

APPENDIX 2

Wiltshire Local Plan Review

Royal Wootton Bassett – Pool of Potential Development Sites

Site Selection Report

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Purpose

The purpose of this paper is to explain how the Council has arrived at a pool of potential development sites from which development proposals needing greenfield land may be chosen.

Context - Wiltshire Local Plan Review

1. The Wiltshire Core Strategy is the central strategic part of the development plan for Wiltshire that sets the legal framework for planning decisions and is the basis that all neighbourhood plans must follow. It covers the period 2006-2026.
2. The Wiltshire Local Plan Review is being prepared to update the Wiltshire Core Strategy with a plan period of 2016- 2036.
3. An important part of keeping the development plan up to date is ensuring that development needs are met. This means accommodating new homes, business and other new uses supported by the necessary infrastructure; and finding land on which to build them.
4. As much as possible of the land needed will be previously developed land. Inevitably, in lots of cases, to meet the scale of need forecast, towns will also expand. A challenging part of planning for the future is therefore managing the loss of countryside by identifying the most appropriate land to develop on the edges of our settlements. This is the focus of this document.
5. This paper documents the stages reached in the site selection process for the settlement and concludes by showing a pool of reasonable alternative sites that could be appropriate for development around the built-up area of Royal Wootton Bassett – a pool of potential development sites. The content of this paper explains how this set of potential development sites has been arrived at. The Council consider these sites to be the reasonable alternatives based on a range of evidence and objectives of the plan that will be further assessed, including through sustainability appraisal.
6. Development proposals can be formulated using sites chosen from this pool. How much land depends upon the scale of need for development forecast over the plan period.
7. At Royal Wootton Bassett the requirement emerging is for an additional 1,255 new homes over the plan period 2016 – 2036. From this overall requirement can be deducted homes already built (2016-2019) and an estimate of homes already committed and in the pipeline in the form of either having planning permission awaiting completion, resolution to grant planning permission, or on land allocated for development in the Wiltshire Core Strategy. Taking account of this amount approximately 1,026 additional homes remain to be planned for over the plan period.
8. How this scale of growth was derived is explained in an accompanying report to this this one called 'Emerging Spatial Strategy'.

