



North East Derbyshire Local Plan Issues and Options Consultation March 2026 – Refined Sites Map. Sites 45083, 45084 and 45907

This is the response of Wessington Parish Council to the consultation

General Observations of Wessington Parish Council

1. Road Infrastructure

- 1.1 Wessington's principle road is the A615 Alfreton to Matlock Road. Derbyshire County Council Highways Department has considered the capacity of this road in the context of development proposals adjacent to it and has made no objection. It has also declined to alter the 40 mph speed limit at the north west end of the village to 30 mph despite the new housing either side. However, if any infill development were to be permitted on Site 45907, the speed limit would need to be reviewed since an additional pedestrian crossing with refuge island would be necessary to ensure residents have a safe alternative route into the village avoiding the very narrow stretch of pavement between Spring Gardens and the entrance to Greendale (See Traffic Hotspots - Map 15 in the Neighbourhood Plan).
- 1.2 Four of the routes out of the village, Wessington Lane, Lindway Lane, Moorwood Moor Lane and Brackenfield Lane are partially single track roads leading into countryside areas.
- 1.3 The remaining route serving the village, Back Lane is an already busy country lane despite having four significant hazardous "pinch points" and any additional housing on Park Field, Site 45084 is likely to add significantly to increasing traffic heading towards the east. Apart from serving local Wessington Traffic, it feeds traffic from the Matlock direction towards Shirland, Blackwell and Hilcote, as an alternative (and shorter) route to McArthur Glen and the A38, avoiding the Watchorn roundabout at Alfreton, and Junction 28 of the M1 and A38. The pinch points comprise:
 - 1.3.1 The stretch between Cross Lane and Butterfield Lane narrows to a single lane at a point of limited visibility due to shading from trees, a sharp dip in the road and high boundaries either side.
 - 1.3.2 The Bump Mill location at railway bridge and bridge over the river Amber has a z-bend with limited visibility and a single lane carriageway over the river bridge. The junction with the B6013 Chesterfield Road at Higham is single track, on the brow of a steep hill comprising an oblique junction with limited visibility to the south due to buildings obscuring the view..
 - 1.3.3 Similarly, the junction with the B6013 Chesterfield Road at Shirland is single track, on the brow of a steep hill comprising an oblique junction with limited visibility to the south due to a bend on the B6013.

2. The School

There are currently 82 Children of primary school age and 18 nursery age children attending Wessington Primary School. The school has a site area of 1716.75 sq metres and an internal floor area of 492.66 which are the minimum for 70 children although the school does have the benefit of the adjoining sports ground on Wessington Green. In other words, the school is considerably over subscribed. No further expansion is possible.

A primary school for 82 children should have an internal floor area of 769 sq metres. Any further development in the village may result in families arriving who cannot find places for their children with the result that additional traffic movements away from the village at school rush hour times will be necessary.

3. **Leisure and Tourism**

Wessington is very popular with walkers because of its central location on the A615 being the focal point of a network of footpaths leading to Ashover (via Brackenfield, Ashover Hay and Ravensnest Tor), Higham, to Lea, Holloway and Cromford via Shuckerstone Hill, to South Wingfield and towards Crich via Fore Lane across to Wessington Lane, or via Moorwood Moor and Plaistow Green. Wessington's elevated position overlooking the Amber Valley and looking towards the ridge line at Highoredish is part of its appeal for walkers and any development proposals should be configured so as not to impact on the long views out of the village across Sites 45083, 45084 and 45907. Because of its appeal, Wessington relieves some of the tourist pressure endured by the Peak District National Park to the north.

Wessington has a popular caravan site on Moorwood Moor Lane and a new Camping Pod site on Cross Lane; again, these sites relieve pressure on The Peak District National Park.

4. **Services**

Wessington has a limited bus service. Its other services and resources are listed/shown in Map 4 in paragraph 43 of the Neighbourhood Plan.

5. **Land Drainage**

Wessington has clay subsoil and is on the spring line (hence the wells and its name which has been interpreted as meaning "wet place") and so surface flooding and inadequate drainage has been a recurring problem. These drainage issues need to be fully appraised and surveyed before any further development is authorised.

6. **Recent Development**

NEDDC is asked to note that Wessington has expanded considerably in the last 40 years with new development on Hillcrest, Spring Gardens, Wistanes Green, Brackenfield View and Wessington Heights. Wessington should be allowed time to absorb this expansion.

