should be protected
– a resurgence of demand for allotments;
– the importance of the local school provision;
– the importance of the local health service provision.

4.2 YOUTH CENTRE

4.2.1 Since the closure of the part-time youth club at Anthony Gell School, there has been no indoor place where young people can gather, other than the cafes and pubs which are perceived as a preserve of adults. The consultation exercise identified that local people consider that it is important to the future of the community that young people have a positive attitude towards Wirksworth and that they and their families wish to stay here. Providing places where they feel comfortable will be a major contribution to that future.

4.2.2 The school students who participated in the consultations clearly want a local youth centre, a young people’s cafe and other means of enjoying positive leisure time outside school through access to recreation, arts and heritage and digital communication technology. Anthony Gell School no longer has space and the county council now offers only a mobile service in the plan area. The town council respects the qualities of our young people and agrees with OFSTED that they have ‘a highly developed sense of moral values and tolerance’. Helping to provide a youth centre will be a Town Council Action Point.

4.3 COMMUNITY SPACE AND SPORTS FACILITIES

4.3.1 The town council considers that existing community spaces do not fully serve the needs of the parish. There is not enough provision and a high proportion of those that there are need improvement. The consultation exercise identified that people consider that current provision should be given specific protection and, indeed, additional facilities especially for children’s play and sports clubs, are necessary.
4.3.2 There are four large community open spaces in the parish. They are at Bolehill, Cromford Road (“Fanny Shaw’s”), Gorsey Bank and Kingsfield. There are small playgrounds at The Dale and Yokecliffe, both in need of upgrade and improvement. These are of importance to the community by virtue of their recreational and amenity value, and the proximity to people served by them.

4.3.3 Opportunities should be sought and encouraged to improve the existing spaces and playgrounds. Built development should not be allowed on them except for small scale development that would help enhance their value to the community as recreational spaces. Permissible development might include a youth facility, such as a coffee bar, at one of the larger open spaces, such as Fanny Shaw’s, where there is a skateboard park. This will be a Town Council Action Point. The NPPF, at paragraph 70, provides authority for the retention, promotion and development of community facilities such as shared space, community facilities, meeting places and sports venues and requires us to “guard against the unnecessary loss of valued facilities and services ….”

4.3.4 Whilst protecting the existing provision it is essential that new community recreation space be created. There are no play facilities east of the town centre in the residential area from Wash Green to King Edward Street and provision south of the town centre, perhaps on The Meadows, would serve a large population in the Yokecliffe area and families visiting the town centre.

4.3.5 The activities of our sports clubs make a vital contribution to the social life, health and prosperity of the community. The arrival of the Leisure Centre and other improvements have shown how local people can benefit from sports-related activities. The recent increase in demand is so great that the sports hall, climbing wall and artificial pitches are already oversubscribed. There are not enough football or hockey pitches to meet demand.

4.3.6 There must be sustained growth in facilities to match the rising demand. There is a need for new developments to contribute proportionally to the provision of such facilities.

**Policy NP8**

*Providing for new community facilities*

In cases where there is a requirement or agreement that a developer should provide or contribute towards community facilities, priority should be given to the need to provide the following facilities:

1. Facilities which may be sought by the concept statement or design guidance for the site; and

2. A Youth Centre or youth facility

**Policy NP9**

*Providing for new sports facilities*

Planning permission will be granted for proposals to provide new sports facilities. The inclusion in new developments of additional sports facilities beyond that which would normally be required by the local planning authority will be permitted.

**Policy NP10**

*New play provision*

Planning permission will be granted for improvements to existing recreation facilities and playgrounds and for new children’s play provision, particularly at Wash Green and in the south of the town.

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27 Note that, as with all the neighbourhood plan policies, this policy applies so long as the location and development do not conflict with the policies on quality and character.
4.4 PROTECTING EXISTING COMMUNITY PLACES

4.4.1 There are many places in the plan area, buildings and open spaces, which are important to the community and should be protected. The first steps in protecting them were to be taken by the 2013 Draft Local Plan (policies DMP 15, SP 10, DMP 20 and DMP 21). Those policies strongly resisted the loss of community facilities and recreational areas and other open spaces, but did not identify those places in a list or on the Proposals Map (other than the National Stone Centre and The Meadows); this Plan does so, in policy NP9.

4.4.2 The Evidence Document contains descriptions of the sites and the reasons for seeking their protection. It should be noted that the list in policy NP9 is not necessarily an exhaustive list; unlisted facilities and spaces are equally protected by the local plan.

4.4.3 However, in some cases, the change of use of a building to another use does not require planning permission. For example, the Post Office could legally be changed to any type of shop. For the community to require the owner to make a planning application, it will have to persuade Derbyshire Dales District Council to issue a Direction removing the owner’s right to make the change unhindered. It is a Town Council Action Point to be vigilant and, if such a situation looks likely to arise, to consider whether to request a Direction. The town council will also consider whether to seek the registration as Assets of Community Value of some or all the facilities and spaces.

**The Meadows**

4.4.3 There is considerable community interest in the future of The Meadows, which is close to and south of the town centre and is privately owned. It is identified by Derbyshire County Council and designated in the local plan as a potential site for a combined infant school (to replace the two infant schools north of the town centre) with nursery provision. A few years ago, there were funds available for the proposed school development. However, the financial situation changed. It may change again within the plan period and therefore it is important that the designation remains. In view of the local plan designation it is not necessary for the neighbourhood plan to make any specific provision.

**Policy NP11**

*Loss of existing facilities and open spaces*

Planning Permission for the redevelopment or change of use of community assets, facilities and open spaces will be granted only if it can be demonstrated that:

1. (a) The asset or facility is no longer needed to serve the needs of the community
or
(b) the asset or facility is no longer financially or commercially viable
or
(c) an alternative facility of the same type can be provided in an equally accessible location; and

2. All possible options have been explored to maintain a community use. The buildings, uses and sites protected by this policy and by the relevant policies of the adopted local plan include those listed here.
Buildings, their uses and their curtilages:


Webster’s (Heritage Centre). The public houses: Malt Shovel, Lime Kiln, Royal Oak, Red Lion, Blacks Head, Hope and Anchor, Wheatsheaf.

Open spaces:


4.5 ALLOTMENTS

4.5.1 The plan area has no allotment sites. The nearest site is at Middleton but currently there are no vacancies and a long waiting list. The demand for allotments is growing; this appears to be not just for recreational reasons but because more people believe they should be more self-sufficient in the context of global threats to the environment and food supplies.

4.5.2 The 2013 Draft Local Plan stated that across the Derbyshire Dales the demand for allotments far exceeds provision and that demand for allotments is likely to increase. It added that the shortage in provision will need to be addressed. The Draft Plan acknowledged that allotments are a community service or facility and that they can be an important part of the district’s green infrastructure. It sought to enhance that infrastructure partly by providing allotments. It said that new housing developments will be required to make a financial contribution towards allotment provision.

4.5.3 It is estimated that the neighbourhood plan area needs a minimum of 9750m² (say, a hectare) of allotment land. Allotments need access, water and normally a communal shed and they can be expensive to provide. Although there are possible sites on the edge of Wirksworth, land close to the settlement often has residential hope value, so landowners are not keen to sell for allotment use. While there is no land currently owned by the town council which is suitable for the purpose, there is a statutory requirement for the council to provide allotment space and it can even compulsorily purchase private land under the Smallholdings and Allotments Act 1908.

4.5.4 Equating that requirement with the increasing demand recognised by the local planning authority, it is likely that, given a favorable financial situation at some time during the plan period, the town council
will provide more allotments. That will be addressed as a Town Council Action Point. Policy NP12 of this plan seeks to permit the development of statutory or private allotments should such proposals come forward.

4.5.5 As allotments are a form of agriculture and horticulture, the use of land for allotments does not require planning permission. The associated road access, sheds and fences above a certain height usually will require permission. The policy encourages the granting of permission for these associated developments. Because of the very limited supply, it is important that allotments land, when provided, is used efficiently, primarily for the production of food and flowers.

Policy NP12
Allotments
Planning permission will be granted for development associated with and necessary to the use of land as allotments, provided that the development is of an appropriate scale and is necessary to the agricultural or horticultural use of the allotment site.

4.6 SCHOOLS

4.6.1 In the plan period, the infant and junior schools may need modern accommodation: they are in buildings over 100 years old. The Meadows is a probable site for new educational development. An all-through education pattern, involving the youngest children through to Year 6, may be an appropriate way forward. The issue will need to be addressed at some point in the future. It is necessary to keep a watching brief on policy changes affecting education. The schools make important employment and financial contributions. The town council will continue to support our schools in their work: in maintaining their high standards of academic achievement and personal development.

4.7 HEALTH

4.7.1 Wirksworth is served by a GP practice which is highly valued in our community. As GPs take on further responsibilities additional buildings may be needed. The medical practice makes important employment and financial contributions. The town council will be active in supporting the Hannage Brook Medical Practice and other local health service providers, especially as more community based services develop.

4.8 TOWN COUNCIL ACTION POINTS

- To work towards the provision of a youth centre or other youth facility, perhaps linked to existing youth provision such as the skate park.
- To work towards the new sports facilities which the sports community say are needed.
- To make or help to facilitate new play provision where it is lacking.
- To be vigilant towards loss of community facilities and discuss with the local planning authority the removal of permitted development rights in appropriate cases.
- To consider whether to seek the registration as Assets of Community Value of some or all the protected facilities and spaces.
- To find ways of providing allotments and in particular to identify a suitable site.
CHAPTER 5, contributing to our Vision by encouraging development and investment to build the local tourist economy; Supporting growth and innovation within the local economy, in particular building on the area’s distinctive strengths, including its creative entrepreneurial community; Striving to become a more energy efficient/low carbon town.

5.0 ECONOMY, TOURISM AND ENERGY

5.1 INTRODUCTION

5.1.1 Our ambition for economy and tourism in the plan area is that by 2028 Wirksworth will have a vibrant local, low-carbon economy providing a broad range of employment opportunities for local people. The town will capitalise on its creative entrepreneurial community, its heritage and its tourism potential to create a supportive environment for small start-up business and to encourage community-led initiatives. Wirksworth will be a place that enables local people to work flexibly and combine home and work life.

5.1.2 There are several important factors which contribute to the economy of Wirksworth and the well-being of its people. They include our very special town centre, our traditional and creative industries and tourism, which is becoming more significant. We can concentrate on those important factors in an attempt to enhance the local economy but, if we do nothing, there is potential for decline.

5.1.3 This chapter is in three parts: Tourism; Business and Employment; and Renewable Energy. Chapter 7 addresses town centre issues.

5.2 TOURISM

What the plan area offers to tourists

5.2.1 The plan area is ideally placed to capitalise on its tourism potential. It contains stunning countryside, is on the edge of the Peak District National Park and is close to a large number of other visitor attractions. Wirksworth’s exceptional built environment coupled with its retail offer and the area’s year-round offer of events, including Wirksworth’s annual Carnival and Well Dressing and its Arts Festival, make the plan area all the more attractive.

5.2.2 The National Stone Centre, Eco Centre and the Ecclesbourne Valley Railway are all in the plan area and provide significant tourism potential. The High Peak Trail connects Wirksworth with other national and local footpaths and gives access to the National Cycle Network. “Destination Wirksworth” is an initiative which markets Wirksworth as a tourist destination linked with the railway. There is evidence that it has increased the number of visitors to the town and area.

Benefiting the local economy

5.2.3 Tourism has shown itself to benefit the economy of the plan area and is likely to become increasingly important.

Advantages and disadvantages of tourism

5.2.4 It is well documented that tourist development and an increase in the number of visitors can damage the attractions themselves. Locally, the number of bed and breakfast and holiday lets is rising. Although helpful to the area’s
tourism potential, this can be seen to be detrimental, increasing house prices and affecting the strong sense of community that is vital to Wirksworth. Also, the potential for income from tourists can lead to demand for more cafes, gift shops and antique shops, potentially replacing the “day-to-day” retailers and adversely affecting the retail balance in the town centre, which, as explained in the Town Centre chapter, is one of Wirksworth’s main assets.

**Strengthening the tourism offer**

5.2.5 Because tourism will increasingly become important to the local economy, the neighbourhood plan will try to strengthen and consolidate the area’s tourism offer. Because there are some disadvantages, the neighbourhood plan should aim to balance tourism growth with the need to conserve the assets of the plan area – countryside, built environment, sense of community and unique town centre.

**The 2013 Draft Local Plan**

5.2.6 Policy SO6 of the 2013 Draft Local Plan stated that the District Council would support the development of tourism and culture, and gave a list of ways in which that would be done. They included “supporting and supplementing the tourism offer of the Peak District National Park” and “supporting measures... which would relieve tourist pressures on the most sensitive areas of the... National Park, (etc)”. Although the policy did not mention Wirksworth by name, the neighbourhood plan area could be significant in providing attractions and facilities which might relieve tourist pressures on the National Park.

5.2.7 Policy DMP 12 set out the limitations on tourism development and said that it preferred the use of existing, permanent buildings (presumably it meant that they were preferable to new buildings). In view of the intention of SP 6 to support and relieve pressure on the national park and because the neighbourhood plan area could play a role in that, the neighbourhood plan should have a policy which enables new tourism development. In the neighbourhood plan area, new buildings at the National Stone Centre and Eco-Centre, by informing and interpreting the Peak District, add to the tourist role of the plan area and potentially relieve tourist pressures on the national park. Therefore, this plan adapts the approach of the Draft Plan to enable new buildings providing information and interpretation.

5.2.8 The Hotel Demand Survey for Derbyshire and the Peak District, referred to in the Draft Local Plan, states that Buxton, Ashbourne, Matlock and Belper are suitable locations for additional hotels. Wirksworth, at times such as the Arts Festival and Well Dressings and special events organised by Ecclesbourne Valley Railway and others, has a shortage of overnight accommodation. Indeed, it has only a few B&Bs, including pub accommodation, and no hotels. If Wirksworth is to capitalise on its tourism potential, there must be provision for a greater amount and wider range of accommodation for overnight stays.

5.2.9 Policy DMP13 in the 2013 Draft Local Plan had strict requirements for new chalet, caravan and campsite developments, mainly to do with visual impact but also requiring the site to be “accessible by a variety of modes of transport”. Because the main purpose of the requirements of both the adopted Local Plan and the Draft Local Plan is to protect the environment, and because that is also one of the main purposes of the neighbourhood plan, no new policies are added on this topic.

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28 It seems that Wirksworth was excluded from consideration because it did not have a Tourist Information Centre providing data for the survey.
Neighbourhood Plan tourism policies

5.2.10 To promote the growth of the tourism economy in Wirksworth and to support the development of tourism, this plan has the following policies, which address specifically the characteristics of the plan area.

**Policy NP13**

*Overnight accommodation and tourism development*

Planning permission will be granted for

1. changes of use to hotel and other overnight accommodation and for extensions to existing hotels or bed and breakfasts,

2. new buildings and other development related to tourism, provided that they would not have significant harmful impacts on the local community, the wider visitor experience or the character or appearance of natural and historic environment of the plan area and the surrounding countryside.

5.3 TOWN COUNCIL ACTION POINTS

- Coordination of tourism information and calendar of events.
- To help marketing through Destination Wirksworth.

5.4 BUSINESS AND EMPLOYMENT

**Wirksworth is a creative entrepreneurial community.**

5.4.1 The 2013 Draft Local Plan had a set of business and employment policies which went a long way towards addressing the problems and opportunities present in Wirksworth. It sought to retain as much existing employment land as is reasonably possible and to provide opportunities for new employment development. In this neighbourhood plan the main aim is to address opportunities which are perhaps more relevant to Wirksworth than to some other parts of the Dales.

5.4.2 A 2006 report\(^29\) found that the cluster of communities centred around Wirksworth are home to a prolific and exceptionally talented mix of innovative, imaginative and creative companies and individuals. These individuals, organisations and companies have grown up and developed in the Wirksworth area over the last 20 years and many are now well established, respected, skilled and experienced in their fields of activity.

5.4.3 The report identified 139 creative enterprises (businesses or individual sole traders), supporting previous figures published regarding the size of the local creative community in the area. These enterprises employ over 251 people on a full or part-time basis. Wirksworth and its surrounding area have an unusually large creative community for such a

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\(^{29}\) Report by NOW and Creative Futures. Dec 2006. See Evidence Document for information about NOW.
rural location, representing about 5% of its population and 8% of its workforce. Because that is a key contributor to what makes Wirksworth special, further development of that kind can and should take place.

5.4.4 One step would be to provide facilities aimed at start-up businesses. Start-up businesses would include small-scale manufacturing, local construction and refurbishment and the creative industries, where the skills and expertise of the local workforce can add significant value. They require low cost facilities for the critical first 18 months, ideally located with other start-ups or service businesses, to promote local co-operation. Such facilities are absent at the moment. This is to be a Town Council Action Point.

5.4.5 At the heart of the remarkable past and future ambition for Wirksworth is a close integration of living and working, in a compact, dense, active and socially inclusive urban environment. This again is a key element of Wirksworth’s character which the town council wishes to promote through encouraging mixed use development (residential development close to B1-type development[^30] and working from home, including alterations, extensions and small, new workshops or studios.

5.4.6 The majority of the working population is not directly involved in the creative industries. Most depend on traditional work opportunities. In the rural parts of the plan area, where local wages are below the national average coupled with limited public transport, finding accessible work is problematic especially for young people and those with new families. This problem was raised by local people in our consultations[^31]. The plan area needs local and well-paid jobs, which are important to providing a vibrant and robust economy. As these are issues throughout Derbyshire Dales, the 2013 Draft Local Plan had policies addressing them and it would not be appropriate for the neighbourhood plan to duplicate those policies.

5.4.7 It is important that local people have opportunities to retrain because there has been a general decline in traditional work opportunities and because of the Town Council’s vision that Wirksworth should continue to be a socially sustainable community. One way to do this would be to enable the provision of training facilities on new employment developments. This is to be a Town Council Action Point.

