

North East Derbyshire District Council

Cabinet

26 February, 2026

**PUBLIC CONSULTATION ON THE NEW LOCAL PLAN: ISSUES AND OPTIONS
– STRATEGIC APPROACH TO THE LOCATION OF DEVELOPMENT & REFINED
SCHEDULE OF SITES.**

Report of Councillor Pickering Portfolio Holder for Environment and Place

Classification: This report is public

Report By: **Planning Policy & Environment Manager**

Contact Officer: **Helen Fairfax**

PURPOSE / SUMMARY

- To update Cabinet on progress in preparing the new Local Plan, outlining the proposed development strategy i.e. the strategic approach to the location of development;
- To outline the scale and general location of sites that align with the proposed development strategy and that have so far passed through the detailed site assessment process as possible options for allocation; and
- To seek approval to undertake publication consultation on these matters in line with the arrangements set out in this report.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. That Members consider the content of this report and the pre-publication Issues and Options consultation material that will be made available and approve its use for public consultation.
2. That Members approve the proposed arrangements for public consultation on the Issues and Options for the Local Plan.
3. That Members delegate responsibility to the Assistant Director of Planning in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Environment and Place for approving the detailed wording of the Issues and Options consultation material and final arrangements for public consultation.

Approved by the Portfolio Holder – Cllr Pickering, Cabinet Member for Environment
& Place

IMPLICATIONS

Finance and Risk: Yes ☒ No ☐

Details: In terms of Finance: The preparation of a Local Plan including securing the necessary supporting evidence and undertaking public consultations has a significant impact upon financial resources. The resources required to undertake the work outlined in this report can be met from the Local Plan base budget and earmarked reserve.

In terms of Risk: This consultation is a necessary part of the preparation of a Local Plan and provides the opportunity for third parties to identify the matters that they consider ought to be included. Undertaking meaningful engagement in the development of a Local Plan reduces the risk that the plan would be found unsound at examination. The main risk at this stage is in the event that the Council receives more than anticipated levels of feedback or significant new issues are identified that require the preparation of further unanticipated evidence. Whilst it will be possible to augment resources, there is potential for a negative impact on the timetable for the production of the Plan, which is already challenging seeking to secure submission by December 2026.

On Behalf of the Section 151 Officer

Legal (including Data Protection): Yes ☒ No ☐

Details: The Council has a duty to prepare and keep up to date a Local Plan. The Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act (2004) and the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012, set out the statutory procedures for preparing Local Plans. The current stage of consulting on Issues and Options falls within Regulation 18.

There are no specific data protection issues arising from this report. Consultation processes result in the Council handling customer's personal data. This information is stored securely in line with the Council's procedures and provisions of the Data Protection Act.

On Behalf of the Solicitor to the Council

Staffing: Yes ☒ No ☐

Details: The preparation of a Local Plan and supporting evidence has a significant impact upon staff resources. Staff resources are in place to effectively undertake the work outlined in this report and it will be important to maintain these resource levels. However, circumstances may arise where it is necessary to augment resources, if for example high levels of responses are received during public consultation, or additional evidence is required to meet any new national planning guidance.

DECISION INFORMATION

Decision Information	
Is the decision a Key Decision? A Key Decision is an executive decision which has a significant impact on two or more District wards or which results in income or expenditure to the Council above the following thresholds: NEDDC: Revenue - £125,000 ☐ Capital - £310,000 ☐ ☒ <i>Please indicate which threshold applies</i>	No
Is the decision subject to Call-In? (Only Key Decisions are subject to Call-In)	No
District Wards Significantly Affected	None at this stage
Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) details:	
Stage 1 screening undertaken Completed EIA stage 1 to be appended if not required to do a stage 2	Yes, see Appendix 2
Stage 2 full assessment undertaken Completed EIA stage 2 needs to be appended to the report	No, not applicable

Consultation: Leader / Deputy Leader ☒ Cabinet ☐ SMT ☒ Relevant Service Manager ☒ Members ☒ Public ☐ Other ☒	Yes Details: Discussions undertaken with Portfolio Holder, SMT and Leadership and with members of the Local Plan Working Group.
Links to Council Plan priorities; - A great place that cares for the environment - A great place to live well - A great place to work - A great place to access good public services	

