

PLANNING COMMITTEE – 25th August 2020

REFERENCE NUMBER: 18/01278/OL Application Expiry Date: 31 August 2020

Application Type: Outline Planning Permission

Proposal Description: **Conversion of existing car sales and storage buildings to create a farm shop, garden centre, restaurant and tearoom, erection of a holiday lodge complex with reception facilities, construction of a village hall and formation of a new access (Major Development)**

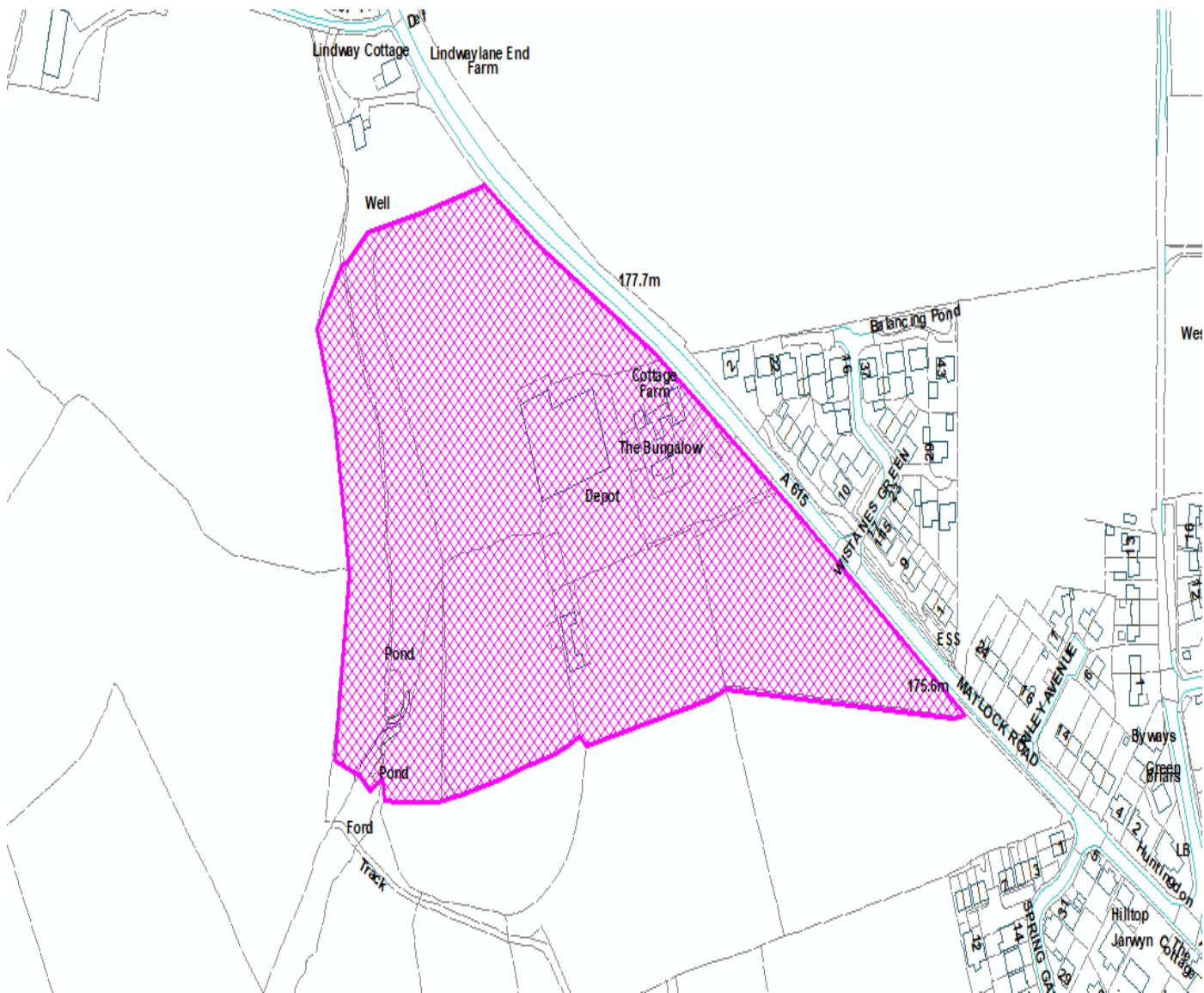
At: **Land Surrounding Cottage Farm Matlock Road Wessington**

For: **Wessington Park Developments Ltd C/O Agent**

Third Party Reps: 48/26 Parish: Wessington
Ward Name: Shirland

Author of Report: Adrian Kirkham Date of Report: 10 August 2020

MAIN RECOMMENDATION: GRANT (Subject to legal agreement and Conditions)



1.0 Reason for Report

1.1 Officers consider that the scale and character of the development together with the degree of public interest is such that a Committee determination is appropriate in this case.

2.0 Proposal and Background

2.1 The application site comprises an area of land to the north and north-west of Wessington centred on an existing group of buildings that currently serve a variety of uses, most notably an online car sales business and its ancillary operations.