5.5 NATIONAL PLANNING POLICY FRAMEWORK AND 2013 DRAFT LOCAL PLAN

NPPF

5.5.1 The NPPF, para 21, requires planning authorities to “facilitate flexible working practices such as the integration of residential and commercial uses within the same unit”. This neighbourhood plan makes some provision through policy and a Town Council Action Point.

2013 Draft Local Plan

5.5.2 One of the means of achieving sustainable development will be to support the local economy by enabling the integration of a mix of uses “suitable for local people in environmentally, socially and economically

[^30]: B1 is explained in the Evidence and Explanations Document.
[^31]: See the Consultation Statement.
sustainable locations”. The Sustainable Community Strategy Economy Action Plan identifies the need to support micro-businesses in the local plan area.

5.5.3 Because those are important suggestions for the neighbourhood plan area, this neighbourhood plan makes some provision through policy and a Town Council Action Point. In addition, policies in the 2013 Draft Local Plan supported this vision.

5.5.4 SP5 encouraged developments that contribute to jobs and educational and re-skilling opportunities, the redevelopment or intensification of existing employment sites, particularly to update them to modern employment standards, and a greater presence of high value and knowledge-based businesses.

5.5.5 DMP 10 identified 4 ha at Middleton Road for employment development. Housing and industry can be incompatible neighbours. The Middleton Road concept statement addresses the difficult issue of the potential relationship between houses and industry.

5.5.6 DMP 11 sought to restrict the loss of existing employment and industrial premises unless there are particular justifications for the loss.

5.5.7 Referring to development outside the settlement framework, where new development would not normally be permitted, DMP 2 enabled “small-scale industrial or business development that is appropriate to its location”. This policy also justified development to enable working from home in rural locations but does not make specific provision in urban areas.

Overview of sites in the Neighbourhood Plan

5.5.8 This section looks at some sites which offer good opportunities to support the area’s creative and knowledge based industries. Most are centrally located and those which are not have suitable characteristics. They tend to be small in size, most have potential to be integrated with residential use and some are in buildings of heritage value that could sympathetically be converted for small business uses.

Haarlem Mill

5.5.9 This site contains a Grade 2 star listed building on the Buildings at Risk register. Because it is a former industrial site and contains a number of small spaces in the existing buildings, it is an ideal candidate for small businesses or industry linked to residential. It is on the edge of town, close to half hourly bus services. Haarlem Mill presents a unique opportunity to bring forward a heritage-led and high quality development that could improve the image of Wirksworth at the important point of arrival and departure at the southern gateway.

Middleton Road

5.5.10 This was the main residential and employment allocation in the 2013 Draft Local Plan. Because there will be a large number of homes nearby, the site is likely to be suitable only for business and industry (B1) use. A mixed development of the Middleton Road site could, without difficulty, provide for the small scale, knowledge-driven, creative businesses which we perceive as being important for the future of the plan area and enable “living above the shop”.

Willowbath Mill

5.5.11 This site is in easy walking distance of the town centre. It is currently occupied by several small, creative industries.
**Stones Builders**

5.5.12 In the town centre and currently a builder’s yard. The employment which will be lost if the site ceases to be a builder’s yard could be partially replaced if the site were to be redeveloped or converted for use by creative and craft industries, integrated with residential use and small-scale retail. This site is discussed also in Chapter 7 of this plan.

**Station Yard**

5.5.13 This neighbourhood plan recognises the Ecclesbourne Valley Railway as a tourist attraction. The operator, Wyvern Rail, is a key stakeholder in employment through tourism in Wirksworth. Beyond this, Wyvern Rail has ambitions to extend its land ownership and create further employment opportunities. Such development would be more deliverable and sustainable if mixed-use opportunities with residential use were also identified. There is an exceptional opportunity here to create a remarkable working and living environment within the town. Chapter 3 refers to the possible use of the site partially for residential development. Chapter 4 lists the railway and station as a protected facility, so it is important that any employment or residential development does not hinder that activity.

**The Parish Rooms**

5.5.14 A two-storey 19th century building in St Mary’s Gate, the Parish Rooms was used in the second half of the 20th century as a clothes factory. The upper floor is currently in office use and the ground floor is let out to community groups. Because it is central to Wirksworth and because it has a history as a place of employment, the owners consider that the upper floor would make an excellent location for small-scale start-up businesses and we propose that it be converted to use as a work hub.

5.5.15 A work hub is a flexible workspace offering professional facilities for micro businesses and mobile workers, including those who work from home. A work hub serves more businesses than a traditional office can house. Shared facilities may include bookable ‘hot’ desks, formal and informal meeting spaces, high speed broadband and costly professional equipment. Work hubs offer an important, professional front for small or start-up enterprises, including those trying to run their business from home. One can meet clients at a work hub, receive business advice and support and have friendly, professional staff handling their phone calls and post. Work hubs provide a relaxed working environment helping collaboration and the exchange of ideas and are an antidote to isolation.

**Mountains’ Yard**

5.5.16 Mountains’ Yard is a haulage yard on the edge of the conservation area, close to very attractive parts of Wirksworth. It is an unattractive site in its current use and draws HGVs through the town centre and streets lined with homes. It provides employment which Wirksworth cannot afford to lose. Historically, quarry wagons transporting stone have provided significant employment for drivers and others in the industry and may still be important in the future when local quarries reopen. Whilst this site could be developed more sympathetically to its surroundings, it
should be only if an alternative location can be found for the lorry depot.

**Policies for business and employment**

*Policy NP14*

**Provision for new and small businesses**

**A**

Subject to the provisions of part B of this policy, planning permission will be granted for developments on the sites of Haarlem Mill, Middleton Road, Willowbath Mill, Stones Builders, Station Yard, the Parish Rooms and Mountains Yard which provide for:

1. start-up businesses by enabling low cost facilities in cooperative clusters;
2. businesses to operate from integrated home/work locations;
3. working from home, enabling extensions and small new buildings;
4. enabling micro-businesses.

**B**

Permission will not be granted for development which would prejudice the Listed status of Haarlem Mill, the development of the Middleton Road site as envisaged by other policies of this plan or the use for railway purposes of Station Yard. Permission will be granted at Mountains Yard only if an alternative site is provided for the haulage business.

*Policy NP15*

**Parish Rooms work hub**

The upper floor of the Parish Rooms which is shown on the proposals map is identified for use as a work hub. Planning permission will not be granted for uses which would conflict with or prevent development of a work hub.

5.6 TOWN COUNCIL ACTION POINTS

- To provide incentives for start-ups.
- To encourage apprenticeship and education.
- To encourage self-build, with training.
- To provide for training facilities in employment developments.
- To work with the owners of Haarlem Mill, Middleton Road, Willowbath Mill, Stones Builders, Station Yard, Parish Rooms and Mountains Yard to try to provide workspaces for small-scale manufacturing, local construction and refurbishment and the creative industries.

5.7 RENEWABLE ENERGY

5.7.1 This section discusses renewable energy sources and our aim of achieving a low carbon plan area. It concentrates mainly on non-residential development because Chapter 3 covers residential development.

5.7.2 Wirksworth is an active Transition Town which aspires to be carbon neutral. We consider that the neighbourhood plan should seek to achieve a level of renewable energy provision at least equal to the government’s aim for the country of 15% by 2020. We draw some encouragement from the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and the 2013 Draft Local Plan.

**National Planning Policy Framework**

5.7.3 The NPPF encourages neighbourhood plans to identify opportunities for community energy-saving initiatives. It says: “97. To help increase the use and supply of renewable and low carbon energy, local planning authorities should recognise the responsibility on all communities to contribute to energy generation from renewable or low carbon sources. They should … consider identifying suitable areas for renewable and low carbon energy sources, and supporting infrastructure, where this would help
secure the development of such sources; support community-led initiatives for renewable and low carbon energy, including developments outside such areas being taken forward through neighbourhood planning; and identify opportunities where development can draw its energy supply from decentralised, renewable or low carbon energy supply systems and for co-locating potential heat customers and suppliers."

Peak Sub-Region Feasibility Study

5.7.4 A feasibility study commissioned by the District Council and other local authorities, cited in the 2013 Draft Local Plan, assessed the potential in the Peak District and Dales for renewable and low carbon technologies. The study concluded that there is potential for a wide range of technologies, including combined heat and power schemes and decentralised district heating schemes, especially in larger developments.

5.7.5 The study made a number of recommendations, including that all developments should have an energy statement, that targets should be set for renewable energy consumption based on achieving certain approved levels and that there should be a policy for stand-alone energy development that could be used to export energy to the National Grid or district heating schemes. Policy SP9 in the 2013 Draft Local Plan reflected the recommendations of the feasibility study. For example, it sought high standards for commercial developments.

5.7.6 If Wirksworth is to achieve the local ambition of 15% renewable energy by 2020, with the higher aspiration of becoming a carbon neutral area, the neighbourhood plan must be more demanding than the local plan. It must set ambitious targets for new buildings, to be met through planning permission requirements, find ways to improve the existing building stock and encourage land in the plan area developed for renewable energy production.

The BREEAM standards

5.7.7 Regarding targets for new buildings, the plan should demand the highest BREEAM33 standards for non-residential development. However, in compliance with the government’s understandable insistence that development should be deliverable (NPPF paragraph 173), the neighbourhood plan policies are less demanding than would be necessary to move quickly towards a low carbon community. The requirements for residential properties were set out in Chapter 3 of this Plan. The corresponding requirements for non-residential buildings, based on BREEAM standards, are in Policy NP16.

5.7.8 Regarding improvements of the existing stock, the neighbourhood plan cannot require existing buildings to be upgraded. Those buildings, even by 2028, will continue to be the majority in the plan area and to be the main stumbling block for our aspirations and ambitions. Policy NP16, which applies to both residential and non-residential development, will help to facilitate the upgrading of buildings where the necessary works require planning permission, although it will need to be read alongside national and local policies requiring the protection of heritage assets from harm.34 Importantly, the town council will work with local people and relevant bodies to find ways of encouraging energy-saving improvements to the existing building stock. This is to be a Town Council Action Point.

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33 The BREEAM standards may be found at www.breeam.org/filelibrary/BREEAM_Brochure.pdf

34 As with all neighbourhood plan policies, this policy will be subject to the other provisions of this and other statutory planning documents.
Regarding renewable energy production, there are many opportunities in the plan area. They include worked out quarries which would be capable of taking large scale solar electric installations (they face in the right direction and are in the right place to enable easy access to the plan area) and there is wind on the hills. Because this is a neighbourhood plan, the main purpose of a policy permitting such developments would be to ensure that the plan area would be the main beneficiary. The scale of the developments should be appropriate to the scale of the locality and they should respect their surroundings.

**Neighbourhood plan policies on sustainable energy**

**Policy NP16**  
*Energy-saving standards for non-residential developments*
All new non-residential buildings should achieve the following standards:
- In the period ending June 2017, BREEAM Good;
- In the period from July 2017 to June 2020, BREEAM Very Good;
- In the period from July 2020 onwards, BREEAM Excellent.

**NP17**  
*Upgrading existing buildings*
Planning applications for alterations to buildings required to improve their energy conservation qualities will be permitted, provided that works to heritage assets do not cause harm to their significance.

**NP18**  
*Enabling renewable energy developments*
Planning permission will normally be granted for developments the main purpose of which is to provide power from renewable energy sources primarily for use in the plan area and its immediate vicinity, provided that they do not cause harm to:
- landscape character, biodiversity and geodiversity interests; or heritage assets or their setting.

**TOWN COUNCIL ACTION POINTS**
- To work with local people and relevant bodies to find ways of encouraging energy-saving improvements to the existing building stock.
CHAPTER 6, contributing to our Vision by promoting sustainable transport that links to surrounding areas and includes a safe and convenient environment for pedestrians and cyclists.

6.0 TRANSPORT AND MOVEMENT

6.1 INTRODUCTION

6.1.1 This chapter is structured as follows:

Section 6.2 sets out our objectives for transport and movement (the objectives address the three main issues which the neighbourhood plan can address with land use policies) and discusses the policy background to the topic of transport and movement;

Section 6.3 looks at the plan area, lists people’s concerns about transport and movement in the area as a whole and suggests some solutions;

Section 6.4 makes provision for pedestrians and cyclists;

Section 6.5 lists Town Council Action Points relevant to the topic “transport and movement”.

6.2 OBJECTIVES & BACKGROUND

Objectives for transport and movement

6.2.1 The three objectives build on the plan’s vision (Chapter 1) and are the result of public consultations and assessments of the issues raised. They are:

- To improve the townscape of central Wirksworth so that it complements the existing buildings which provide the town’s unique character, thus making it a more attractive place to live and/or work in and to visit, and to change the balance between pedestrians and vehicles to significantly favour pedestrians.
- To provide additional parking space and protect existing parking and reorganise it where possible to work more effectively.
- To improve, extend and enhance provision for pedestrians and cyclists so as to discourage use of vehicles, reduce pollution and congestion while promoting health and wellbeing.

Policy background

6.2.2 The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) says that the transport system should be balanced in favour of sustainable transport modes, that different policies and measures will be required in different communities and that encouragement should be given to solutions which support reductions in greenhouse gas emissions and reduce congestion.

6.2.3 The NPPF has five priorities for the location and design of developments. They include giving priority to pedestrian and cycle movements and creating safe and secure layouts which minimise conflict between traffic, cyclists and pedestrians. The NPPF adds that local planning authorities should protect sites and routes which could be critical in developing infrastructure to widen transport choice.

6.2.4 It is apparent that the NPPF has much the same approach to sustainable transport as Wirksworth people have supported in our consultations. That is the context for this discussion of what the neighbourhood plan needs to do.

6.2.5 The 2013 Draft Local Plan followed the NPPF guidance. It did not identify many sites and routes but it did have general policies which set a background for this neighbourhood plan. They cover most of the plan area’s policy needs but the neighbourhood plan can make useful contributions to policy on the following topics: town centre character and streetscape; parking; and provision for pedestrians and cyclists.
6.3 THE PLAN AREA

6.3.1 Because of the local topography, many of the roads in the plan area are difficult for vehicles. Wirksworth’s street pattern has evolved over many centuries and is not designed to accommodate modern vehicular traffic. There is congestion in the town centre, with associated noise and pollution, and significant challenges for cyclists and pedestrians. Those problems affect drivers, shoppers, residents, public health and the local economy. Some of them cannot be directly addressed by the neighbourhood plan but will be taken forward by the town council as Town Council Action Points.

6.3.2 In our consultations people have expressed a number of concerns:

- The public transport links, particularly to and from the rural area, are poor. There are not enough buses, not enough places served and poor evening provision.
- There are not enough footpath links giving access between residential areas, schools, community facilities and the town centre.
- New residential developments, even in recent years, have not provided pedestrian-friendly footpath links and routes, avoiding busy roads, narrow footways, steep inclines and other difficulties for pedestrians, especially with children and shopping bags. Where there are footpaths, they are often hidden behind high fences or hedges.
- The pedestrian pavements (footways) on the roads linking residential areas with the town centre are sometimes too narrow and sometimes non-existent. Walking is dangerous because pedestrians are close to fast-moving vehicles.
- There is insufficient parking provision in some residential parts of Wirksworth.
- There is no agreed plan for how to deal with quarry traffic and the routes it should take.
- There is little or no provision for cyclists, for either shopping or leisure purposes, except on the High Peak Trail.
- In Wirksworth town centre specifically, there is vehicular / pedestrian conflict, arising from the following main problems:
  - There is insufficient parking provision.
  - The main shopping streets are also the main through roads.
  - There are inadequate pavements.
  - In the middle of the town centre, there is a pinch point where people can walk only in single file.
  - There is parking on the pavement.
  - Traffic speeds are too high.
  - There is an uncoordinated jumble of street signs and other street furniture which has grown up incrementally for ad hoc purposes.
  - Wide road junctions and parking provision for vehicles create a townscape with too much black tarmac.
  - There is noise and dust from large vehicles.
  - Loading from delivery vehicles for shops is difficult.

6.4 PEDESTRIANS AND CYCLISTS

6.4.1 Several of the issues listed above are related to the topics ‘town centre’ and ‘parking’ and are addressed in a separate town centre chapter (Chapter 7). This section deals with the need to provide for pedestrians and cyclists.

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35 See the Consultation Statement
6.4.2 Conflict between pedestrians and cyclists usually occurs where they are sharing the same path. With forethought and good design, most conflict can be avoided. In our plan area, as explained in Chapter 2, good design in development will be a policy requirement.

6.4.3 Behind and around Wirksworth town centre, there is a network of footpaths, often in areas that are inaccessible to motor vehicles. Many of the paths link to or continue as footpaths in the open countryside. However, the paths are usually narrow and unsuitable for shared use with cycling.

6.4.4 It is not easy to cycle in Wirksworth. There are no dedicated cycle lanes. Streets are of varying widths and the topography of frequent steep hills is discouraging. For many, cycling seems unsafe and unappealing.

6.4.5 Local people have described difficulties and dangers where pedestrian pavements are narrow or non-existent and there is genuine fear of them or their children being hit by vehicles, combined with the inconvenience of negotiating difficult routes. Footways should be at least wide enough to enable ‘two abreast’ walking.

6.4.6 Getting to school

There is considerable vehicular traffic associated with the four schools, causing congestion, encouraging parking on pavements and restricted areas and creating hazards for pedestrians and cyclists. In some places near the primary schools, pedestrian pavements are non-existent. Improvement of footpath routes to the schools is essential. Creation of safe cycling routes from the residential areas would improve safety and encourage children to cycle to school.

6.4.7 There is a good pedestrian route from Gorsey Bank and the residential areas in the south eastern sector of Wirksworth, along The Hannages to Coldwell Street, from where all four schools can be accessed. However, it needs improving and extending so that the Junior School and the infant schools can be more safely accessed. The same route could be used by cyclists if it was widened or paralleled. This is achievable and is included in policy NP20 and is also a Town Council Action Point.