REPORT DETAILS

1 **Background** *(reasons for bringing the report)*

- 1.1 Cabinet will recall approving a range of materials for last summer's Issues and Option Consultation at its meeting on 12 June 2025 (Minute No: CAB/ 7/25- 26). Consultation on the Issues and Options and supporting information took place between 19th June – 14th August 2025, supported by a targeted social media campaign and a series of public consultation drop-in sessions held across 11 different locations throughout the district.
- 1.2 Approximately 775 people attended the public drop-in sessions and 856 individuals / organisations submitted representations to the consultation providing over 17,000 separate comments across the various questions. This represents a high level of engagement relative to the previous local plan at comparable stages. For example, there were 228 respondents to the core strategy issues and options consultation in 2009 (although this did not include potential sites) and 368 respondents to the Initial Draft Plan & potential sites consultation in 2015
- 1.3 The Local Plan Working Group has considered feedback from the consultation through a series of meetings in November & December 2025 focussed initially upon the main strategic matters associated with the quanta and overall distribution of development, the approach to settlements and the spaces between them. These matters set the strategic context of the Plan that will shape the future of development in the district and it is logical that they be considered ahead of more detailed policies and decisions around specific sites.
- 1.4 At a meeting on 12 February 2026, the Group considered the proposed development strategy i.e. the strategic approach to the location of development, alongside information on the sites that align with the strategy and have so far passed through the detailed site assessment process as possible options for allocation; and proposed arrangements for publication consultation on these matters as part of the ongoing Issues & Options.
- 1.5 Following consideration of the above, the Group agreed the proposed material to form the basis for the next Issues & Options public consultation and that these be recommended for approval by Cabinet at its scheduled meeting on 26 February 2026.

2. **Details of Proposal or Information**

- 2.1 This report provides an overview of feedback from last summer's public consultation on the Issues & Options, focussed upon the matters around the strategic approach to the location of development; and how this has informed the proposed strategy approach.

Feedback from Public Consultation on Issues & Options (June/August 2025)

Development Targets

- 2.2 In response to consultation questions around the scale of housing and employment development, the majority of respondents indicated a preference for lower levels. In terms of housing needs, the Government is very clear that the use of the standard method is mandatory, with no flexibility for an alternative approach. There are only very limited bases for arguing a lower requirement in plans and this would need to be supported by robust evidence. An up to date Green Belt Review is a critical part of the evidence, this work is currently underway, but will not be available until the Summer. In the meantime, it is important to proceed on the basis of seeking to meet the standard method housing target of c.600 dwellings per annum.
- 2.3 In terms of employment needs, there is more flexibility in selecting a target, provided that we work with the range of between 15 and 31 ha for general employment needs and that the target reflects local economic aspirations and aligns with the housing target. There is also a recognised need for large-scale logistics space, which may require one or more major sites (minimum 25 hectares) and this need can be shared with neighbouring authorities. At this stage no decisions have been taken over the scale of employment to plan for.

Spatial Distribution of Development

- 2.4 The consultation asked where we should focus new development, offering 7 alternatives (a – g) with the opportunity to select up to 3 (Figure 1). A total of 524 selections were made for this question, with the highest proportion (24%) favouring locations around the edges of Chesterfield; with strategic sites and the creation of new settlements being the joint second. There was less support for development around the district's main towns and larger villages and around the edges of Sheffield; with least support for development around smaller villages.