- 2.2 Notwithstanding that, much of the site is currently undeveloped and comprises existing agricultural land. Hedgerows generally bound the site with a denser area of vegetation forming the western boundary as it falls away to a watercourse. The area of land to the north of the site, the area where the new access is proposed, is also open land. The application site is detached from Wessington to its south with an undeveloped field separating it from the development of Spring Gardens,
- 2.3 Wessington itself extends to the east of the site, across Matlock Road, where recently constructed housing has been built. The remainder of the village extends to the east and south east.

Application Details

- 2.4 The application originally sought consent for a larger scheme than now proposed and specifically for a hotel and associated spa facility, holiday lodges and associated car parking, the conversion of the existing car sales and storage building to form a farm shop complex, rural commercial workshops, gallery, restaurant and tea room, a village hall and shop and 32 houses, including 6 affordable units.
- 2.5 Subsequently, following discussion with Officers, the scheme has been amended and scaled down (with a consequent reduction in the red line (application) boundary. Consent is now sought, in outline, for a village hall and associated car parking, a holiday lodge complex (and an area of associated car parking) and the conversion of the existing car sales building to form a farm shop, garden sales area and restaurant/tea room and the visitor reception area for the holiday lodges. All the proposed new uses/development are submitted now in outline save for the new access for which detailed consent is sought and which is proposed to the north of the existing car sales building accessing Matlock Road.
- 2.6 The previously proposed hotel and housing no longer form any part of the scheme being considered.

Applicant's Supporting Documentation

- 2.7 The application is supported by various reports and studies including site condition, trees, ecology, highways, drainage and flood risk and landscape analysis. These are all available to view in full on line.

In addition, and in precis, the applicant states that, although reduced from the original scheme, the application would benefit the local economy, tourism in the District and the residents of Wessington.

3.0 Relevant Planning History

3.1 The most relevant planning history in respect of the site is as follows:

3.2 15/00674/FL Construction of new vehicle service workshop and retention of existing lean-to buildings for wash area/storage workshop and extension of domestic curtilages (Amended Title) (Amended Plans): Application Approved.

This submission sought consent for the formalisation of extensions originally approved under 12/00308/FL.

Previously, the planning history for the site related to development in connection with its former use for the repair and maintenance of haulage vehicles and plant.

3.3 On land to the south of the application site the planning history is as follows:

In 2000 an outline application (00/00992/OL) for Residential Development of the existing engineering and plant yard for housing and a site for a village hall was withdrawn but included part of the current application site.

In 2007 an Outline application (07/01139/OL) for 41 dwellings and a village hall was refused. It also included part of the current application site.

In 2011 an outline application for 9 dwellings, a village hall and shop (11/00743/OL) was granted and the Reserved Matters (14/00056/RM) approved in April 2014.

A further outline application (14/00547/OL) for residential development to continue the 2011 permission remains undetermined.

In 2016 an outline application for residential development of up to nine dwellings was approved (16/00749/OL) and a further application for the village hall and shop was approved (16/00750/FL).

4.0 Consultation Responses

NEDDC Housing: The provision of 2 bedroom bungalows suitable for older people would be an appropriate addition to the affordable housing stock.
Amended Plans: The most appropriate affordable housing for this area is 2 bedroom bungalows or 2/3 bedroom houses, preferable for affordable rent. (These comments were made before housing was removed from the application.)

NEDDC Environmental Health:	Amended Plans: A number of outstanding land contamination issues need to be addressed before agreement to the risk assessment findings and the associated proposed remedial works. If permission is granted conditions are to be attached these will require a more comprehensive remedial strategy for the site.
NEDDC Street Scene:	Advice provided on level of contribution and types of facilities that could be required. Amended Plans: Refer to previous comments, no further comments at this stage.
NEDDC Drainage:	No comments received
NEDDC Employment:	Amended Plans: Condition requested to submit, approve and implement a scheme to enhance and maximise employment and training during the construction phase.
DCC Strategic Planning:	On balance the (original) application proposals are unacceptable in their current form due to the disproportionately large and overwhelming scale of the development in relation to Wessington and the likely adverse impacts on the surrounding countryside contrary to the policies of the NPPF, SLP and ALP. A reduced scale development would be much more compliant.
DCC Planning Policy:	The local primary and secondary schools do not have sufficient capacity to accommodate pupils from this proposed development. Mitigation is required in the form of financial contribution. An advisory note regarding Broadband to be attached to any planning permission granted. Amended Plans: Guidance provided on the likely contributions required.
DCC Landscape Architect:	Due to the large scale of the (original) proposal it would have a Moderate Adverse impact on the landscape. Considers impact on views as Major in places and further viewpoints should be considered.
DCC Urban Design	The (original) masterplan leads to an extension of the village into open countryside. It is too large

in scale and will be perceived as a stand-alone development. It will dominate and significantly change the character of Wessington.

DCC Highways: No objections subject to a number of issues being addressed by submission of revised details to also include obligations, conditions and notes.

DCC Archaeology: Amended Plans: A number of issues still to be resolved. Further details are required before the Highway Authority may be in a position to sanction the current outline application.

A heritage study is required in the form of a professional authored buildings appraisal of the farmstead site and a geophysical survey of the greenfield parts of the site.

Amended Plans: In the light of the reduction of the scheme and retention of the historic farm buildings, on balance, a heritage submission is no longer required.

DCC Flood Risk: No comments received.

Police: Amended Plans: Security concerns over the distance between holiday lodges and their parking as shown on the proposed layout.

