“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 That draft was withdrawn in October 2013, but is likely to re-emerge in a broadly similar form in 2015 or 2016; and it is now unlikely to be adopted soon.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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1.1 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.

\(^1\) 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...
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.
CHAPETER 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 landscape7.)

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 aware8 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 to9:
- 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

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.
9 More information about the Project is in ‘The Wirksworth Story – New Life for an Old Town’, pub. 1984
- 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).

2.3.5 Characteristics which define historic Wirksworth within the settlement area include:
- A high density collection of modest miners’ and quarry workers’ dwellings and grander homes of the better-off and a variety of shops and work places.
- Roofs mainly of Staffordshire blue tiles, stone tiles or imported slate and extensive use of locally quarried limestone, gritstone and lime render for the buildings, paving and boundary walls, imparting a vernacular greyishness, contrasting with the smarter ashlar sandstone and the use of imported or manufactured materials in the deliberate architecture of the public buildings, such as the schools, the larger town centre buildings and the Town Hall.
- Significant hilly topography giving rise to dramatic changes of level within short distances so that roads and pathways are steep and buildings appear piled on top of one another.
- The physical proximity of the formal space around the church to that of the Market Place and their separation and enclosure by substantial buildings fronting the Market Place.
- The relationship of those spaces and buildings, which maintain a sense of enclosure in the town centre, to a number of informal spaces nearby and to many glimpses of the surrounding landscape.
- An organic network of ginnels, paths and roads throughout the town informing the identity and activity of individual areas.
- The relationship between those individual areas, the ginnels and the underlying land form.
- The retention of sharp edges to much of the historic older town.
- Open views across the town and valley from within the town and views between buildings, both linking the town to the surrounding landscape.
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.

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

2.6.1 Wirksworth fosters innovation and local people understand that 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; 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:
- 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.

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“Contemporary” is defined in the Evidence Document.

See Chapter 5 of this plan and the Consultation Statement.

See Vision, in Chapter 1 of this plan.

The Character Guidance is contained in Appendix 1. It describes the significant characteristics and qualities of the area.

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:
   i. should take its lead from the characteristics of Wirksworth recognised in the Character Guidance, so far as relevant; and
   ii. should contribute positively to the quality of development in Wirksworth.

B
In other cases, the development:
   i. should respect the local character and historic and natural assets of the surrounding area;
   ii. 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
   iii. 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.

This refers to the Concept Statement in Appendix 2 of this plan and to any guidelines for residential development that may be published by the local planning authority.
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 Wirksworth18.

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 report19 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 area20 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 standards21.

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).

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.

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 NP5

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

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).

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.

3.3.3 The 2013 Draft Local Plan did not make BfL12 mandatory. Because it was looking at the local plan area as a whole and making policy for such an extensive area, that decision was justifiable. For Wirksworth, however, the standards set out in BfL12 should be aspired to wherever possible. BfL12 sets out twelve criteria to assess the quality of a development scheme. Proposals coming forward in Wirksworth should thus be exemplary, ideally scoring twelve out of twelve greens when assessed against those criteria.

In order to show that good design is at the heart of proposed new developments, applicants should include with their residential planning applications an assessment which clearly explains how they perform against each of the twelve criteria in BfL12.

References to BfL 12 refer also to any successor documents which may replace or modify it.
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.

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.

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.

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.

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.²⁷

**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.

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:


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.
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\(^2\). 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.

\(^2\) 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

\(^{29}\) 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.

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 BREEAM 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. 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 consultations35 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.

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.

Getting to school

6.4.6 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.
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.

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.
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 Sainsbury’s in Matlock and 8 miles to Morrisons at Belper; both towns are on main bus routes from Wirksworth. There is also a Sainsbury’s 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 town\(^{38}\). 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.

\(^{38}\) 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\(^{39}\) 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 (see paragraph 7.4.7 above) offers a default floorspace of 2500m\(^2\) for triggering impact assessments. Of course, the NPPF has in mind town centres of all sizes. Because Wirksworth has a small town centre\(^{40}\) which already loses most of its trade to Matlock and other larger towns, 2500m\(^2\) 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 200m\(^2\) in size. Therefore, the neighbourhood plan sets the threshold at 200m\(^2\) (gross internal floorspace).

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 2500m\(^2\) for triggering impact assessments. Of course, the NPPF has in mind town centres of all sizes. Because Wirksworth has a small town centre\(^{40}\) which already loses most of its trade to Matlock and other larger towns, 2500m\(^2\) 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 200m\(^2\) in size. Therefore, the neighbourhood plan sets the threshold at 200m\(^2\) (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.

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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.

**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\(^\text{42}\), 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.

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\(^{42}\) See the Evidence Document for further information about shared surface schemes.
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.

7.5.17 **Improve and increase parking provision**

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”.

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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.
CHAPTER 8, explaining how the Neighbourhood Plan policies can be delivered.

8.0 IMPLEMENTATION

8.1 INTRODUCTION
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.

8.2 WIRKSWORTH TOWN COUNCIL
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.

8.3 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.

8.3.1 These policies do not identify land for development. They set criteria for all development. They are an extension of policies in the Local Plan, and will be applied by the local planning authority alongside them.

8.3.2 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.

8.3.3 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

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

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

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*

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).
8.3.15 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.

8.4 TOWN COUNCIL ACTION POINTS WHICH ARE TO BE INCORPORATED IN A NEW WIRKSWORTH TOWN PLAN

The following box contains the complete list of the action points described in the topic chapters.

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.
## APPENDIX 1  CHARACTER GUIDANCE

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PART 1 INTRODUCTION

Neighbourhood Plan and Character Guidance

1.1. Wirksworth Neighbourhood Plan policies NP 1 & 2 make it clear that the Character Guidance is essential reading for everyone applying to develop in the plan area. This is the Character Guidance to which the policies refer. (Parts of this section are repeated from Chapter 2 of the Plan)

1.2. The Character Guidance is in three parts:
   Part 1, Introduction
   Part 2, Characterisation Appraisal and Development Considerations;
   Part 3, Other Essential Information.

1.3. Close investigation has taken place to identify the features that make Wirksworth unique, its setting, shape and grain and the style and nature of its buildings. To support the Character Guidance, Future Wirksworth commissioned a Character Statement, to give a background to the historic development and expansion of the town. The author of the Character Statement is the former Conservation and Design Manager for Derbyshire County Council and, for most of the 1980s, was the Leader of The Wirksworth Project. The Character Statement is in Part 3.

1.4. Future Wirksworth has also prepared the Characterisation Appraisal and Development Considerations set out in Part 2.

An introduction to the special character of Wirksworth

1.5. 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.

1.6. 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.
PART 2 CHARACTERISATION APPRAISAL AND DEVELOPMENT CONSIDERATIONS

Characterisation Appraisal

2.1. The Character Areas Map shows the division of the urban part of the plan area into 33 character areas. In many cases, it would not be possible to draw precise boundary lines. There are often overlaps between the areas and therefore, when looking at the development considerations which apply in one area, it will be necessary to consider whether those applying to adjoining areas are also relevant.

2.2. Whilst one area may be different from the next, all are set in a landscape which has a unique relationship with the built form of the settlement. Indeed, it would be difficult to find a spot in the town where one would not be aware of the landscape setting.

2.3. The unique relationship has the following characteristics.

Wirksworth’s distinctive visual characteristics are considered below in two ways:
The characteristics of its relationship as a settlement to the wider landscape;
the characteristics of the historic settlement itself.

2.4. 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).

2.5. Characteristics which define historic Wirksworth within the settlement area include:

- A high density collection of modest miners’ and quarry workers’ dwellings and grander homes of the better-off and a variety of shops and work places.
• Roofs mainly of Staffordshire blue tiles, stone tiles or imported slate and extensive use of locally quarried limestone, gritstone and lime render for the buildings, paving and boundary walls, imparting a vernacular greyness, contrasting with the smarter ashlar sandstone and the use of imported or manufactured materials in the deliberate architecture of the public buildings, such as the schools, the larger town centre buildings and the Town Hall.

• Significant hilly topography giving rise to dramatic changes of level within short distances so that roads and pathways are steep and buildings appear piled on top of one another.

• The physical proximity of the formal space around the church to that of the Market Place and their separation and enclosure by substantial buildings fronting the Market Place.

• The relationship of those spaces and buildings, which maintain a sense of enclosure in the town centre, to a number of informal spaces nearby and to many glimpses of the surrounding landscape.