Summary of the site selection process

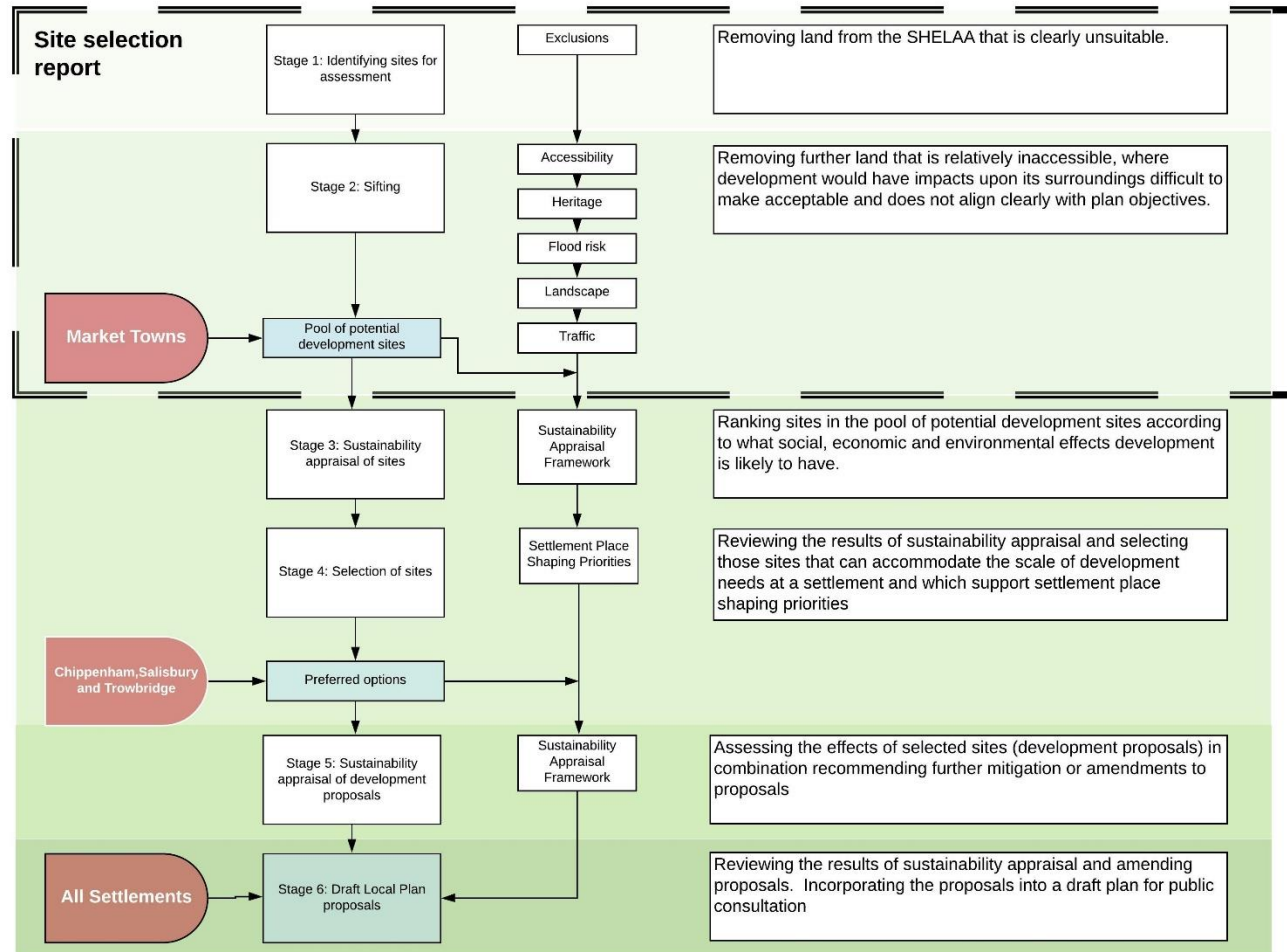


Figure 1 Site Selection Process

The starting point – ‘Strategic Housing and Employment Land Availability Assessment’

9. Figure one shows the entire site selection process. This document covers stages 1 and 2.
10. The Strategic Housing and Economic Land Availability Assessment¹ (SHELAA) provides the pool of land from which sites may be selected. The SHELAA is a register of land being promoted for development by land owners and prospective developers. Parcels of land are submitted for consideration for inclusion in Wiltshire Council’s plan, as well as Parish and Town Council neighbourhood plans².
11. Plan preparation and not the SHELAA determines what land is suitable for development as it selects the most appropriate sites.

Stage 1 – Identifying Sites for Assessment

12. This initial stage of the site selection process excludes those SHELAA sites from further consideration that constitute unsuitable land for development.

Stage 2 - Site Sifting

13. A second stage assesses further those sites that have passed through Stage 1 and results in a set of reasonable alternatives for further assessment through sustainability appraisal.
14. Using a proportionate amount of evidence³, more land is therefore removed from further consideration. It can be removed because it is relatively inaccessible and where development would have impacts upon its surroundings that would be difficult to make acceptable.
15. To determine what land to take forward for further consideration and which not, however, also involves considering how much land is likely to be needed and what areas around the settlement seem the most sensible. Such judgements take account of:
 - (i) emerging place-shaping priorities⁴ for a community (these outline what outcomes growth might achieve);
 - (ii) the intended scale of growth;
 - (iii) what future growth possibilities there are for the urban area;
 - (iv) what the past pattern of growth has been; and
 - (v) what significant environmental factors have a clear bearing on how to plan for growth.⁵

¹ Information about the Strategic Housing and Employment Land Availability Assessment can be found on the Council website <http://www.wiltshire.gov.uk/planning-policy-monitoring-evidence>

² Other land, not included in the SHELAA, may possibly be capable of development but because neither a developer nor landowner has promoted the site for development, the site cannot readily be said to be available within the plan period.

³ To meet national requirements, plans must be sound, justified by having an appropriate strategy, taking into account the reasonable alternatives, and based on *proportionate evidence*³.

⁴ The role and function of place shaping priorities is explained in the settlement statement

⁵ Regulations on the selection of sites allow those preparing plans to determine reasonable alternatives guided by the ‘plans objectives’ so long as this is explained. This stage does so explicitly.

16. It may be appropriate for some SHELAA land parcels to be combined together to create more sensible or logical development proposals. Parcels of land may therefore be assembled together into one site for further assessment. This stage allows these cases to be recorded⁶.