Amber Valley Borough Council: Such a scale of development in this rural location would be inherently unsustainable and would cause harm to the rural landscape on the outskirts of Wessington.

Seven Trent Water: Condition to submit drainage plans for the disposal of surface water and foul sewerage. Plans to be approved before the commencement of the development.

Amended Plans: The development shall not commence until drainage plans for the disposal of surface water and foul sewerage have been submitted and approved.

Derbyshire Wildlife Trust: The level of reporting is not sufficient to determine a planning application. Further

surveys and an EIA should be submitted.
Amended Plans: A number of ecological surveys are still outstanding. All work requested should be undertaken prior to determination of this application.

Health Service:	No request for a health contribution in this case.
Wessington Parish Council:	Many concerns and much opposition from residents. Requests the application to be considered by Committee.
Ward Councillor:	Requests application goes to Planning Committee and Planning Committee visit the site to assess impact on the local area due to the scale of the proposal.
Wessington NP Steering Group:	There is possibility the village would benefit from a village hall and village shop and the redevelopment of the brownfield site within the village would be supported. However, there are many concerns over the viability of running the village hall and over the scale of the proposed development and harmful impact on the surrounding open countryside.

5.0 Representations

A Site Notice was posted on 15/02/19. The application was publicised in the local press on 21/02//19 and 80 neighbours were notified by letter. 44 **objection** letters were received raising the following matters:

- No benefit to the village.
- Detrimental to the village and its community.
- Traffic is already increasingly heavy in the village at peak times with no means of safely crossing the main road.
- On the outskirts of the village so would not encourage or facilitate residents to have a social hub.
- The parking at the school drop off and pick up would be adversely affected. This is already an issue with limited parking.
- Already have a pub/restaurant and chip shop.
- People shop online and most people have access to a car, no need for a village shop.
- The road is dangerous, people exceed the speed limit, and there have been many recorded near misses near Winstanes Green due to people

overtaking. This development would increase the traffic and likelihood of accidents.

- Access to and from the site is dangerous and pedestrians will be at risk.
- There is not adequate amenity space within the site considering its scale.
- Local services, specifically Wessington Primary School will suffer.
- The school is already at maximum capacity and applications are already approved for Brackenfield Lane that will also impact upon this.
- The development extends the village envelope even further than previous developments, setting a precedent for future expansion beyond the natural village curtilage.
- There does not appear to be an ecology assessment for the scheme.
- Ponds at the bottom of the site, potential for great crested newts.
- No requirement for hotel and leisure facilities in the village.
- Already hotels in the village and close by.
- Much of the neighbourhood plan factors do not appear to have been considered.
- Is a property developer trying to make some quick cash?
- The ratio of the population envisaged to the current village is too big an increase.
- Potential negative impact on the local hotel and guest houses.
- Police speed traps are used on the road as is already dangerous.
- Already had a lot of development in a short period of time in the village.
- No consideration of wildlife in the area.
- The more buildings the more cash for the developer. Proposal is based on how many buildings can fit onto the site and not whether these buildings are needed.
- The proposal will alter the whole character of the village.
- Increased traffic and congestion on the roads.
- The bus service is poor and a car is needed to access the local towns and doctor's surgery.
- It is green land, the Neighbourhood Plan needs to be considered.
- Devaluation of local properties.
- Add to the increase in noise and pollution levels year on year.
- All 108 of the recent properties developed have been outside the Settlement Development Limit.
- If this is granted the footprint of the village would grow by around another 50% and extend a further 250m beyond the SDL.
- Wessington is a level 3 settlement in the NED Local Plan.
- The NED Local Plan states no housing allocations within level 3 settlements over and above existing commitments.
- The Wessington Neighbourhood Plan states development should be within the SDL.
- Criteria for Policy SS9 are not met.

- Wessington lies to the west of the district in open countryside on the edge of the Peak District. Development according to the Local Plan should be focused on regeneration of urban areas to the north.
- Wessington contains protected wildlife sites, this development would cause considerable impact on the natural environment.
- Limited potential for the school to grow even with funding as is a traditional village school.
- Question viability of the shop plans.
- Query would the leisure facilities be affordable for current residents.
- Cottage Farm is identified as a heritage asset on the Neighbourhood Plan.
- Query over the impact on protected viewpoints 3 and 6.
- Considerable impact on protected views and loss of mature trees.
- Buildings do not appear to be similar to those already existing on the edge of the village.
- Query over estimations for the number of vehicle movements.
- Movement of HGVs and estimated impact is inadequate.
- The visibility and speed of traffic at the additional site access is dangerous and proposals to widen the highway could further increase the issue.
- No evidence to prove the need for additional tourism.
- Accessibility to the village is difficult for various modes of travel.
- No identified current housing need.
- Contradicts Local Plan regarding owner occupied second homes.
- The infrastructure (such as water/sewerage) in the village will not support such a large development.
- Expectation of many visitors to the complex as 200 parking spaces this is not in line with the Neighbourhood Plan as it will not sustain the natural character of the village.
- The area is a rural farming community and is how it should remain.
- The proposal conflicts with criteria, policy GS1(a) and policy GS1(c) of the Local Plan.
- Wessington has increased in size over 60% already, without any supporting infrastructure.
- One stretch of pavement on A615 is only 94cm wide – dangerous for pedestrians.
- The case for more social housing is not proven.
- 150 new jobs created will bring in more traffic from outside the village.
- Report undertaken by Derbyshire County Council clearly shows the school is at full capacity and there is already considerable extra demand for school places from current developments. The site allows **NO** opportunity for further expansion of the school.
- The LEA stated that education infrastructure will be a matter of serious concern in considering all future planning applications.

