

January 2021



Marlborough

Wiltshire Council LOCAL PLAN

Looking to the future

Site Selection Report
for Marlborough



Wiltshire Council

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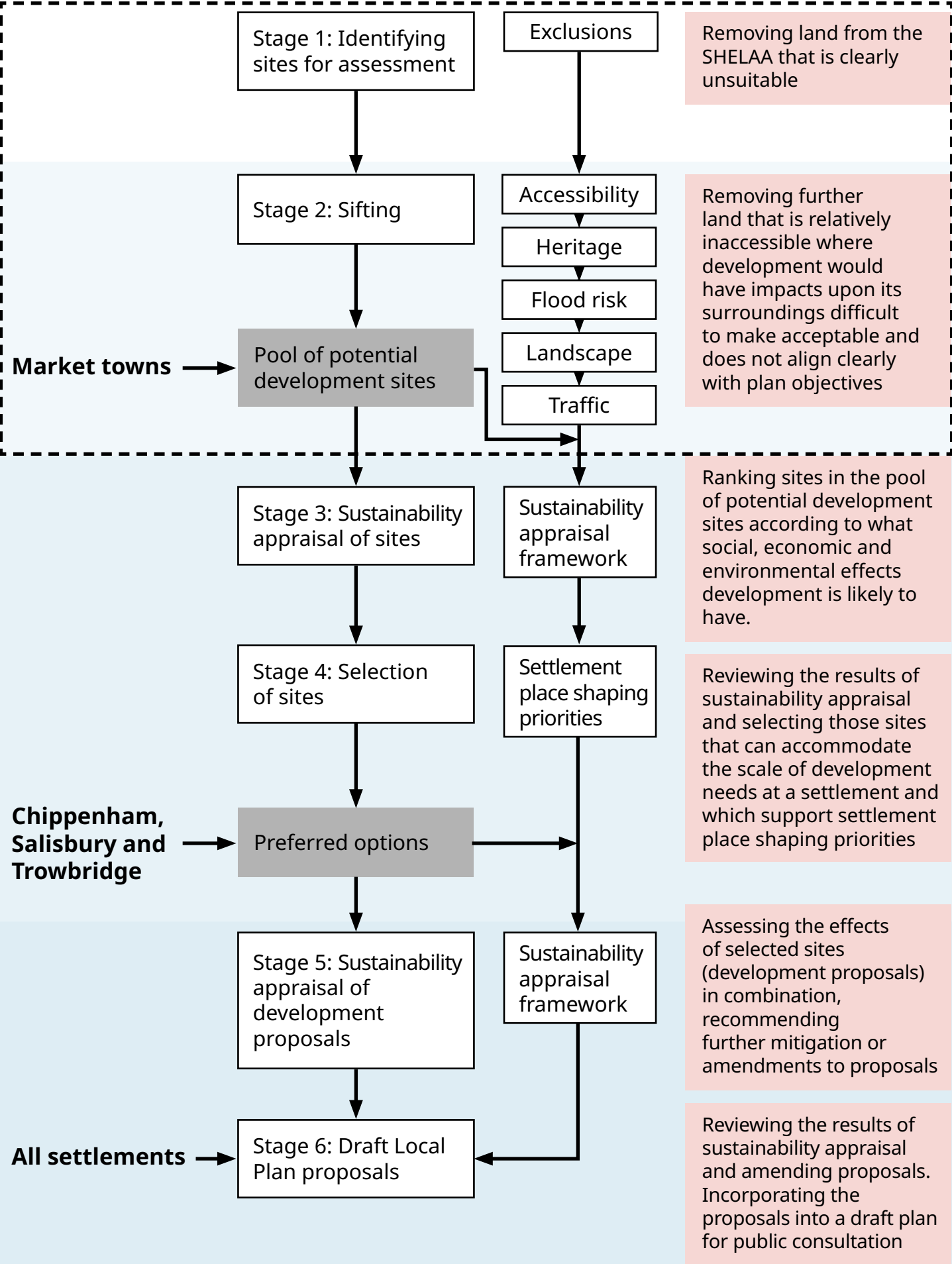
Purpose

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 the reasonable alternative sites that could be appropriate for development around the built-up area of Marlborough – 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 considers 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 Marlborough the requirement emerging is for an additional 680 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 245 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 one called 'Emerging Spatial Strategy'.

Figure 1: Summary of the 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
 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.

¹Information about the Strategic Housing and Employment Land Availability Assessment can be found on the Council website.