• An organic network of ginnels, paths and roads throughout the town informing the identity and activity of individual areas.

• The relationship between those individual areas, the ginnels and the underlying land form.

• The retention of sharp edges to much of the historic older town.

• Open views across the town and valley from within the town and views between buildings, both linking the town to the surrounding landscape.

The character areas

2.6. The descriptions of the character areas are summaries. Each element of the description does not necessarily apply to the whole area but is a distinguishing feature of the area.

Area 1
Description:
Former quarries and industrial and railway industrial land partly re-colonised by nature; some narrow fields; extensive public access. Includes National Stone Centre, Derbyshire Eco Centre, a modern industrial estate and the Middleton Road development site which was identified for residential and employment use in the 2013 Draft Local Plan. Includes part of Wildlife Site NBE3 (DWSR), an SSSI and part of Middleton Conservation Area.

Development considerations:
The northern part, around the stone centre and eco-centre provides opportunities for innovative and creative developments.
The Middleton Road development must accord with the Concept Statement (see Policy NP3 and Appendix 2). Applicants must submit a masterplan for the whole area identified in the 2013 Draft Local Plan development area.

Area 2a
Description:
Bolehill is a separate settlement from Wirksworth; predominantly residential – mix of ages and materials; hidden recreation space; much use of stone, especially in boundary walls, but
the buildings have a variety of styles, materials and use of residential space. The fields to the north-east are part of the sub-area’s setting. Bolehill sits, almost submerged, in a hillside overlooking Wirksworth, with a panorama of urban and rural elements. Viewed from the south end of Wirksworth, the colours of Bolehill merge into the rural hillside.

Development considerations:
Should pay regard to adjoining conservation areas.
Keep the sense of sitting in, not dominating, the hillside – roof and ceiling heights should be of the same scale as existing buildings.
Subject to precise location of development site, the choice of materials and styles could be wide.
In the parts outside the settlement framework, “rural” policies apply additionally to those in this character guidance.

Area 2b
Description:
Bolehill conservation area. Bolehill is a separate settlement from Wirksworth. Predominantly residential – mix of ages and materials but mainly stone.
Development considerations:
Conservation area policies apply.
Keep sense of sitting in, not dominating, the hillside – roof and ceiling heights should be of the same scale as existing buildings.
In the north-western part outside the settlement framework, “rural” policies apply additionally to those in this character guidance.

Area 3
Description:
Gentle to steeply rising landscape – the most distinctive part of the bowl which contains the town; irregular field patterns; ridgeline road. Is an important backdrop to Wirksworth.
Includes a geological site. Is mostly within the Wirksworth conservation area.
Includes Coneygreave House site allocated for housing in 2013 Draft Local Plan.
Development considerations:
Most of Area 3 is outside the Settlement Framework Boundary so ‘rural’ policies apply. For development of the Coneygreave site, consider the design guidance for housing sites in the neighbourhood plan area. Conservation area policies apply.

Area 4
Description: Stone built residential properties lining the main road; Victorian feel; important open spaces.
This area contains a wide variety of Victorian & early 20C residential forms, sizes and materials. Except for small section at north west, is within the Wirksworth conservation area.
Development considerations:
Development of the section at north west should be guided by the Concept Statement for

1 Nothing in this Character Guidance is intended to detract from the government policies and the development plan policies which apply to the rural parts of the neighbourhood plan area.
the Middleton Road site.  
Fanny Shaw playing field is on the list of open spaces protected by the neighbourhood plan. Conservation area policies apply.

**Area 5**

*Description:* Former limestone quarry which is now a major community open space, Stoney Wood, comprising steep, north and east facing hillsides above an artificial (quarried) valley bottom.  
Outside the Settlement Framework Boundary.  
*Development considerations:*  
Stoney Wood is on the neighbourhood plan list of protected open spaces (see neighbourhood plan policy NP11 and Appendix 6).

**Area 6a**

*Description:*  
Railway station complex; linear; partially re-colonised by nature. Within the conservation area.  
*Development considerations:*  
Conservation area policies apply.

**Area 6b**

*Description:*  
A linear valley partly within the conservation area.  
The northern part is an important open footpath (see neighbourhood plan policy NP20) outside the settlement framework with surrounding views of hillsides and the town.  
The southern part consists of houses in a linear arrangement below the west facing hillside, between the tree-lined railway and the tree-lined Hannage Brook, which are also in this part of the area.  
*Development considerations:*  
See footpath and cycle way proposals in the neighbourhood plan. Respect the character of the valley.

**Area 7**

*Description:*  
Enclosed, with little relationship to the town’s setting except as a critical gateway to town centre and, travelling northwards, provides a visual escape from the central area.  
The northern part contains the first public buildings seen on the approach to the town: a listed public house and a listed school.  
The southern part is a former quarry – prominent rock faces; modern shop and utility developments – disparate building arrangement – a microcosm of 20th century buildings – food store, petrol filling station, telephone exchange and housing.  
Includes SSSI. Is within conservation area.  
*Development considerations:*  
Development should enhance the northern approach, improve the 'gateway' to the town and pay attention to advertising signs, boundary treatments and hard and soft landscaping. Conservation area policies apply.
Area 8

Description:
Narrow highway – historically shared surface; predominantly stone walls and stone buildings; Moot Hall; 1960s sheltered housing.
Within Wirksworth conservation area.
Contains public car park and varied types of building ranging over several centuries in age.
Limited opportunities for views outwards between buildings.

Development considerations:
Conservation area policies apply.

Area 9

Description:
Brick and stone.
North End is narrow and curving; buildings at back of footway.
The west side is tightly developed and encloses the view. At the east, the rural setting of the settlement is revealed, mainly through glimpses between buildings.
Within the conservation area.

Development considerations:
Conservation area policies apply.

Area 10

Description: Higgledy-piggledy houses and cottages, mostly modest in size and height, on steeply rising ground; limestone, gritstone and brick; warren – network of jitties and ginnels; between two quarries.
Within the conservation area.
A long cul-de-sac: there is only one, narrow and winding, vehicular access to and from this area.
At the top, the pedestrian can access extensive views revealing Bolehill and Wirksworth in their setting.

Development considerations:
The restricted access and the dominant sense of enclosure will restrict any new development proposals to those that can demonstrate a high level of sensitivity to the character of the area.
Conservation area policies apply.

Area 11

Description:
Former quarry; re-colonised by nature; close in to town centre.
Part of site possibly still covered by permission to extract stone.
The eastern half is in the conservation area.

Development considerations:
Potential for redevelopment in some areas for recreational/leisure use.
Conservation area policies apply in the eastern half of the area.
Area 12
Description:
Steeply descending winding entrance to town; stone and brick; on-street parking. Within Conservation Area.
Strong sense of enclosure in the public part of West End.
Unlike most of the settlement, in West End there are few views in and out except when descending towards the marketplace: the sense of the rural hillside increases during the descent.
Development considerations:
Development would preferably keep the sense of enclosure.
Town Centre policies apply.
Conservation area policies apply.

Area 13
Description:
Commercial historic core of town: urban open spaces; high quality floorscape in parts. Within Conservation Area.
Development considerations:
Floorscape needs raising to the highest standards across this area (see neighbourhood plan chapter 7).
Town Centre policies apply.
Conservation area policies apply.

Area 14
Description:
Secluded enclosure focused on large church; circular walkway; radial access points via Church Street, Blind Lane, St Mary’s Gate, etc.
This area relates eastwards to the rural setting and westwards to the town centre.
Development considerations:
Within Conservation Area.
Town Centre policies apply.

Area 15
Description:
Enter point to historic town centre. Coldwell Street is also the main pedestrian route from the railway station and the junior school to the town centre. The area has remnant grounds and outbuildings of high status buildings. 17th to 20th century houses, mostly substantial, in large gardens; a major horse chestnut tree; highly visible haulage yard.
The recent funeral parlour has added to the interest of the area.
Within Conservation Area.
Development considerations:
See Wirksworth Neighbourhood Plan, Chapter 5, for discussion of the haulage yard.
Development should enhance and where necessary improve the entry to the town, particularly for pedestrians, and pay attention to advertising signs, boundary treatment and hard and soft landscaping.
Conservation area policies apply.
Area 16
Description: Steeply descending winding access road to town; narrow width buildings tight onto road; on-street parking. This area is highly visible from many parts of Wirksworth and its setting, from above and from below.
Within conservation area.
Lack of adequate footpaths is a major concern.
A physically difficult route for a bus service, although the area needs one.
Development considerations:
Conservation area policies apply.
Because of the visibility from superior vantage points, the shape and colour of roofs can be significant.
Development should address the need for a new footpath to the town centre.