- The applicant has been met with protest by residents at all public engagements.
- Properties and roads in the village are subject to flooding in times of heavy sustained rainfall. More building in the area will increase this. The drainage system cannot cope.
- People choose to live in Wessington for its small size and character.
- A village hall and shop could easily be accommodated in existing buildings.
- This development is too much – a farm shop, tea room, village hall and community shop would be welcome by residents and visitors. However the hotel, holiday lodges, leisure spa and 26 houses is not a good idea due to remoteness of the village, little to do and size of the land.
- Previous consideration of a village hall shows it would be financially unsustainable even with a bar included.
- The village has already lost its community feel with the influx of new residents.
- NEDDC have exceeded their housing target by 156%.
- Extension of ribbon development beyond the natural confines of the village.
- Shift the village centre northwards. The village is currently centred around the green.
- Concerned that important information regarding the impact of traffic is missing from the application documents including a Stage 1 Safety Audit, speed survey, visibility splays, accidents, spa flow rates, new access.
- Management plan needed for the community buildings should they fail to sustain themselves.
- We are still yet to experience the impact of the Brackenfield Lane site on the village.
- The 45 week let properties would provide second homes to people. This is in conflict with the local plan.
- Approximately 75% of this development would be built on open countryside and would adjoin wildlife sites.
- No room for the return bus stop from Matlock.
- Increased pollution.
- Negative impact on dog walkers and other recreational users and visitors to the countryside around and within the village.
- Concerns over streams and brooks surrounding the village – drying up due to damming, flooding and contamination.
- A completely new process must be instigated to determine the current demand for a village hall and in which location.
- The site is within the Derwent Valley Landscape Partnership area.

4 letters of **support** were received raising the following points:

- The village is currently severely lacking in amenities, especially a shop.
- A social hub for bringing the community together with events at the village hall and tea room for socialising.
- The local shop would benefit mums with young children and older residents who don't want to leave the village for essentials.
- The site is near the Peak District and M1 so holiday lodges would be popular.
- The village has been in support of a village hall for many years and the last questionnaires carried out in 2014 showed there was a lot of support and demand for a variety of clubs and uses.
- There is Lottery Funding available for the village hall and it will be self-sustainable.
- The new location offered by the developer is so the village hall can make use of the parking on the site by the retail units.
- The new landowner is honouring the obligation of the previous landowner to build a village hall on the site.
- There are plenty of volunteers.
- There is a need for employment within the village and to be able to walk to work.
- The project may improve the roads and provide much needed pedestrian crossings.
- The current batch of questionnaires being carried out appear to be showing there is still support for a village hall.
- There is a possibility of GPs using the hall two days a week.
- Recently with 100 new houses to the village the need for a village hall will be increased.
- A village hall would be beneficial for children and young people in the village.
- The Lottery grant should not be lost as it is the only way we can fund a village hall in Wessington.

Following the submission of amended plans a further site notice was posted on 2/3/20 and advertised by a press notice on 12/3/20. 80 neighbours were notified by letter. 26 **objection** letters have been received making comments as set out below:

- Object to the residential buildings and holiday lodges in the proposal.
- The main road is already very busy with traffic.
- Query over building holiday lodges alongside residential dwellings.
- The school cannot cope with further pupils, already exceeding maximum capacity.
- There is already residential development in progress in the village.
- The development is far too large for the village.
- The development would strongly change the character of the village.

- The vision statement for the neighbourhood plan states development should minimise the impact of the landscape character and be small enough to keep the rural aspect.
- Green and open spaces would be taken away dramatically altering views.
- Would endanger wildlife.
- The holiday lodges for sale are unlikely to support a tourist economy.
- Lack of footpaths, cycleways and bus routes connecting to the village.
- A village hall and shop can easily be accommodated in existing buildings.
- Development and expansion of housing away from the centre of the village significantly impacting on the traditional village boundaries.
- The new proposal would develop on high ground to the north of the village impacting on current ponds and water catchment that controls surface water flow into the village.
- Some of the buildings are located on or next to environmentally important drainage land.
- The development will alter the ability to control water flow and have a detrimental impact on the buildings and land below.
- Recent completed developments have seen an increase in surface water moving from the village towards Wessington Hay.
- Long term impact on adjacent land and water flow needs to be assessed.
- There is no opportunity for expansion of the school.
- There is no business plan for the village hall and shop.
- The submitted estimates of vehicle movements grossly underestimate the likely impact of the proposed development on traffic through the village.
- Lack of village services to support an increase in population.
- Concerns over impact of tourists on the village.
- Dangers from the 3 entrances to the site are located on the busy road and the location of the pedestrian crossing and village hall directly at the point of the speed rating change.
- Residents would not welcome a new vehicular fuel station. This may increase traffic and there are already local stations nearby.
- The village residents would like to address the current traffic concerns, pollution and infrastructure.
- The development is not in line with objectives 1 and 2 of the Wessington Neighbourhood Plan and will take away the rural character of the village.
- It is not in line with the District Plan.
- A prominent intrusion into the countryside.
- Significant social and environmental impacts.
- Documents supplied are incomplete.