Response with regard to the Wessington Sites 45083, 45084 and 45907

It should be noted that previous planning applications for sites 45084 and 45907 have been refused and the refusals have been upheld on appeal. The Council is asked to review closely the reasonings in the Appeal Decisions.

Site 45083 – Land adjoining Brackenfield Lane

Community Objective 7 applies to this site. This field lies between No 18 Brackenfield Lane (the last house on the south side of the road) and Roadnook Farm. Roadnook is a Grade 2 Listed Building and is mentioned in the Domesday Book as being a manor house and is the most significant heritage building in Wessington. The farmhouse is set within a walled garden and the only public view of it (other than from within the farmyard) is from the elevated setting of Brackenfield Lane, across the site 45083 from Brackenfield Lane as the viewer leaves the village. It would be a major loss to Wessington if that view was obscured by intervening development of any kind on Site 45083.

Brackenfield Lane presents an attractive and convenient walk to Brackenfield Green for residents, particularly in wet weather and for residents of limited mobility and part of the attraction is the view across Site 45083 and the Amber Valley towards Higham. Further along Brackenfield Lane, the views are obscured by hedges, a wall and the general lie of the land which dips down to the stream at Frog Holes.

45084 – “Park Field” Land adjoining Back Lane Wessington

This land is within Brackenfield Parish but by kind agreement with Brackenfield Parish Council, it has been treated as forming part of the Wessington Community for the purposes of the Wessington Neighbourhood Plan.

At paragraph 92 of the Neighbourhood Plan is stated:

“Neighbourhood Plan Policy 2:

Protecting the Natural Environment and Landscape Character

- 1. The quality and accessibility of the natural environment in Wessington Parish is its greatest attribute, highly valued by local residents. Development across Wessington Parish is required to demonstrate that;*
 - (a) it is sympathetic to the local character and landscape setting; and*
 - (b) it does not represent a significant visual intrusion into the landscape setting, particularly the significant long views into and out of the village”*

Community Objective 1 applies as regards vistas. Park Field is at the point at which Back Lane leaves the core settlement area of Wessington and although housing continues down the south side of Back Lane for the extent of Hillcrest, the north side is open. It is along this elevated stretch of Back Lane that the most favourable long distance views over the Amber Valley can be enjoyed which would be lost if any development were to occur on this land. This view is indicated as **View 5** in Map 10 “Significant Viewpoints” in the Neighbourhood Plan.

This land has a very popular long distance footpath passing diagonally across the length of it which links Wessington with Brackenfield and Ashover (via Ashover Hay and Ravensnest Tor) to the north and Higham to the east. Once this path reaches the northern boundary of Site 45084 where it joins a farm track and footpath, the land falls away steeply to the north and east and the long views into the Amber Valley are lost.

The central part of Wessington Green narrows at its eastern end into an open space known locally as The Orchard with views across Back Lane and into Park Field. The effect is to give that part of Wessington Green an open link into the neighbouring countryside of the Amber Valley and enhances the spaciousness afforded by Wessington Green.

The Council is asked to note the general lie of the land for site 45084 which falls away from Back Lane and the Brackenfield Lane area in a north easterly direction towards open countryside, away from existing mains drainage services and to consider whether the providing mains drainage for a significant number of houses would be practicable from a cost effectiveness perspective.

Site 45907 – Land adjoining Matlock Road

Site 45907 currently forms an open space break between Spring Gardens and the new Wessington Heights development and as such, is consistent with Paragraph 53 of the Wessington Neighbourhood Plan which notes that open spaces are characteristic of the village. Any development of Site 45907 could be mitigated if it is set back from the A615 as has been done for Wistanes Green, Wessington Heights and Brackenfield View.

The Parish Council considers that a major drawback for Site 45907 is that although it is close to the core of the village there is no convenient pedestrian access to the school and the western section of Wessington Green where the sports field, nature reserve, adult gym and footpaths to towards Crich and South Wingfield are located. Pedestrians must either cross the A615 twice in order to reach these facilities or walk down the narrow single file pavement next to Wheelwrights Cottage which presents huge risk to adults with children since they cannot walk side by side. (See Traffic Hotspots - Map 15 in the Neighbourhood Plan). This issue could be mitigated if a pedestrian route could be created through the Spring Gardens estate and onto Slack Lane. This would require the consent of the owner of Slack Lane.