Next Steps in the site selection process

17. The result of this part of the site selection process is a set of reasonable alternative sites. Where greenfield land must be built on to meet the scale of need, land for development proposals will be chosen from this pool. Views on each site are invited alongside a settlement's suggested scale of growth over the plan period (2016-2036) and the plan's priorities for the community. The results of consultation will inform the formulation of development proposals.
18. Each of the sites in the pool of reasonable alternatives will be examined in more detail. They will be subject to sustainability appraisal, stage three. This assesses the likely significant effects of potentially developing each site under a set of twelve objectives covering social, economic and environmental aspects. It helps to identify those sites that have the most sustainability benefits over those with less. It also helps to identify what may be necessary to mitigate adverse effects and what measures could increase benefits of development.
19. The most sustainable sites are those most likely to be suited to development. Sustainability appraisal may recommend sites, but it is also important to select sites that support the plan objectives and strategic priorities for a settlement, in particular. Carrying out this selection of sites is stage 4.
20. Stage 3 sustainability appraisal looked at how each potential development site performed individually. Stage 5 carries out sustainability appraisal looking at development proposals together and what effects they may have in combination. This will lead to amended proposals and more detailed mitigation or specific measures to maximise benefits from development.
21. Development proposals are also subject to more detailed assessments; by viability assessment to ensure that they can be delivered and by assessment under the Habitats Regulations in order to ensure no adverse effects on Natura 2000 sites. The results of these steps may amend development proposals.
22. Stage 6 therefore draws in the work of viability assessment, habitats regulation assessment and sustainability appraisal to produce proposals that can be published in a draft version of the reviewed Local Plan, which will then be published for consultation.
23. As stated previously, this document only covers stages 1 and 2 in detail. These stages are described further in the following sections.

⁶ Land promoted for development is defined by land ownership boundaries and over what land a prospective developer has an interest. It does not necessarily represent what land is needed for a logical or sensible development proposal. A logical proposal may be smaller or larger or combine different owners' interests.

Stage 1 Site Exclusions

24. This stage starts with all SHELAA land parcels on greenfield land at the edge of Royal Wootton Bassett and ensures they are appropriate for site selection. Land parcels that are not or could not be extensions to the existing built up area are not included. Figure 2 shows sites that have been excluded. Site 751873 has been excluded because it is in flood zone 2 and 3 and site 3515 has been excluded because of its small size.

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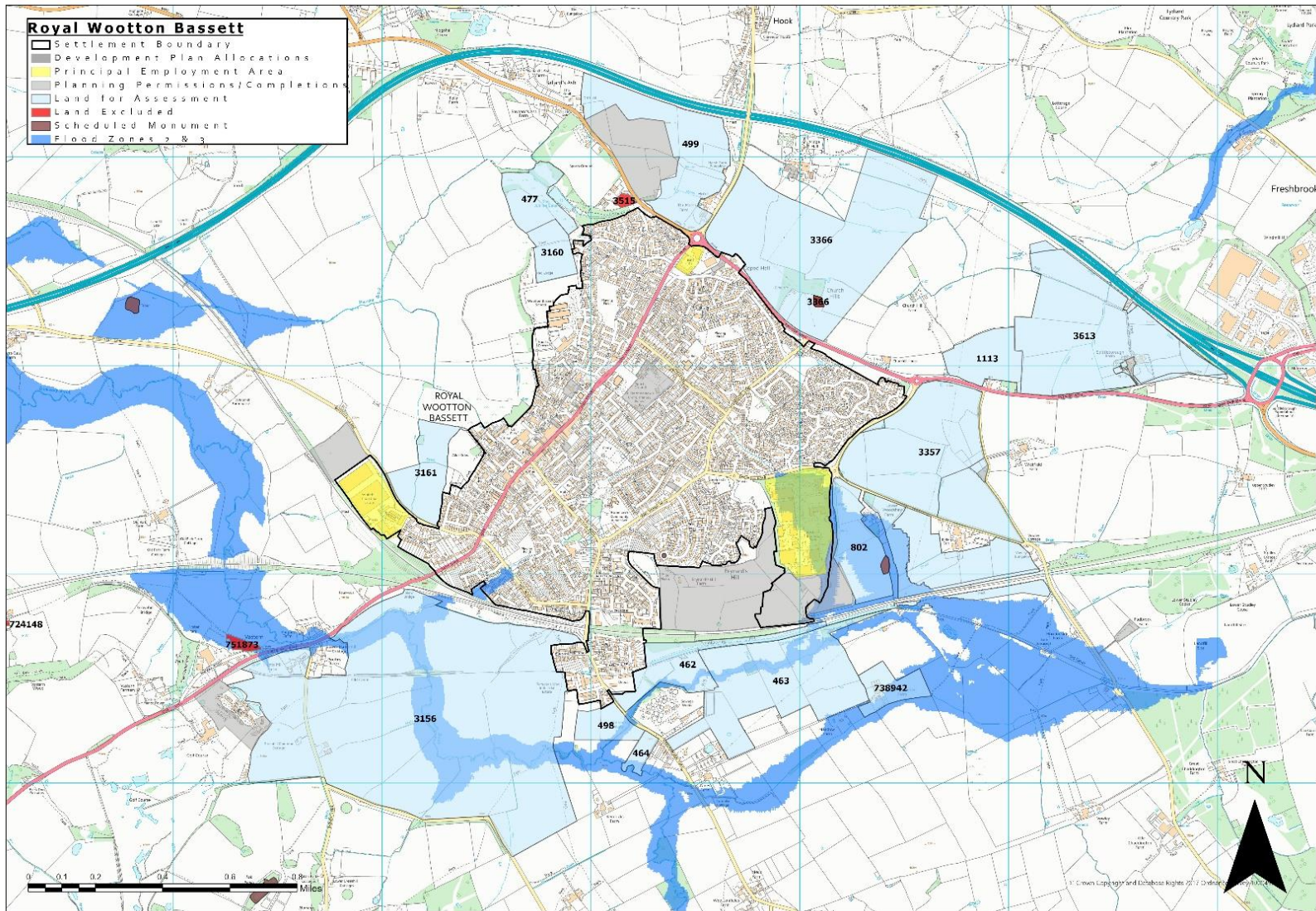