- Appears to be a reliance on documents previously submitted for a very different scheme.
- Unable to fully assess the merits of this application and submit a detailed objection letter.
- NEDDC have exceeded their housing targets by 156%
- Wessington has already made a significant contribution towards housing in North East Derbyshire.
- Increased traffic on single track lanes creating further damage to the countryside.
- The petrol station will be unsightly, out of character and likely commercially unviable.
- Existing pumps that are there are no longer in use and acceleration of electric vehicles on the roads would possibly lead to the petrol station being unused and abandoned in future.
- 7 existing petrol stations within 5 miles of Wessington.
- Fossil fuels are the main contributor to the climate emergency so additional use must be discouraged.
- The application proposes new largescale development extending approximately 250m outside of the Settlement Development Limit.
- Only a small proportion of the proposed development utilises existing buildings on the site and a significant proportion involves the development of open countryside and outside of the SDL.
- Unclear from the application what additional employment contribution the development would provide to the village.
- The development shows no facility for the provision of deliveries and loading and unloading.
- With limited pedestrian access for the holiday lodges it is unlikely tourism will generate income for existing businesses in the village.
- The application does not include an updated visual or environmental impact assessment.
- The petrol station would have considerable impact on protected viewpoint 3.
- The widening of the highway would require the removal of a large proportion of hedgerow, and significantly alter the approach to the village at the protected view point 3.
- This application fails to meet Wessington's housing need.
- The shop is large in size contrary to the local plan requirements for new retail development.
- Inadequate pedestrian access from the village centre to the farm shop.
- The village hall is outside the SDL and fails to utilise existing structures or developed boundaries.
- The application lacks evidence for the consultation of the new plans with the community.
- The petrol station is not identified as a need within the village in the Neighbourhood Plan.

- Petrol station would create issues including noise and light for neighbouring residents.
- The revised application provides no estimates of expected vehicle movements and impacts.
- The development proposes two additional access points onto an area of the Highway known for dangerous manoeuvres and speeding.
- The additional access point to the northern aspect of the site sits close to the 50mph zone.
- The application contains no measures to support reductions in speed or improve road safety.
- Proposals to widen the highway near the access point could further increase existing issues around speeding and dangerous overtaking.
- The application includes no provision for alternative modes of transport to the site.
- The site would be reliant of people accessing it by car yet the design shows limited vehicle access and limited parking facilities.
- The scale of the tourism site is not in keeping with the character of the village.
- The footprint of each holiday lodge is approximately 10m in length more characteristic of large detached residential properties.
- This application fails to take into account previous concerns expressed by residents or adopted planning policy.
- Limited social and economic benefit for the village.
- This application fails to demonstrate sustainability.
- Given the scale of this development it is likely to have a detrimental impact on the village's infrastructure and character.
- No need for a village shop. Farms shops are expensive and people travel to cheaper shops. The previous shops in the village closed due to lack of demand.
- Query why this application has been put forward given the objections from the previous submission.
- Approximately 75% of the development would be on open countryside and adjoin local wildlife sites.
- Concerns that the proposed businesses would be unsustainable and eventually the unused buildings would be turned into residential properties.
- The application does not meet Policy E10 (Tourist Developments).
- Wessington is identified as a Level 3 settlement in the NEDDC Local Plan. There should be no housing allocations over and above existing commitments in Level 3 settlements.
- People live in the village for its rural setting and lifestyle this would be ruined.
- There is a hotel and bed and breakfast and caravan sites nearby so no further need for tourist accommodation in Wessington.

- This new proposal suggests HGV traffic and holiday traffic will be increased.
- The local wildlife is already under threat from recent developments this will further impact on our wildlife.
- The plan appears to be for phases 1 and 2 as opposed to 1, 2, 3, 4 and 5 on the previous submission.
- Wessington has grown significantly recently and tis development will not add to the village and the existing infrastructure is insufficient to cope with the size of the village.
- The A615 is very busy and difficult to join, few observe the speed limit and crossing the road is difficult.
- Drainage is a concern with residents experiencing flooding after rainfall
- Wessington is not a tourist destination. Accommodation already exists and the lodges would add to congestion.
- The village shop would be a shop for the lodges as it is not conveniently located for either a shop or village hall as it is away from the village.
- It is accepted building should be allowed on brownfield land but this development is not in proportion with the needs of Wessington. Building is already taking place on Brackenfield Lane.
- Wessington has limited public transport and no buses connect with major towns or rail services.
- There is no Doctor's surgery in Wessington
- The proposal goes against the Neighbourhood Plan and conflicts with the policies of the Local Plan and the National Planning Policy Framework
- The appeal in respect of development on Back Lane set out the further development in Wessington was unsustainable in transport terms.
- The North East Derbyshire Local Plan identifies Wessington as a Level 3 settlement, and states that there 'will be no housing allocations in such settlements over and above existing commitments'.
- Traffic is already a major problem for this village, with a huge increase in traffic on the busy A615 causing dangerous problems for residents and children crossing this road. There have recently been several accidents including the tragic fatality of a child on the A615. One stretch of pavement on the same side of the road as the proposed development is only 94cm wide and cannot be accessed when lorries are passing. This proposal will bring about a massive increase in traffic, with the continued need for residents and customers to cross the road into the village only increasing the dangers of the A615.
- The proposal also shows approximately 160 new car parking spaces. This would totally transform the Matlock Road traffic problems contrary to the Wessington Neighbourhood Plan
- The development would adversely affect the site's rural setting and lifestyle