²Other 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.

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

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

⁵Regulations 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.

⁶Land 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.

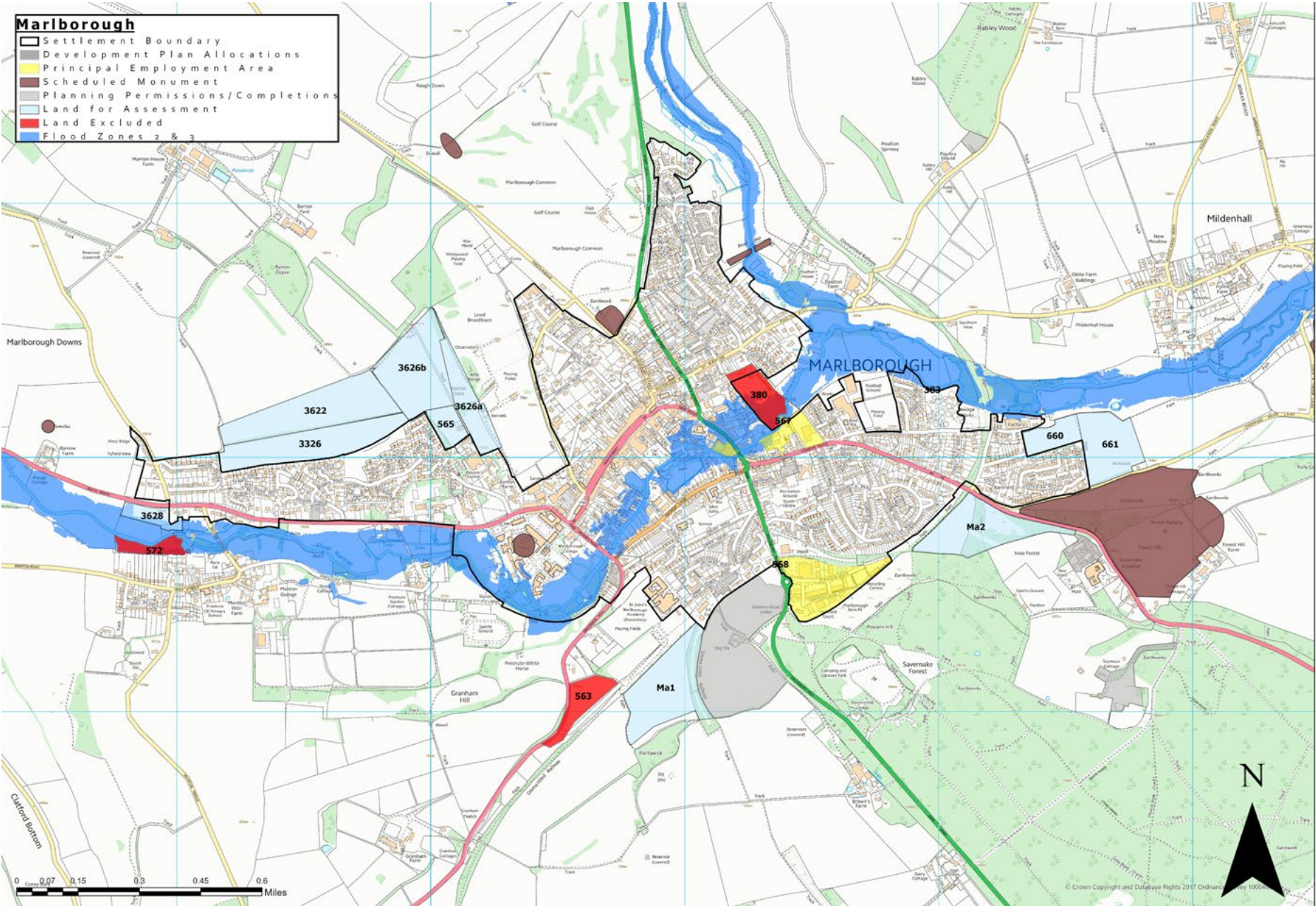
Next Steps in the site selection process

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 that is a reasonable alternative will be examined in more detail. They will be subject to sustainability appraisal, which is stage three in the site selection process. 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 for 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 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 Regulations 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.

Stage 1 Identifying Sites for Assessments

24. This stage starts with all SHELAA land parcels on greenfield land at the edge of Marlborough 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 that three sites have been excluded due to being in flood zone 2 and 3 or not being well related to the existing settlement.