6.4.8 Other Town Council Action Points include investigating the potential for linking the south of the town, particularly Alderwasley Hall School’s Callow Park campus, with the town centre, linking the tourist attraction of the railway station with Carsington Water (a major attraction) and with the High Peak Trail via Old Lane.

Policy NP19
Provision for pedestrians and cyclists
Favourable consideration will be given to proposals for development that:

1. enable users to reach the town centre, schools, and other social facilities on foot or by cycle by routes avoiding difficulties such as busy roads, narrow footways, and steep inclines; or

2. improve conditions for pedestrians and cyclists using existing routes.

Development that would adversely affect other existing footpath and cycling routes will normally be refused.
**Policy NP20**

*New Pedestrian and Cycle Route*

Planning permission will be granted for the new footpath and cycle route along the Hannages, shown on the proposals map. Development that would prejudice the provision of that route will be refused.

6.5 **TOWN COUNCIL ACTION POINTS**

- These action points will require the town council to involve other agencies, such as the Highway Authority.
- Investigating a variety of options for improving the town centre, as described in Chapter 7.
- Additional parking provision in both the centre and some residential parts of Wirksworth and in Bolehill.
- Provision for pedestrians and cyclists: enabling improvements, links and routes; providing secure cycle stands, etc.
- Improving bus routes and provision, particularly to the villages.
- Prevention of parking on pedestrian pavements.
- The widening of pedestrian pavements in various parts of the plan area.
- Routes for quarry traffic and/or access-only weight limits.
- Investigate potential for pedestrian and cycle links between the Callow Park campus and the town centre.
- Investigate potential for linking railway station with Carsington Water.
- Investigate potential for linking railway station with High Peak Trail via Old Lane.
- In addition to the policies affecting new development, the town council will pursue with the county council and district council opportunities to improve existing, inadequate pedestrian and cycle links.
7.0 RETAIL AND WIRKSWORTH TOWN CENTRE

7.1 AMBITION

7.1.1 Our ambition for the town centre in 2028 is that Wirksworth should be a town with a distinctive, independent retail offer, at least as strong as that of today, which will ensure that the day-to-day needs of local people are met, will enhance the town’s tourism offer and will contribute to local jobs and economic prosperity. However, to achieve that ambition, we face major challenges.

7.1.2 In accordance with one of the themes of the plan, growth is necessary to achieve stability. The plan proposes modest growth in the town centre’s retail offer in order to challenge the decline which might otherwise happen in the competitive retail economy of the future.

7.2 LOCAL DISTINCTIVENESS

7.2.1 The character of Wirksworth’s town centre is perhaps unique. It has low vacancy rates and more shops and a greater variety of choice than would be expected for the size of the population and it has no national chains except for the banks. A high proportion of the people who serve in the shops are the owners of the businesses and many of them live in Wirksworth, as evidenced in the business survey undertaken by Future Wirksworth. Local people know their shopkeepers and meet and chat with other local shoppers.

7.2.2 This distinctive mix of independents alongside the town’s historic townscape makes it a very attractive shopping offer for residents and tourists. Wirksworth Town Council, New Opportunities Wirksworth and the town’s traders’ association actively promote the town centre and organise a number of events, including Christmas late night shopping.

7.2.3 There is competition and choice. For example, there are two butchers and others selling meat products; and similar competition applies to most of the other traders. There is a weekly Tuesday market. Large supermarkets are within reach of most people. 200 metres from the town centre there is a Co-op store and it is just 5 miles to Sainsburys in Matlock and 8 miles to Morrisons at Belper; both towns are on main bus routes from Wirksworth. There is also a Sainsburys at Ashbourne, 9 miles away, and all three of those towns have Co-op stores.

7.3 PROBLEMS

7.3.1 However, there are problems which need addressing by positive action. The following paragraphs discuss them under five headings: Retail; Market; Appearance of the town centre; Usability of the streets; Parking.

Retail

7.3.2 There has recently been a decline in the proportion of shops providing for “day-to-day needs”, selling the sort of goods which people require to feed or clothe themselves. Day-to-day shops both attract local people to frequent the town centre on a weekly or daily basis and contribute to our other main theme of becoming a low carbon town by keeping down the necessity of travelling out of town to shop.
7.3.3 There is an increasing range of excellent artists’ outlets, gift shops, antique shops and cafes. Such shops service local shoppers and boost the tourist offer but Wirksworth will cease to be what it is if the number and choice of day-to-day shops is not maintained or increased.

7.3.4 Nationally, the proportion of independent shops is reducing and being replaced by chains. All our shops are small: the largest (Ken’s supermarket) has about 100 m² retail floorspace (gross, 200 m²). Whilst they do compete for trade amongst themselves and with the Co-op store, their size makes them vulnerable to competition. The plan cannot assume that national chains will not arrive in Wirksworth town centre but it can take positive measures to support our independent traders.

7.3.5 The local businesses provide a living for the shopkeepers and staff and are the main contributors to a fantastic social ambience for local people and visitors but there is evidence that profit margins are not high. For example, in August 2013, the town’s traditional bakery, which appeared to be popular and successful, closed and became a dwelling-house because, according to the baker/shopkeeper, it was trading at a loss. There is therefore concern that, given a small downturn in local trade, our treasured variety and character could be lost.

7.3.6 It is important to understand that, in seeking to retain the town centre’s character, the Town Council does not want to inhibit necessary change. For example, it may be necessary to press for better access to the shops for older and less able people, even though that may conflict with the highest building conservation ideals. This will be a Town Council Action Point.

**Market**

7.3.7 The Tuesday market, once prosperous and popular, currently has just seven regular traders and sometimes only three. The district council’s Town Centre Study provides evidence that improvements to the range of goods sold and to the market stalls themselves would persuade people to visit the town centre more regularly. The market is sited on the town’s most central car park, which reduces spaces available to those shoppers who need to drive into town.

**Appearance of town centre**

7.3.8 Central Wirksworth is composed of characterful buildings set in an historic street pattern but is to some extent spoilt by the appearance of the streetscape (that is, by the poor quality of the space between buildings at street level) and its usability.

7.3.9 The visual coherence and overall character of the town centre is undermined by the inconsistent and unattractive appearance of the vehicular and pedestrian pavements of the town centre, where areas of black tarmac are mixed with sections of historic stone paving. The tarmac areas mainly serve vehicular traffic and parking. Signage, street furniture and the clutter of service providers, such as control boxes for electrical equipment, are untidy, having been provided piecemeal and apparently without thought for shoppers and others using the town centre. Much could be done to improve the appearance of the area.

**Usability of the streets**

7.3.10 Narrow or very narrow footways occur in some areas, most notably in the pinch...
point between the Hope and Anchor PH and Weston’s electrical shop where footway width allows pedestrians to walk only in single file on each side of the road with vehicular traffic between. Accidents happen when pedestrians are forced onto the road or large vehicles oversail the footway. Road junctions on Coldwell Street and the Market Place are wide, forming significant barriers to the free flow of pedestrians. Ironically, one of the narrowest sections of road and busiest of footways, close to the pinch point, hosts an important loading point for local shops.

Parking

7.3.11 Our consultations have revealed that many Wirksworth residents, shoppers, workers and shopkeepers, believe that there is insufficient parking space in the town38. Indeed, in our survey of local traders, parking was revealed to be the main issue. With the proposed extension of the Co-op store on Harrison Drive and the additional parking provision for the store customers, which is on the side of the store remote from the town centre, car borne shoppers are going to be tempted by the easy parking at the Co-op, possibly to the detriment of town centre shops.

7.3.12 A strategy to improve the way in which town centre car parks were used was put in place in the 1980’s, as part of the Wirksworth Project. Parking charges were introduced, partly to ensure that the town centre spaces in the Market Place and at Barmote Croft would be available for shoppers and not occupied by residents or town centre workers. Residents and town centre workers were found space to park in small-scale car parks on the perimeter of the town centre.

7.4. ACTION TO ACHIEVE OUR AMBITION

7.4.1 How can the plan deal with those problems, to ensure the continuation of a distinctive, independent town centre providing for day-to-day needs and contributing to local prosperity? This ambition can be achieved if the provisions of the local plan are successful and the following action is taken.

- Do more to retain the viability of our established independents.
- Provide more space for new traders to come into the town.
- Help to retain important community facilities in the town centre.
- Improve the Tuesday market and enable it to move to a new site.
- Improve the appearance and usability of the town centre streets.
- Maintain and increase car parking provision.

7.4.2 Those six things to do are discussed below, after a look at the national and local policy background.

2013 Draft Local Plan town centre and retail policies

7.4.3 The Town Centre Study advised that the district council should:

- Plan for more and better quality food retail floor space in the town centre, in order to reduce the amount of food shopping that residents currently have to do in Matlock and elsewhere;
- Not seek an increase in the provision for non-food shopping; and
- Focus on protecting Wirksworth’s existing retail provision.

7.4.4 The 2013 Draft Local Plan did not provide for a significant new food shop since, at the time it was prepared, there was apparently no suitable site either in the town centre or at the edge of the centre.

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38 See the Consultation Statement.
7.4.5 The National retail and town centre policies set out a positive approach to protecting and enhancing town centres and a more negative approach to development which is outside town centres. In line with that policy, the 2013 Draft Local Plan said that the district council will “maintain and where possible enhance the vitality and viability of town centres in accordance with their function, scale and development needs.” It required proposals for non-A1 uses to be “complementary to adjacent shopping uses”.

7.4.6 Actions offered by the Draft Plan to maintain and enhance the town centre’s vitality and viability included “resisting development elsewhere unless there are no sequentially preferable sites”. Actions also include creating attractive centres with a good range of shops, services and public spaces and promoting them as the “focus for retail, leisure and office development”.

7.4.7 As for development elsewhere, the NPPF requires that, for any proposal for a new shop outside a town centre with a floor space of more than a certain size (“a proportionate, locally set floor space threshold”), there should be an assessment of its impact on the town centre. It would look at, amongst other things, the impact of the proposed new shop on “town centre vitality and viability, including local consumer choice and trade in the town centre”.

7.5 SIX THINGS TO DO

Do more to maintain the viability of our established independents

7.5.1 The 2013 Draft Local Plan summarised the Town Centre Study but, because it was a district-wide plan, it did not aim to address the specific Wirksworth problems discussed above. There is a need for more specific policies, including a Wirksworth-specific impact assessment. The distinctiveness of Wirksworth can be considerably enhanced if, at the same time as protecting its small independents from overwhelming competition, we can work towards major enhancements to the town centre.

7.5.2 The NPPF (see paragraph 7.4.7 above) offers a default floorspace of 2500m² for triggering impact assessments. Of course, the NPPF has in mind town centres of all sizes. Because Wirksworth has a small town centre which already loses most of its trade to Matlock and other larger towns, 2500m² is far too high a threshold. A proportionate threshold for Wirksworth should be equivalent to the largest existing shop in the town centre, which is less than 200m² in size. Therefore, the neighbourhood plan sets the threshold at 200m² (gross internal floorspace).

7.5.3 In order to assess the impact of the proposed new shop on consumer choice and trade (as advised by NPPF) and because Wirksworth’s special ‘offer’ is based on the number and variety of local, independent traders, the impact assessment should be able to show that the independent traders will not have to close as a direct consequence of the proposed new shop. Policy NP21 does not require new floorspace to be refused because a particular trader might go out of business, which would be unreasonable and anti-competitive; but it does require an applicant to show that a proposal for a new shop would not take up so much trade that there would be insufficient remaining for all the existing traders to continue in business.

7.5.4 Because such impacts might be caused by the development of a large new shop in the town centre, as much as by a development elsewhere, Policy NP21 applies throughout the plan area.

39 For the definition of A1 and other uses, see Evidence Document.
40 Less than 1/10 of the size of many shopping centres.
**Policy NP21**

Impact of new retail development (viability of established independent traders)

All planning applications for new retail floorspace exceeding 200 sqm must be accompanied by an impact assessment, to include assessment of:
- the impact of the proposal on existing, committed and planned public and private investment in a centre or centres in the catchment area of the proposal; and
- the impact of the proposal on town centre vitality and viability, including local consumer choice and trade in the town centre and wider area, up to five years from the time the application is made.

**Provide more space for new traders to come into the town**

7.5.5 The town centre study seeks more food retail floor space. Although the draft local plan does not provide for a significant new store in Wirksworth, there is scope for expanding the town’s unique ‘small shops’ offer. It is one of Wirksworth’s main attractions and could be enhanced by a variety of new shops selling all types of goods, food and non-food. Expanding the choice will help the ambition to be realised. Indeed, growth in choice as in most economies is necessary, to avoid a decline.

7.5.7 Although vacancy rates are low at present, there will still be short periods when there are vacancies. To try to ensure that shop units do not remain empty at such times, which might affect the vitality of the town centre, and to foster community activity, the plan includes a policy which enables temporary changes of use to non-retail. The policy would set a maximum period of six months. In some cases, the operator may wish to continue the use after the six months. At that time it will be possible to see whether the use is harming the town centre’s vitality and viability, the wider visitor experience or local residential amenities; if it is not, that may be justification for the local planning authority to grant permanent permission.

**Policy NP22**

Temporary uses in the town centre

Within the town centre, as defined in the Proposals Map, permission will normally be granted for the temporary change of use (six months maximum) of empty shops to small business, community or organised events but only if the temporary use will not have significant harmful impacts on the wider visitor experience or on the amenities of neighbouring residents.

**Help to retain important community facilities in the town centre.**

7.5.8 Facilities such as a post office, pharmacy and library are important elements in Wirksworth’s town centre offer. The neighbourhood plan includes them in Policy NP11 as community facilities needing protection.

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41 The primary frontage is entirely within the conservation area and therefore there is no permitted development to convert to residential use.
**Improve the Tuesday market and enable it to move to a new site.**

7.5.9 If the Tuesday market was to move it would free up the town centre car park. There is a credible alternative location. On St John's Street at the Memorial Gardens and Memorial Hall, a farmers’ market takes place once a month on Saturday mornings. St John’s Street is quite wide at that point. The farmers’ market has attractive stalls and 14 or more traders. Whilst the traders’ cars and vans do take up space, they do not occupy the 30 central spaces which the Tuesday market currently uses.

7.5.10 The Memorial Hall and adjoining former cinema (Stone’s building) have potential for redevelopment, which may take place early in the plan period. Redevelopment could affect the potential for moving the market. It should address the possibility of having a market as its neighbour. However, because the idea of moving the market is in its infancy, this plan is not able to impose any relevant policy requirements on the redevelopment.

7.5.11 The town council and other agencies will investigate the potential for moving the Tuesday market to the St John’s Street location or to another town centre location if that proves to be preferable. This will be a Town Council Action Point but, in addition, the neighbourhood plan should have a policy enabling the move in case any planning permissions are necessary.

7.5.12 The Town Council Action Points include seeking opportunities to re-invigorate our existing market, drawing together the interests and characteristics of the town, such as local food production, arts and crafts, second-hand goods and fairtrade items, to produce a more varied and vibrant series of markets. The town council will engage the district council and other agencies in the development and promotion of a markets plan and timetable, including the regular Tuesday and farmers’ markets and arts and crafts, bric-a-brac and second-hand markets, and will investigate providing pop-up market stalls. It will aim to support local food production and use the market for promotion of community groups and facilities. It will also consider whether there is potential for a parking policy for traders which might permit them to park on yellow lines and on St John’s Street.

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**Policy NP23**  
**Tuesday market**

Proposals to improve the Tuesday market, or to relocate it to an appropriate new location within the town centre, will be considered sympathetically, and in the light of other policies in the development plan, provided that it does not lead to a net loss of car parking.

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**Improve the appearance and usability of town centre streets**

7.5.13 Much could be done to improve the usability of the town centre whilst at the same time improving its appearance. The most attractive proposition is a shared surface scheme along The Market Place, St John’s Street, West End and Coldwell Street. In such schemes, the street is available to pedestrians and vehicles so that, although still separated from one another, pedestrians have priority over vehicles.

7.5.14 In Wirksworth, a shared surface approach would overcome the main obstacle to improving the pedestrian/traffic relationship, which is the narrowness of the road and the pedestrian pavements at the pinch point and at some of the entries into the town centre. It would also enable a completely fresh look at the road junctions, speed limits, the road surface materials...
and the street furniture. It would improve pedestrian and cyclists’ ease of movement and safety along and across the street, discourage unnecessary HGV journeys through the town and improve the legibility, use, visual coherence and character of Wirksworth’s historic shopping centre.

7.5.15 Other possibilities for improving the usability and appearance of the town centre include:

- Widening pedestrian pavements;
- Reducing traffic speed by design alterations to the highways and/or speed reduction measures;
- Introducing an access-only weight restriction;
- Changing the surface materials in key areas;
- Rationalising signage and reviewing the type and distribution of street furniture;
- Improving disabled access to the town centre and shops.

7.5.16 Those will be Town Council Action Points but if the shared surface scheme or any of the other possibilities proves to be workable and is found to require planning permission for all or part, Policy NP 24 will enable it.

**Policy NP24**

*Pedestrian/traffic relationship in town centre*

Permission will not be granted for any development that would prejudice the coming forward and implementation of a scheme for the improvement of the footways and carriageways in central Wirksworth, to improve the relationship between pedestrians and vehicles.

Where planning permission is required for works to be carried out in association with such a scheme, any application will be considered sympathetically in the light of other policies in the Plan.

**Improve and increase parking provision**

7.5.17 It is essential that the existing car parks, particularly in the way that they provide for residents, workers and shoppers in a variety of accessible locations, should be retained. It is also essential to provide additional parking spaces with easy access to the town centre shops. It may be possible to make more provision by redesigning or re-marking the existing car parks but it seems that there is only one potential site for a significant number of additional spaces.

7.5.18 The site is at Wood Street and Canterbury Road, adjoining an existing public car park. It is currently used partly as the garden of a private house and partly as private garages. It is clear from the layout of the site and from ordnance survey maps that the area which is now garden once gave access to the garages.