The public footpath along Slack Lane gives good long views across Site 45907 towards the ridge line at Highoredish.

Wessington Neighbourhood Plan – 10th October 2019

The Council is invited to consider the Wessington Neighbourhood Plan with its vision that *“Wessington Parish will continue to be a safe, vibrant and friendly community in which to live, with easy access to the open countryside around the village and green spaces within it. Any new development will be expected to blend in with the existing village and houses will be of a size and tenure to suit the needs of local people of all ages. Any growth is to contribute to the vitality and viability of the village and help to support local facilities but will be of a scale that reflects the village’s rural character”*

It is not intended to reiterate the Neighbourhood Plan here other than to set out the broad principles underpinning the Plan and for the purpose of responding to the proposed three sites in the March 2026 plan circulated by NEDDC comprising sites 45083, 45084 and 45907.

Community Objectives

A range of issues were confirmed through the early consultation processes. The objectives below reflect the greatest concerns of the residents and the primary area of focus for this Neighbourhood Plan.

Community Objective 1: To ensure that development minimises the impact on the landscape character of the Plan area, recognizing the value of long views and vistas and the rural setting of the village.
Community Objective 2: To ensure that all new development is high quality and small in scale and reinforces the existing rural character.
Community Objective 3: To ensure that future housing growth provides a mix of house types, particularly smaller dwellings, to meet local as well as District needs.
Community Objective 4: To maximise local employment opportunities where this does not encroach on the open countryside to provide local employment and services for residents and visitors. Wessington Neighbourhood Plan 2017-2034
Community Objective 5: To protect, and where possible extend, the footpath network within the village and across the Parish to improve access to the countryside and to protect local green spaces. To maximise the opportunities created by new development to add footpaths and green spaces where possible.
Community Objective 6: To seek opportunities to maintain and enhance the social and economic vitality of the Parish by supporting and expanding the range of services and facilities within the Parish.
Community Objective 7: To ensure that heritage of the Plan area is protected and, where possible, enhanced.
Community Objective 8: To seek solutions to the problems of speeding and road safety in the Parish and to ensure that these problems are not made worse by future housing growth.
Community Objective 9: To encourage developers to consult with the community early in the planning application process (at pre-application stage) via mechanisms outlined in this Neighbourhood Plan.

The options the Wessington Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group considered and the reasons they were either progressed or dismissed are set out below.

Table 6: Settlement Development Limit Assessment

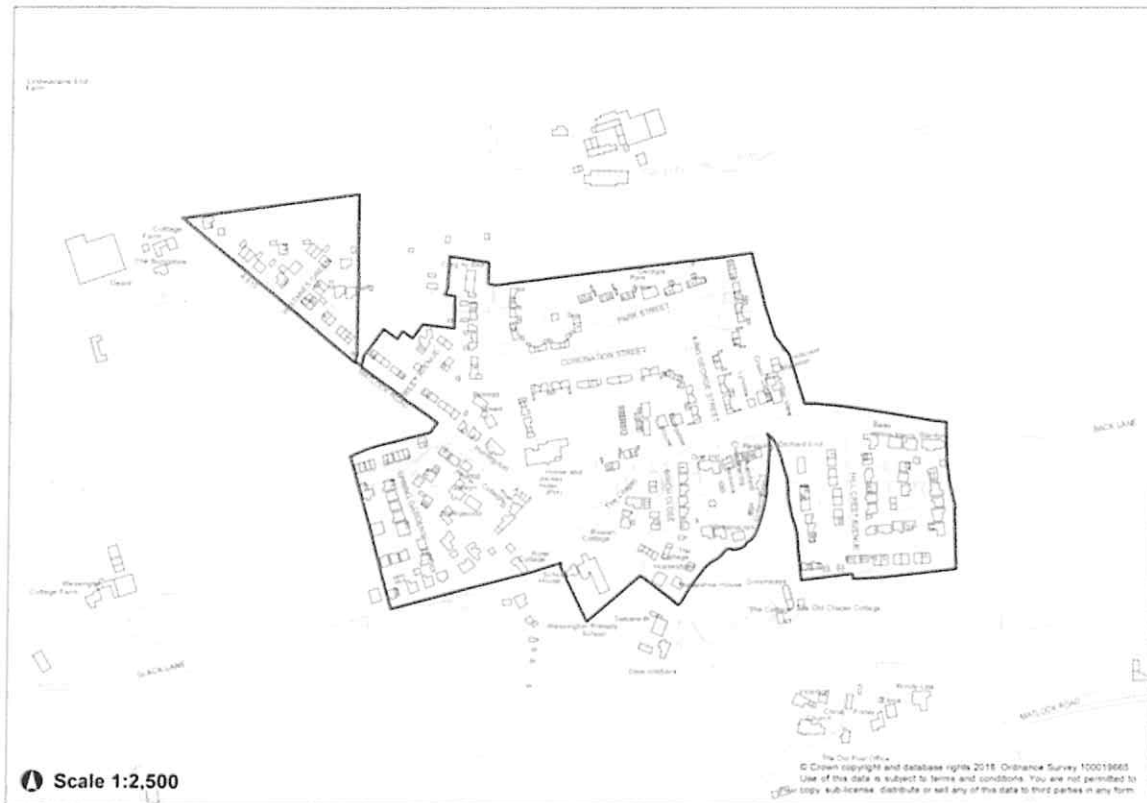
Option 1	Reasoned Assessment
Tightly constrained settlement development boundaries – consistent with 2005 Local Plan	This would not allow an appropriate response to proposals to meet local need and does not reflect development on the edge of the village since 2005.