Area 17
Description:
Wide major town street; three and two storey stone and brick buildings; mixed use; buildings to back of footway. Includes businesses and homes, some substantial, and modern elderly people's accommodation attached to historic building.
Includes significant, potential redevelopment site (Stones/Memorial Hall).
Within Conservation Area.
Development considerations:
Conservation area policies apply.
Town centre policies apply to the northern part of the area.
Potential new location for market (see neighbourhood plan chapter 7).
Development should protect views of St Mary’s Church from Oat Hill.

Area 18
Description:
Comprises a large, informal open space, used mainly as a convenient and attractive pedestrian route, and a major high status historic residence with mature trees in its existing grounds and some more recent houses in its former grounds.
The open space, The Meadows, is lined on three sides by backs of house plots and noticeably overlooked by the backs of houses on Summer Lane.
The Meadows is identified in the DDLP as a possible school site and open space.
Within Conservation Area.
Development considerations:
Retain the existing footpaths (including two along the edge of and one across The Meadows)
Consider roof shapes and materials in the part of the area near Summer Lane - perhaps green roofs, which would help to implement other neighbourhood plan policies.

Area 19
Description:
Uniform brick two-storey houses.
Development considerations:
Consider proximity to conservation area.
**Area 20a**  
*Description:*  
School playing field on level ground in conservation area. Excellent views of the hillside to the east and the valley further south, giving a comprehensive education in the setting of the settlement.  
In the conservation area.  
*Development considerations:*  
This area is on the list of open spaces protected by the neighbourhood plan.

**Area 20b**  
*Description:*  
Large, municipal-type buildings (school, leisure centre, swimming pool, health centre), widely spaced with external associated spaces, sports courts, floodlight pylons and car parks, constituting an area without a distinctive character. Excellent views of the hillside to the east and the valley further south, giving a comprehensive education in the setting of the settlement.  
*Development considerations:*  
Development should improve the quality of the area, taking its lead from other characteristics of the settlement (see neighbourhood plan Policy NP2).

**Area 21**  
*Description:*  
20th-century brick residential estates; major sports and recreation ground in the southern part and a local play area in northern part. Although development is quite dense, it is mostly detached and semi-detached houses, with views between and above of the rural setting of Wirksworth.  
*Development considerations:*  
Recreation ground and play area are on list of spaces protected by the neighbourhood plan. Try to maintain visual connection with setting.

**Area 22**  
*Description:*  
19th century and first half of the 20th century ribbon development with leafy gardens. Wide range of materials and sizes but a general sense of brownness in roofs and walls, except around the large Meadow House, where red brick and roofs predominate.  
In views from outside Wirksworth, at south, Area 22 is generally higher than but blends with Area 21. From inside Area 22, there are important views between the buildings, particularly views to the east and south of the declining valley setting of the settlement.  
*Development considerations:*  
At the eastern end, where buildings stand above Areas 21 and 18 to the north, consider the appearance and other impacts of rear extensions and alterations. Large houses and extensions, subject to neighbour amenity considerations, might be appropriate if they maintain the important views between buildings. Be sensitive to the colours of the area.
Area 23
Description:
A gateway to Wirksworth, the southern approach road, lined mainly by 20th-century residential properties set back from footways; Oat Hill provides views of historic town centre at summit.
Includes a modern industrial estate.
Development considerations:
Some improvements to the gateway to Wirksworth, to make it more welcoming, are desirable.
The Adam Bede triangle is a protected space in the neighbourhood plan.
The mounding and tree screening to the industrial estate is valuable and should be maintained.

Area 24
Description:
20th-century residential predominantly brick.
Water Lane is a long cul-de-sac servicing industries, many homes, car parks and public buildings.
Development considerations:
The cul-de-sac implications might include limits on new vehicle-generating developments.

Area 25
Description:
mixed use – predominantly industrial, which dominates the modest, historic cottages in this area, and a historic mill in use by several small, modern and creative industries. Visually, when passing down Water Lane, this area also includes the swimming pool and the Hannage Brook Medical Centre (see Area 20b). This area does not have a distinctive character and most of the buildings are not of particular, visual quality.
Development considerations:
As with Area 24, the cul-de-sac implications might include limits on new vehicle-generating developments.
Development scale, layout and character should respect the modest qualities of the cottages.
Development should improve the quality of the area, taking its lead from other characteristics of the settlement (see neighbourhood plan Policy NP2).

Area 26
Description: Uniform render and brick post-war housing.
The shape and scale of the street, with contrasting terraces facing each other at different heights, is impressive and unusual in this settlement.
Development considerations:
Development might be sensitive to the shape and scale of the street.
The cul-de-sac implications might include limits on new vehicle-generating developments (see Area 24).
Area 27
Description:
Brick and render post-war estate.

Development considerations:
Existing policies apply.

Area 28
Description:
Hamlet centred on former mill; steep hillside; predominantly stone with some brick. A modest but highly visual part of the setting of the settlement.
Within conservation area.
Development considerations:
The cul-de-sac implications might include limits on new vehicle-generating developments (see Area 24).
Conservation area policies apply.

Area 29a
Description: the historic, listed Haarlem Mill and associated land.
Part of the gateway to Wirksworth.

Development considerations:
Listed building policies apply, along with the other policies of the development plan. Development should take account of the need to improve or enhance the 'gateway' to the town and pay attention to advertising signs, boundary treatment and hard and soft landscaping.

Area 29b
Description:
Part of the gateway to Wirksworth.
Includes land potentially affected by flooding, which is likely to prevent development. Also contains land holding modern industrial buildings, some poor quality, small industrial/retail uses and historic and modern housing.
Includes a former scrap yard/market garden which is being actively pursued as a residential site.

Development considerations:
Development should improve the 'gateway' to the town and pay attention to advertising signs, boundary treatment and hard and soft landscaping.

Area 29c
Description:
Part of the gateway to Wirksworth.
Part of area is outside the Settlement Framework Boundary.
The area includes a recreational area (bowling green), a derelict employment site identified in the evidence base for the DDDC Draft Local plan as a potential windfall housing site and a historic mill surrounded by modern housing with some older cottages and a farm house.

Development considerations:
Development should improve the 'gateway' to the town and pay attention to advertising signs, boundary treatment and hard and soft landscaping.
Development should improve pedestrian access to Snowfield View.

**Area 30**
*Description:*
Brick and render post-war estate, somewhat remote from Wirksworth town centre.
Although within the bowl setting of the settlement, this area is quite prominent from the gateway Areas 23 & 29.
The eastern corner of this triangle of houses is open and gives excellent views of the Hob Farm hillside.
*Development considerations:*
Consider keeping the eastern corner undeveloped.
Consider the effect of development on the historic Haarlem Mill, which this area sits above.

**Area 31**
*Description:*
Satellite cluster on road to Kirk Ireton. Includes large, modern farm buildings and a range of housing types from older to modern.
This area is outside the Settlement Framework Boundary but is part of the visual setting of the settlement.
*Development considerations:*
Rural development policies apply.
Consider the visual relationship with the main settlement and the other parts of its rural setting.

**Area 32**
*Description:*
Land below limestone cliff face; wooded and open fields; limestone field walls. Outside the settlement framework but part of the setting of Area 21.
*Development considerations:*
If development is necessary here, consider organic development merging with landscape and minimising the visual impacts of reflective windows and pale materials.

**Area 33**
*Description:*
Limestone quarry, with permission to continue to extract stone and expand north-westwards. Outside the settlement framework.
Adjoins Wirksworth conservation area and includes part of Middleton conservation area.
*Development considerations:*
Development plan policies apply, including those relating to quarrying, rural development and, where relevant, conservation areas.
PART 3 OTHER ESSENTIAL INFORMATION

Conservation areas

3.1. The historic area of the town was declared a Conservation Area in 1970 and extended in 1976, and later Bolehill and Gorsey Bank were also declared Conservation Areas. A Wirksworth Conservation Area Character Appraisal was undertaken and published in 2001. A limited appraisal of the Bolehill Conservation Area was completed in 2003.