7.5.19 Whilst the Wood Street site is not immediately available for car parking, it should be protected from any other form of development, so that eventually it can provide additional parking with good accessibility to the town centre.

7.6 TOWN CENTRE POLICIES

7.6.1 The retail policies partially implement the six things to do. Policy NP21 arises from “Do more to maintain the viability of our established independents”; policy NP23 arises from “Improve the Tuesday market and enable it to move to a new site”; policy NP24 arises from “Improve the appearance and usability of town centre streets”; policies NP25 and 26 arise from “Improve and increase parking provision”.

47
Policy NP25
Protecting existing car parks
Planning permission will not be granted for developments which would replace the existing car parks at Canterbury Road, The Market Place, West End, Rydes Yard, The Dale, Barmote Croft, North End and Old Lane unless alternative provision is made for the car parking needs of the dwellings, businesses and visitors which they serve, which will include as a minimum:
1. The alternative provision must be made in the immediate vicinity.
2. The alternative provision must offer the same or better levels of accessibility and number of parking spaces.

Policy NP26
Possible car parking at Canterbury Road
The land at the junction of Wood Street and Canterbury Road, shown on the Proposals Map, is particularly suitable for a new car park, and may in the long term be used for that purpose. Any planning application for other forms of development on this site will therefore be determined in the light of the likelihood, at the time of the application, of the site coming forward for parking, and the extent to which the proposed development would prejudice that possibility.

7.6 TOWN COUNCIL ACTION POINTS
- To take action to improve the quality and variety of Wirksworth markets. In particular, the council will consider how to improve the Tuesday market and whether to move its location. The council will also engage the district council and other agencies in the development and promotion of the markets.
- To lobby for better car parking provision in the town centre.
- To find ways of improving the pedestrian/traffic relationship in the town centre and, in particular, to consider a shared surface scheme.
- To find ways of improving disabled access to the town centre and shops, which is constrained by listed building and conservation policy.
The Wirksworth Neighbourhood Plan will be implemented through a combination of planning decisions by Derbyshire Dales District Council and action by Wirksworth Town Council, landowners, developers, highways and utilities providers and local people.

Wirksworth Town Council, the local council responsible for the plan area, will play its part in implementation in the following ways.

- The town council will agree a programme for pursuing the Town Council Action Points which are listed in the neighbourhood plan. That programme will be called “Wirksworth Town Plan”. It will take several years to implement because there are many action points, most of which will need the involvement of a number of agencies. Some will require the raising of substantial funds.

- The town council will use the neighbourhood plan as its main reference point when it is passing its comments on planning applications to the local planning authority.

How each of the policies will be implemented

- Policy NP4
  Space standards for new homes
- Policy NP6
  Quality of residential development
- Policy NP7
  Energy-saving standards for new dwellings

These policies do not identify land for development. They establish standards for residential development. In addition to the cost of site preparation and other costs normally associated with residential development, the main factors affecting the viability of homes which are built to reach these standards are likely to be: government policy; the appeal to purchasers; and the state of the housing market.

Government policy

On matters such as energy-saving and a low-carbon economy, government policy, as expressed in government policy documents, through the building regulations and in special schemes such as government-funded grants, directly influences the minimum standards which developers incorporate into the homes they build. Government policy changes over time, tending to reflect the aspirations of a more affluent society and usually becoming more demanding rather than less demanding of developers. At present (September 2014), the ultimate standard set by Neighbourhood Plan Policy NP5 (CSH Level 6) is equivalent to the standard that the government is seeking to achieve. The Evidence and Explanations Document submitted with this plan discusses this matter further.

The appeal to purchasers

People are becoming more aware of the costs of energy in their homes and the
environmental impact of using energy. There is also a tendency for people to want more space in their homes, rather than less. Improving standards in both these regards therefore improves the marketability of new development. If this plan’s Quality and Character policies are implemented successfully new homes will also be more characterful and saleable and therefore, even with higher building costs due to these policies, an attractive proposition for developers.

8.3.5 The state of the housing market
House prices usually go up, but not always. Until a site and its development potential are addressed by an applicant and the local planning authority, it will not be possible to say whether the cost of dwellings built to the neighbourhood plan standards can be profitably covered by the price at which they might sell. A recent feasibility study of the Middleton Road site had to assume several different housing market scenarios.

8.3.6 Conclusion
The requirements which the policies set are likely to be achievable. To ensure that they do not prevent the essential growth of the town, the policies provide flexibility, giving developers the opportunity to show that the requirements of the policies at a particular time would make their development unviable.

- Policy NP5
Principal residence homes

8.3.7 Dwellings which are used as holiday homes and second homes are usually built as principal residence homes. The attachment of a condition to maintain their principal purpose is likely to make little difference to the price or viability of the new development. Similar policies are in use elsewhere, for example in the Lynton and Lynmouth Neighbourhood Plan (Housing Policy 3). The policy will be implemented by the local planning authority every time it grants permission for a dwelling. The Evidence and Explanations Document explains why the condition serves a valid planning purpose and is necessary for the social wellbeing of the community.

- Policy NP8
Providing for new community facilities
- Policy NP9
Providing for new sports facilities

8.3.8 These policies make no extra demands on developers. Instead, they indicate our priorities for the expenditure to which developers will already be committed. This policy will be implemented as and when development takes place and funds (commuted sums) are available and the development of new community and sports facilities might be hastened by the proposed Wirksworth Town Plan.

- Policy NP10
New play provision
- Policy NP12
Allotments
- Policy NP13
Overnight accommodation and tourism development
- Policy NP14
Provision for new and small businesses
- Policy NP17
(Energy-saving) Upgrading existing buildings
- Policy NP18
Renewable energy developments
- Policy NP17

8.3.9 These policies do not require development to take place nor do they directly protect sites from other forms of development. They will be implemented as and when funds are available or sites are found. The development of those sites which are not in public ownership will depend on the attitude of the owner. The policies will help the owner to see a green light towards planning permission. Implementation of
the policies might also be hastened by the proposed Wirksworth Town Plan and by positive action by their owners and/or partners of the town council.

- Policy NP11
   Loss of existing facilities
- Policy NP25
   Protecting existing car parks

8.3.10 Our local community facilities will be kept in their current uses except in circumstances permitted by the policies of the local plan and the neighbourhood plan. Unfortunately, in some cases, permitted development rights might permit change in conflict with the policies. It may be necessary for the local planning authority to withdraw some of those rights.

- Policy NP15
   Parish Rooms work hub

8.3.11 This policy identifies the site for a specific change of use and restricts other changes. It will be implemented by the owners, who favour the neighbourhood plan proposal to use the site as a work hub, and by the local planning authority when granting planning permission. The owners may seek grant aid to facilitate the development.

- Policy NP16
   Energy-saving standards for non-residential developments

8.3.12 There are 200,000 buildings across Europe which are built to BREEAM standards, many to the “Excellent” standard. There is much evidence that industrial and commercial buildings sell better and command higher rents if they have a BREEAM certification because companies can be confident of the quality, energy efficiency and comfort of the buildings and often consider that the certification enhances their reputation. The “Good” standard is not too challenging, being probably slightly higher than existing building regulations (it is not possible directly to compare the two standards). Therefore, the standards in the policy are likely to be achievable.

- Policy NP19
   Provision for pedestrians and cyclists

8.3.13 Although this policy has the potential to impose burdens on developments whose main purpose is not to provide for pedestrians and cyclists, it does not require the developer to carry out any works off-site. It will normally be quite easily implemented through straightforward provision in the design of the site layout. It expects new development to accommodate and/or improve footpaths and cycle routes. Accommodation of public footpaths is a normal, legal requirement and is usually achievable without great difficulty. The policy will also be implemented by the decisions of the local planning authority and by the efforts of the town council through the Wirksworth Town Plan.

- Policy NP21
   Impact on new retail development

8.3.14 These policies are entirely dependent for their implementation on the planning decisions of the local planning authority, in consultation with others, including Wirksworth Town Council. However, the effects of the policies will depend on other factors, including the successful implementation of the other town centre policies of the local plan, the neighbourhood plan (policies NP21, 22, 23&24) and the Wirksworth Town Plan (carrying through the Town Council Action Points).
These are primarily enabling policies which depend for their implementation on the planning decisions of the local planning authority and on the hard work and cooperation of local traders, Wirksworth Town Council, local landowners and statutory agencies. If the effort is not made, the overall purpose of the policies will not be achieved. The associated Town Council Action Points will be high priorities in the Wirksworth Town Plan. Policy NP23 limits what the landowners may do with their properties. Because they at present have not said that they have early plans to change the current situation, it is unlikely that the positive side of the policy (use as car park) will be implemented immediately. This is a plan for the long-term as well as the short term and it is probable that, by preventing development for other purposes, the policy will be implemented during the plan period.

**Social sustainability and housing**
- To foster housing diversity, e.g. set up a Community Land Trust.
- To enter into a dialogue with the local estate agents about not advertising properties as ideal for holiday lets.

**Community well-being**
- To work towards the provision of a youth centre or other youth facility, perhaps linked to existing youth provision such as the skate park.
- To work towards the new sports facilities which the sports community say are needed.
- To make or help to facilitate new play provision where it is lacking.
- To be vigilant towards loss of community facilities and discuss with the local planning authority the removal of development rights in appropriate cases.
- To consider whether to seek the registration as Assets of Community Value of some or all the protected facilities and spaces.
- To find ways of providing allotments and in particular to identify a suitable site.
- To support our schools in maintaining their high standards of academic achievement and personal development and to help find ways of providing for new education provision when needed.
- To keep a watching brief on policy changes in health and to be active in supporting the Hannage Brook Medical Practice and other local health service providers, especially as more community based services develop.
**Tourism**
- Coordination of tourism information and calendar of events.
- To help marketing through Destination Wirksworth.

**Economy**
- To provide incentives for start-ups.
- To encourage apprenticeship and education.
- To encourage self-build, with training.
- To provide for training facilities in employment developments.
- To work with the owners of Haarlem Mill, Middleton Road, Willowbath Mill, Stones Builders, Station Yard, Parish Rooms and Mountains Yard to try to provide workspaces for small-scale manufacturing, local construction and refurbishment and the creative industries.

**Energy**
- To work with local people and relevant bodies to find ways of encouraging energy-saving improvements to the existing building stock.

**Transport and movement**
- Investigating a variety of options for improving the town centre, as described in Chapter 7.
- Additional parking provision in both the centre and some residential parts of Wirksworth and in Bolehill.
- Provision for pedestrians and cyclists: enabling the improvements, links and routes on the Proposals Map. Providing secure cycle stands, etc.
- Improving bus routes and provision, particularly to the villages.
- Prevention of parking on pedestrian pavements.
- The widening of pedestrian pavements in various parts of the plan area.
- Routes for quarry traffic and/or access-only weight limits.
- Investigate potential for linking railway station with Carsington Water.
- Investigate potential for linking railway station with High Peak Trail via Old Lane.
- In addition to the policies affecting new development, the town council will pursue with the county council and district council opportunities to improve existing, inadequate pedestrian and cycle links.

**Town centre**
- To take action to improve the quality and variety of Wirksworth markets. In particular, the Council will consider how to improve the Tuesday market and whether to move its location. The council will also engage the district council and other agencies in the development and promotion of the markets.
- To lobby for better car parking provision in the town centre.
- To find ways of improving the pedestrian/traffic relationship in the town centre and, in particular, to consider a shared surface scheme.
- To find ways of improving disabled access to the town centre and shops, which is constrained by listed building and conservation policy.
COUNCIL  
25th JUNE 2015  

Report of the Head of Regeneration and Policy  

PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT – KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS OUTTURN 2014/15  

SUMMARY  

This report summarises the outturn performance against the District Council’s Key Performance Indicators for 2014/15  

RECOMMENDATION  

1. That the outturn performance against the Key Performance Indicators for 2014/15 be noted.  

WARDS AFFECTED  

All Wards  

STRATEGIC LINK  

The Corporate Plan sets out the District Council’s priorities and areas for improvement and identifies a number of key targets to be achieved each year. Service plans, policies and strategies, supplement the Corporate Plan. Within individual Service Plans there are a number of Key Performance Indicators, which set out priority targets for achievement within those service areas. The District Council’s Performance Management regime, monitors progress against these Key Performance Indicators We describe this linking of common priorities from the Peak District Partnership, through our Corporate and Performance Plan, and ultimately to service plans and individual employees’ Personal Development Plans, as our ‘golden thread’.  

1 BACKGROUND  

1.1 The Corporate Plan sets out the District Council’s priorities and areas for improvement and identifies a number of key targets to be achieved each year. Service plans, policies and strategies, supplement the Corporate Plan. Within individual Service Plans there are a number of priority targets for achievement within those service areas. These priority targets are known as Key Performance Indicators.  

1.2 The District Council’s Performance Monitoring and Management regime is the way the District Council goes about understanding how effective it has been in achieving the Key Performance Indicators and where appropriate taking remedial action to ensure that they are achieved.  

62
1.3 To do so the District Council must be able to show that it knows:

- what its priorities are
- what it is aiming for
- what it must do to achieve these aims
- how it measures progress, and
- when it is appropriate to take remedial action to address underperformance.

1.4 For the period 2014/15 there were 26 Key Performance Indicators identified, of which 11 were Corporate Plan targets.

2 KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS – OUTTURN 2014/15

2.1 The District Council’s Performance Management Handbook\(^1\) sets out that progress against Key Performance Indicators is measured and continually reviewed using the established ‘traffic light’ system where the following classification and interpretation can be used:

- **Direction of travel** i.e. is performance improving, stable or worsening compared to the previous year?

- **Performance relative to the target** i.e. is it on track to achieve target or at risk of not achieving target?

  **Green** = If an indicator is improving and has achieved target for the past year, or is on track to achieve the current year’s target.

  **Red** = If an indicator is worsening and has not achieved target for the past year, or is at risk of not achieving the current year’s target.

  **Amber** = If an indicator is (i) stable or improving but it has not achieved target or is not on track to achieve target or (ii) worsening but has met or is on track to meet the target (i.e. does not meet the criteria for Green or Red).

2.2 The following table sets out a summary of outturn for 2014/15 overall using the above system:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Service Area</th>
<th>No. Targets</th>
<th>Green</th>
<th>Amber</th>
<th>Red</th>
<th>TBC</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Corporate</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
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<tr>
<td>Housing</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
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<tr>
<td>Planning</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
<td>2</td>
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<tr>
<td>Revenues and Benefits</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Waste and Street Cleansing</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2</td>
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<td>2</td>
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<tr>
<td>Economy</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
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<td><strong>TOTAL</strong></td>
<td><strong>26</strong></td>
<td><strong>16</strong></td>
<td><strong>2</strong></td>
<td><strong>7</strong></td>
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</table>

2.3 The outturn figures indicate that 62% of the key performance indicators were achieved during 2014/15. The detailed outturn position for each of the key performance indicators for 2014/15 is set out in Appendix 1. This indicates that

• We exceeded our target of delivering 35 adaptations to homes for disabled people.
• The Affordable Warmth Initiative commenced in January 2015 and work is ongoing with 2 pilot GP practices across the District.
• New Fixed Penalties for Litter and Dog Fouling were brought into force on 1st April 2015.
• Advice to new and established businesses continues to be very effective in supporting and providing advice across Derbyshire Dales.
• The determination of planning applications continues to exceed the target times.
• Although there has been a reduction in the average rates of sickness absence at 10.12 days per FTE employee they continue to remain worse than the target of 8 days.
• There was a significant drop in the number of litter and dog fouling complaints that we received during the year.
• The ability of the District Council to be able to allocate 19ha of employment land through the Derbyshire Dales Local Plan suffered a set back with the withdrawal of the Local Plan in October 2014.
• The target for the number of affordable houses enabled is likely to be missed, primarily as a result of delays in funding availability for sites in Bakewell, Tideswell and Wirksworth – although work is ongoing with partners to ensure that an appropriate level of affordable housing is competed during 2015/16.
• Recycling Rates dipped slightly during 2014/15.

3 RISK ASSESSMENT

3.1 Legal
The Corporate Plan, and relevant Service Plans are fully compliant with all relevant legislation. The legal risk is assessed as being low.

3.2 Financial
Service and financial planning is an integrated process. The budget and service plans are prepared simultaneously, and actions for 2015/16 are to be funded from within budgetary provision for 2015/16. It is considered that the Key Performance Indicators for 2015/16 can be achieved within agreed budgets. The financial risk is therefore considered to be low.

3.3 Corporate Risk
There is a risk that Key Performance Indicators may not be achieved. Progress is monitored regularly by Service Heads and by Corporate Leadership Team. Whilst priority actions have been developed with managers as part of the combined service planning and budget setting process, given the continuing financial pressures on the District Council, the risk of not achieving key performance indicators is classified as medium.
4 OTHER CONSIDERATIONS

In preparing this report, the relevance of the following factors has also been considered: prevention of crime and disorder, equalities, environmental, climate change, health, human rights, personnel and property.