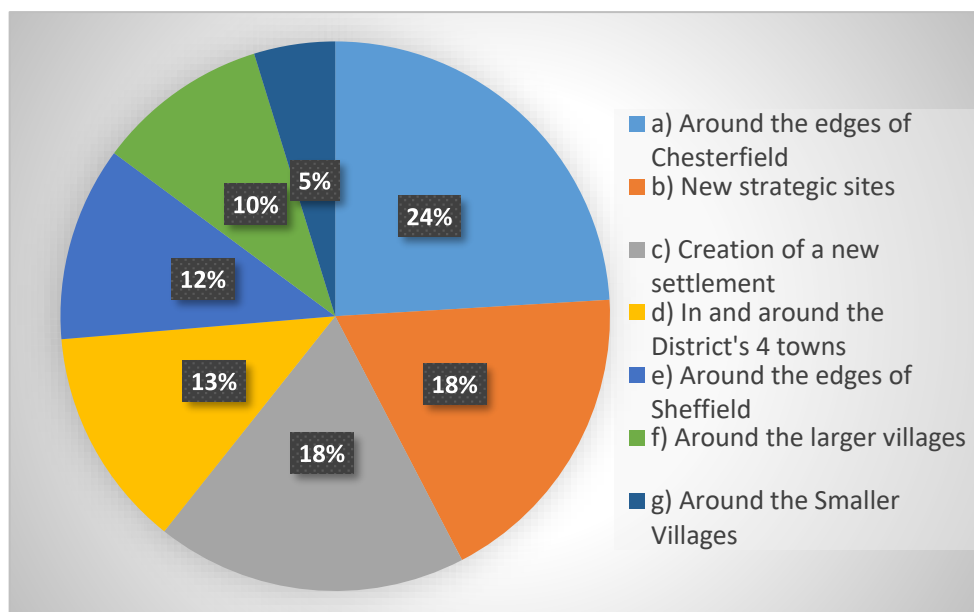


Figure 1: Spatial Options – Preferences

2.5 In response to the question of whether there are any other spatial options that should be considered, the 163 respondents highlighted a broad range of issues and considerations, rather than clearly defined alternative spatial options. The main 'alternatives' include:

- Brownfield regeneration,
- Conversion of underused employment land and other buildings,
- Flexible settlement-hierarchy adjustments to accommodate varied village growth, and
- Clustering rural villages to share services.

Determinants of the location of development

2.6 In response to the question of what issues people thought should determine the location of new homes and other development, giving 9 alternatives (a – i) with the ability to tick all that apply (Figure 2). There were 833 respondents with the highest proportion (23%) favouring the sustainability of the settlement, closely followed by access to jobs and services (21%) and areas with infrastructure capacity (17%). The remaining options received limited support, with a proportional increase in households by settlement being least favoured at 4%.

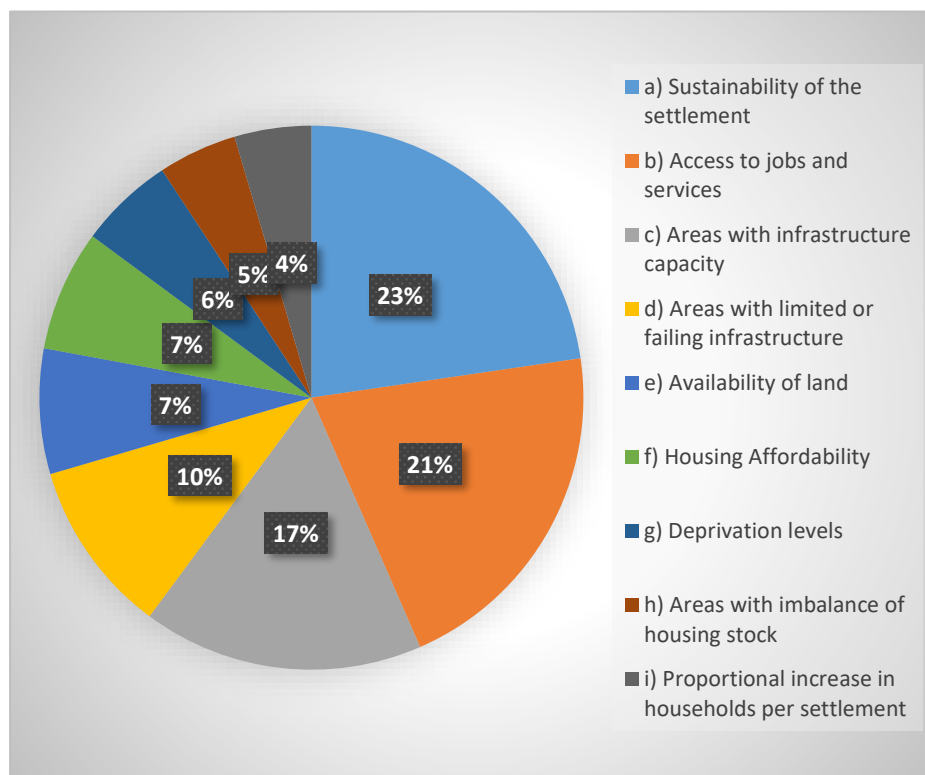


Figure 2: Determinants of the location of development

Site Type

2.7 Respondents were asked to choose their 3 most preferred site type options for new development from a list of 7 alternatives, along with an explanation of the impacts or benefits of their selection. Of the 335 separate option selections (not

all respondents chose 3 options) 57% identified a preference for increasing housing densities around larger settlements, with a further 19% opting for higher densities everywhere (Figure 3). There was limited support for the other 5 alternative options.