Option 2 No boundaries	Reasoned Assessment Does not provide a clear Parish level policy framework and could endanger important significant views. Would be contrary to consultation and evidence of need for more detailed policy guidance on where development should be located.
Option 3 Settlement development boundaries that allow for modest growth in parts of the Parish that have the least landscape sensitivity.	Reasoned Assessment This allows for incremental, sustainable growth of the Parish reflecting the community consultation and enabling the community to influence where growth takes place. See Settlement Development limit review at http://www.north-eastderbyshire.gov.uk/index.php/your-council/document-library/local-plan-2001-2011-supplementary-documents/local-plan-documents-february-2017/2039-settlement-development-limit-review-january-2018/file All policies should be read in conjunction with policies in North East Derbyshire District Council's adopted Policies. No Neighbourhood Plan policy will be applied in isolation; account will be taken of all relevant policies Wessington Neighbourhood Plan 2017-2034
Option 4 Accept SDL as proposed and taken forward in the Submission Draft Local Plan	Reasoned Assessment This Neighbourhood Plan incorporates the Submission Draft Local Plan SDL boundary. It includes development that is completed but does not include sites that have planning permission but that have not been implemented. The NP policy is worded to respond to any changes to that boundary at the Local Plan submission stage following examination.

Although Option 4 was adopted for the Neighbourhood Plan, this was done without advance knowledge of the impact of the 2025 National Planning Framework and so should not be interpreted as being an unequivocal acceptance of the significant changes that the options selected by NEDDC under the NPF might make to its existing Planning Policy for housing.

Map 8 identifies the Settlement Development Limit as indicated in the North East Derbyshire District Council Submission Draft Local Plan.

Map 8 Settlement Development Limits based on the Submission Draft Local Plan



Red line = SDL boundary

All policies should be read in conjunction with policies in North East Derbyshire District Council's adopted Policies. No Neighbourhood Plan policy will be applied in isolation; account will be taken of all relevant policies Wessington Neighbourhood Plan 2017-2034

Neighbourhood Planning Policy 1: Sustainable Development and the Settlement Development Limit

1. Development proposals that are within the Settlement Development Limit defined in Map 8 or, if these are superseded by those in the up to date Local Plan, will be supported where they can demonstrate that they satisfy the principles of sustainable development.

This is defined as;

- (a) meeting development needs as defined in District policies; and
- (b) being of a scale, density, layout and design that is compatible with the character, appearance and amenity of that part of Wessington Village in which it would be located; and
- (c) not causing the loss of, or damage to, areas important to the character of the settlement as identified in Map 6; (**Map 6 is not reproduced here as none of the sites shown on it would be directly affected by any development on Sites 45083, 45084 or 45907**) and
- (d) not resulting in the loss of designated areas of nature conservation as identified on Map 6; and

(e) incorporating into the scheme any natural or built features on the site that has heritage or nature conservation value where possible.

2. Outside the Settlement Development Limit proposals will be controlled and limited in accordance with countryside policies in the up to date Local Plan and other relevant policies in this Neighbourhood Plan (especially Neighbourhood Plan Policy 2). Land outside the defined Limits to development will be protected reflecting its intrinsic character.

21st April 2026



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