5 CONTACT INFORMATION

Mike Hase, Policy Manager
Tel: 01629 761251 E-mail: mike.hase@derbyshiredales.gov.uk

6 BACKGROUND PAPERS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>File</th>
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<tr>
<td>Report to Council</td>
<td>20\textsuperscript{th} November 2014</td>
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<tr>
<td>Report to Council</td>
<td>5\textsuperscript{th} March 2015</td>
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BACK TO AGENDA
### Key Performance Indicators Outturn Data 2014/15

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Service Area</th>
<th>Ref</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>2013/14 Outturn</th>
<th>Risk at start of Q1 2014/15</th>
<th>2014/15 Target</th>
<th>2014/15 Outturn</th>
<th>Annual Improvement Target</th>
<th>Commentary</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Waste &amp; Street Cleansing</td>
<td>NI 192</td>
<td>% of household waste which has been sent for reuse, recycling, composting or anaerobic digestion</td>
<td>56.1</td>
<td>Green</td>
<td>56.7</td>
<td>55.72%</td>
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<td>BV 84a</td>
<td>Household waste collected (kilograms per head)</td>
<td>396</td>
<td>Red</td>
<td>394</td>
<td>397</td>
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<td>Economy</td>
<td>CG 1</td>
<td>% year on year reduction in the number of complaints in respect of litter and dog fouling</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>Red</td>
<td>66</td>
<td>87</td>
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<td>Corp Plan Target</td>
<td>No. of businesses supported to access grants or loans from Government and Local Enterprise Partnerships</td>
<td>New</td>
<td>/</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>20</td>
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<td>Corp Plan Target</td>
<td>No. of new business start-ups enabled by Derbyshire Dales Business Advice</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>Amber</td>
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<td>Corp Plan Target</td>
<td>No. of new business start-ups enabled by Derbyshire Dales Business Advice, enabling the creation of local jobs</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>Red</td>
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<td>Corp Plan Target</td>
<td>Neighbourhood Management Policy, along with return to interviews and introduction of Counselling services should ensure that improvements are made during 2015/16</td>
<td>New</td>
<td>/</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>£469,500</td>
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<td>Corp Plan Target</td>
<td>No. of service reviews completed / £ savings identified (contributing to £1m savings target over next 3 years)</td>
<td>New</td>
<td>/</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>£469,500</td>
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<td>NI 151</td>
<td>% of Major planning applications determined in 13 weeks</td>
<td>87.5</td>
<td>Green</td>
<td>60.0</td>
<td>94%</td>
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<td>NI 157ii</td>
<td>% of Minor planning applications determined in 8 weeks</td>
<td>82.4</td>
<td>Green</td>
<td>75.0</td>
<td>75.60%</td>
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<td>% of Other planning applications determined in 8 weeks</td>
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<td>% of Other planning applications determined in 8 weeks</td>
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<td>90.10%</td>
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<td>Housing &amp; Bums</td>
<td>BV 9 (ARB 1)</td>
<td>% of Council Tax collected within the year</td>
<td>98.3</td>
<td>Amber</td>
<td>98.2</td>
<td>98.10%</td>
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<td>BV 10 (ARB 2)</td>
<td>% of Non Domestic rates collected within the year</td>
<td>97.6</td>
<td>Green</td>
<td>97.3</td>
<td>97.40%</td>
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<td>BV 204</td>
<td>% of appeals allowed against LA’s decision to refuse planning application</td>
<td>26.0</td>
<td>Red</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>26.00%</td>
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Review of Development Management

SUMMARY

This report informs Members of the actions taken in respect of the review of Development Management. It explains the options that have been considered in order to ensure that the service remains fit for purpose and makes recommendations in relation to improvements that will ensure that the District Council can offer the best possible Development Management service in the future.

RECOMMENDATION

That the Action Plan attached as Appendix 1 to this report be approved.

WARDS AFFECTED

All wards outside of the Peak District National Park.

STRATEGIC LINK

The effective administration of the Development Management service supports all of the District Council’s aims. In particular the review will help to ensure that the District Council continues to provide excellent services.

1 BACKGROUND

1.1 The review of the District Council’s Development Management Service was one of 3 major reviews scheduled for 2014/15 and provided an opportunity to re-focus the delivery of the service as well as securing financial efficiencies.

1.2 Development Management is an evolution of the previous Development Control Service. It is about the local authority taking a proactive approach to place shaping; positively promoting sustainable development and the overall vision for the area. This evolution requires a move away from the reactive control of development to a more positive role and will require changes in structure and resource allocation, as well as improving customer engagement processes and the ongoing monitoring of the outcomes of development.

1.3 At its meeting on 19 June 2014 Council approved the scope and methodology of the review, including the engagement of Planning Officers Society Enterprises to undertake an independent appraisal of the current service. At its meeting on 20 November 2014 Council considered a further report that explained the findings of Planning Officers Society Enterprises and made recommendations as to how those findings should be carried forward.
2 REPORT

2.1 Following the November 2014 meeting the Review was broken down into 5 sub-areas and groups were formed to consider each of these separate, but linked subjects. The sub-areas were:

- Integrated Planning Service – dealing with the relationship between Planning Policy and Development Management;
- Development Control to Development Management – dealing with pre-application systems;
- Officer/Member Relationship – dealing with Committee arrangements, the scheme of delegation and the role of Members at the pre-application stage;
- Processes and Procedures – dealing with the use of ICT and other new technology, document management, system re-engineering and officer delegations;
- Resources, Structures and Resilience – dealing with the structure and staffing of Development Management, validation, enquiries and health and safety.

2.2 The teams formed to consider these sub-areas were made up of officers from across the District Council in order to maximise the talent available in both the Development Management team and the rest of the organisation. In addition a Members' Panel was formed in order that the opinions and advice of Elected Members could be obtained, particularly in relation to the Officer/Member relationship sub-area.

2.3 It quickly became clear that some of these sub-areas were easier to tackle than others. However, all of the sub-groups have met and have now produced a number of recommendations. In addition, some of those recommendations have now been implemented. The recommendations and the actions that have either already been taken or are now proposed are set out in the remainder of this report.

Integrated Planning Service

2.4 This sub area was concerned with making sure that structures and systems were in place that ensured the link between Planning Policy and Development Management remained strong in the new organisational structure adopted by the District Council.

2.5 The sub-group that considered this area consisted of officers from Regulatory Services and from Policy and Regeneration, together with the Corporate Director. The purpose of the group was to make sure that Development Management staff were fully aware of how their roles fitted into the strategic direction of the District Council, particularly in relation to the emerging Local Plan. Equally it was important that those developing the Local Plan were aware of the needs of the Development Management team and of the impact that emerging Plan policies had on their recommendations.

2.6 It was decided that in order to ensure that staff were engaged in this at all levels within both Development Management and Policy it would be necessary to establish engagement at each of those levels. It was felt that this could be undertaken by utilising some of the new systems that had recently been established, such as the Hub arrangements, as well as taking advantage of some long standing liaison arrangements.
2.7 The first part of the Action Plan deals with this sub-area of the Review. From the comments contained within the Action Plan Members will see that most of these points have already been actioned. Officers consider that these new arrangements are working well.

**Development Control to Development Management**

2.8 This sub-area was concerned with evolving the philosophy of the existing Development Control service from one that reacted to planning applications; making decisions as proposals were presented to them, to one that was more proactive. The intention of the sub-group was to find ways that would enable the new Development Management service to guide developers into producing proposals that represented the best possible form of development for the District. In essence this would mean concentrating more resources into pre-application discussions so that fewer resources would have to be devoted to post-application work.

2.9 An officer sub-group was formed to consider this area of work and the proposals that were developed were sense-checked through the Members’ Panel mentioned in paragraph 2.2.

2.10 In considering this issue it quickly became clear that the current staffing structure in Development Management would struggle to deliver a high quality pre-application service as well as their existing application workload. Whilst the principles of a more fundamental reorganisation of resources are discussed later in this report it was also suggested that one way of helping to fund this new service would be through the introduction of a pre-application charging scheme, as is now common in many other planning authorities. The purpose of introducing a charging scheme would be to raise some revenue for the high quality advice that can be provided by officers and to encourage some of the more routine requests to be redirected to other channels, such as the Planning Portal and the District Council’s own website.

2.11 A scheme of pre-application charges was developed by the officer sub-group and presented to the Members’ Panel. The original scheme was based on that already in use at the Peak District National Park Authority. Following discussions with the Members’ Panel a number of amendments were made with the intention of reducing charges in relation to many householder applications. It is estimated that this revised scheme could produce income in the region of £20,000 per annum.

2.12 Before introducing a formal system of pre-application advice it is considered that a number of other steps need to be taken. It will be necessary to advertise the introduction of the scheme and to discuss the matter direct with regular applicants and agents. It will also be necessary to ensure that sufficient and suitable resources are available to service the new system. As such it is proposed that the introduction of charging is deferred until April 2016 in order to make the necessary arrangements.

2.13 Part 2 of the Action Plan deals with actions required prior to the introduction of the proposed pre-application service.

**Officer/Member Relationship**

2.14 This sub-area was concerned with the ways in which officers engage with Members over individual planning applications and with the mechanics of Planning Committees. The intention of this area of work was to ensure that only those applications that required public scrutiny were referred to Committee whilst ensuring that Members...
continued to have overview of the Planning process. The POSE report recognised that the working relationships between officers and Members were very good and that many of the existing arrangements should remain, but also recommended that there were ways in which this area of work could be streamlined and modernised.

2.15 This area of work was considered through the Members’ Panel, with suggestions being worked up by officers and discussed with the 5 Members. The final recommendations of this joint work were presented to the Leader’s Advisory Group and subsequently reported to Council on 28 May 2015 as part of the report on Responsibility for Functions and Revisions to the Council’s Constitution. The recommendations are summarised in the third part of the Action Plan for completeness.

2.16 It is recognised that these proposals represent significant changes to the ways in which Members have been engaged with the Planning process for a considerable time. Whilst officers and members of the Members’ Panel were of the view that the proposed new arrangements should not reduce the transparency of the process or reduce the quality of decision making it is suggested that the new arrangements should be tested over a period of 12 months. Action Points 22 and 23 seek to ensure that these opinions are thoroughly tested within that period.

2.17 It is estimated that these new arrangements should produce savings in the region of £6,000 to £7,000 per annum.

Processes and Procedures

2.18 This sub-area was concerned with examining the systems used within the Development Management team both in terms of the processes that were used and the technology that was used to support them.

2.19 As this sub-area dealt with internal processes and procedures an officer sub-group was formed to consider them. As well as utilising expertise from within the Development Management team this sub-group pulled together expertise in areas such as the use of technology, process engineering and transformation.

2.20 It was apparent from the beginning that this was an area in which there was much room for change and improvement. Whilst the Development Management team produced very good results in terms of planning recommendations, robust decisions and performance management, as recognised in the POSE report, this was done against a background of old fashioned processes which relied very heavily on paper-based procedures which were very demanding in terms of staff time. Although the team used an electronic database (UNIFORM), this was used more as a repository than as a case-management system and officers were still very heavily reliant on hard copy files. This in turn led to complex working procedures often involving many steps and multiple staff members in order to process applications.

2.21 In order to tackle these issues and ultimately free up staff resource for the more modern service that the District Council wished to provide, the sub-group examined processes in use in other authorities and carefully considered how these could be adapted for use in Derbyshire Dales.

2.22 In order to set out all of the sub-groups findings as well as their ultimate recommendations it was considered that a full report should be produced. This report
is presented as a background paper to this report. The recommendations of the report are summarised in part 4 of the Action Plan.

2.23 As can be seen, the recommendations of this sub-group are many and complex. It is clear that the work being recommended here cannot be undertaken over a short period of time and that it will require a degree of resourcing that is not currently available within the Development Management team. The first step is clearly to establish a Business Process Project Team and to scope the level of resource required to undertake this work. It is suggested that this work is commenced immediately and implementation is progressed over the next 12 months with regular progress reports being submitted to both CLT and to the Members’ Panel suggested in Recommendation 23.

Resources, Structures and Resilience

2.24 This sub-area was concerned with examining the workload within the Development Management team and whether the level of staff resource and the structure into which those resources were organised were adequate to deal with it. It also looked at the level of specialist services available within the Development Management team and ways in which these resources could be used going forward.

2.25 This issue has been considered by a small team consisting of the Head of Regulatory Services and the Development Manager, reporting to the Corporate Director. It is clear to those who have been examining the issue that the existing Development Management team structure is not currently able to deal with the new expectations created by a formal pre-application service or with the temporary, but lengthy, workload created as a result of the necessary process redesign, the scope and breadth of which can be seen in section 4 of the Action Plan.

2.26 In addition the Development Management team has been dealing with extremely high workloads over the past 2 years. Income from planning application fees in 2013/14 was £457,453 (79% above estimate) and £550,171 in 2014/15 (94% above estimate). Whilst this income is very welcome it does also mean that all members of staff within the Development Management team are currently experiencing extremely high workloads.

2.27 In order to move the service forward in the ways recommended in this report and the Action Plan it is suggested that changes need to be made to the existing structure which address the following needs:

- Reduce the reliance on the Service Manager through downwards delegation;
- Increase the staff resource available to the core Development Management team;
- Create technical support role to administer the pre-application service and to support officers;
- Utilise existing skills within the Team and develop staff to fill gaps in areas such as systems management;
- Refocus the service to be front loaded rather than reactive;
Consider a temporary staff resource in the short-term to deal with existing workload and facilitate the implementation of the Review recommendations. A budget price for this resource is estimated at £17,000 for 12 months.

2.28 Whilst discussions have been undertaken with a number of individuals within the wider Development Management team it is considered that further work needs to be undertaken with the District Council’s Human Resources Manager and with the team as a whole before a revised structure can be finally drafted. It is vitally important to make sure that this part of the Review delivers a structure that is able to undertake the tasks and the new way of working expected of it within the resources that are available, and as such it is also vitally important to ensure that staff buy into any changes.

2.29 Following discussions with the Human Resources Manager and consultations with staff and trade unions it is proposed that a detailed future team structure be developed along with plans for its implementation.

2.30 In addition to dealing with structural issues, this sub-group also considered the arrangements in place for ensuring the safety of staff whilst on site. This issue is being dealt with through new lone working arrangements that have been considered through the District Council’s Safety Committee and which are due to be implemented imminently.

2.31 Part 5 of the Action Plan deals with the proposed actions in relation to this area of the Review.

3 RISK ASSESSMENT

Legal

The recommended action plan works within the existing statutory framework to provide for an improved service. The legal risk is therefore low.

Financial

The report indicates that these proposals should result in:

- income from charging for pre-application advice, estimated at £20,000 per annum from 2016/17;
- £6000 - £7000 per annum from savings arising from the new committee arrangements;
- a need to spend a “one-off” £17,000 on a temporary resource to deal with existing workload and facilitate the implementation of the Review recommendations.

The balance on the Invest to Save Reserve is sufficient to finance the temporary resource.

The financial risk is, therefore, assessed as “low”.

4 OTHER CONSIDERATIONS

In preparing this report, the relevance of the following factors has also been considered: prevention of crime and disorder, equalities, environmental, climate change, health, human rights, personnel and property.
5 CONTACT INFORMATION
Tim Braund, Head of Regulatory Services, Tel: 01629 761118, Email: tim.braund@derbyshiredales.gov.uk

Paul Wilson, Corporate Director, Tel: 01629 761324, Email: paul.wilson@derbyshiredales.gov.uk

Jon Bradbury, Development Manager, Tel: 01629 761331, Email: jonathan.bradbury@derbyshiredales.gov.uk

6 BACKGROUND PAPERS

7 ATTACHMENTS
Appendix 1 – Development Management Review Action Plan

BACK TO AGENDA
## DEVELOPMENT MANAGEMENT REVIEW ACTION PLAN

### Part 1 - Integrated Planning Service

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No.</th>
<th>Recommendation</th>
<th>Risk</th>
<th>Timescale</th>
<th>Comment</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>That the Development Manager be included in the newly formed Place Shaping Hub in order to aid strategic alignment between Planning Policy, Economic Development, Housing and Development Management</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>Short</td>
<td>Action implemented</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>That the weekly Development Meetings be used to provide operational contact between Planning Policy officers and Development Management officers</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>Short</td>
<td>Action implemented</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>That standard agenda items be agreed for the Development Meetings to ensure that Policy input matches Development Management needs</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>Short</td>
<td>Implemented</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>That a programme of Policy briefings be agreed for the Development Meetings</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>Short</td>
<td>Implemented</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>That a briefing note be produced explaining the impact of the withdrawal of the Local Plan on Development Management decisions</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>Short</td>
<td>Implemented</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>That a training needs audit be undertaken for Development Management staff as part of the PDR process</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>Ongoing</td>
<td>Part of PDR process</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>That a fortnightly Planning Update meeting be introduced at management level to progress chase the new format of Development Meetings</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>Short</td>
<td>Implemented</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Part 2 - Development Management from Development Control

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No.</th>
<th>Recommendation</th>
<th>Risk</th>
<th>Timescale</th>
<th>Comment</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>That Council agrees to the principle of introducing a charging regime for pre-application advice</td>
<td>Medium</td>
<td>Short</td>
<td>To be agreed at Council 25 June 2015</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>That the scheme of pre-application charges developed through the Members’ Panel be adopted as the basis for the charging regime for Derbyshire Dales District Council</td>
<td>Medium</td>
<td>Medium</td>
<td>Draft charging schedule produced.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>That the charging regime be introduced from 1 April 2016</td>
<td>Medium</td>
<td>Medium</td>
<td>Formal processes to be developed ahead of implementation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>That Members be involved in pre-application discussions for significant developments. These to be determined by officers through the Integrated Planning Service meetings</td>
<td>Medium</td>
<td>Medium</td>
<td>Formal processes to be developed ahead of implementation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>That the sub-group continues to meet in the interim to develop robust internal processes to ensure the efficient handling of pre-application requests</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>Ongoing</td>
<td>To reconvene ASAP after approval</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Part 3 - Officer/Member Relationship