- 2.8 Reasons given for respondents' selections emphasise preserving Green Belt gaps and biodiversity, favouring brownfield regeneration and higher-density schemes within existing settlements to balance housing delivery with countryside protection. They highlight efficient land use through compact urban infill and strategic town centre sites to reduce car dependency and carbon emissions. Many urge transport upgrades and 15-minute neighbourhood models to ease congestion and support walking, cycling and public transport. There is a clear call for strong settlement boundaries to maintain community identity and for development to use existing utilities, schools and services. Respondents also stress the need for a varied housing mix, including smaller and affordable homes, and note potential economic and employment benefits from construction and new resident expenditure.

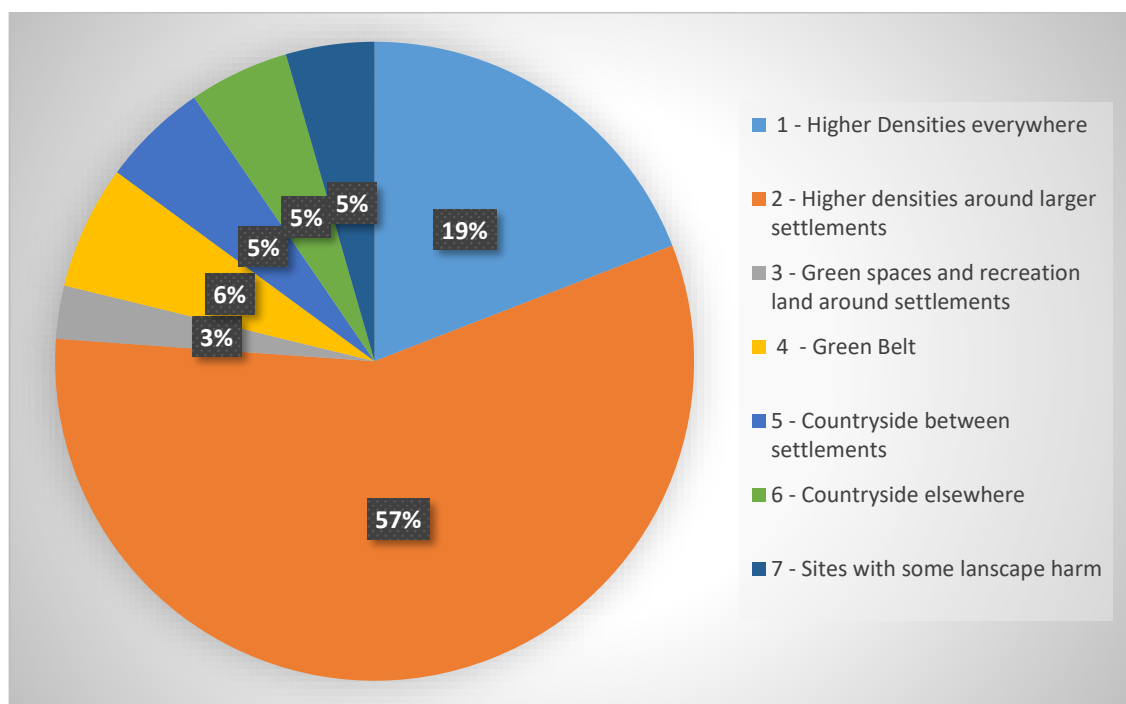


Figure 3: Preferred Site Types

Implications

- 2.9 The above summaries highlight the key areas where difficult and potentially unpopular decisions need to be taken by the Council. For example, responses generally indicate a desire to retain the Green Belt and focus on previously developed land in areas with infrastructure capacity and access to jobs and services. There is widespread support for increasing densities in locations around larger settlements (Figure 3); but a preference for sites on the edges of Chesterfield and Sheffield where capacity is limited and largely within the Green Belt. Conversely there is limited support for development around the District's

towns and larger villages where capacity is greatest (albeit a sizeable proportion is within Green Belt or a LSG) (Figure 1). Whilst there is also strong support for new strategic sites and/or a new settlement, the combined capacity of these options is only sufficient to meet less than 50% of the Standard Method housing target and almost 50% of this is in the Green Belt.