Landscape setting

3.2. The land surrounding Wirksworth is an important part of the history of the place and provides a strong visual setting for the town and the other settlements of Bolehill and Gorsey Bank.

3.3. The Derbyshire Historic Landscape Characterisation identifies the areas around the town in Character Area 50 Derbyshire Peak Fringe and Lower Derwent; these areas contribute to local distinctiveness and the retention of their character is a key element in achieving sustainable development.

Wirksworth Project

3.4. In 1983, thanks to the efforts of the Wirksworth Project, local organisations, businesses and the Wirksworth public, the town received the Europa Nostra Award, an award made by the European Union for outstanding improvement, and, in 1984, the RTPI Annual Award for Planning Achievement. It also attracted the attention of the Prince of Wales, who called the town’s revitalisation project “brilliantly imaginative” and the project received a visit from HRH The Princess Margaret. 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.

Concept Statements

3.5. All development proposals for the Middleton Road and Coneygreave House sites, which were identified in the 2013 Draft Local Plan as major development sites, and for the Haarlem Mill and Ward’s Yard sites must accord with the Concept Statements (see Appendices 2-5).

History and description of Wirksworth’s character

A Wirksworth character statement

Barry Joyce MBE FSA Dip Arch MSc, September 2012

1) Wirksworth lies in the centre of Derbyshire and in fact in the centre of England - its very ‘navel’ as D H Lawrence described it when he lived here for year. His description suggests the way the town nestles in the head of the Ecclesbourne Valley. Landform is an important determinant of the character of the town, as is the
geology beneath. It is this which has determined landform as well as the town’s vernacular architecture and its historic occupations.

2) The north-south line of the River Ecclesbourne demarcates the boundary of two stone types. On the west side is hard Carboniferous limestone, which was mined for lead and quarried for building and burnt for quicklime. Its thin soil supported pastoral farming. On the east lies softer gritstone which is overlaid with soils which could better support grain crops. Here in the Middle Ages were two of the town’s common ‘fields’, some strips of which got enclosed early on, as can be seen be the extreme narrowness of some fields today.

3) The weight of history lies heavy on Wirksworth. The area was settled by the Romans and the present town is likely to be on or near the Roman mining settlement Lutodarum. Its Anglo Saxon past is evidenced by the name Eccles (place of Christian mission) bourne (spring or brook). A precious relic from this period is an elaborate carved coffin lid found under the church floor. The circular shape of the churchyard may also stem from this time. The Barmote Court has settled lead mining disputes for over 700 years and still sits here in its own court house. The town’s 17th century buildings suggest this was a time of relative wealth, with the expansion of building in the town centre encroaching into the town’s once much bigger market place.

4) The 18th century saw a widespread re-building and general consolidation of the town centre. Towards its end it also brought the introduction of cotton spinning mills. Industrialisation continues through the 19th century with the development of weaving mills, which specialised in the manufacture of narrow fabrics. The 20th century saw growth in the importance of quarrying. It also saw economic decline – which continued up to the 1980s, when an intensive programme of conservation led regeneration projects arrested decline by revealing the town’s unrecognised assets.

5) The inhabitants of Wirksworth up to and including the 20th century were a very settled, and even perhaps insular, social group – a community whose forebears had lived a very hard life mining, farming and latterly quarrying. Mechanisation of quarrying in the early 20th century reduced the numbers of workers in that industry and also created extreme environmental problems, because of damage to property caused by blasting and air pollution. This was a major contribution to a severe depression in property values, particularly to property near Dale Quarry. This, plus an expectation of general improvements to living standards, led to the relocation of people from the old town to new houses built along new roads laid out to the south of the town, where the Ecclesbourne Valley opens out to more level ground.

6) Discovery of the charms of the old town by people attracted to its special character began in the 1960s and was accelerated by the regeneration project of the 1980s. Relatively low property prices were an incentive to outsiders buying property in the old town. The development of a new housing estate on the south west edge of the town also attracted an influx of newcomers. The majority of these new residents commuted out of town to employment in Matlock, Derby and further afield. The
more established residents also looked more and more to outside the town for work as millworking and quarrying contracted.

7) Dramatic hilly landform plus designation as a conservation area has helped the old town retain sharp edges to the west and east. Its dramatic and attractive landscape setting is one of town’s greatest assets. However the once distinct satellite settlements of Miller’s Green, Gorsey Bank, Wash Green, Bolehill and Middleton have been, or are becoming, absorbed into the general built up area, threatening their distinctiveness.

8) The old town’s historic settlement layout is, in itself a major asset. Its character was determined by historic ways of life and these former ways of life are now ‘fossilised’ in the routes, scale and form of roads, a labyrinth of jitties and ginnels, odd forgotten corners, bigger urban spaces, ancient small quarries and a rich legacy of historic buildings and street paving made from stone won from those quarries.

9) There are intriguing clues to the fact that before its economic decline the town once had a number of mansion houses - evidenced by lengths of high boundary walls, lordly garden trees and abandoned coach houses and stable blocks. These now witness a time when the town had status as a county town with resident gentry.

10) Because the town became poor and remained poor with very low property values right up to the end of the 1970s, it escaped the low quality redevelopment which blighted so many towns in the 20\textsuperscript{th} century. Its relative poverty also left a priceless legacy of intact historic building details. Wirksworth can claim to have more historic doors, windows and other building details than any other town in Derbyshire. It can make a similar claim for its historic floorscape.

11) Wirksworth can also boast of the survival of a number of traditional community activities- the annual wells dressings at Whitsuntide, the clypping of the parish church on the Sunday nearest its patronal festival in September, the Barmote Court, which meets in April, the Wakes fair in October, and of course its weekly Tuesday market held since its charter was given by King Edward I in 1306. It is perhaps too soon to claim tradition status for the annual arts festival but this event has achieved a regional reputation and does much to promote the town and its special qualities.
APPENDIX 2  CONCEPT STATEMENT FOR THE MIDDLETON ROAD SITE

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INTRODUCTION

Middleton Road is the largest and most significant development site in Wirksworth and so is critical to the delivery of the Neighbourhood Plan.

It is a critical opportunity by which a number of the broad aims of the plan will be delivered. It also presents a dual challenge to both extending and preserving the character and quality of the town. It provides an opportunity to provide a high quality and low-carbon living and working environment. Development will undoubtedly change the relationship of the town to its natural setting.

This concept statement provides supplementary guidance on what would be reasonably expected of a development proposal for the site. The concept statement is not a design proposal. Rather it is a set of guiding principles and ideas that allow flexibility in development proposals whilst ensuring that fundamental priorities are delivered.

GENERAL PRINCIPLES

The development of Middleton Road should seek to create a high quality living and working environment that respects and takes full advantage of the high quality and dramatic location, whilst critically preserving the landscape qualities within and around the site. The development should be guided by the primary aim of creating a natural, logical and visionary extension of Wirksworth. It should be underpinned by a design that acknowledges the qualities of Wirksworth, in its landscape context and as a settlement character.

Normal planning approaches to planning both residential and employment developments are unlikely to be appropriate for this site.
The quality of design will be determined primarily by the creation of quality spaces, both urban and landscape, between buildings that preserve and define outwards views towards the landscape around the town. These are referred to as critical view corridors and are identified on the map on Figure 4 of this appendix.

The preservation and creation of these view corridors is the central idea within this concept statement. It is an idea that cannot be captured in a single moment or photograph but is something that can be experienced at virtually every point within the site. Movement through the site is typically North/South and this is through a dramatic experience of views to East and West.

The development should be designed with site layouts to maximise the opportunity for low energy design, with building orientation to take advantage of established passive solar design approaches.

The development should prioritise the pedestrian over the vehicle to create quality outdoor spaces between new buildings and to reduce the extent and impact of characterless vehicular surfaces. Homezone principles and guidance in Building for Life 12 should be fully considered.

The quality of space between buildings and the quality of architecture are equal priorities. Developers will be expected to create rich and varied townscape character, complementary to Wirksworth. The identity should be distinctive, progressive, contemporary, respectful.

Innovation to achieve low-carbon design will be supported for both residential and non-residential buildings.