Figure 2 Map showing stage 1 SHELAA land excluded

Stage 2 Site Sifting

Methodology

25. This stage of the site selection process sifts out sites to provide a reasonable set of alternatives for further assessment. There are two parts to this stage of the process (A) accessibility and wider impacts and (B) strategic context.

A. Accessibility and wider impacts

26. Firstly, the individual merits of each site are assessed to understand their strengths and weaknesses in terms of how accessible a site location may be and what wider impacts could result from their development. Sites more likely to have unacceptable impacts or which are relatively inaccessible are less reasonable options.

Accessibility

27. Sites that are relatively inaccessible are much less likely to be reasonable alternatives and may be rejected from further consideration.
28. Accessibility is represented as a heat map of travel times on foot, cycling and public transport to important destinations for residents - the town centre, principal employment areas (including employment allocations), secondary schools and hospital and health centres (including GP surgeries).
29. Sites are categorised overall as low accessibility (red), medium accessibility (amber) or high accessibility (green).

Wider impacts

30. **Landscape:** A site that creates a harmful landscape or visual impact that is unlikely to be successfully mitigated may be rejected.
31. **Heritage:** Assets outside the sites under consideration may be harmed by development. This stage identifies where those assets are, their nature and importance, and assesses the potential for harm that may result from the development of some sites.
32. **Flood Risk:** All land on which built development may take place, by this stage of the selection process, will be within zone 1, the areas of the country with minimal flood risk. Flood risks from all sources are a planning consideration, this step will identify sites where development may increase risks outside the site itself.
33. **Traffic:** Developing some sites may generate traffic that causes an unacceptable degree of harm, in terms of worsening congestion. Others may be much better related to the primary road network (PRN). This can lead to other harmful impacts such as poor air quality or impacts upon the local economy.
34. The results of each of these 'wider impact' assessments are gathered together and categorised as high (red), medium (amber) and low (green) level of effects for each site under each heading.

B. Strategic Context

35. Having gained a picture of the relative strengths and weaknesses of each site, the next step is to draw this information together and decide which ones would be part of a pool of reasonable alternatives and which ones not.
36. Unlike the first part of this stage, this requires judgement about what pool of possible land for development constitutes a set of reasonable alternatives for consideration at a settlement. This must not pre-judge more detailed testing of options but rule out others that are clearly less likely to be characterised as being reasonable options and therefore unnecessary to assess in greater detail at later stages.
37. The distribution and number necessary to provide a reasonable pool of alternative sites can be influenced by each settlement's role in the spatial strategy and the scale of growth to be planned for, by the pattern of growth that has taken place at a town as well as significant environmental factors. This is called the site's strategic context.
38. Whilst the first set of evidence provides information about each individual site, evidence in the form of a settlement's 'strategic context' provides the basis for further reasoning by which some land parcels are selected for further consideration and others rejected. They can indicate future growth possibilities, directions to expand, for an urban area.
39. This strategic context evidence describes the settlement's:
 - Long-term patterns of development
 - Significant environmental factors
 - Scale of growth and place shaping priorities
 - Future growth possibilities for the urban area
40. Referring to these aspects, there can be several influences upon whether a site is taken forward for further consideration. Common examples would be:
 - The scale of the pool of sites that will be needed. The less additional land is needed the smaller a pool of sites may need to be and so perhaps only the very best candidates need to be considered further.
 - What SHELAA sites may be consolidated into one (and sometimes which ones not). A historic pattern of growth, or the need for a new direction of growth may recommend a SHELAA site is combined with another in order to properly test such an option.
 - A desirable pool of sites might favour a particular distribution or set of locations because it might help deliver infrastructure identified as a place shaping priority for the settlement.