Proposed Approach to the Location of Development

2.10 Overall, the consultation responses broadly correlate with the level of sustainability associated with such locations, as evidenced in the Settlement Role and Function Study. Using the adopted Local Plan approach as a starting point and applying the findings of the Issues & Options consultation, the following updated approach to the settlement hierarchy and priority locations for the distribution of development is proposed:

- | | |
|-----------------------|--|
| | i. Edge of Chesterfield/ Sheffield |
| Priority 1 Locations: | ii. New Settlement /Strategic Site |
| | iii. Level 1 Settlements - Main Towns |
| Priority 2 Locations: | iv. Level 2 Settlements - Larger Villages |
| Priority 3 Locations: | v. Level 3 Settlements - Smaller Villages |
| Priority 4 Locations: | vi. Level 4 Settlements – Very Small Villages
/ Hamlets |

2.11 It is intended that site allocations will be assigned using a cascade approach, whereby the higher the position in the hierarchy, the more development is likely to be focussed there. Noting that this does not override Green Belt or other desirable policy restrictions such as Local Settlement Gaps, provided that sufficient suitable sites can be found elsewhere in appropriate locations.

2.12 The approach can be justified on the basis that it is appropriate to prioritise development closest to existing services and facilities where there is clear evidence of existing capacity or where the necessary capacity can be provided, such as around the edges of neighbouring urban areas and the districts larger settlements; and through the creation of new settlements and strategic sites.

2.13 The broad strategy for development will involve maximising allocations in areas outside of the Green Belt before considering sites within it; and then only where shown to be necessary, i.e. exceptional circumstances can be demonstrated, as required by national policy.

2.14 It is also important to recognise that there are large parts of the district, particularly (but not exclusively) in the west, that are not sustainable locations for development. This cannot be a blanket approach i.e. we cannot say 'no

development in the west/north/south at all', but there are many areas that cannot be the focus for significant development because the services and facilities do not exist to support them and trying to bring that infrastructure forward through development would not be viable. These locations are generally Level 4 settlements (and some Level 3) and it is expected that development in these areas will be restricted in scale, relative to the size of the settlement, and targeted to meet local needs.

Housing – Refined Schedule of Sites

- 2.15 Figure 4 provides an overview of the number and approximate capacity of sites that have passed through the site assessment process and that align with the locations in the development hierarchy. The capacity of shortlisted sites is almost 18,000 dwellings, with existing planning permissions adding further 1,800 dwellings to the supply.
- 2.16 The capacity figures include localised density calculations, with an uplift added around the higher priority locations. This responds to the findings of consultation outlined at paragraph 2.8 above, whereby respondents indicated a preference for higher densities as a means of accommodating growth.

Development Hierarchy	Site Type	Major Permissions at 31/03/25	Refined List Capacity	Total Capacity (approx.)
Edge of Chesterfield/ Sheffield	Sites (not GB or LSG)	-	-	0
	Sites in GB	-	1,663	1,633
	Sites in LSG	-	-	0
	Total	-	1,663	1,633
New Settlement /Strategic Site	Sites not GB or LSG	-	2000	2000
	Sites in GB	-	1500	1500
	Sites in LSG	-	-	0
	Total		3,500	3,500
Level 1 - Main Towns	Sites (not GB or LSG)	653	1,486	2,139
	Sites in GB	-	1,668	1,668
	Sites in LSG	-	1,137	1,137
	Total	653	4,291	4,944
	Priority 1 Total	653	9,454	10,107
Level 2 - Larger Villages	Sites (not GB or LSG)	1,107	6,193	7,023
	Sites in GB	-	752	788
	Sites in LSG	-	100	100
	Priority 2 Total	1,107	7,045	8,152