Development should employ a variety of built forms and materials that are appropriate and justifiable for Wirksworth in relation to its local traditions and character. This applies equally to contemporary design approaches. Buildings should be offset in relation to each other, both horizontally and vertically, to create juxtaposition of profiles and exposed gables and characterful roofscapes. Street lines and building lines should be non-linear.
Overall site development proposals should incorporate and respond positively to vital existing features:

- Old Lane is a historic route through Wirksworth and is a long established footpath and amenity. It should be a significant element within development proposals and remain as a pedestrian artery through the site. Critical views to the surrounding landscape should be preserved along the route.
- New buildings should address Old Lane – but not encroach to overly urbanise it
- The earthwork that runs along the line of the former quarry conveyor, and the well-established tree avenue along the line, are an important mark of history, a unique landscape feature and an important screening element. It should be retained within new development.

Overall site development proposals should retain and improve pedestrian access within the town:

- A new pedestrian and cycling route should be created along the southern embankment to Ravenstor station, connecting Cromford Road to Old Lane and the National Stone Centre. This could potentially further connect through to Ecclesbourne Valley Railway yard.

The development proposal should be based on the submission of an extensive and rigorous site appraisal on a site by site basis, presenting a clear consideration of site history, ecology, site character and qualities, and the potential impact of development on the town and landscape character.

The development should be comprehensively illustrated at planning application stage, with drawings and models to accurately represent the quality of architecture and spaces between buildings and their wider impact on the settlement.

**DESIGNATION OF THREE SUB-AREAS**

A sustained analysis and interpretation of the Middleton Road site leads to a conclusion that the site should be considered as not only a significant and strategic whole but also three distinct and different sub-areas. Simply, whereas drawn maps and plans make it easy to
consider the site as a whole, from the perspective of a person on the ground, within the site and beyond the site, it is not possible to see or experience the site as a single entity.

Middleton Road as a total site area should therefore be appraised, designed and developed on the basis that it is a composite of three distinct and identifiable areas. Each area has a different relationship to the existing settlement, and to the surrounding landscape.

Old Lane and the remaining landscape grove associated with the former quarrying conveyor to Middlepeak Quarry on Middleton Road are historic lines of demarcation within the site area that have consequently defined the different areas.

The three areas that should be considered are:

Area 1: East of Old Lane, fronting to Old Lane, Cromford Road and Ravenstor Station. The area is generally flat with derelict usage. Former railway and storage workings associated with quarrying.

Area 2: West of Old Lane, South of conveyor, fronting down to Middleton Road. Low lying and reasonably well screened by existing landforms and established trees. In use as livestock grazing.

Area 3: West of Old Lane, North of conveyor. On rising ground and becoming increasingly visible in wider landscape setting. Precious, historic field pattern, with enclosure walls and mature trees. Bordering onto site of a Scheduled Ancient Monument. In use as livestock grazing.

A critical phasing strategy should be applied to the three zones to ensure controlled growth of the town towards and into the landscape.

As well as an overall masterplan for the site, there should be a more detailed and coherent plan for each of the three sub-areas.
DEVELOPMENT PHASING

A critical phasing strategy should be applied to the three sub-areas to ensure controlled and organic outwards growth of the town into the landscape.

Accordingly, development would be expected to be in the general sequence of Area 1 and Area 2 together prior to any development at all of Area 3:

- This recognises the precious landscape nature of Area 3, which should be preserved for as long as possible prior to development.
- This will allow balance between residential and employment development in the initial phases of development.

Areas 2 and 3 should be developed in an east to west direction, outwards from Old Lane, ensuring natural growth of the settlement and avoiding premature and isolated encroachment into the landscape.

The tree screening to the north and west edges of Area 3 should be planted at an early stage and prior to built development within Area 3.

AREA 1 DESIGN PRINCIPLES

Due to its proximity to Ravenstor Industrial Estate, Ravenstor Station, and its brownfield status, it is envisaged that this area will be primarily employment use, with potential for some mixed use development with residential above employment.

Development should consolidate the opportunity of building on brownfield land by building densely. This will allow a less dense development of area 2 and area 3 which are more suitably described as greenfield and better suited to residential development.

Development should have a dense urban character up to site boundaries, creating a designed frontage to Cromford Road, Ravenstor Station and Old Lane.
Development should be in blocks of limited size that maintain at least three primary view corridors in the east to west direction, from Old Lane across to Spitewinter and Barrel Edge. The spaces between the blocks should be designed as quality urban space.

Development should be multi-storey (3-4 storeys) to achieve this essential mix of density and visual permeability and to maintain the line of urban form along Cromford Road. This will require quality design and reference to both novel precedents and historic models of multi-storey working in mills. Multi-storey development should also have energy efficiency benefits. (fig 7)

Big monolithic low pitched industrial roofs should be avoided.

Building of high boundaries or security fencing around the employment developments should be prevented, to maintain views and to allow the area to remain permeable to pedestrians.

Types of employment use should be carefully located. B8 use, if permitted, should be to the north of Area 1, towards Ravenstor Industrial Estate and B1 towards the south, allowing mixed-use residential towards the town. Multi-storey development would allow employment use at ground floor throughout the whole of Area 1, with residential at upper floors where appropriate.

**AREA 2 DESIGN PRINCIPLES**

This area would be residential with a mix of density. Density would typically decrease from Old Lane out towards the western edge, to increase the blending of development and landscape. Development will be 2-3 storey houses, with effective use of roof spaces to maintain density and energy efficiency.

Development density should be optimised in Area 2, to reduce the future density of development in Area 3.
Employment-use development in this area should be in close proximity to Area 1, along the western edge of Old Lane.

Houses should be laid out on an east-west street plan to create outward visual links to the wider landscape horizon and quarry ridges.

East-west street layouts will be supported to optimise the opportunity for south facing dwellings to maximise solar low-carbon design.

Development should create a designed frontage to Middleton Road along the southern boundary, although this should be set back from the road and the existing line of trees retained and intensified to provide screening and preservation of landscape.

There will be a mix of house types, including family housing and apartments, of both affordable and market value. Apartments for the elderly, if permitted, would be close to Old Lane, allowing walking to public transport.

Development would be in short terraces or semi-detached properties to maintain visual permeability but maximise density and the increase the potential for low carbon design.

Bungalows will not be supported so as to maintain density and reduce the overall extent of development. Ground floor apartments would typically have one or two storey apartments above.

Parking in off-street bays or on-street will be supported to reduce the overall extent of hard-surfacing in the development and to promote the homezone concept. Integrated or stand-alone garages will not be supported, to reduce the overall extent of physical development in this sensitive landscape area.

There should be a number of communal outdoor spaces, with quality landscaping. There should be at least one equipped play space.
There should be a significant landscaping provision within the development, to create a high quality living environment and to further screen development from surrounding elevated viewpoints.

**AREA 3 DESIGN PRINCIPLES**

This area should only be developed when Area 1 and Area 2 are fully developed.

Development should be of a notably lower density than Area 1 or Area 2. Development would be more suitably suburban or rural in character, comprising short terraces and semi-detached houses with clear visual gaps between. Typically 2 storeys.

Density would typically decrease from Old Lane out towards the western edge, to increase the blending of development and landscape.

The design layout should acknowledge and where possible retain the sense of historic field lines.

Significant existing trees should be preserved.

Encroachment of buildings right up to the western boundary should be avoided where possible. As opposed to providing larger gardens to each property it would be preferable to keep built density tighter and to provide communal allotments along the western boundary.

Houses should be laid out on an east-west street plan to create outward visual links to the wider landscape horizon and quarry ridges.

East-west street layouts will be supported to optimise the opportunity for south facing dwellings to maximise solar low-carbon design.

Bungalows will not be supported so as to maintain density and reduce the overall extent of development. Ground floor apartments would typically have one or two storey apartments above.
Parking in off-street bays or on-street will be supported to reduce the overall extent of hard-surfacing in the development and to promote the homezone concept. Integrated or stand-alone garages will not be supported, to reduce the overall extent of physical development in this sensitive landscape area.

Every consideration should be given to the physical and visual impact of development on the adjoining site of Nether Ratchwood & Rantor lead mines, which are a scheduled ancient monument.

The site becomes increasingly visible to inward views as it slopes up towards Middleton Road. There should be a significant landscaping provision around the north and western boundaries and within the development, to create a high quality living environment and to screen development from surrounding elevated viewpoints.

Employment-use development in this area should be in close proximity to Area 1, along the western edge of Old Lane.

**CREATING A HOMEZONE**

Home Zones are residential streets designed to improve local quality of life. They aim to strike a better balance between the needs of drivers and other street users such as pedestrians - especially children and older people - and cyclists. Changes to the layout of the street emphasise this change of use, so motorists perceive that they should give informal priority to other road users.

