

REASONS WHY WILMCOTE STATION SHOULD NOT BE INCLUDED IN NPFF DEFAULT FOR DEVELOPMENT RULE

1. Listed Footbridge – Inherent Accessibility Failure

Heritage Constraints Prevent Inclusive Access

Wilmcote station includes a listed footbridge. Because it is listed:

- Structural alteration is heavily restricted.
- Installation of lifts or ramps is extremely difficult, if not practically unachievable.
- Any significant alteration would face heritage objections and high cost barriers.

Disabled Access Problem (Fundamental Policy Conflict)

Passengers can:

- Travel northbound from Wilmcote (e.g., toward [Birmingham](#)) on the Birmingham-bound platform.

However:

- On return, they must use the opposite platform.
- Access requires climbing the listed footbridge steps.
- There is no step-free access between platforms.

This creates a situation where:

- A disabled passenger can leave Wilmcote.
- But cannot independently return.

This is a serious Equality Act and inclusive transport issue.

Conflict with NPPF Sustainability Principles

The Government's station-led development policy assumes:

- Inclusive access.
- Genuine public transport usability.
- Social sustainability.

Wilmcote station fails on inclusive access at a structural level.

A station that is unusable for mobility-impaired residents cannot reasonably justify high-density housing growth.

2. No Parking & Severely Limited Physical Capacity

No Meaningful Car Parking

Wilmcote station:

- Has no proper commuter car park.
- Cannot realistically expand parking due to:
 - Village constraints
 - Rural road layout
 - Heritage constraints
 - Green Belt/open countryside context
- If major housing were approved:
- Residents would drive to other stations.
- On-street parking pressure would increase.
- Village congestion would worsen.

This contradicts the policy aim of reducing car dependency.

3. Limited Train Frequency & Network Capacity

Wilmcote is a small rural station on a line with:

- Limited service frequency.
- Limited peak-time capacity.
- No evidence of infrastructure upgrades planned to absorb major growth.

Even if 10,000+ additional residents were permitted in surrounding developments:

- The current service could not absorb a major commuter increase.
- Platforms and waiting areas are extremely small.
- There are no significant passenger facilities.
- No capacity modelling demonstrates resilience for high-density expansion.

A station cannot be used as justification for growth if:

The rail network has neither service frequency nor physical infrastructure to support it.

4. Catchment Reality – It Does Not Function as a Strategic Commuter Hub

For a railway station to justify “default yes” development, it must function as:

- A meaningful commuter node
- With reliable return journeys
- With inclusive access
- With capacity to scale

Wilmcote station is not.

6. Rural Context – Not an Urban Transport Node

Wilmcote is:

- A small rural village
- With limited services
- Without employment centres
- Without secondary transport integration (no major bus interchange, no park-and-ride, no cycling hub)

The presence of a lightly served rural station does not transform a settlement into a sustainable growth location.

7. Infrastructure Mismatch

If proposals anticipate 10,000+ additional passengers:

There is:

- No confirmed line upgrade.
- No platform extension programme.
- No passing loop improvements announced.
- No accessibility improvement scheme.
- No parking expansion.
- No pedestrian access redesign.

Planning policy requires infrastructure to be:

Deliverable, funded, and aligned with growth.

None of this is currently demonstrated.

8. Practical Example of Unsustainable Outcome

A resident with mobility impairment:

1. Travels to Birmingham from Wilmcote.
2. Returns later that day.
3. Cannot access the opposite platform independently.
4. Must rely on assistance, alternative stations, or avoid travel entirely.

That is not a functioning sustainable transport node.

9. Strong Policy Argument Summary

You can argue that Wilmcote station:

- **✗** Is not inclusive.
- **✗** Is capacity-constrained.
- **✗** Is service-limited.
- **✗** Has no parking provision.
- **✗** Cannot scale to support high-density housing.
- **✗** Is heritage-constrained.
- **✗** Would remain car-dependent even with development.

Therefore:

The mere existence of Wilmcote railway station should not trigger any presumption in favour of major housing development under revised NPPF “default yes” proposals