- The development would destroy any sense of openness and remove views
- The village school could not cope with the additional pressure placed on it by this development
- The village hall is neither needed nor wanted in Wessington

6.0 Relevant Policy and Strategic Context

6.1 The Development Plan comprises the North East Derbyshire Local Plan and the Wessington Neighbourhood Plan.

6.2 In respect of the **North East Derbyshire Local Plan** the most relevant policies to this application are considered to be as follows:

GS1 Sustainable Development
 GS5 Settlement Development Limits
 GS6 New Development in the Countryside
 GS7 Change of Use and Conversions
 NE1 Landscape Character
 BE1 General Design Principles
 BE2 External Lighting and Floodlighting
 E9 Employment development in the Countryside
 E10 Tourism Developments
 E11 Tourist Accommodation
 SH6 Retail Developments in Out of Centre Locations
 SH11 Farm Shops
 SH12 Garden Centres
 T2 Highway Access and the Impact of New Development
 CSU2 Purpose Built Community Facilities

6.3 In respect of the 2019 **Wessington Neighbourhood Plan** the most relevant policies to this application are considered to be as follows:

NPP1 Sustainable Development and the Settlement Development Limits
 NPP2 Protecting the Natural Environment and Landscape Character.
 NPP3 Design Principles
 NPP5 Protecting heritage Assets
 NPP6 Enhancing the Provision of Community Facilities
 NPP8 Maintaining Local Employment
 AP1 Highway Safety

6.4 The emerging **North East Derbyshire Publication Draft Local Plan 2014-2034 (DLP)** was submitted for examination in May 2018, with public hearings taking place in November/December 2018 and March 2019. The Inspector issued her interim findings in letters dated 18 February and 21 March 2019. In May 2019, the Council paused the Plan, pending

consideration of its options around housing numbers and Green Belt release. On 27 February 2020 the Council announced the un-pausing of the Plan to allow it to proceed to the next stage of consultation on the Main Modifications. It is expected the Plan will achieve adoption in late 2020/early 2021.

In respect of the DLP the most relevant policies to this application are considered to be as follows:

SS1 Sustainable Development
SS9 Development in the Countryside
WC4 Development on Employment Land
WC6 Visitor Economy and Tourism development in the Countryside
WC7 Tourist Accommodation in the Countryside
SDC1 Re-use of Building in the Green Belt and Countryside
SDC3 Landscape Character
SDC12 High Quality design and Place Making
ID4 New Social Infrastructure

National Planning Policy Framework

- 6.5 The overarching aims of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) have been considered in the assessment of this application and are set out in the report below.

7.0 Planning Issues

Principle of Development

- 7.1 The applicant seeks consent to develop an area of land to the north and north west of Wessington for a variety of uses comprising a new holiday lodge facility, a farm shop, garden centre and associated facilities and a village hall. The site(s) would be accessed off two new junctions with the main Matlock Road. One would be to the village hall facility (jointly with the (approved) housing area) whilst the remainder of the development would be accessed via a new standalone "T" junction affording access to a variety of car parking/turning areas supporting the various proposed uses.
- 7.2 The application site is located outside of the settlement development limits for Wessington where generally new development is strictly controlled.
- 7.3 The extant Local Plan sets out that new tourist facilities will be permitted that expand the range of tourist facilities and attractions providing they do not adversely impact on the character of the area, any major attractions are well related to the local transport networks and public transport and retail development is small in scale and ancillary to the main use. This accords generally with the NPPF which seeks to promote businesses in

- rural areas and expand tourism and leisure developments subject to the character of the area being protected and so the policies of the Local Plan are considered by Officers to carry full weight in this case.
- 7.4 In respect of new tourism accommodation the extant Local Plan sets out that, where it is outside settlement limits, it will be permitted where it involves the re-use of a building or the extension of an existing tourist facility only. However, as this policy is far more restrictive than the general aims and policies of the NPPF (as set out above) Officers attach limited weight to this policy and instead place weight on the more permissive policies of the NPPF and the DLP which itself is encouraging of new tourist accommodation providing it is adequately screened, is sensitively designed, does not adversely impact on the amenity of local residents and would not adversely impact on the character of the area.
- 7.5 The Neighbourhood Plan reflects the Local Plan in seeking generally to resist development to that within settlement limits and as such it has similar deficiencies in terms of its compatibility with the NPPF as the Local Plan in respect of this development, and so the weight Officers attribute to it. However, policy NPP8 of the Plan relates specifically to the brown field element of the application site, the existing building and its curtilage, and supports business growth and/or tourism related development within the site's curtilage and any proposals for a café and/or shop which improves services for residents and visitors. In this respect, and on that part of the site the Neighbourhood Plan is supportive of the proposal.
- 7.6 The application submission also seeks consent for a farm shop, although the development is not associated with a farm and is, in the view of Officers, more of a [tourist] destination, and a garden centre [The applicant also makes reference to an ancillary café/restaurant area]. As such, Officers have considered it as a tourist destination rather than as local retail units and have treated it as such. In this respect the policy background is supportive of the application, as it is for the lodges and visitor accommodation themselves.
- 7.7 The exact level of retail offer is unspecified, as the application is seeking consent for the change in the use of the existing on site building, which is otherwise capable of conversion in line with Council policies. In view of the site's location out of any existing town centres it would otherwise be a requirement for a Retail Impact Assessment (RIA) to be submitted showing the impact of this out of centre retail facility on other centres., However, the applicant has agreed that any retail space covering the garden centre and farm shop would not exceed 495sq m (net), approximately one third of the converted building, (not including any café area), which has an internal floor area of 1562 sq m, thereby avoiding the need for RIA. If the application was approved the level of retail space could be controlled through condition. The remainder of the existing