There are some examples of streets in Wirksworth that already are used in the way that a homezone is. These allow maximum green space between buildings (typically private gardens) and reduce the extent of paved surfaces because cars and pedestrians share the same surface. These include Cavendish Cottages, Sough Lane, The Dale and Greenhill.
Adopting a homezone concept for all development on Middleton Road would have the following advantages:

- Reduce the impact of road surfaces
- Maintain as much public and private green space as possible by reducing the extent of separate footpaths
- Add to the distinctive examples already in place in Wirksworth.

See also: [http://www.homezones.org/concept.html](http://www.homezones.org/concept.html)

ANNEX 1

**2013 Draft Local Plan Site Allocation Policy SA6 – Land at Middleton Road, Wirksworth**

Planning Permission will be granted for a mixed use development comprising a maximum of 150 dwellings and 4 hectares of employment land at Middleton Road, Wirksworth as defined on the Proposals Map, subject to compliance with Adopted Local Plan policies and subject to:

- A comprehensive layout and site Masterplan for the development.
- A detailed phasing programme covering the entire site, such a programme to ensure the provision of the employment development and residential development concurrently or as otherwise agreed with the District Council.
- A comprehensive landscaping plan.
- Transport Assessment including full highways design to demonstrate the provision of a safe access.
- The required proportion of affordable housing.
- The provision of an appropriate mix of housing types to meet the needs of the community.
- The provision of open space on site.
- Flood Risk Assessment, including surface water control measures via the use of SuDS.
- Ecological Assessment.
- Developer contributions towards the provision of necessary infrastructure, educational services and other community services including open space,
- Design reflecting the Landscape Character Supplementary Planning Document.
ANNEX 2

Excerpt from 2013 Draft Local Plan Site Description

- This is an extensive area of previously developed land to the rear of the Ravenstor Industrial Estate and extends across to Middleton Road. The site is situated approximately 0.8 km to the north of Wirksworth Town Centre and has an area of approximately 9 hectares. Although much of the site is derelict and will require much reclamation it is situated is a good location relative to local shops and services and Wirksworth town centre.

- The site is relatively flat, although the land rises slightly to the west offering pleasant views to the northeast of the Peak District. The sites are bounded by Middleton Road (B5023) to the west and Cromford Road (B5036) to the east.

- This site has been a long standing allocation of employment development within the adopted Derbyshire Dales Local Plan. However evidence suggests that bringing the site forward for employment development is not commercially viable. Consequently in order to deliver a sustainable employment site for Wirksworth it is considered appropriate to release part of it for residential development as part of a mixed-used scheme.

- The Wirksworth Conservation Area abuts the south eastern boundary of the site and the Middleton Conservation area lies adjacent to the northern boundary. The Bolehill Conservation Area is also located in close proximity to the site. Development on the site will need to take account of the significance of these designations.

ILLUSTRATIONS

Figure 1 Site boundaries
Figure 2 Sub-area designations
Figure 3 Critical view corridors
Figure 4 Employment area designation
Figure 5 Landscape screening
Figure 6 Homezone precedents
Figure 7 Multi-storey employment precedents
Figure 8 Residential precedents
Figure 1. Site Boundaries

Middleton Road

Coneygreave
Figure 3. Critical view corridors to east and West
Figure 4. Employment area designation
Fig. 5 Landscape screening Area 2 and Area 3
Fig 6. Homezone Precedents

Almere, Netherlands

Cambridge, UK

Cavendish Cottages, Wirksworth
Fig 7. Multi-storey employment precedents

Start-up units, Lincoln

Eco-depot, York

Willow-bath Mill, Wirksworth
Fig 8. Residential Precedents

- Characterful profiles
- Contemporary mixed materials
- Solar Terraces, Freiburg
# APPENDIX 3  CONCEPT STATEMENT FOR THE CONEYGREAVE HOUSE SITE, CROMFORD ROAD

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INTRODUCTION

Coneygreave is a very important site in Wirksworth. It is currently undeveloped within the town and so provides a vital visual connection between the town and its landscape surroundings. Any future development is expected to fully embrace a core requirement of the Neighbourhood Plan to ensure that the critical visual connections are maintained.

This concept statement provides supplementary guidance on what would be reasonably expected of a development proposal for the site. The concept statement is not a design proposal. Rather it is a set of guiding principles and ideas that allow flexibility in development proposals whilst ensuring that fundamental priorities are delivered.

GENERAL PRINCIPLES

The development of Coneygreave should seek to create a high quality living environment that respects and takes full advantage of the high quality location, whilst critically preserving the landscape qualities within and around the site.

The development should be guided by the primary aim of creating a natural, logical and visionary extension of Wirksworth. It should be underpinned by a design that acknowledges the qualities of Wirksworth, in its landscape context and as a settlement character.

The quality of design will be determined primarily by the creation of quality spaces, both urban and landscape, between buildings that preserve and define outwards views towards the landscape around the town. These are referred to as critical view corridors and are identified on the map on Figure 2. Views outwards are to the north-east, due east and the south-east.

The preservation and creation of these view corridors is a key idea within this concept statement. It is an idea that cannot be captured in a single moment or photograph but is something that can be experienced at virtually every point within the site.
Additionally, the falling contours of the site towards the eastern boundary, along with a restriction on building heights, should be used to ensure that a constant view to surrounding hills is maintained from street level on Cromford Road over the top of new dwellings along the eastern boundary. This may affect the typical size of new dwellings for this site.

The development should be designed with site layouts to maximise the opportunity for low energy design, with building orientation to take advantage of established passive solar design approaches.

The development should prioritise the pedestrian over the vehicle to create quality outdoor spaces between new buildings and to reduce the extent and impact of characterless vehicular surfaces. Homezone principles and guidance in Building for Life 12 should be fully considered.

The quality of space between buildings and the quality of architecture are equal priorities. Developers will be expected to create rich and varied townscape character, complementary to Wirksworth. The identity should be distinctive, progressive, contemporary, respectful. Innovation to achieve low-carbon design will be supported.

Development should employ a variety of built forms and materials that are appropriate and justifiable for Wirksworth in relation to its local traditions and character. This applies equally to contemporary design approaches. Buildings should be offset in relation to each other, both horizontally and vertically, to create juxtaposition of profiles and exposed gables and characterful rooftops. Street lines and building lines should be non-linear.

The development proposal should be based on the submission of an extensive and rigorous site appraisal presenting a clear consideration of site history, ecology, site character and qualities, and the potential impact of development on the town and landscape character.

The development should be comprehensively illustrated at planning application stage, with drawings and models to accurately represent the quality of architecture and spaces between buildings and their wider impact on the settlement.

Significant existing trees should be preserved.
**DESIGN PRINCIPLES**

This area will be residential with a mix of density. Development will be 2-3 storey houses and apartments, with effective use of roof spaces to maintain density and energy efficiency. There will be a mix of house types, including family housing in accordance with the neighbourhood plan policies and apartments, of both affordable and market value. Apartments for the elderly would be close to Cromford Road, allowing walking to public transport.

Development would be in short terraces or semi-detached properties to maintain visual permeability and increase the potential for low carbon design. Bungalows will not be supported so as to maintain density and reduce the overall extent of development. Ground floor apartments would typically have one or two storey apartments above.

Parking in off-street bays or on-street will be supported to reduce the overall extent of hard-surfacing in the development and to promote the homezone concept. Integrated or stand-alone garages will not be supported, to reduce the overall extent of physical development in this sensitive landscape area.

An open space should be retained to the south of Caulton Villa to maintain key views and solar access, given the orientation of this property to the South.

There should be at least one communal open space at the heart of the development, with landscaping provision within the development, to create a high quality living environment and to further screen development from surrounding elevated viewpoints.

**CREATING A HOMEZONE**

Home Zones are residential streets designed to improve local quality of life. They aim to strike a better balance between the needs of drivers and other street users such as pedestrians - especially children and older people - and cyclists. Changes to the layout of the street emphasise this change of use, so motorists perceive that they should give informal priority to other road users.
There are some examples of streets in Wirksworth that already are used in the way that a homezone is. These allow maximum green space between buildings (typically private gardens) and reduce the extent of paved surfaces because cars and pedestrians share the same surface. These include Cavendish Cottages, Sough Lane, The Dale and Greenhill

Adopting a homezone concept for all development on the Middleton Road, Coneygreave and Wards sites would have the following advantages:

- Reduce the impact of road surfaces
- Maintain as much public and private green space as possible by reducing the extent of separate footpaths
- Add to the distinctive examples already in place in Wirksworth.