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No.</th>
<th>Recommendation</th>
<th>Risk</th>
<th>Timescale</th>
<th>Comment</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>That the number of Planning Committees be reduced from 2 to 1</td>
<td>Medium</td>
<td>Short</td>
<td>Action implemented</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>That the new Planning Committee meetings be held on a 4 week cycle</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>Short</td>
<td>Action implemented</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>That special Planning Committee meetings can still be called outside this cycle as and when required</td>
<td>Medium</td>
<td>Ongoing</td>
<td>Already used</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Resolution</td>
<td>Level</td>
<td>Duration</td>
<td>Status</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---</td>
<td>----------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>-------</td>
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<td>-------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>That a standing item on Enforcement be added to the Planning Committee agenda</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>Short</td>
<td>To be implemented July 2015</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td>That Planning Committee meetings are alternated between Matlock and Ashbourne with business being tailored to the appropriate setting as far as is practicable</td>
<td>Medium</td>
<td>Short</td>
<td>Action implemented</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18</td>
<td>That the scheme of delegation be amended so that minor applications will be determined by officers as the default position.</td>
<td>Medium</td>
<td>Short</td>
<td>Action implemented</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19</td>
<td>That the new scheme of delegation be published and used for Member training</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>Short</td>
<td>Action implemented</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20</td>
<td>That the process by which officers have contacted Ward Members in relation to individual applications be amended so that in future Members will be asked to check against weekly lists and then contact the case officer should they wish to discuss an application</td>
<td>Medium</td>
<td>Short</td>
<td>Action implemented</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21</td>
<td>That the public participation scheme for Planning Committee meetings be amended as detailed in the report to Council on 28 May 2015</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>Short</td>
<td>Action implemented</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22</td>
<td>That the new arrangements be monitored and evaluated after a period of 12 months.</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>Medium</td>
<td>To be reported at Council in 2016</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23</td>
<td>That a new Members’ Panel be formed to help to review the new arrangements over the next 12 months</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>Short</td>
<td>To reconvene ASAP after approval</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## Part 4 - Processes and Procedures

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No.</th>
<th>Recommendation</th>
<th>Risk</th>
<th>Timescale</th>
<th>Comment</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>24</td>
<td>That a Business Process Project team be established to take forward the redesign of processes</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>Short</td>
<td>To be formed ASAP after approval</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25</td>
<td>That the scope of process redesign be established along the principles of core planning processes in the first instance, followed by issues such as enforcement, TPOs etc</td>
<td>Medium</td>
<td>Short</td>
<td>To commence ASAP after approval</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26</td>
<td>Produce a draft project plan for process redesign</td>
<td>Medium</td>
<td>Short</td>
<td>To commence ASAP after approval</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>27</td>
<td>To obtain full buy-in to the redesign from Development Management staff and BSU colleagues</td>
<td>Medium</td>
<td>Short/ongoing</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>28</td>
<td>Establish a priority list of business processes to be tackled</td>
<td>Medium</td>
<td>Short</td>
<td>To commence ASAP after approval</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>29</td>
<td>Establish a standard approach to capturing and documenting existing business processes and the staffing resource necessary to do so</td>
<td>Medium</td>
<td>Short</td>
<td>To commence ASAP after approval</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30</td>
<td>Establish the levels of IT competency within the planning service via PDR outcomes and identify necessary training and action accordingly</td>
<td>Medium</td>
<td>Short/ongoing</td>
<td>To commence ASAP after approval. Training will be iterative process</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>31</td>
<td>Undertake a review of desktop IT provision within the planning service identifying the scope of necessary renewal, including agile working provision for specific posts. Cost, prioritise and action accordingly</td>
<td>Medium</td>
<td>Short</td>
<td>To commence ASAP after approval</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>32</td>
<td>Establish Uniform champions within the planning service and via technical support, plus any associated training needs and action accordingly</td>
<td>Medium</td>
<td>Short/ongoing</td>
<td>To commence ASAP after approval. Training will be iterative process</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Task Description</td>
<td>Priority</td>
<td>Phase</td>
<td>Linkage</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---</td>
<td>----------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>----------</td>
<td>-------</td>
<td>-------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>33</td>
<td>Explore the merits of the existing Northgate Electronic Document Management System (EDMS) against rival systems</td>
<td>Medium</td>
<td>Medium</td>
<td>To link with Transformation Project</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>34</td>
<td>To set aside any additional expenditure on Uniform products i.e. Enterprise, until the full scope of the existing system is known and fully utilised</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>Short</td>
<td>To plans to implement Enterprise at this time</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>35</td>
<td>Establish costs for colour scanner to feed planning portal, assess and action accordingly</td>
<td>Medium</td>
<td>Medium</td>
<td>To link with Transformation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>36</td>
<td>Explore further the possibility of a measuring tool being offered via the planning portal</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>Medium</td>
<td>To link with Technical Team</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>37</td>
<td>Review indexing criteria adopted on the planning portal to allow ease of interrogation</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>Medium</td>
<td>To link with Technical Team and BST</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>38</td>
<td>Introduce regular (weekly or biweekly) two-way trouble shooting sessions with BSU colleagues</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>Short</td>
<td>Meetings between Development Manager and Business Support Manager already implemented – consider expanding</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>39</td>
<td>Establish the terms of customer engagement and what this looks like i.e. letter/e-mail etc, plus minimum &amp; maximum response times. Ensure corporate alignment as necessary and communicate via different media accordingly</td>
<td>Medium</td>
<td>Medium</td>
<td>Ongoing culture change and channel shift</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>40</td>
<td>Establish the core processes of the planning service, i.e. what are the components of our ‘funnel’ and associated performance criteria</td>
<td>Medium</td>
<td>Medium</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>41</td>
<td>Establish a standard approach to business process redesign, incorporating Uniform at the centre together with core processes as above and the delegation of decisions to the lowest level possible</td>
<td>Medium</td>
<td>Short/ongoing</td>
<td>Critical to process redesign</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---</td>
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<td>---</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>42</strong></td>
<td>Tackle business process redesign in order of priority (with ‘as is’ processes being identified in the first instance)</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>Medium/ongoing</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>43</strong></td>
<td>Identify champions within the planning service and BSU to trial new processes; identify the level of service risk associated with the trial and the necessary timeline for the trial. Obtain prior approval from the project and service managers before going live. Review, realign and go-live as necessary</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>Short/ongoing</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>44</strong></td>
<td>To review service specific website content to enable better self-help, sign-posting and issue resolution</td>
<td>Medium</td>
<td>Medium</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>45</strong></td>
<td>To consider the posting of Planning Officer reports via the planning portal</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>Medium</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>46</strong></td>
<td>Identify a point in time when hardcopy files will no longer be generated and ensure business processes are able to support such a move. Consideration should be given here to the use of UPRN’s (as opposed to plot file referencing)</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>Long</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>47</strong></td>
<td>Explore ‘technical officer’ staffing options and associated costs/benefits for further discussions</td>
<td>Medium</td>
<td>Long</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>48</strong></td>
<td>Sanction agile working pilot for target individual/s – assign key I.T. support contact. Observe and refine approach accordingly</td>
<td>Medium</td>
<td>Medium</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>49</strong></td>
<td>Identify and generate standard template documents required to aid business process redesign and associated trials</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>Medium/ongoing</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Core activity for Business Process Project team

Links with actions in Structure section

Ongoing culture change and channel shift

Links with actions in Structure section

Ongoing culture change
| 50 | As part of the BSU training agenda bring Customer Communications and Business Support together for a period of time to encourage a greater understanding of roles/responsibilities and opportunities for positive change. This has already been actioned via the Wednesday training meetings. | Low | Short | Action implemented |
| 51 | Explore the possibility of BSU colleagues spending time sat in the planning service on a rota basis in order to get a greater understanding of the service and how they fit in | Low | Medium | Ongoing training |
| 52 | To identify a robust method of transferring historical plot files to a digital format including the identification of core documentation required from such files, the necessary extent of back-scanning plus the timeline and resource required to make it happen | High | Long | High volume of work |
| 53 | To introduce a timeline for reviewing newly established business processes | Medium | Long | To be implemented later in process redesign |
| 54 | Raise a Corporate question as to the merits of running Uniform, M3 and Mayrise as the collective annual spend is considerable | High | Long | Large cultural investment in existing systems v sustainability of separate systems |
### Part 5 - Resources, Structures and Resilience

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No.</th>
<th>Recommendation</th>
<th>Risk</th>
<th>Timescale</th>
<th>Comment</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>55</td>
<td>That a revised team structure be developed that is able to deliver the future Development Management service, taking into account the needs outlined in paragraph 2.28</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>Medium</td>
<td>In development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>56</td>
<td>That the revised team structure be considered by the Human Resources Manager and consulted upon with the Development Management team and trade unions</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>Medium</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>57</td>
<td>That a timescale be developed for the transition to the new team structure</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>Long</td>
<td>Following consultation in 56 above</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>58</td>
<td>That members of the Development Management team be included in the new lone working arrangements</td>
<td>Medium</td>
<td>Short</td>
<td>In development</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

BACK TO AGENDA
COUNCIL
25th JUNE 2015

Report of the Head of Resources

ANNUAL GOVERNANCE STATEMENT 2014/15

SUMMARY

This report seeks Members’ approval for the Annual Governance Statement, which is consistent with the CIPFA/SOLACE Framework “Delivering Good Governance in Local Government”, and meets the requirements of the Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015.

RECOMMENDATION

1. That approval be given to the Annual Governance Statement 2014/15.

2. That the significant governance issues, and the actions to address them, be noted.

WARDS AFFECTED

None

STRATEGIC LINK

Preparation of an Annual Governance Statement helps to identify principal risks to the achievement of the Council’s objectives.

1 REPORT

1.1 Confidence in public sector governance is of critical importance given the investments by the government and council tax payers in local services. An annual governance statement (AGS) should not be seen as a dry financial requirement, but as an important public expression of what the Council has done to put in place good business practice, high standards of conduct and sound governance.

1.2 Councils face intense pressure to deliver unprecedented funding cuts, organisational change and innovation in service delivery while meeting public demands for greater transparency in decision-making and performance. Effective governance is essential if senior officers and members are to meet these exacting challenges. Ironically though, those processes that ensure good governance are at risk from the conflicting demands for reduced spending and a re-prioritisation of resources. Councils must produce an AGS alongside the annual accounts to reports publicly on how they have complied with their governance code and describe any governance issues, and explain how they will be addressed.

1.3 The Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015 require local authorities to conduct a review of its system of internal control at least once a year, and, following that review, to publish an annual governance statement prepared in accordance with proper practices in relation to internal control. The Annual Governance Statement is attached at Appendix 1. It is
consistent with the 2007 CIPFA/SOLACE publication “Delivering Good Governance in Local Government”, and an addendum published in December 2012.

1.4 In accordance with proper practice, the Annual Governance Statement must be signed by the Leader of the Council and by the Chief Executive, who must be satisfied that the document is supported by reliable evidence and accurately reflects the Council’s governance arrangements.

1.5 The Statement describes the key elements of the governance framework and the process that has been applied in maintaining and reviewing the effectiveness of the governance framework. Section 5 of the Annual Governance Statement identifies any significant governance issues.

2 RISK ASSESSMENT

2.1 Legal
The legal risk has been assessed as low. The Council’s Framework for Corporate Governance requires the Council to put in place effective arrangements for an objective review of risk management and internal control. This Statement helps to satisfy that requirement.

2.2 Financial
The financial risk arising from this report is low.

3 OTHER CONSIDERATIONS
In preparing this report the relevance of the following factors has also been considered: prevention of crime and disorder, equalities, environmental, climate change, health, human rights, personnel and property.

4 CONTACT INFORMATION

Karen Henriksen, Head of Resources
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Sandra Lamb, Head of Corporate Services
Telephone: 01629 761281; Email: sandra.lamb@derbyshiredales.gov.uk

5 BACKGROUND PAPERS

Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015
CIPFA Finance Advisory Network Rough Guide for Practitioners on the Annual Governance Statement

6 ATTACHMENTS
Annual Governance Statement 2014/15

BACK TO AGENDA
ANNUAL GOVERNANCE STATEMENT 2014/15

1. SCOPE OF RESPONSIBILITY

Derbyshire Dales District Council is responsible for ensuring that its business is conducted in accordance with the law and proper standards, and that public money is safeguarded and properly accounted for, and used economically, efficiently and effectively. The District Council also has a duty under the Local Government Act 1999 to make arrangements to secure continuous improvement in a way in which its functions are exercised, having regard to a combination of economy, efficiency and effectiveness.

In discharging this overall responsibility, Derbyshire Dales District Council is responsible for putting in place proper arrangements for the governance of its affairs, facilitating the effective exercise of its functions, and which includes arrangements for the management of risk.

Derbyshire Dales District Council has approved and adopted a code of corporate governance, which is consistent with the principles of the CIPFA/SOLACE Framework “Delivering Good Governance in Local Government”. A copy of the code is on our website www.derbyshiredales.gov.uk, or can be obtained from the Head of Corporate Services, Town Hall, Matlock, DE4 3NN. This statement explains how Derbyshire Dales District Council has complied with the code, and also meets the requirements of regulation 6 (1) (b) of the Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015, which requires all relevant bodies to prepare an Annual Governance Statement.

2. THE PURPOSE OF THE GOVERNANCE FRAMEWORK

The governance framework comprises the systems and processes, culture and values, by which the District Council is directed and controlled and its activities through which it accounts to, engages with, and leads the community. It enables the authority to monitor the achievement of its strategic objectives and to consider whether those objectives have led to the delivery of appropriate services and value for money.

The system of internal control is a significant part of that framework and is designed to manage risk to a reasonable level. It cannot eliminate all risk of failure to achieve policies, aims and objectives and therefore can only provide reasonable and not absolute assurance of effectiveness. The system of internal control is based on an ongoing process designed to identify and prioritise the risks to the achievement of Derbyshire Dales District Council policies, aims and objectives, to evaluate the likelihood and potential impact of those risks being realised, and to manage them efficiently, effectively and economically.

The governance framework has been in place at Derbyshire Dales District Council for the year ended 31st March 2015 and up to the date of approval of the Statement of Accounts.

3. THE GOVERNANCE FRAMEWORK

The key elements of the systems and processes that comprise the District Council’s governance arrangements are as follows:
Identifying and communicating the District Council’s vision of its purpose and intended outcomes for citizens and service users:

The shared Peak District Statement of Priorities outlines the vision and priority challenges for the area. It was produced by the Peak District Partnership which brings together all the relevant stakeholders, including those that deliver services in the area. The District Council is a lead member. Priorities have been identified through consultation with local people and a wide range of stakeholders.

Reviewing the District Council’s vision and its implications for the authority’s governance arrangements:

The Council’s aims and objectives are set out in the annually-updated Corporate Plan. The Corporate Plan contains a statement of priorities which describes the areas where we are focusing our activities over a four-year period. These priorities reflect the Peak District Statement of Priorities, which was developed following consultation with residents, businesses and voluntary organisations. The Corporate Plan also identifies targets for the coming year and reports on progress against last year’s targets.

Measuring the quality of services for users, for ensuring they are delivered in accordance with the authority’s objectives and for ensuring they represent the best use of resources:

The Council's annual Performance Plan contains information about the Council’s services and finances, sets out what we do, targets for the year and planned improvements. It includes key performance indicators to show how well we performed in previous years.

Through reviews by external auditors, Internal Audit, and the Corporate Leadership Team, the District Council constantly seeks ways of ensuring the economical, effective and efficient use of resources, and for securing continuous improvement in the way in which its functions are exercised.

Services are delivered by trained and experienced people. All posts have a detailed job description and person specification. Training needs are identified through the Performance and Development Review Scheme.

The Council has achieved accreditation under the Investors in People Standard, which is a quality framework to ensure that the Council’s employees have the right knowledge, skills and motivation to work effectively.

The Council has an effective performance management framework as set down in its document “Managing Performance at Derbyshire Dales District Council: A Practical Handbook”. The system is driven by the Corporate Plan which focuses attention on corporate priorities. This is cascaded through departmental service plans, individual employee personal development objectives and action plans. It is clearly laid out in the annual service and financial planning and performance management cycle. The Council’s policy committees monitor and scrutinise progress against targets and performance in priority areas affecting relevant service areas, and consider and approve corrective action where necessary, biannually.

The quality of performance data is assured through a corporate verification and quality assurance process, and further guaranteed through the involvement of Internal Audit. Data quality guidance is circulated to appropriate employees and reviewed each year using a risk-based approach. Control checks are incorporated at all stages of the process.

Defining and documenting the roles and responsibilities of the executive, non-executive, scrutiny and officer functions, with clear delegation arrangements and protocols for effective communication:

The District Council has adopted a constitution which sets out how the Council operates, how decisions are made and the procedures which are followed to ensure that these are efficient, transparent and accountable to local people.

Most day-to-day decisions are made by policy committees. In 2014/15, the Council had three policy committees – ‘Corporate Committee’, ‘Community Committee’ and ‘Environment Committee’. Meetings
are open to the public except where personal or confidential matters are being disclosed. There is a scheme for ‘public participation’ at these meetings.

Policy improvement and review is undertaken by sub-committees as may be required from time to time. To allow the policy committees to concentrate their time and effort on policy and strategic matters, the Council has a Scheme of Officer Delegation, whereby routine decision-making is delegated to officers. The scheme sets out the relevant subject areas and the responsible officers.

**Developing, communicating and embedding codes of conduct, defining the standards of behaviour for Members and staff:**

All governance and probity issues are under the remit of the Corporate Committee.

Members have been required to attend training on the application of the Council’s Code of Conduct for Members. Training was also provided to senior officers of the Council so that they could appreciate the issues surrounding the ethical framework and the Member/officer relationship.

The Employee Code of Conduct, based on the underlying principles of the Member code, was adopted in January 2008 and reviewed in 2015 to include aspects of employee behaviour. Extensive consultation has taken place with employees and the new Code is set to be adopted in July 2015. The new Code will be distributed to all employees and a signature required to accept the revised provisions as part of the employee’s contract of employment.

The Council has a protocol governing Member/Officer relations.

The District Council adopted a new Code of Conduct as required by the Localism Act, on 21 June 2012. Training was provided for all Councillors on the new provisions of the Code as part of the mandatory training element of the Member Development Scheme. All Councillors have subsequently completed their Register of Disclosable Pecuniary Interests as required and copies are available for members of the public to view via the District Council’s website.