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

flood 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 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 that 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 Marlborough is shown in the table below:

Marlborough Strategic Context

Context criteria	Detail
Long-term pattern of development	<p>The River Kennet dissects the town with the urban form sitting to the north and south of this defining landform. Historically the town has also developed along the routes formed by the A4 running east/west and the A346 running north/south. More recently development has taken place to the East at Chopping Knife Lane and to the South at Salisbury Road. This spread of development has expanded to those less environmentally sensitive areas.</p> <p>Future development must tackle any potential significant negative effects to the surrounding Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty.</p>
Significant environmental factors	<p>Marlborough sits within the North Wessex Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty which is a significant constraint to development for all of the sites under consideration. When considering areas of land for future growth, careful consideration must be given to the conservation and enhancement of this designated landscape.</p> <p>The Savernake Forest Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) fringes the town to the south east while the River Kennet SSSI sits to the east of the town.</p> <p>County Wildlife sites are present within and around the town, namely:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rivers Kennet and Og • Stonebridge Meadows • Granham Hill

Context criteria	Detail
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chiseldon to Marlborough Railway Path • Postern Hill Chalk • Chopping Knife Lane Bank <p>There are areas of flood risk associated with both the River Kennet and Og.</p>
Scale of growth and place shaping priorities	<p>The scale of growth is relatively modest. When taking into consideration growth already in the pipeline the residual will require limited allocations in terms of number and scale.</p> <p>Place shaping priorities include the need to prioritise local needs for affordable homes. This will require enough new housing whilst respecting objectives of AONB designation, retaining the character and setting to the town. Further priorities involve maintaining the town's role as a locally important employment centre and the improvement of infrastructure to fully meet the town's needs, in particular additional health service and educational facilities. Improving accessibility, traffic management and parking in and around the town centre is a further priority.</p>
Future growth possibilities for the urban area	<p>The likeliest future growth patterns continue past directions; to the east, to the south (extending from the Salisbury Road development as allocated within the Wiltshire Core Strategy); or to the west.</p> <p>There are some SHELAA sites outside the broad extent of the urban area. However, some sites may enable suitable mitigation to be achieved when considering the designated AONB covering the surrounding countryside.</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.

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.

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.

SHELAA Reference	Site Address	Accessibility	Flood Risk	Heritage	Landscape	Traffic	Stage 2A and Stage 2B - Overall judgement	Taken Forward
3326	Land at College Fields						<p>This site sits to the north of existing residential development, with open countryside to its northern and eastern boundary.</p> <p>Sitting within the North Wessex AONB on a south facing hill, prominent across the Kennet valley, development here may affect the views over towards the AONB across the other side of the valley. The accessibility of the site is average, lying to the west of the town centre and associated amenities. The site may impact upon local congested corridors and the Marlborough AQMA with any harmful effects needing mitigation.</p> <p>Overall, the impact on the AONB is the main concern and will require substantial mitigation to enable this site to be acceptable for development. Areas of the site would likely need to remain undeveloped to aid screening. However, given the mitigation required to reduce the impact upon the AONB is an attribute shared by many sites this is insufficient reason to exclude the site at this stage</p> <p>Take forward for further assessment.</p>	✓
565	Land off Barton Dene						<p>This site, also within the AONB, borders existing residential development with open countryside to the north and east.</p> <p>Sitting close proximity to congested corridors and the Marlborough AQMA, analysis will be needed to demonstrate the ability to mitigate harmful effects. It is currently unclear how this site would be accessed. This feasibility of access will therefore need to be assessed further, unless considered in combination with other sites.</p> <p>The site sits on the south facing hill prominent across the Kennet valley, affecting the views over towards the AONB.</p>	✓

SHELAA Reference	Site Address	Accessibility	Flood Risk	Heritage	Landscape	Traffic	Stage 2A and Stage 2B - Overall judgement	Taken Forward
							<p>While extending into the AONB, this site does sit in a slight valley that may help to screen and reduce impacts, but this would need further assessment.</p> <p>Insufficient reason to exclude the site at this stage. Should be considered in combination with sites 3626a and 3626b, which are located adjacent to the site to the north and east.</p> <p>Take forward for further assessment.</p>	
660	Further Land at Chopping Knife Lane						<p>Sitting to the east of the settlement, this land adjoins the settlement boundary on its southerly and westerly extent with the north and east being bordered by open countryside.</p> <p>The site may impact upon local congested corridors and the Marlborough AQMA with any harmful effects needing mitigation. In landscape terms, the site is within the AONB, bounds the Kennet River Green infrastructure corridor and has open views down the Kennet valley to the east. Mitigation would be necessary to provide a strong buffer of landscaping, perhaps in conjunction with site 661. In heritage terms, the site is adjacent to the Grade II listed Elcot Mill and Stable Block with residential development here potentially impacting on the rural setting of the heritage asset.</p> <p>Take forward for further assessment. While this site may become developable on its own, given the level of development required at the settlement in combination with the potential mitigation measures necessary to alleviate negative effects, it appears appropriate to combine this site with 661 to consider one logical extension.</p>	✓