- Continuing historic patterns or, in response to a significant environmental factor, looking for new directions for growth may recommend a site that helps to deliver such a course.
41. Sometimes these influences will not bear on site selection. In other instances, they may be important.
42. A description of the settlement strategic context for Royal Wootton Bassett is shown in the table below:

Royal Wootton Bassett Strategic Context

Context criteria	Detail
Long-term pattern of development	<p>Most recent developments occurred to the south and south-east of the town: Brynard's Hill and Lower Woodshaw, Interface Business Park, and Whitehill Lane Industrial Estate. Developments elsewhere, at St Ivel and Rylands Sports Field, complement these.</p> <p>A proposed housing allocation to the north west on land at Maple Drive was not endorsed through the neighbourhood plan examination but remains a consideration.</p>
Significant environmental factors	<p>The escarpment to the west of the town prevents large scale development due to elevated ground and visual effects of development. To the south, the rail line constitutes a man-made barrier and there are few crossing points into the town.</p> <p>To the south-east, flood plains are an obstacle to development. To the north and east, the open countryside and the M4 separate Royal Wootton Bassett from Swindon. Capacity at Swindon Road and M4 Junction 16 may constrain further development to the north of the town.</p>
Scale of growth and strategic priorities	<p>The indicative scale of growth proposed is 1,026 dwellings and 6 ha of employment land for up to 2036.</p> <p>Strategic priorities seek to maintain the separation with Swindon; maintain capacity at M4 Junction 16; maximise sustainable transport solutions; provide additional employment; maintaining the town's historical setting; increase infrastructure capacity; safeguard and restore the Canal; and to conserve and enhance environmental assets. A Swindon Parkway station is considered to be a long-term strategic priority to provide an alternative to road transport.</p>
Future growth possibilities for the urban area	<p>There are opportunities for future growth, although most sites around the town are constrained by landscape sensitivity.</p> <p>Land to the south of the town is less constrained in transport terms and would continue the past direction of growth. Flood risk may reduce overall site capacities here.</p> <p>Other opportunities for development include the north-west of the town near to Maple Drive and to a limited extent to the east of the town.</p> <p>A neighbourhood plan review is being initiated. The Plan could complement strategic growth through targeted small-scale development that delivers against specified local priorities.</p>

Combining sites

43. Assessment may also suggest combining sites together. To be combined land must:
- be a smaller parcel within a larger one, the smaller site will be absorbed and subsequently removed; or
 - abutting each other and not have any strong physical barrier between them, such as a railway, river or road.

Site Assessment Results

44. The following table shows the results of Stage 2. It sets out judgements against each of the SHELAA sites, taking into account both the accessibility and wider impact considerations and strategic context described above. It identifies where it may be appropriate to combine sites and which sites should and should not be taken forward.
45. The map that follows illustrates the results of this stage of the process showing those sites that have been removed and those that should go forward for further assessment through sustainability appraisal.






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SHELAA Reference	Site Address	Accessibility	Flood Risk	Heritage	Landscape	Traffic	Stage 2A and Stage 2B - Overall judgement	Taken Forward
462	Land South of Wootton Bassett - Part A	Yellow	Yellow	Green	Yellow	Green	<p>Much of the site to the north and the thin strip to the east is taken up with the old canal green infrastructure corridor. The site also bounds the railway embankment green infrastructure corridor that is heavily wooded. This leaves a small area of land between the existing council depot and the sewage works available for development.</p> <p>The site should go forward for further assessment as there does not appear to be any overriding significant impacts that justify rejecting the site at this stage.</p>	✓
463	Land South of Wootton Bassett - Part B	Yellow	Green	Green	Red	Green	<p>The site is isolated from the existing settlement boundary and the outlying housing along Marlborough Road. Whilst generally well screened and visually unobtrusive there could be views from Brynards Hill (Site 507) onto the site which would be difficult to mitigate, that would create urban encroachment into the countryside and detract from the views to the AONB ridge line beyond. A smaller portion to the west of the site may be able to accommodate some development along Marlborough Road. The proposed route of restored Wilts and Berks Canal should be respected in any development. Development should be limited to avoid a new conspicuous urban edge.</p> <p>The site should go forward for further assessment as there does not appear to be any overriding significant impacts that justify rejecting the site at this stage.</p>	✓
464	Land South of Wootton Bassett - Part C	Yellow	Yellow	Green	Yellow	Green	<p>While overall there are no direct adverse effects identified, the site is isolated from the settlement boundary and should be excluded, in conjunction with the isolated land parcel 498 to the south of the flood zone (see below).</p>	✗
477	Land West of Maple Drive	Green	Green	Green	Yellow	Yellow	<p>The southern part of this site in combination with site 3160 was previously included in the submission version of the RWB NP. The site is within 1,500m of a congested corridor. It scores well in accessibility terms. There is more limited capacity in the north of the site due to the presence of woodland. There are potential views to the north and west, and any design would need to consider surrounding green corridors.</p> <p>At this stage the evidence suggests taking the site forward as parts of the site could be suitable.</p>	✓