Level 3 - Smaller Villages	Sites not GB or LSG	47	839	886
	Sites in GB	-	325	325
	Sites in LSG	-	-	-
	Priority 3 Total	47	1,164	1,211
Level 4 – Very Small Villages/ Hamlets	Sites not GB or LSG	-	-	-
	Sites in GB	-	141	141
	Sites in LSG	-	-	-
	Priority 4 Total	-	141	141
Grand Total		1,807	17,804	19,611

Figure 4: Spatial Hierarchy showing the Number & Capacity of Refined Sites

- 2.17 It is **important to note** that this table includes sites that are located within the Green Belt and Local Settlement Gaps, where they are suitable in all other respects. Exceptional circumstances are required to release land from the Green Belt and the current review of the Green Belt is underway to inform this. The findings of both the Green Belt Review and review of Local Settlement Gaps will be available by June 2026 and will inform the selection of preferred sites.
- 2.18 The capacity information shows that in principle, there is sufficient land overall to meet the standard method housing target – subject to final stages of assessment. However, approximately 37% of this capacity is on sites within the Green Belt (c.6000 dwellings, of which 4,800 is within the priority 1 areas); and within current Local Settlement Gaps (c.1200 dwellings, of which the majority is in priority 1 areas). This demonstrates a high likelihood that it will be necessary to consider sites that are located in the Green Belt in order to ensure a sustainable pattern of development. The alternative would be to load higher levels of housing on settlements lower in the priority order, which would have a particular impact on the Level 2 (larger villages) in the district.

Gypsy & Traveller Sites

- 2.19 Of the sites put forward for consideration as potential allocations for Gypsy & Travellers, 3 have been shortlisted for further consideration and consultation (Figure 4). This includes two sites at Calow and North Wingfield that are allocated for this use in the current Local Plan and a further site at Duckmanton that has planning permission for pitches, but that will lapse in the near future. It is proposed that all three sites are considered as possible allocations to meet future need identified by the Gypsy & Traveller Accommodation Assessment.

Site Reference	Site Name	Settlement/ Countryside	Site Size (ha)	Maximum Potential Capacity on Site (Pitches)
45457	The Old Potato Store, Dark Lane, Calow	Countryside	0.12	2
45472	Land east of Dark Lane, North Wingfield	Countryside	0.18	3
45480	Land east of Bonne Vienne Staveley Road Duckmanton	Countryside	0.23	4
			TOTAL PITCHES	9

Figure 5: Shortlisted Sites for Gypsies & Travellers

Employment Sites

- 2.20 The site assessment process has assessed all 67 sites that were submitted for consideration. The majority were removed on the grounds of being unavailable, unachievable or unsuitable (out of these sites, some 12 sites were discounted due to only GB / LSG restrictions, as it is not considered that such locations will be necessary to accommodate employment needs). Figure 6 & 7 include the 20 sites shortlisted for further consideration and consultation.
- 2.21 Based on the information available, Figures 5 & 6 demonstrate that approximately 27ha of land is potentially available for general employment uses and a further 53ha with potential for consideration as Strategic Logistic sites. The site options remaining include available land with existing employment areas, sites with planning permission and other newly identified sites. There is also the possibility that additional sites will come forward from some strategic and mixed use sites (as noted in the table). Further work is required to consider the detailed impacts of some of these sites in relation to landscape and heritage assets

Location	Developable Area (Approx. ha)
Strategic Sites (1 sites)	
Land at Duckmanton Moor (may include some limited E(g), B8 uses)	TBC

Sub-total	TBC
Level 1 Settlements (Main Towns) (7 Sites)	
Land at Callywhite Lane, Dronfield	1.60
Land at Ducksett Lane / Staveley Lane, Eckington (also suitable for housing)	2.20
Plot 4 Westthorpe Fields, Killamarsh*	0.44
Land at Egstow Park, Clay Cross*	1.42
Land off Upper Mantle Close, Clay Cross	0.90
Land at Bridge Street, Clay Cross	1.00
Plot H Coney Green Business Park, Clay Cross	1.67
Sub-total	9.23
Level 2 Settlements (7 Sites)	
Land at The Avenue, Wingerworth	2.88
Land off Ravenshorn Way, Renishaw	0.47
Land off Station Road, North Wingfield	0.75
Former Coal Yard Grassmoor (Zone A)*	0.66
Former Coal Yard, Grassmoor (Zones B, C & D)*	3.30
Land off Hardwick View Road, Holmewood	0.90
Land at Lower Plisley (may include some limited employment uses)	TBC
Sub-total (plus any contribution from Lower Pilsey)	8.96