**Reviewing and updating standing orders, standing financial instructions, a scheme of delegation and supporting procedure notes/manuals, which clearly define how decisions are taken and the processes and controls required to manage risks:**

The District Council has robust systems for identifying and evaluating all significant risks, developed and maintained with the pro-active participation of all those associated with planning and delivering services. The Council has approved a Risk Management Policy Statement and Strategy which provides a comprehensive framework for the management of risk throughout the Council. A cross-departmental Risk Continuity Group has defined Terms of Reference to develop a comprehensive performance framework for risk management and to embed risk management across the authority. A Risk Register is in place and appropriate staff have been trained in the assessment, management and monitoring of risks.

All reports which require decisions to be taken by the Council or its Committees contain a section which outlines legal, financial and corporate risks in order to inform the decision making process.

The Council’s Constitution, including the Scheme of Delegation, Standing Orders and Financial Regulations, is reviewed annually by the Council.

**Ensuring the District Council’s financial management arrangements conform with the governance requirements of the CIPFA Statement on the Role of the Chief Financial Officer in Local Government (2010):**

The Council has designated the Head of Resources as chief financial officer in accordance with Section 151 of the Local Government Act 1972. Examples of how the role of the Head of Resources & the District Council’s financial management arrangements conform with the governance requirements of the CIPFA Statement on “The Role of the Chief Financial Officer in Local Government (2010)” are as follows:
• The Head of Resources is a member of the Chartered Institute of Public Finance & Accountancy (CIPFA), reports directly to the Chief Executive and is a member of the Corporate Leadership Team.

• The District Council’s governance arrangements ensure that the Head of Resources has direct access to the Chief Executive, all other members of the Corporate Leadership Team, the Corporate Committee, and external audit.

• The Council’s Financial Regulations ensure that the Head of Resources is able to influence all material business decisions, as no item can be placed before the Council or its Committees without obtaining the Head of Resources’ assessment of its financial implications and financial risk.

• Financial Regulations require the Head of Resources to prepare, and review on an annual basis, a financial strategy which includes a five-year financial plan, a five-year capital strategy, and a policy in respect of reserves and provisions.

• The Head of Resources ensures compliance with CIPFA’s Code on a Prudential Framework for Local Authority Capital Finance and CIPFA’s Treasury Management Code.

• Article 12 of the Council's Constitution sets out the functions of the chief finance officer, including ensuring lawfulness and financial prudence of decision making, administration of financial affairs, contributing to corporate management, providing advice and giving financial information, and requires the Council to provide whatever resources are required to allow these duties to be performed.

• There is a line of professional accountability to the Head of Resources for the District Council’s finance staff.

Undertaking the core functions of an audit committee, as identified in CIPFA’s “Audit Committees – Practical Guidance for Local Authorities”:

In the financial year 2014/15, the core functions of an audit committee were undertaken by the Corporate Committee. It is a key source of assurance to the Council’s arrangements for managing risk, maintaining an effective control environment. Its Terms of Reference relating to audit are in accordance with the above CIPFA guidance.

Ensuring compliance with relevant laws and regulations, internal policies and procedures, and that expenditure is lawful:

The Council has designated the Head of Corporate Services as Monitoring Officer. It is the function of the Monitoring Officer to ensure compliance with established policies, procedures, laws and regulations. After consulting with the Chief Executive (head of paid service) and the Head of Resources (Chief Finance Officer), the Monitoring Officer will report to the full Council if she considers that any proposal, decision or omission would give rise to unlawfulness or maladministration. Such a report will have the effect of stopping the proposal or decision being implemented until the report has been considered.

The Council maintains an Internal Audit Section, which complies with the ‘Public Sector Internal Audit Standards’ set by the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy (CIPFA) and the Institute of Internal Auditors (IAA). Whilst the District Council maintains an in-house Internal Audit function, Internal Audit management is provided through membership of an Internal Audit Consortium which also provides Internal Audit services for Chesterfield Borough Council, Bolsover District Council and North East Derbyshire District Council. This arrangement has enabled the District Council to address concerns about Internal Audit capacity and to ensure that the Internal Audit Manager is professionally qualified.

The Council has an objective and professional relationship with external auditors and statutory inspectors, as evidenced by the Annual Audit Letter.
During 2014/15 the Council had Committees which carried out a number of regularity functions, including:

- two Planning Committees to determine planning applications and related matters;
- a Local Plan Advisory Committee to assist in the formulation of planning policy;
- a Licensing and Appeals Committee, which monitors and reviews the effectiveness of the council’s licensing policy and procedures.

**Whistle-blowing and for receiving and investigating complaints from the public:**

The Council’s Whistle-blowing policy demonstrates the Council’s commitment to providing support for whistleblowers. It is available to all staff on the Council’s Intranet, and is included in procurement advice to suppliers.

The Council has an adopted complaints procedure that enables members of the public to raise concerns in respect of the Council’s services. Any member of the public who is dissatisfied with the initial response to their complaint has the opportunity to request an independent review of that decision by the Council’s Chief Executive. The relevant policy committee has a role in monitoring the complaints framework and any complaints dealt with by the Local Government Ombudsman. Any critical findings from the Local Government Ombudsman are reported to one of the Council’s Policy Committees or Council as appropriate.

Details of how to make a complaint are on the Council’s website [www.derbyshiredales.gov.uk](http://www.derbyshiredales.gov.uk).

**Identifying the development needs of Members and senior officers in relation to their strategic roles, supported by appropriate training:**

The aim of the Council’s employee Performance and Development Review Scheme is to jointly agree objectives, identify training and development needs, and formulate specific and realistic action plans which contribute towards achieving the Council’s aims and objectives. The scheme also reviews past performance.

A Member Development Working Group, consisting of Members and officers, has day-to-day responsibility for shaping and developing the Council’s Member Development Scheme. The scheme enables individual Members to discuss their training and development needs within a set framework that included mandatory training on key topics.

**Establishing clear channels of communication with all sections of the community and other stakeholders, ensuring accountability and encouraging open consultation:**

The Council has three Area Community Forums covering the North, Central & Southern Areas of the District, which are intended to act as a focal point for mutual communication and consultation between the local community, stakeholders and Councillors. Community Forums contribute towards development of policies, and can examine the effectiveness of strategic implementation of Council Policy at a local level and report findings to the relevant Committee.

The Council has a Citizens Panel of 1000 residents who are consulted regularly on a variety of issues, including the establishment of aims and objectives.

The Council has a variety of other means of communicating with all sections of the community, including the Council’s website, the use of social media, and the publication of DalesMatters twice a year.

**Incorporating good governance arrangements in respect of partnerships and other group working as identified by the Audit Commission’s report “Governing Partnerships: Bridging the Accountability Gap”, and reflecting these in the authority’s overall governance arrangements:**

The Council has delegated to its policy committees a requirement to work jointly and in partnership with others to help deliver the Council’s aims and objectives. Financial Regulations require the Head of Corporate Services to ensure that significant partnerships are defined by a written agreement which covers:
• The aims and objectives of the partnership.
• The accountability arrangements, including pooled budgets, scheme of delegation, reporting structures.
• The funding arrangements.
• The success criteria for the partnership, including financial performance.
• Governance arrangements including audit review.
• Arrangements for dissolving the partnership.

The Council maintains a register of all significant partnerships covering the above criteria. Risks arising from significant partnerships are identified in the Council’s Risk Register.

4. REVIEW OF EFFECTIVENESS

Derbyshire Dales District Council has responsibility for conducting, at least annually, a review of the effectiveness of its governance framework including the system of internal control. The review of the effectiveness is informed by the work of the senior managers within the authority who have responsibility for the development and maintenance of the governance environment, the Chief Internal Auditor’s annual report, and also by comments made by the external auditors and other review agencies and inspectorates.

The process that has been applied in maintaining and reviewing the effectiveness of the system the Governance Framework includes:

The Head of Corporate Services (the ‘Monitoring Officer’) has a duty to monitor and review the operation of the Constitution to ensure its aims and principles are given full effect. The Council reviews the Constitution each year at its Annual Meeting.

The Corporate Committee reviews the local Code of Corporate Governance on an annual basis, including Dimension 4 relating to risk management and internal control, adopts an Action Plan to deal with any issues, and makes appropriate recommendations to Council on potential improvements.

The Council’s Corporate Committee has Terms of Reference which include:
• To undertake the role of Audit Committee and provide assurance of the adequacy of the risk management framework and associated control environment;
• To consider the reports produced in accordance with the Audit Plan and responses to the recommendations made therein;
• To consider the External Auditor’s report on issues arising from the audit of accounts;

The Council has designated the Head of Resources as chief finance officer in accordance with Section 151 of the Local Government Act 1972. The role of the Head of Resources and the District Council’s financial management arrangements conform with the governance requirements of the CIPFA Statement on “The Role of the Chief Financial Officer in Local Government (2010)”. The financial management of the authority is conducted in accordance with the financial rules set out in Parts 8 and 9 of the Constitution (Contract Standing Orders and Financial Regulations, respectively). The Council has in place a five-year Financial Strategy, last updated in November 2013, to support the medium-term aims of the Corporate Plan.

The Internal Audit Section is responsible for monitoring the quality and effectiveness of systems of internal control. A risk model is used to formulate a three-year plan which is approved by Corporate Committee, and from which the annual workload is identified. The reporting process for Internal Audit requires a report of each audit to be submitted to the relevant Head of Service, with a copy to the relevant service manager, as appropriate. The report includes recommendations for improvements that are included within an action plan and require agreement or rejection by service managers. The process includes quarterly reviews of recommendations to ensure that they are acted upon. All Internal Audit reports include a report on the quality and effectiveness of internal control within the Council’s systems, and an assessment in accordance with quantification and classification of internal control level definitions. These definitions are:
The Internal Audit Section is subject to regular inspection by the Council’s external auditors who place reliance on the work carried out by the section.

A review of the effectiveness of the system of internal control and the effectiveness of internal audit is undertaken on a regular basis. During 2014/15, 27 internal audit reports were issued. Two of these reports assessed internal controls as ‘unsatisfactory’. The first related to Data Protection; an action plan is in place and the recommendations are due to be implemented during 2015/16. Until these recommendations have been implemented, the risks (including possible fines / reputational damage in the event of a security breach) have been scored as ‘high’ by the Risk Continuity Group. The second unsatisfactory report related to Arc Leisure, Matlock; all of the recommendations made in that report have been accepted by management and most have now been implemented.

The Council’s Corporate Leadership Team meets weekly to develop policy issues commensurate with the Council’s aims, objectives and priorities. The Corporate Leadership Team also considers other internal control issues, including risk management, performance management, compliance, efficiency and value for money, and financial management.

Each year, the Corporate Leadership Team reviews the Risk Management Policy Statement and Strategy to ensure their continued relevance to the Council. The annual review also assesses performance against the aims and objectives of the Risk Management Strategy. In the Annual Audit Report, the Internal Audit Manager provides an opinion to the Corporate Committee on the adequacy of the Council’s risk management systems and the internal control environment.

The Risk Continuity Group provides progress reports to the Corporate Management Team, bringing their attention to significant risks. The Risk Continuity Group also:

- Reviews the Council’s strategic risk register and associated action plans;
- Ensures that the appropriate management action is taken to minimise/eliminate risk;
- Reviews the results of investigations into untoward incidents.

For performance management, a traffic light monitoring and reporting system is in place. This risk assessment determines the frequency of reporting to chief officers and councillors, with corrective action plans put in place for any under-performing services.

In the Audit Commission’s Audit Letter issued in October 2014, the External Auditor commented that

- We issued an unqualified opinion on your financial statements on 23rd September 2014.
- We issued an unqualified conclusion on the Authority’s arrangements to secure value for money (VFM) conclusion for 2013/14 on 23rd September 2014. This means we are satisfied that you have proper arrangements for securing financial resilience and challenging how you secure economy, efficiency and effectiveness”.

The Council’s Corporate Leadership Team has reviewed this Annual Governance Statement and the evidence supporting it.

We have been advised on the implications of the review of the effectiveness of the governance framework by the Corporate Committee, and that the arrangements continue to be regarded as fit for purpose in accordance with the governance framework. The areas already addressed and those to be specifically addressed with new actions planned are outlined below.
5. **SIGNIFICANT GOVERNANCE ISSUES**

The following significant governance issues have been identified.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Issue</th>
<th>Action</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. The Council continues to face significant financial pressures. Although savings and efficiency gains have been achieved each year in order to set a balanced budget, the latest projection has identified that further savings of around £1.3 million are required over the next five years.*</td>
<td>Continue to plan and monitor efficiency savings, to be achieved through the continuation of a programme of service reviews and through other methods set out in the financial strategy. Update the medium-term financial plan during October 2015, or as and when further information becomes available, e.g. 2014/15 outturn. Monitor future announcements in respect of funding levels and incorporate into the medium-term financial plan as necessary.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. The Council has arrears of Housing Benefit overpayments, totalling approximately £743,534. However, a bad debt provision of £125,000 is considered to be adequate at this stage.</td>
<td>Take the necessary recovery action in order to actively pursue outstanding debts. Produce regular monitoring reports in order to review progress. Assess the adequacy of the bad debt provision as and when further information is available in respect of the success of recovery action.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. An internal audit review has identified that there are weaknesses in the Council’s arrangements for Data Protection and Information Governance. The strategic risk (of fines / reputational damage) has been assessed as ‘high’. However, an action plan has been produced and the risks will reduce when all actions have been implemented. Some actions have already been implemented.</td>
<td>Implement the remaining actions identified in the action plan during 2015/16. Internal audit will review the controls and implementation of the action plan in March 2016.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*In March 2015 the external auditor informed members of the Corporate Committee that she had reviewed the Council’s financial plan and had no concerns to report.*
We propose over the coming year to take steps to address the above matters to further enhance our governance arrangements. We are satisfied that these steps will address the need for improvements that were identified in our review of effectiveness and will monitor their implementation and operation as part of our next annual review.

Signed

Councillor Lewis Rose O.B.E.  
Leader of the Council  
Date: - 28th June 2015

Dorcas Bunton  
Chief Executive  
Date: - 28th June 2015

BACK TO AGENDA
Report of the Head of Resources

GENERAL FUND OUT-TURN 2014/15

SUMMARY
This report advises Members of the final expenditure for 2014/15 and recommends that the under-spending be transferred to reserves.

RECOMMENDATIONS
2. That £156,000 be transferred to a new Reserve for Ward Member Budgets as set out in paragraph 1.3 of this report.
3. That the remaining balance of £401,660 be transferred to the Capital Programme Reserve.
4. That Members approve the transfer of £233,000 from the Job Evaluation Reserve to the Capital Programme Reserve.
5. That the updated Medium Term Financial Plan be noted.

WARDS AFFECTED
Not applicable

STRATEGIC LINK
The Council’s financial position is taken into account in determining all the priorities in the Corporate Plan.

The financial position as at 31st March 2015 will be reflected in the Medium-Term Financial Plan and in the Revenue Spending Proposals for 2016/17 that will be presented in early 2016.
1. REPORT

1.1 The final accounts for 2014/15 show an under-spending on the General Fund of £557,660 when comparing the final expenditure with the revised budget. The under-spending has been calculated after setting aside £35,000 in the committed expenditure reserve to finance a temporary resource in the Estates and Facilities section. This resource is required to work on valuation issues, thereby freeing up time so that the Estates and Facilities Manager is able to address property issues, such as those mentioned in paragraph 1.5 below.

1.2 The main variations are summarised in Appendix 1 for Members’ information. The most significant variations are:-

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variation</th>
<th>£000</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Reduction in business rates on council properties following appeals</td>
<td>(87)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Increased income from planning application fees</td>
<td>(100)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reduction in expenditure on rent allowances (net of income)</td>
<td>(231)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reduction in ICT costs</td>
<td>(67)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1.3. When the revised budget for 2014/15 was approved by Council in March 2015, there was an estimated surplus on the General Fund of £1,050,619 to be transferred to reserves. The under-spending of £557,660 results in an overall surplus of £1,608,279 for 2014/15.

1.4 At the Council meeting held on 28 May 2015, members agreed, in principle, to the allocation of individual budgets to ward members. Officers are currently preparing a scheme and governance arrangements, which are due to be presented to the July Council Meeting. The underspending from 2014/15 now offers members the opportunity to set aside monies to finance these budgets. It is suggested that an appropriate sum would be £1,000 per annum per member (to cover the each of the four years of elected office). This results in a requirement of £156,000. If members agree, this will be transferred to a new Ward Members Budgets Reserve in 2014/15 to be released in future years to offset the actual expenditure incurred by ward members.

1.5 The overall position on revenue reserves is shown at Appendix 2. A review of reserve balances as at 31 March 2015, together with a review of potential future liabilities, has shown that:

- The Direct Revenue Financing Reserve, Property Repairs Reserve and Capital Improvements Reserve all have similar purposes. These reserves have been combined to form the Capital Programme Reserve;

- The balance on the Capital Programme Reserve is likely to be insufficient to meet future requirements. These future requirements will be reported to Members in the coming months but include liabilities such as improvements identified in the property condition surveys, the toilets / shelter at the Memorial Gardens in Matlock Bath, the rock faces at Lovers Walks in Matlock Bath, the skate park at Ashbourne and CCTV.

- The balance on the Job Evaluation Reserve exceeds the amount that is now considered to be required. It is recommended that £233,000 be transferred from this reserve to the Capital Programme Reserve.
1.6 It is therefore suggested that the under-spending of £557,660 be allocated as follows:-

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ward Member Budgets Reserve</th>
<th>£156,000</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Capital Programme Reserve</td>
<td>£401,660</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>£557,660</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1.7 The balance on the General Reserve, available for unforeseen events and emergencies, remains unchanged at £989,356. In addition, the Council has a further General Fund Working Balance of £1 million, which is set aside to provide working capital.

1.8 The position on reserves and balances following the recommendations set out above can be seen in Appendix 2.

1.9 It is considered that approximately £68,000 of the under-spend will continue in future years. This has been reflected in an updated medium-term financial plan, which is shown at Appendix 3. It is now envisaged that the Council will be able to deliver balanced budgets in 2015/16, 2016/17 and 2017/18, and that the savings gap that must be closed in 2020/21 is approximately £1.18 million, assuming an ongoing annual 10% reduction in the Government’s Settlement Funding Assessment. More clarity around government grants might be available following the Chancellor of the Exchequer’s budget announcements on 8 July. If the impact is significant, a report will be presented to a future Council meeting.