SHELAA Reference	Site Address	Accessibility	Flood Risk	Heritage	Landscape	Traffic	Stage 2A and Stage 2B - Overall judgement	Taken Forward
498	Templars Way Industrial Estate	Green	Yellow	Green	Yellow	Green	<p>Parts of the site south of the flood zone may be less suitable as it may become isolated from the remainder of the site. The site scores well in accessibility terms, is not close to a congested corridor. The proposed route of the restored Wilts and Berks Canal should be respected in any development.</p> <p>The site should go forward for further assessment as there does not appear to be any overriding significant impacts that justify rejecting the site at this stage. Employment use would be preferred to housing, to avoid sterilising the existing employment site to the north.</p>	✓
499	Marsh Farm	Green	Green	Yellow	Red	Yellow	<p>The site is highly visible from surrounding roads including the M4. The development risks coalescence with Ballard's Ash, Hook, and Coped Hall. It may be possible to develop a smaller portion of the site to the south if sensitively integrated into the landscape Contribution of site to setting of Grade 2 listed "The Marsh" requires assessment. The site scores well in terms of flood risk and accessibility.</p> <p>Part of the site at the Coped Hall roundabout benefits from planning permission for a care home.</p> <p>The site should go forward for further assessment as there does not appear to be any overriding significant impacts that justify rejecting the site at this stage.</p>	✓
802	Lower Woodshaw Farm	Green	Green	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow	<p>The Sift 2 assessment considered only the parts of this site which are outside Flood Zone 2.</p> <p>The southern parcel would not be suitable in planning terms as it is separated from the settlement by unsuitable land. The northern part while closer to the settlement would be 'attached' to Interface Business Park but form a small isolated development of approx. 2 ha and is not considered suitable on its own in the interest of good planning.</p> <p>Exclude the site from further consideration due to the limited amount of unconstrained land and isolation from the settlement.</p>	✗
1113	Land North of Swindon Road	Yellow	Green	Green	Red	Yellow	<p>The site is within 500m of a congested corridor. The site is separated from site 3357 and the town by Swindon Road, which forms a clear barrier to connectivity. The site has views over the</p>	✗

SHELLAA Reference	Site Address	Accessibility	Flood Risk	Heritage	Landscape	Traffic	Stage 2A and Stage 2B - Overall judgement	Taken Forward
							<p>countryside to the north and broken distant views to the North Wessex Downs AONB to the south. There is a risk of coalescence between the settlements of Royal Wootton Bassett and Swindon.</p> <p>The site should therefore be excluded from further consideration on landscape grounds.</p>	
3156	Land South of Wootton Bassett						<p>The site is highly prominent with key views across to the skyline of Royal Wootton Bassett and surrounding countryside. If the site were developed it would risk coalescence with the small hamlet of Vastern and the surrounding farmsteads. There is also the risk of coalescence with the Wiltshire Crescent development on the nearby Golf course, in a rural setting. The Brinkworth Brook Green Infrastructure corridor provides a logical landscape boundary feature in the area south of Wootton Bassett. There should be no development south of the Brinkworth Brook for landscape reasons. There are opportunities to sensitively design wetland areas to accommodate SUDS and areas prone to flooding adjacent to the Brinkworth Brook, while creating new habitat and amenity features. A smaller portion of the site north of the Brinkworth Brook may be able to accommodate some development.</p> <p>Route of historic Wilts and Berks Canal should be respected in any development. The site would remove the agricultural setting of Grade 2 Hunt Mill Farm.</p> <p>This is a large site and constraints identified do not apply to the whole site. The site should go forward for further assessment as there does not appear to be any overriding significant impacts that justify rejecting the site at this stage.</p>	✓
3160	Land West of Maple Drive						<p>This site in combination with the southern half of 477 was previously included in the submission version of the RWB NP. The site is within 1,500m of a congested corridor. It scores well in accessibility terms. The site is well located in landscape terms for additional housing.</p> <p>The site should go forward for further assessment as there does not appear to be any overriding significant impacts that justify rejecting the site at this stage.</p>	✓
3161	Land at Whitehill Lane						<p>About 50 per cent of the site (the northern half) is shown as a town park supported in RWB NP Policy 3. It scores well in accessibility terms. While in a highly prominent location, and open to</p>	✓