See also: http://www.homezones.org/concept.html

**ANNEX 1**

**2013 Draft Local Plan Site Allocation Policy SA4 – Land adjacent to Coneygreave House**

Planning Permission will be granted for the residential development of land at Coneygreave House, Wirksworth as defined on the Proposals Map for a maximum of 27 dwellings subject to compliance with Adopted Local Plan policies and subject to:

- A comprehensive layout for the development.
- A landscaping plan to indicate the provision of a buffer associated with the stream between and the proposed residential development and the Conservation Area, and along the south western boundary in order to maintain a degree of openness between the northern and southern parts of the Wirksworth.
- Transport Assessment including full highways design to demonstrate the provision of a safe access.
- The required proportion of affordable housing.
- The provision of an appropriate mix of housing types to meet the needs of the community.
ANNEX 2

Excerpt from 2013 Draft Local Plan Site Description

- The greenfield site is located adjacent to the existing Settlement Framework Boundary of Wirksworth and has an area of 0.91 ha.
- The site is accessed from Cromford Road.
- As a greenfield site the development would result in some environmental impact upon biodiversity and natural assets, however there are no environmental designations on the site and it falls outside the Conservation Area. Development of the site would form an extension to the built up area of Wirksworth and may be integrated, through design and landscaping into the settlement pattern.
- The site has good access to services, facilities and employment opportunities in Wirksworth and is near to public transport.

ILLUSTRATIONS

Figure 1 Coneygreave site boundaries and site view
Figure 2 Coneygreave critical view corridors to east.
Figure 1. Coneygreave Site Boundaries and Site View
Figure 2. Coneygreave critical view corridors to East

Views corridors to hillsides to be preserved between new dwellings at site level.

Views to hillsides to be preserved over the top of new dwellings.

No development zone to preserve views from Cauldon Villa.
APPENDIX 4 CONCEPT STATEMENT FOR THE HAARLEM MILL SITE, DERBY ROAD

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- Figure 3 Haarlem Mill photos
- Figure 4 Haarlem Mill critical view corridors

(There is no Figure 1 or 2)

See also:

http://www.britishlistedbuildings.co.uk/en-79712-haarlem-mill-wirksworth-derbyshire
INTRODUCTION

Haarlem Mill is of nationally significant historic status. It was completed in 1780 and is part of the remarkable industrial heritage of Derbyshire. The site and existing mill buildings were identified for employment use in the 2013 Draft Local Plan. The site area is such that additional residential use is also achievable and this would increase the viability of delivering the employment use and ensuring the absolute necessity of high quality development. A mixed use development would create a unique opportunity for heritage-led and place-led regeneration that would together complement many of the aims of the Neighbourhood Plan, for both residents and visitors.

The site is prominent at the southern gateway to Wirksworth and is highly visible. Further development will impact on the relationship of the built form of the town to its landscape. This concept statement provides supplementary guidance on what would be reasonably expected of a development proposal for the site. The concept statement is not a design proposal. Rather it is a set of guiding principles and ideas that allow flexibility in development proposals whilst ensuring that fundamental priorities are delivered.

GENERAL PRINCIPLES

The development of Haarlem Mill should seek to create a high quality living and working environment that respects and takes full advantage of the dramatic location, whist critically preserving the historic architectural and landscape qualities within and around the site. Normal planning approaches to planning both residential and employment developments are unlikely to be appropriate for this site. The highest standards are expected.

The quality of design will be determined primarily by the creation of quality spaces, both urban and landscape. New development should preserve and define outwards views towards the landscape around the town. These are referred to as critical view corridors and are identified on the map on Figure 4. The preservation and creation of these view corridors is a primary idea within this concept statement.
The development should be designed with site layouts to maximise the opportunity for low energy design, with building orientation to take advantage of established passive solar design approaches.

The development should prioritise the pedestrian over the vehicle to create quality outdoor spaces between new buildings and to reduce the extent and impact of characterless vehicular surfaces. Homezone principles and guidance in Design for Life 12 should be fully considered.

The quality of space between buildings and the quality of architecture are equal priorities. Developers will be expected to create rich and varied townscape character, complementary to Wirksworth. The identity should be distinctive, progressive, contemporary, respectful. Innovation to achieve low-carbon design will be supported for both residential and non-residential buildings.

Development should employ a variety of built forms and materials.

Parking in off-street bays or on-street will be supported to reduce the overall extent of hard-surfacing in the development. Integrated or stand-alone garages will not be supported, to reduce the overall extent of physical development in this sensitive historic area.

The development proposal should be based on the submission of an extensive and rigorous site appraisal, presenting a clear consideration of site history, ecology, site character and qualities, and the potential impact of development on the town and landscape character. The development should be comprehensively illustrated at planning application stage, with drawings and models to accurately represent the quality of architecture and spaces between buildings and their wider impact on the settlement.
DESIGN PRINCIPLES

In the region of 30 new houses, including family housing in accordance with the neighbourhood plan policies, and apartments may be viable. Development should consolidate the opportunity of building on brownfield land by building densely.

A building line parallel to Derby Road should be applied to ensure that the eastern gable of the original mill does not lose prominence.

Landscape areas should be preserved and created within the site, associated with the Ecclesbourne River, that create an accessible amenity for residents and visitors to the Mill and to nearby and wider town residents. Significant historical elements, such as the mill pond, should be reinstated or clearly referenced in site proposals.

Development should have a dense urban character, consistent with the existing architectural typologies on site. Blocks of new development, up to three stories tall, are appropriate. Development should be in blocks of limited size that maintain at least three primary view corridors in the east to west direction. The spaces between the blocks should be designed as quality urban space.

Development should be multi-storey (up to 3 storeys) to achieve this essential mix of density, mixed use and visual permeability. This will require quality design and reference to both novel precedents and historic models of multi-storey working in mills. Multi-storey development should also have energy efficiency benefits. Multi-storey development would allow employment use at ground floor throughout the whole of the site area, with residential at upper floors where appropriate.

ILLUSTRATIONS

Figure 3 Haarlem Mill photos
Figure 4 Haarlem Mill critical view corridors
(There is no Figure 1 or 2)
Figure 3. Haarlem Mill photographs
Figure 4. Haarlem Mill critical view corridors

- East and West view corridors to be preserved between new buildings
- Building Line to ensure protection of views of 1780 Listed Mill
# APPENDIX 5  CONCEPT STATEMENT FOR THE WARD’S YARD SITE, DERBY ROAD

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*Figure 5 Critical view corridors and site view (there are no figures 1-4)*
INTRODUCTION

Wards site presents a straightforward opportunity for new dwellings at the south of the town. It should nonetheless be considered as important. It sits at the southern edge of the town and so presents a first or last impression, with mainly open landscapes around it. It will also be an immediate neighbour to Haarlem Mill. Development must remain sensitive to the core character aims of the Neighbourhood Plan.

This concept statement provides supplementary guidance on what would be reasonably expected of a development proposal for the site. The concept statement is not a design proposal. Rather it is a set of guiding principles and ideas that allow flexibility in development proposals whilst ensuring that fundamental priorities are delivered.

GENERAL PRINCIPLES

The development of Wards should seek to create a high quality living environment that respects and takes full advantage of the high quality location, whilst critically preserving the landscape qualities around the site.

The development should be guided by the primary aim of creating a natural, logical and visionary extension of Wirksworth. It should be underpinned by a design that acknowledges the qualities of Wirksworth, in its landscape context and as a settlement character. The quality of design will be determined primarily by the creation of quality spaces, both urban and landscape, between buildings that preserve and define outwards views towards the landscape around the town. These are referred to as critical view corridors and are identified on the map on Figure 5.

The development should be designed with site layouts to maximise the opportunity for low energy design, with building orientation to take advantage of established passive solar design approaches.
The development should prioritise the pedestrian over the vehicle to create quality outdoor spaces between new buildings and to reduce the extent and impact of characterless vehicular surfaces. Homezone principles and guidance in Building for Life 12 should be fully considered.