SHELAA Reference	Site Address	Accessibility	Flood Risk	Heritage	Landscape	Traffic	Stage 2A and Stage 2B - Overall judgement	Taken Forward
661	Land North of Chopping Knife Lane						<p>Sitting to the east of the settlement, within the AONB, this land adjoins the settlement boundary and site 660 along its western boundary. The northern boundary adjoins Chopping Knife Lane while the southern and eastern boundaries adjoin open countryside.</p> <p>The site may impact upon local congested corridors and the Marlborough AQMA with any harmful effects needing mitigation. Sitting slightly further away from the town centre and associated amenities, accessibility is less favourable at this site. In landscape terms, the site bounds the Kennet River Green infrastructure corridor and has open views down the Kennet valley to the east. Mitigation would be necessary to provide a strong landscape buffer, perhaps in conjunction with site 660. In heritage terms, the site sits adjacent to 660 which abuts Elcot Mill and Stable Block. Impact on the rural setting of this heritage asset will therefore need to be assessed further.</p> <p>Take forward for further assessment. While this site may become developable on its own, given the level of development required at the settlement in combination with the mitigation necessary to alleviate negative effects, it appears appropriate to combine this site with 660 to consider one logical extension.</p>	✓
3622	Land to NW of Barton's Green						<p>This land is bounded by open countryside, not adjoining the current settlement boundary (the nearest point to the settlement boundary is approx 50m) and extends into the AONB. The southern boundary adjoins site 3326. Sitting further north, the site sits more exposed on the south facing hill that is prominent across the Kennet valley potentially breaching the skyline and affecting the views over towards the AONB and beyond, especially from the A345.</p>	✓

SHELAA Reference	Site Address	Accessibility	Flood Risk	Heritage	Landscape	Traffic	Stage 2A and Stage 2B - Overall judgement	Taken Forward
							<p>If developed, the site may impact upon local congested corridors and the Marlborough AQMA with any harmful effects requiring mitigation. The accessibility of the site is average, lying to the west of the town centre and associated amenities. Overall, the sites impact and encroachment into the open countryside are the main concerns requiring detailed mitigation to enable this site to move forward, indeed areas of the site would likely need to remain undeveloped to aid screening.</p> <p>Given the sites isolated characteristic, it only appears an option if developed in combination with site 3326 to the south. Take forward for further assessment. Extending the urban form into the surrounding countryside and the AONB to such an extent seems unnecessary within the plan period however to enable suitable mitigation to be achieved this site should be carried forward at this stage.</p>	
3626a	Land at Barton Dene						<p>The site forms a finger of land that extends northwards into the AONB to the west of the town. It forms one of a cluster of sites (565, 3626a and 3626b) sitting to the north of existing development. Sitting on the south facing hill prominent across the Kennet valley, development may affect the views over towards the AONB.</p> <p>Lying in close proximity to congested corridors and the Marlborough AQMA, development of the site would require mitigation to alleviate any adverse impact upon these constraints.</p> <p>Given the level of development required at the settlement in combination with the mitigation necessary to alleviate negative effects, it would be appropriate to combine this site with 565 and 3626b to consider one logical extension.</p>	✓