SHELLAA Reference	Site Address	Accessibility	Flood Risk	Heritage	Landscape	Traffic	Stage 2A and Stage 2B - Overall judgement	Taken Forward
							<p>views, this site does offer the opportunity to create a gateway development into the urban settlement.</p> <p>The site should go forward for further assessment as there does not appear to be any overriding significant impacts that justify rejecting the site at this stage.</p>	
3357	Land at Woodshaw						<p>The site has views over the countryside to the north and distant views to the North Wessex Downs AONB to the south. There is a risk of coalescence between the settlements of Royal Wootton Bassett and Swindon. The site is between 500 and 1,000m of a congested corridor. A smaller portion of the site to the north east of the site may be able to accommodate some development if sensitively integrated into the landscape.</p> <p>This smaller portion of the site may be suitable for employment development due to the proximity to the strategic road network. The site should go forward for further assessment as there does not appear to be any overriding significant impacts that justify rejecting the site at this stage.</p>	✓
3366	Land adjoining Midge Hall Farm						<p>The site is highly visible from surrounding roads including the M4. The development risks coalescence with Hook and Coped Hall. Development would contribute to coalescence with Swindon. The site wraps round the Grade 2 farmstead and would lead to the loss of its agricultural setting.</p> <p>A large proportion of the site is within 500m of a congested corridor. It may be possible to develop a smaller portion of the site to the west adjacent to the A3102 if sensitively integrated into the landscape.</p> <p>This smaller portion of the site may be considered suitable for employment development due to the proximity to the strategic road network.</p> <p>The site should go forward for further assessment as there does not appear to be any overriding significant impacts that justify rejecting the site at this stage.</p>	✓

SHELAA Reference	Site Address	Accessibility	Flood Risk	Heritage	Landscape	Traffic	Stage 2A and Stage 2B - Overall judgement	Taken Forward
3613	Spittleborough Farm / W of M4 J16						<p>The site is close to a congested corridor (500m). The site is clearly separated from the town. The site has views over the countryside to the north and is relatively well screened to the south. There is a risk of coalescence between Swindon and Royal Wootton Bassett.</p> <p>Exclude site from further consideration on landscape grounds.</p>	X

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The following sites have been combined:

Ref	Reason
477 3160	Both sites abut one another to the north-west of the town.
462 463	These sites abut one another and are located south of the railway.

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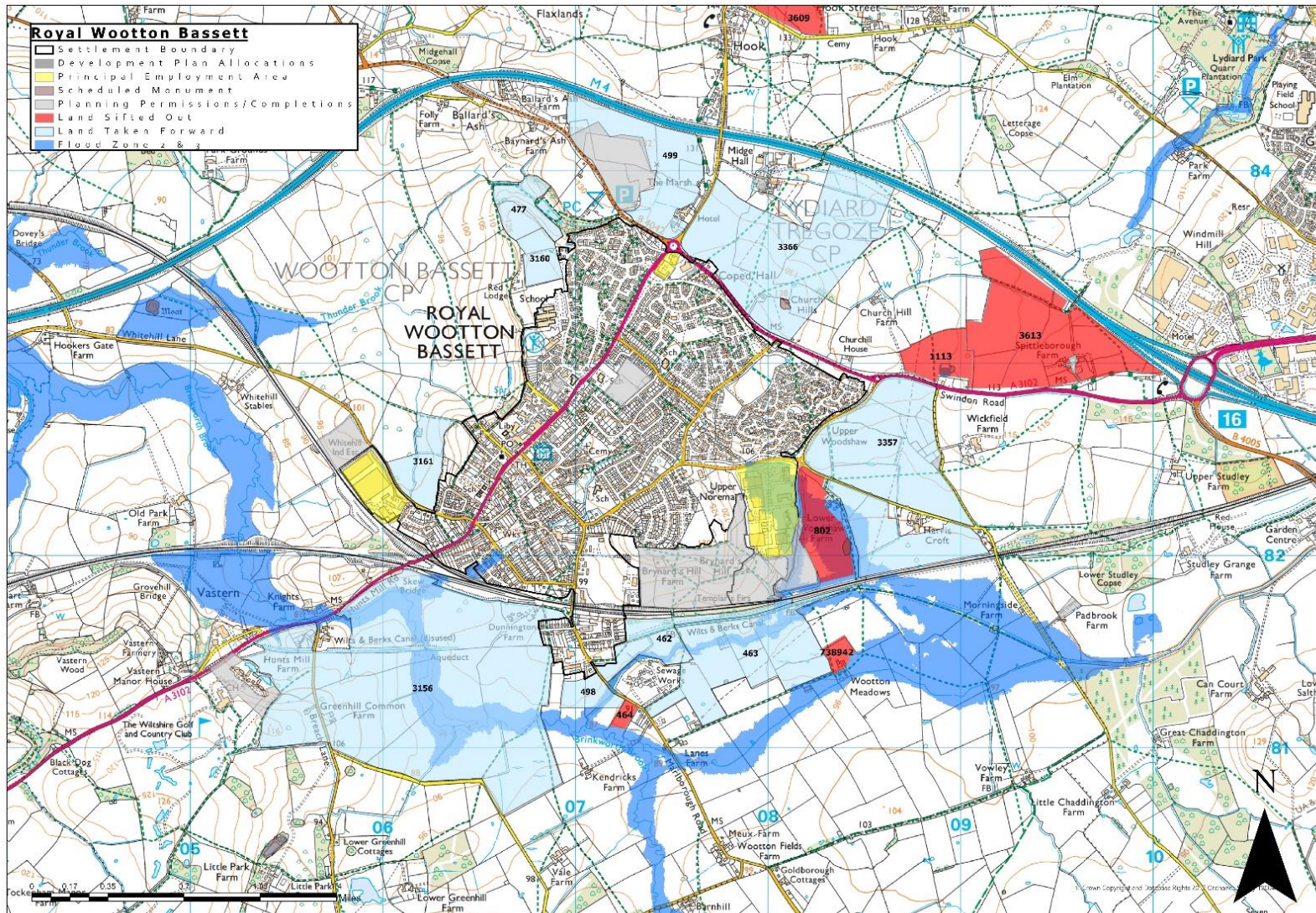