The quality of space between buildings and the quality of architecture are equal priorities. Developers will be expected to create rich and varied townscape character, complementary to Wirksworth. The identity should be distinctive, progressive, contemporary, respectful. Innovation to achieve low-carbon design will be supported.

Development should employ a variety of built forms and materials. Buildings should be offset in relation to each other, both horizontally and vertically, to create juxtaposition of profiles and exposed gables. Street lines and building lines should be non-linear.

The development proposal should be based on the submission of an extensive and rigorous site appraisal presenting a clear consideration of site history, ecology, site character and qualities, and the potential impact of development on the town and landscape character. The development should be comprehensively illustrated at planning application stage, with drawings and models to accurately represent the quality of architecture and spaces between buildings and their wider impact on the settlement.

Significant existing trees should be preserved.

**DESIGN PRINCIPLES**

This area will be residential with a mix of density. Development will be 2-3 storey houses and apartments, with effective use of roof spaces to maintain density and energy efficiency. There will be a mix of house types, including family housing in accordance with the neighbourhood plan policies and apartments, of both affordable and market value. Development would be in short terraces or semi-detached properties to maintain visual permeability and increase the potential for low carbon design.
The existing buildings on the site appear to be of no special architectural value. The quality of the new overall layout of the site is more important than the retention of the existing buildings.

Bungalows will not be supported, so as to maintain density and reduce the overall extent of development. Ground floor apartments would typically have one or two storey apartments above.

Parking in off-street bays or on-street will be supported to reduce the overall extent of hard-surfacing in the development and to promote the homezone concept.

**CREATING A HOMEZONE**

Home Zones are residential streets designed to improve local quality of life. They aim to strike a better balance between the needs of drivers and other street users such as pedestrians - especially children and older people - and cyclists. Changes to the layout of the street emphasise this change of use, so motorists perceive that they should give informal priority to other road users.

There are some examples of streets in Wirksworth that already are used in the way that a homezone is. These allow maximum green space between buildings (typically private gardens) and reduce the extent of paved surfaces because cars and pedestrians share the same surface. These include Cavendish Cottages, Sough Lane, The Dale and Greenhill.

Adopting a homezone concept for all development would have the following advantages:

- Reduce the impact of road surfaces
- Maintain as much public and private green space as possible by reducing the extent of separate footpaths
- Add to the distinctive examples already in place in Wirksworth.

See also: [http://www.homezones.org/concept.html](http://www.homezones.org/concept.html)
ILLUSTRATIONS

(there are no figures 1-4)

Figure 5. Wards critical view corridors and site view

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Central view to hillsides to be preserved between buildings
APPENDIX 6 LIST OF PROTECTED COMMUNITY ASSETS

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| Open spaces                              | 3-4  |
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PROTECTED COMMUNITY FACILITIES AND OPEN SPACES

Chapter 4 and policy NP11 seek to protect the following sites from development.

BUILDINGS, THEIR USES AND THEIR CURTILAGES

Anthony Gell School. Junior School. C of E and County Infants Schools. Popular and essential facilities both for statutory education and for community use; the schools share many activities with the wider community.

Christian Centre. Baptist church. United Reformed church. St Mary’s. Methodist church. RC church. Essential facilities. In addition to their religious and social role, most of the churches are available as meeting places and concert and theatre spaces for the wider community. The Methodist chapel (now Wellspring church) and Baptist church (currently for sale) have integral church halls which for many years have been available to the public for hire.

Hannage Brook Medical Centre. Essential facility.

Town Hall. In addition to being headquarters of town council, a crucial location for many community activities.

Library. Essential facility.

Memorial Hall. One of very few central facilities offering a large, disabled-friendly, space, used by many groups and for many activities.

Leisure Centre. Essential facility and the largest hall in town for major events.

Swimming Pool. Essential facility, in community ownership, used by the primary schools and, outside of school visits, by many children and adults.

The railway and station. A major asset to Wirksworth, attracting visitors to the plan area.

Bolehill Men’s Institute. Essential because the only meeting place in Bolehill.

Parish Rooms (except for the use identified in policy NP14). Central location makes it an important asset to the town.


Glenorchy Centre. One of the few accessible spaces, useful for a variety of purposes, set in a historic building.

Moot Hall. A unique and historic place which is also used for music and arts purposes.

Public Conveniences at Barmote car park and Fanny Shaw’s. Essential facilities.

Sheltered accommodation: Bolehill Croft, Barmote Croft, Anthony Gell Almshouses, Waltham House, Bournebrook Avenue, Griggs Gardens, Kingsfield Road and Stafford Crescent. Essential accommodation.

Fire Station & petrol station. These Harrison Drive properties provide essential facilities.

National Stone Centre (except as protected in the local plan) & Derbyshire Eco Centre. Socially and educationally important and attract visitors to the plan area.

Post Office. Chemist. Nat West Bank. Lloyds Bank. Important in their own right and also because they help to maintain footfall in the town centre, to the benefit of the retail offer, town centre viability and the whole community.

Webster’s (Heritage Centre). A unique Wirksworth asset, contributing to the town’s identity.

The public houses: Malt Shovel, Lime Kiln, Royal Oak, Red Lion, Blacks Head, Hope and Anchor, Wheatsheaf. All the local pubs play an important part in social life; each has its own character and provides different facilities and spaces, jointly being essential to the Wirksworth community; crucial to the area’s tourist offer.

OPEN SPACES

Fanny Shaw Playing Field, Cromford Road. Includes a skateboarding area, popular with older children, and a children’s play area which is a convenient, local facility for nearby housing.

Anthony Gell School playing fields. Large, flat open space containing all-weather pitches and tennis courts and car parking for the Leisure Centre. Green insert near centre of town. Helps to maintain links between town and surrounding countryside.

Gorsey Bank Recreation Ground. Open space including children’s play area. Local facility for adjacent housing. Helps to maintain links to surrounding countryside.

Cricket pitch at Kingsfield. Community sports facility. Helps to maintain links to surrounding countryside.
Football pitch at Kingsfield. Community sports facility. Helps to maintain links to surrounding countryside.

Bowling green at Kingsfield. Community sports facility. Helps to maintain links to surrounding countryside.

The Meadows (except as protected in the local plan – reserved for educational use). Valued as an open space within the town centre and with easy access from it.

Hannages, including the area between AGS playing field and the railway line. Green barrier along railway line. Pedestrian route and possible cycle path. Part of transition from town to countryside. Green edge to town.

Bolehill Recreation Ground. Open space within housing area. Helps to maintain less densely developed character of area.

Stoney Wood, Middleton Road. Reclaimed and regenerated quarry on steep hillside. Used as a community space for festivals etc. Visible from higher points on eastern side of valley.

Star Disc, Greenhill. Unique installation and visitor attraction.

Community Orchard, Greenhill. Green area at top of hill providing foil to adjacent buildings and maintaining link to countryside.

Play area, The Dale. Children's play area convenient for nearby housing.

Play area, Yokecliffe estate. Children's play area convenient for nearby housing.

Play area, Malthouse Close. Children's play area convenient for nearby housing.

Memorial Foundation play area, Derby Road. Children's play area convenient for nearby housing.

Open space at Adam Bede Crescent. Green open space forming part of planned crescent development sited at southern approach to town where it helps as part of the transition from countryside to more densely developed town centre.

Memorial Gardens, St. John's Street. Important town centre open space relieving continuous 'back of pavement' development on east side of St John's Street.
APPENDIX 7  ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Wirksworth Town Council wishes to thank all those who took part in the preparation of the plan, which is a large proportion of Wirksworth’s population and business people. In particular, it would like to thank all our Neighbourhood Plan Team members, who attended meetings and events, distributed leaflets and in other ways got directly involved and helped create the plan.

The members of the Future Wirksworth Steering Group, which changed a little over time:
Cllr Mike Ratcliffe, Chair; Alison Foote, Vice-Chair; Jo Williams, Secretary and Coordinator; Cllr Alison Clamp; Ken Acons; Noel Mayes; Andrew Wilson; John Horak; Heather Lounds; Steve Brett; Adam Lathbury.

Students of Sheffield Hallam University, Helen Metcalfe of Planning with People, Planning Aid, particularly Louise Hambleton and Bob Keith, CPRE, Prince’s Foundation and Noel Isherwood, Locality, Dave Chetwyn of Urban Vision, the Wirksworth Town Council staff, Mike Hase and Jonathan Grocutt and other staff at Derbyshire Dales District Council, Paul Carr.