1.10 The recommendations of Council will be reflected in the Statement of Accounts, which must be signed by the Head of Resources before 30th June. The accounts are then subject to an independent audit, carried out by the KPMG. The audited Statement of Accounts will be presented for approval at the Governance and Resources Committee meeting to be held on 17th September 2015.

2. RISK ASSESSMENT

2.1 Legal

There are no legal risks arising from this report.

2.2 Financial

The recommended transfers to reserves will help mitigate future financial risks that the Council may face. Therefore the financial risk arising from this report is low.

3 OTHER CONSIDERATIONS

In preparing this report the relevance of the following factors is also been considered: prevention of crime and disorder, equality of opportunity, environmental health, legal and human rights, financial personal and property considerations.

4 CONTACT INFORMATION

Karen Henriksen, Head of Resources
5 BACKGROUND PAPERS

None

6 ATTACHMENTS

Appendix 1 – Analysis of General Fund Underspend 2014/15
Appendix 2 – Summary of Revenue Balances, Provisions and Earmarked Reserves as at 31st March, 2015
Appendix 3 – Medium Term Financial Plan

BACK TO AGENDA
## APPENDIX 1

### ANALYSIS OF GENERAL FUND UNDERSPEND 2014/15

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Revised Estimate</th>
<th>Actual Expenditure</th>
<th>Variance</th>
<th>Ongoing</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>£000’s</td>
<td>£000’s</td>
<td>£000’s</td>
<td>£000’s</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Major Variances:**

**Expenditure less than expected:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Revised Estimate</th>
<th>Actual Expenditure</th>
<th>Variance</th>
<th>Ongoing</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Business rates (successful appeals, backdated)</td>
<td>714</td>
<td>627</td>
<td>(87)</td>
<td>(20)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Savings on ICT</td>
<td>333</td>
<td>266</td>
<td>(67)</td>
<td>(34)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Consultancy</td>
<td>306</td>
<td>270</td>
<td>(36)</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Water charges</td>
<td>188</td>
<td>165</td>
<td>(23)</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communications</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>(22)</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rent Allowances (offset by income below)</td>
<td>14,200</td>
<td>13,859</td>
<td>(341)</td>
<td>(576)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Income less than anticipated:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Revised Estimate</th>
<th>Actual Expenditure</th>
<th>Variance</th>
<th>Ongoing</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Car parking charges</td>
<td>(2,174)</td>
<td>(2,125)</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rent allowances income (see above)</td>
<td>(14,635)</td>
<td>(14,525)</td>
<td>110</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Building Regulation Fees</td>
<td>(175)</td>
<td>(147)</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Retained business rates</td>
<td>(1,724)</td>
<td>(1,705)</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>206</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Income higher than anticipated:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Revised Estimate</th>
<th>Actual Expenditure</th>
<th>Variance</th>
<th>Ongoing</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>VAT refund for trade waste</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>(38)</td>
<td>(38)</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trade waste charges</td>
<td>(360)</td>
<td>(393)</td>
<td>(33)</td>
<td>(33)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Planning application fees</td>
<td>(450)</td>
<td>(550)</td>
<td>(100)</td>
<td>(171)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Other Minor Variances**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Revised Estimate</th>
<th>Actual Expenditure</th>
<th>Variance</th>
<th>Ongoing</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>£000’s</td>
<td>£000’s</td>
<td>£000’s</td>
<td>£000’s</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>(17)</th>
<th>0</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(558)</td>
<td>(68)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### APPENDIX 2

#### SUMMARY OF REVENUE BALANCES, PROVISIONS AND EARMARKED RESERVES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Balance at 31st March 2015</th>
<th>Before Report Recommendations £000s</th>
<th>After Report Recommendations £000s</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Revenue Balances</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>General Fund Working Balance*</td>
<td>1,000</td>
<td>1,000</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>General Reserve</td>
<td>989</td>
<td>989</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Building Control</td>
<td>(80)</td>
<td>(80)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>1,909</strong></td>
<td><strong>1,909</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Provisions</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Insurances</td>
<td>71</td>
<td>71</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>71</strong></td>
<td><strong>71</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Earmarked Reserves</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bakewell A.B.C. Repairs</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>7</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Capital Programme Reserve**</td>
<td>1,978</td>
<td>2,647</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Carsington Improvements</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>36</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Committed Expenditure</td>
<td>308</td>
<td>308</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Economic Development</td>
<td>376</td>
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<td>Job Evaluation</td>
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<td>Invest to Save</td>
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<td>Member / Officer Indemnity</td>
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<td>Replacement Car Parking Machines</td>
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<td>Revenue Grants Unapplied</td>
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<td>Technology Renewals</td>
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<td>Vehicle Renewals</td>
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<td>Wheeled Bins</td>
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<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
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<td><strong>8,432</strong></td>
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<td><strong>TOTAL</strong></td>
<td><strong>9,820</strong></td>
<td><strong>10,412</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* The General Fund Working Balance is specified as a “controlled reserve” for the purposes of Section 26 of the Local Government Act 2003.

** Includes balances formerly held in the Direct Revenue Financing Reserve, Capital Improvements Reserve and the Property Repairs Reserve.

In the main, the above balances are earmarked for specific projects.
## MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL PLAN

### Existing Spending Level

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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>£000s</td>
<td>£000s</td>
<td>£000s</td>
<td>£000s</td>
<td>£000s</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>8,856</td>
<td>9,598</td>
<td>9,442</td>
<td>9,152</td>
<td>9,338</td>
<td>9,560</td>
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</table>

### Future Commitments / savings

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<tr>
<td>Ongoing underspends from 2014/15 outturn</td>
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<td>Inflation – pay awards</td>
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<td>142</td>
<td>142</td>
<td>142</td>
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<td>Inflation - general</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>61</td>
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<td>Reduction in Benefits Administration Subsidy</td>
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<td>25</td>
<td>25</td>
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<td>25</td>
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<td>Reduction in support for Parish tax base</td>
<td>(24)</td>
<td>(24)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Pensions past service deficit recovery</td>
<td>20</td>
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<tr>
<td>2015/16 “one-off” transfers to reserves to finance future liabilities</td>
<td>810 (810)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>2016/17 “one-off” transfers to reserves to finance future liabilities</td>
<td>388 (388)</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>2017/18 “one-off” transfers to reserves to finance future liabilities</td>
<td>32 (32)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Administration service review</td>
<td>(23)</td>
<td>(48)</td>
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<td>Tourism Service Review</td>
<td>(23)</td>
<td></td>
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<td>Ashbourne leisure Centre Gym Contract</td>
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<tr>
<td>Change in contracted out national insurance</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Total Spending Requirements</strong></td>
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<td><strong>9,442</strong></td>
<td><strong>9,152</strong></td>
<td><strong>9,338</strong></td>
<td><strong>9,560</strong></td>
<td><strong>9,788</strong></td>
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### Financed by:

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<tr>
<td>Revenue Support Grant</td>
<td>(1,018)</td>
<td>(729)</td>
<td>(465)</td>
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<td>Retained Business Rates</td>
<td>(1,403)</td>
<td>(1,438)</td>
<td>(1,474)</td>
<td>(1,511)</td>
<td>(1,549)</td>
<td>(1,588)</td>
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<td>Homelessness Prevention Grant</td>
<td>(138)</td>
<td>(138)</td>
<td>(138)</td>
<td>(138)</td>
<td>(138)</td>
<td>(138)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Council Tax Freeze Grant 2011/12</td>
<td>(141)</td>
<td>(141)</td>
<td>(141)</td>
<td>(141)</td>
<td>(141)</td>
<td>(141)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Council Tax Freeze Grant 2013/14</td>
<td>(57)</td>
<td>(57)</td>
<td>(57)</td>
<td>(57)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Council Tax Freeze Grant 2014/15</td>
<td>(57)</td>
<td>(57)</td>
<td>(57)</td>
<td>(57)</td>
<td>(57)</td>
<td>(57)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Rural Services Delivery Grant</td>
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<td>(77)</td>
<td>(77)</td>
<td>(77)</td>
<td>(77)</td>
<td>(77)</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Total Settlement Funding Assessment</strong></td>
<td><strong>2,891</strong></td>
<td><strong>2,637</strong></td>
<td><strong>2,409</strong></td>
<td><strong>2,205</strong></td>
<td><strong>2,019</strong></td>
<td><strong>2,058</strong></td>
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<td>New Homes Bonus – 2011/12 Allocation</td>
<td>(169)</td>
<td>(169)</td>
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<td></td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New Homes Bonus – 2012/13 Allocation</td>
<td>(147)</td>
<td>(147)</td>
<td>(147)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>New Homes Bonus – Adjustment Grant</td>
<td>(6)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Disabled Facilities Grant</td>
<td>(184)</td>
<td>(184)</td>
<td>(184)</td>
<td>(184)</td>
<td>(184)</td>
<td>(184)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ongoing additional business rates</td>
<td>(271)</td>
<td>(271)</td>
<td>(271)</td>
<td>(271)</td>
<td>(271)</td>
<td>(271)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Council Tax Freeze Grant 2015/16</td>
<td>(58)</td>
<td>(58)</td>
<td>(58)</td>
<td>(58)</td>
<td>(58)</td>
<td>(58)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Financing from Council Tax</td>
<td>(5,322)</td>
<td>(5,426)</td>
<td>(5,532)</td>
<td>(5,640)</td>
<td>(5,749)</td>
<td>(5,862)</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Total Income</strong></td>
<td><strong>(9,598)</strong></td>
<td><strong>(9,442)</strong></td>
<td><strong>(9,152)</strong></td>
<td><strong>(8,909)</strong></td>
<td><strong>(8,614)</strong></td>
<td><strong>(8,605)</strong></td>
</tr>
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</table>

### DEFICIT / CORPORATE SAVINGS TARGET

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0</td>
<td>429</td>
<td>946</td>
<td>1,183</td>
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</table>

### Notes

1. Assumes pay awards of 2.2% for 2015/16 and 2% from 2016/17 to 2020/21
2. General inflation assumed at 2.3% for 2015/16 and 2.5% from 2016/17 to 2020/21
3. Assumes a 10% reduction in Settlement Funding Assessment from 2016/17 to 2018/19
4. Assumes that business rates will have an inflationary increase of 2.5% from 2016/17 to 2020/21
5. New Homes Bonus is awarded for 6 years; assumed no further awards after 2015/16;
6. Assumes Council Tax will be frozen in 2015/16, and will increase by 1.95% per year in 2016/17 to 2020/21

---

BACK TO AGENDA
CAPITAL PROGRAMME OUT-TURN 2014/2015 – ESTIMATES 2015/16 TO 2019/20

SUMMARY

This report:
- Informs members of the out-turn of the 2014/15 Capital Programme
- Determines the revised Capital Programme and financing arrangements for 2015/16
- Outlines the Capital Programme proposals for 2016/17 to 2019/20

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. That the out-turn of the Capital Programme for 2014/15 in the sum of £2,358,486 be noted and approved.

2. That the revised Capital Programme and financing arrangements for 2015/2016 in the sum £2,918,781 be noted and approved.

3. That the revised Capital Programme proposals for 2016/17 – 2019/2020 as detailed in Appendix 1 be noted.

WARDS AFFECTED

All

STRATEGIC LINK

The Council’s Capital Programme takes into account all the priorities and targets within the Corporate Plan and these are identified in the Capital Strategy.

1 REPORT

1.1 OUT-TURN 2014/15

The detailed out-turn of the 2014/15 Capital Programme in the sum of £2,358,486 is shown in Appendix 1. This compares with the revised estimate of £3,110,328 an underspending of £751,842

There are three schemes with slippage of £50,000 or more:

- Social Housing Grant – Birchover £120
- Repayment of Derelict Land Grant £269
- Replacement of Pay & Display Ticket Machines £52
The total expenditure for 2014/15 was £2,358,486 which has been financed as follows:

- **Grants** 357,589
- **Capital Receipts** 1,266,938
- **Funds/Reserves** 733,959

2,358,486

1.2 **REVISED CAPITAL PROGRAMME FOR 2015/16**

1.2.1 The revised General Fund Capital Programme for 2015/16 is summarised as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Recommended Capital Programme</th>
<th>£</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Housing which meets local needs</td>
<td>965,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Business Growth and Job Creation</td>
<td>269,180</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Street Cleaning, Waste Collection &amp; Healthy Communities</td>
<td>934,351</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>725,250</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Capital Salaries and Support Service Charges</td>
<td>25,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>2,918,781</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1.2.2 The spending proposals for 2015/2016 total £2,918,781, which includes salaries and support services charges of £25,000 and is the aggregate of the estimated scheme costs. All estimated grants and contributions are dealt with as part of the financing arrangements.

1.2.3 Reductions in the capital programme funding have been made in respect of planned noise and trade effluent measures associated with the operation of the Livestock Markets at the ABC. In May 2014, the Environment Committee approved the implementation of a noise management plan aimed at reducing noise associated with the operation of the livestock market at a cost of £88,300. Several measures were implemented and regular dialogue was undertaken with nearby residents. Neighbours have reported overall an improvement in the noise at the ABC and that additional measure to address original noise issues are no longer needed. Plans are in place to replace the tractor due to its age which will help further improve the situation. The only ongoing issue reported was noise from hauliers shouting and dogs barking occasionally. Further discussions are to be had with Bagshaws to remind hauliers to carry out activities quietly and signs will be erected on site as a reminder. These measures can be accommodated within existing revenue budgets and therefore it is recommended that the capital budget be reduced only to fund the replacement tractor.

1.2.4 In respect of trade effluent measures a report to Corporate Committee in June 2014 outlined ongoing works that were being considered to comply with the trade effluent consent. WEBS Limited were appointed to conduct a survey and identify a solution. Following a survey undertaken it was recommended that a balancing tank be implemented to allow the suspended solids more time to settle out before being
discharged to the public sewer to enable us to comply with the limits. This measure would, however, have come at both considerable capital and ongoing revenue cost to the Council and therefore it was recommended that prior to any investment in a balancing tank that negotiations take place with Severn Trent to see if the consent levels could be reviewed and higher consent levels agreed. These negotiations have taken place with Severn Trent and it has since been agreed that the consent levels have been varied to higher levels to enable the Council to comply with the discharge levels. These conditions have been agreed without the need for a balancing tank. It is therefore recommended that capital sum of £95,590 that was set aside to fund this be removed from the capital programme.

1.2.5 The major items in the General Fund spending proposals where expenditure in 2015/16 is estimated to be in excess of £250,000 are:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>£000</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Social Housing Grants</td>
<td>715</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Repayment of Derelict Land Grants</td>
<td>269</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Replacement of Pay &amp; Display Ticket Machines</td>
<td>406</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Commercial Vehicles</td>
<td>328</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1.2.6 A Condition Survey has been carried out on all council properties. The results are due to be reported to the Governance and Resources Committee in September 2015, when it will be necessary to update the capital programme accordingly.

1.2.7 The overall financing package that is proposed for the revised 2015/16 Capital Programme is as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source</th>
<th>£</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Capital Receipts</td>
<td>837,701</td>
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<tr>
<td>Grants and Contributions</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Housing – Disabled Facilities Grants</td>
<td>239,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Miscellaneous Grants</td>
<td>23,102</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>262,102</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Internal Funds:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cersington Fund</td>
<td>35,812</td>
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<tr>
<td>Office Technology Reserve</td>
<td>131,782</td>
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<tr>
<td>Vehicle Renewal Fund</td>
<td>328,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unapplied Revenue Grants Reserve</td>
<td>393,000</td>
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<tr>
<td>Replacement of Car Parking Machines Reserve</td>
<td>250,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Direct Revenue Financing Reserve</td>
<td>478,062</td>
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<tr>
<td>Invest to Save Reserve</td>
<td>36,107</td>
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<tr>
<td>Bakewell ABC Reserve</td>
<td>7,000</td>
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<tr>
<td>Property Repairs Reserve</td>
<td>64,765</td>
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<tr>
<td>Capital Improvements Reserve</td>
<td>34,450</td>
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<tr>
<td>Wheeled Bins Reserve</td>
<td>50,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Direct Revenue Financing</td>
<td>10,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1,818,978</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2,918,781</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
2 RISK ASSESSMENT

2.1 Legal

Contained within the body of the report.

2.2 Financial

There is adequate funding for the capital programme. The financial risk is, therefore, assessed as ‘low’.

3 OTHER CONSIDERATIONS

In preparing this report the relevance of the following factors is also been considered prevention of crime and disorder, equality of opportunity, environmental health, legal and human rights, financial personal and property considerations.

4 CONTACT INFORMATION

For further information contact:
Karen Henriksen 01629 761284 or
Email: karen.henriksen@derbyshiredales.gov.uk

5 BACKGROUND PAPERS

Final Account Working Papers Held in Accountancy

6 ATTACHMENTS

Appendix 1 Capital Programme 2014/15 – 2019/20

BACK TO AGENDA
## CAPITAL PROGRAMME 2014/15 to 2019/20

### Schemes listed by Corporate Priority REV EST OUT-TURN ESTIMATE REVISED ESTIMATE ESTIMATE ESTIMATE ESTIMATE ESTIMATE TOTAL

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<td><strong>Affordable housing</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Disabled Facilities Grants</td>
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<td>122,589</td>
<td>260,000</td>
<td>260,000</td>
<td>260,000</td>
<td>270,000</td>
<td>270,000</td>
<td>270,000</td>
<td>1,442,589</td>
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<tr>
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<td>0</td>
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<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>80,000</td>
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### Note
- All estimates are subject to further review and finalise 6 months prior to commencement.
- All figures are in £ except where stated otherwise.
- Out-turn figures are actual expenditure to January 2015.

104
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* taken out of capital programme pending results from condition surveys

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**BACK TO AGENDA**