- building would be used as the reception area serving the lodges and as the restaurant/cafe area.
- 7.8 Officers consider that there is no direct impact on any local centre from the proposed retail offer as it is neither close to an existing retail facility or likely to be of the nature to counter traditional retail offerings. In addition, capped at a retail level of 495 sq m, the level of activity would be small. Therefore, Officers do not raise objection to the principle of converting the building to the retail/restaurant/visitor reception as proposed as it would be a tourist destination/facility offer rather than a traditional retail offering. In this respect it would also accord with the aspirations set out in the NPPF, the DLP and Neighbourhood Plan.
- 7.9 The provision of a community facility, a village hall in this case, is also proposed and its provision would generally be supported by the policies of the Local Plan, even though it would be located outside existing settlement boundaries, subject to its wider impact being acceptable. This also accords with the general principles set out in the NPPF and, as such, the proposal for the village hall is otherwise acceptable. Further weight is added to this conclusion by the supportive policies also set out in the draft Local Plan (the "DLP").
- 7.10 The weight that should be given to the provision of the village hall, as proposed by the applicant, and the potential social benefits that follow in particular, is in the view of Officers, complicated by the comments made by the local bodies. There would be social benefits arising from the provision of such a facility, and such proposals have in the past carried significant weight in the decisions taken on development proposals in the area, although the village hall has not yet been constructed. Officers contend that the provision of the village hall carries medium weight in this case.
- 7.11 Reference is made in representations to a relatively recent appeal decision in Wessington for affordable housing which was dismissed on the basis that Wessington was not a sustainable location for new housing development. Officers note that decision but as this application is seeking consent for a tourist related facility, which by its nature does seek to attract visitors, Officers have not placed weight on the appeal decision referred to.

Landscape and character and appearance of the area

- 7.12 The overriding aim in assessing new development in countryside areas is to seek to ensure it is assimilated into its setting without adversely impacting on the character of the area. This is a principle that runs through the Development Plan, the DLP and the NPPF.

- 7.13 In this case, part of the site comprises previously developed land and it is this part of the site that is referred to in the Wessington Neighbourhood Plan. However, the application site extends to the south, west and north of that site and in all cases extends into and onto existing green field land.
- 7.14 The originally submitted Landscape Assessment acknowledged that particularly from close views, i.e. from the road and the important southern viewpoint set out in the Neighbourhood Plan, the development would impact on the area. However, it sets out how as one moves away from the site, either in a westerly direction or to the north, the development would become less prominent.
- 7.15 The site does slope away towards its western perimeter. This also increases its prominence from that direction but this, potentially more prominent area, would be developed as lodges, probably single story in scale, and landscaped to create a particular setting associated with such development. All these factors would mitigate any impact on this more visible edge of the development. It is however recommended that any permission is conditioned requiring the lodges to be single storey only to secure this appropriate landscape impact.
- 7.16 Currently the area to the north of the existing buildings is undeveloped and agricultural in nature. It forms a soft edge to the village as you enter it from the north. Within this area, a new access is proposed to serve the site, with the exception of the village hall. This has the potential to introduce a particularly urban character to this area creating a significant road junction and associated infrastructure. Officers have sought to remove this access point and relocate it closer to the existing access into the site. The applicant has resisted these requests. The impact of introducing this urbanising feature into what is currently the soft entrance into the village is regrettable. However, with additional hedging and tree planting to soften the impact of this access any harmful effect would be mitigated. This has been acknowledged by the applicant and he has agreed to additional landscaping into this area in order to mitigate this impact.

Layout and Detail

- 7.17 The application was originally made in a detailed form with only landscaping reserved for further approval. Further to discussions with Officers the scheme has been reduced in scale and is now made in outline with only the issue of access not being reserved for further approval.
- 7.18 The indicative layout that now supports the application, zones the site into specific development areas. Officers consider this, generally, to be acceptable and, subject to consent being granted, would recommend that the indicative layout, in terms of those zones, is implemented as such.

7.19 However, Officers do consider that, in addition to the ecological considerations (see below), the site in its indicative form may present a too intensive a form of development, requiring, in particular, larger areas of landscaping to be provided. Therefore, whilst recommending that the zoning is followed, Officers would also recommend adding a note to any permission granted, that the indicative layout is not necessarily an acceptable form of development when the reserved matters are submitted.