*Sites with Planning Permission

Level 3 Settlements (1 site)	
Land north east side of Chesterfield Rd, Long Duckmanton	1.62
Sub-total	1.62
Other (2 sites)	
Land at Corbriggs Industrial Estate	1.90

Land to North of Mansfield Road, Doe Lea	5.50
Sub-total	7.40

Total (plus any contribution from Strategic Sites)	27.21 Ha
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Figure 6: Shortlisted Sites for Employment Uses

Strategic Warehousing (2 sites)	Developable Area (Approx. ha)
Land south of Markham Vale, Long Duckmanton	40.99
Former Coalite site, Long Duckmanton	12.00

Total	52.99 Ha
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Figure 7: Shortlisted Sites for Strategic Logistic Uses

Sustainability Appraisal (SA)

- 2.22 The overall purpose of the SA is to assess the extent to which the Plan will help to achieve sustainable development. It is a legal requirement and an integral part of the Plan making process that aims to test the sustainability of the Plan and reasonable alternatives. The proposed development strategy and refined schedule of sites are currently being assessed against the SA Framework prepared last year. The findings of this work will be published alongside the consultation material.

Arrangements for Public Consultation

- 2.23 The updated Local Plan timetable schedules further public consultation on Issues and Options in March/April 2026. In line with this it is proposed that public consultation will commence on Thursday 12 March 2026 and that it should run for a period of 7 weeks ending on Thursday 30 April 2026.
- 2.24 It is proposed to run the consultation online utilising the JDI platform, this is an existing system that we have used for previous consultations and which we have found is better placed for enabling the analysis of consultation responses. This consultation will include the maps for all sites that have passed through the assessment process. The Place Maker system will be used to host the land availability information that supports the refined schedule of sites, but also includes all those sites that did not pass through the assessment. As with the previous consultation, we will encourage the submission of comments online.

However, we appreciate that not everyone has access or is comfortable using online systems, so we will allow for email & postal submissions as necessary.

- 2.25 In accordance with the adopted Statement of Community Involvement we are proposing a series of drop-in sessions across the district (timetable tbc) and will provide consultation materials on the council's website and at the council office and local libraries throughout the district. This will be supplemented by a range of publicity materials and social media campaign to reach as many people as possible, including:

- Direct email/letter to those registered on our Local Plan database
- Posters / information distributed to ward members, Parishes and local libraries
- Council Website, social media channels and media screens in Council buildings
- Use of the Gov Mail e-bulletin service
- Direct targeting of local Facebook groups and 'X'

- 2.26 Timescales are tight and work is ongoing to prepare the final detailed consultation material and to make arrangements for the public drop in sessions. It is recommended that that approval of the final details is delegated to the Assistant Director of Planning in consultation with the Leader and Portfolio Holder for Environment & Place.

3 Reasons for Recommendation

- 3.1 To ensure that the Cabinet has the opportunity to consider the feedback to public consultation on the Issues and Options consultation, alongside the latest evidence and understand how this has shaped the proposed strategic approach to the location of development.
- 3.2 To ensure that the Cabinet is aware of the refined schedule of sites and how these align with the proposed strategy for the location of development; and agree the material and associated arrangements for public consultation in March/April 2026.

4 Alternative Options and Reasons for Rejection

- 4.1 The preparation of, and consultation on Issues and Options is a requirement of Plan Making regulations and there is no reasonable alternative to undertaking this stage if the Council wishes to secure a new Local Plan.
- 4.2 The Issues and Options material sets out a range of alternatives for consideration and comment through consultation and at this stage there are no grounds to either accept or reject a particular option.

DOCUMENT INFORMATION

Appendix No	Title
1	EQIA Stage 1
Background Papers (These are unpublished works which have been relied on to a material extent when preparing the report. They must be listed in the section below. If the report is going to Cabinet you must provide copies of the background papers)	