Figure 3 Map showing results of Stage 2 SHELAA land sifting

Conclusion

46. The following sites show the final pool of potential development sites. From these sites may be selected those necessary to meet scales of growth and priorities for the town over the plan period. Only some of the sites, if any, will be developed and not every part of those sites will be developed due to the need to include land for mitigation.

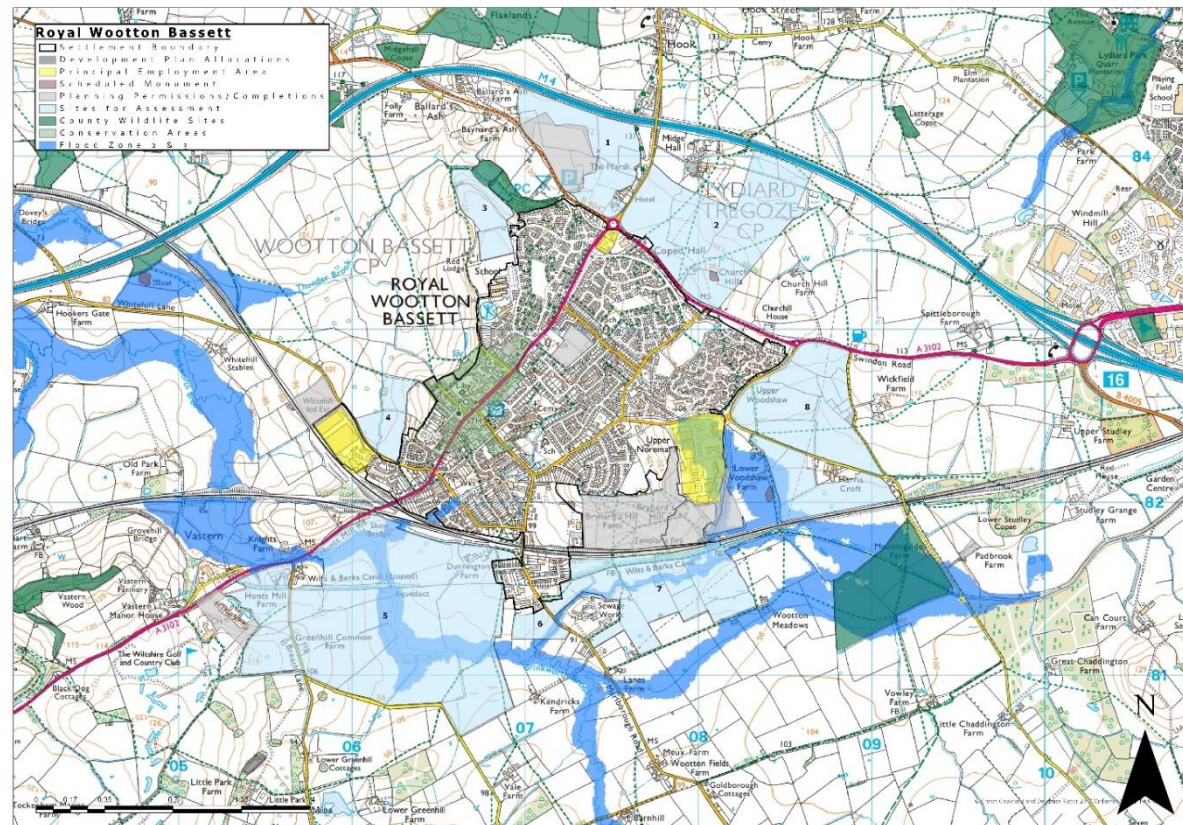


Figure 4 Map showing pool of potential development sites