Highway and Traffic Issues

7.20 Two new accesses are proposed to serve the development off Matlock Road. One is associated with an existing permission for housing to the south whilst another is to the north.

7.21 The Highway Authority has raised issues in respect of the northern access but, whilst final clarification remains to be received, from a highway safety aspect, the new access is acceptable, subject to various details, not least whether or not a protected right turn is required. The applicant is happy to design the new access to include one and the Highway Authority considering whether one is needed. This will be subject to details being agreed and controlled by conditions. Subject to this, there is no highway objection to the new access.

7.22 The development will increase traffic on the main road but not to the extent that the Highway Authority is concerned and would recommend refusal of the application. The local highway network is able to accommodate the additional traffic.

7.23 Representations are made about the amount and nature of traffic using the Matlock Road currently and how pedestrians will access the development and cross Matlock Road. The Highway Authority wants to see a proper crossing of the A615 formed and footways as necessary to allow pedestrian access to and from Wessington. The applicant has confirmed that he is happy to do this. This can be achieved through conditions or legal agreements.

7.24 A pedestrian access from the site to Matlock Road is shown that, subject to the provision of footways and a road crossing, would allow walking access between Wessington and the development.

7.25 Subject to final clarification from the Highway Authority and to necessary conditions/legal agreements, the proposal would not result in an unacceptable impact on highway safety.

Ecology issues

- 7.26 The Council's consultees on this matter, the Derbyshire Wildlife Trust (DWT), retain the view that the submitted ecological surveys are not sufficient at this stage as the survey results may have a bearing on the layout of the scheme. DWT do recognise the intention to create a nature reserve to the west of the site which would provide an opportunity to retain and create some high quality habitats.
- 7.27 In noting the comments of the DWT, the reason for the additional information would be to inform the detailed layout of the site. As the application is now made in outline, Officers are of the view that the information could be submitted to inform a reserved matters submission, and so it is not required at this stage.
- 7.28 No objection in principle has been raised. Subject to conditions requiring further ecological information to be submitted to inform any reserved matters applications, the reduction in the scale of the development proposed from that originally made, its outline nature and the part brown field nature of the site, Officers consider that the proposal is acceptable from an ecological point of view.

Other matters

- 7.29 The comments of the Environmental Health Officer are noted. This matter can be dealt with by way of conditions which will safeguard future developers and occupiers of the site.
- 7.30 Comments from Housing and Street Scene teams are noted as is that from the Infrastructure Team at Derbyshire County Council. However, these comments relate primarily to the scheme when it included housing, and so much is now no longer pertinent.
- 7.31 The Street Scene team do consider some contribution to offsite play facilities is appropriate and it is considered relevant to secure some payment towards such provision to cater for the use of such facilities by those visiting the site.
- 7.32 The issues of flooding and archaeology are otherwise addressed acceptably and the concern raised by the police crime advisor could be addressed at any detailed layout stage.

8.0 Summary and Conclusion

- 8.1 The application site lies outside the settlement limits of Wessington and in the countryside for planning purposes. Part of the site is allocated in the

Wessington Neighbourhood Plan for potential redevelopment for, among things, tourism related development.

- 8.2 This tourism based development complies with the policies of the NPPF, in part with the Neighbourhood Plan and also to the evolving policies of the DLP. As such, the development as a whole is considered acceptable in principle.
- 8.3 The application also proposes a local community facility and some retail activity. The community facility adds some weight to supporting the scheme whilst the retail provision is more tourism related in character and so adds little of additional weight in favour of the scheme.
- 8.4 The scale of the proposal is large when compared to the existing village. However, with appropriate landscaping and careful design, it is considered it would not overwhelm the local landscape and or have an adverse impact on it. This would be subject to a number of conditions including requiring implementation as per the zones on the submitted indicative masterplan, the lodges being single storey and the submission of additional ecological information to inform any layout and landscaping.
- 8.5 Access is proposed to the north of the existing buildings. Officers would have preferred that this access point is removed from the scheme. However, with additional landscaping and softening, Officers do not conclude this issue alone sufficient to resist the application.
- 8.6 The Highway Authority does not object to the application in principle. Whilst final clarification on specifics is awaited, Officers conclude that all technical issues can or have been addressed, subject to conditions that would ensure an acceptable form of development could go ahead.
- 8.7 Therefore, in its revised and reduced form, Officers conclude that the development is acceptable and recommend it for approval subject to conditions and the completion of the necessary legal agreements.

9.0 Recommendation

- 9.1 That planning permission is GRANTED subject to conditions, a full list of conditions will be provided in the late update report, and the completion of a legal agreement to cover, at least, the following issues:

Section 106 Legal agreement:

1. Provision of road crossing, speed restraints and pavements
2. Provision of contribution to play facilities

Conditions:

1. Outline planning permission (except access)
2. Submission of RM details.
3. Implement approved landscaping
4. Development in accord with zoning plan.
5. No development over single storey in height.
6. Submission of all boundary treatments.
7. Restriction on uses within the existing building including no more than 495m² retailing/details of the subdivision of the existing building.
8. Drainage conditions
9. Recommended access/highway conditions.
10. Highway conditions controlling the detailed design of the access points, construction compounds, construction management plan including hours of operation.
11. Ecological conditions to inform the detailed design, a landscape and biodiversity enhancement and management plan (LBEMP).