SHELAA Reference	Site Address	Accessibility	Flood Risk	Heritage	Landscape	Traffic	Stage 2A and Stage 2B - Overall judgement	Taken Forward
							Take forward for further consideration. While development among these parcels of land have potential for significant landscape impacts, particularly in the more exposed northern section, other parts of the site could accommodate some development.	
3626b	Land at Barton Dene II						<p>Lying to the west of the town, this site forms the northerly extent of a cluster of sites (565, 3626a and 3626b) sitting to the north of existing development. The site extends into the AONB. Sitting further north than surrounding sites and the existing built form, the land is prominent across the Kennet valley, affecting views towards the AONB</p> <p>The site may impact upon local congested corridors and the Marlborough AQMA with any harmful effects needing mitigation. This more northerly and detached position makes accessibility poorer to important destinations in the town.</p> <p>On its own the site is not particularly well related to the settlement, and so only becomes available in combination with sites 565 and 3626b, which together form one logical extension.</p> <p>Take forward for further consideration. While development among these parcels of land have potential for significant landscape impacts, particularly in the more exposed northern section, other parts of the site could accommodate some development.</p>	✓
3628	Land South of Bath Road						<p>Lying to the far west of the settlement boundary, this land is on the urban fringes of the town bounded to the north by the A4 and south by the River Kennet corridor.</p> <p>Its proximity to the river Kennet leaves much of the southern and western parts of the site within flood zones 2 and 3. The location to the western edge of Marlborough means accessibility to the</p>	✗

SHELAA Reference	Site Address	Accessibility	Flood Risk	Heritage	Landscape	Traffic	Stage 2A and Stage 2B - Overall judgement	Taken Forward
							<p>town and associated amenities is poorer than other areas. If developed, the site may impact upon local congested corridors and the Marlborough AQMA with any harmful effects requiring mitigation. The site has largely good boundary screening directly from Bath Road, with intermittent views from the other side of the valley along Manton Road. Lower lying, this site is less prominent to the surrounding landscape although mitigation would be necessary to prevent harmful urban encroachment into the AONB.</p> <p>However, the site has a distinctly remote and rural feel to it, largely due to the density of the built form thinning out noticeably along the Bath Road when travelling westwards away from the town. This low-density context, along with flood risk issues mean that this site should be excluded from further consideration.</p>	
Ma1							<p>The site is adjacent to a Wiltshire Core Strategy allocation at Salisbury Road, located to the east and which now has planning permission for 175 homes, currently being built out. The St Johns secondary school is located directly to the north. The remainder of the site is bounded by open countryside to the south and west.</p> <p>If developed, the site may impact upon local congested corridors and the Marlborough AQMA with any harmful effects requiring mitigation. Moderate risk of pluvial flooding has been assessed on this site and the associated management measures would likely reduce site capacity. Further assessment would be necessary to understand this risk and associated mitigation in more detail. In landscape terms, the site is located within the AONB but appears to be nestled on the lower slope of a broad valley which appears to reduce views from the surrounding area.</p>	✓

SHELAA Reference	Site Address	Accessibility	Flood Risk	Heritage	Landscape	Traffic	Stage 2A and Stage 2B - Overall judgement	Taken Forward
							<p>The path of the old railway line green infrastructure corridor forms the eastern boundary of the site. Further assessment will be required to ensure that protecting the setting and landscape of the AONB would be feasible.</p> <p>While there are some likely complexities to negotiate, individually or together these do not suggest that this site should be rejected at this stage.</p> <p>Take forward for further assessment.</p>	
Ma2							<p>Lying to the east of the settlement, this site is bounded by the A4 to the north, settlement boundary to the west and open countryside along with Savernake forest Site Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) to the south.</p> <p>If developed, the site may impact upon local congested corridors and the Marlborough AQMA with any harmful effects requiring mitigation. In landscape terms the site benefits from some hedgerow boundaries screening the lower northern section of the site. However, the land slopes up steeply to the south which may render it unsuitable for development while requiring careful planning in terms of roof lines and building locations to ensure the development does not crest the screening line of hedging around the site. The site is also in an elevated location within the AONB, forming a prominent feature in the landscape while being adjacent to the Savernake Forest SSSI to the south. This site is also largely formed of the Postern Hill Chalk County Wildlife Site.</p> <p>Given the level of development required at Marlborough and the other site options available, it seems unnecessary to consider this less favourable site given the likely complexities in achieving development along with the necessary mitigation at this stage.</p>	✗

The following sites have been combined:

Ref	Reason
660 and 661	These sites abut each other and have no strong physical barriers. In combination, they form a more logical parcel of land extending the existing built area and offer more flexibility to form a logical urban extension capable of offering mitigation against harmful effects.
545, 3626a and 3626b	These sites abut each other and have no strong physical barriers. In combination, they form a more logical parcel of land extending the existing built area and offer more flexibility to form a logical urban extension capable of offering mitigation against harmful effects.
3622 and 3326	These sites abut each other and have no strong physical barriers. In combination, they offer more flexibility to form a logical urban extension capable of offering mitigation against harmful effects.

Conclusion

46. **The map on page 20** shows 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 3: SHELAA land excluded at Stage 2

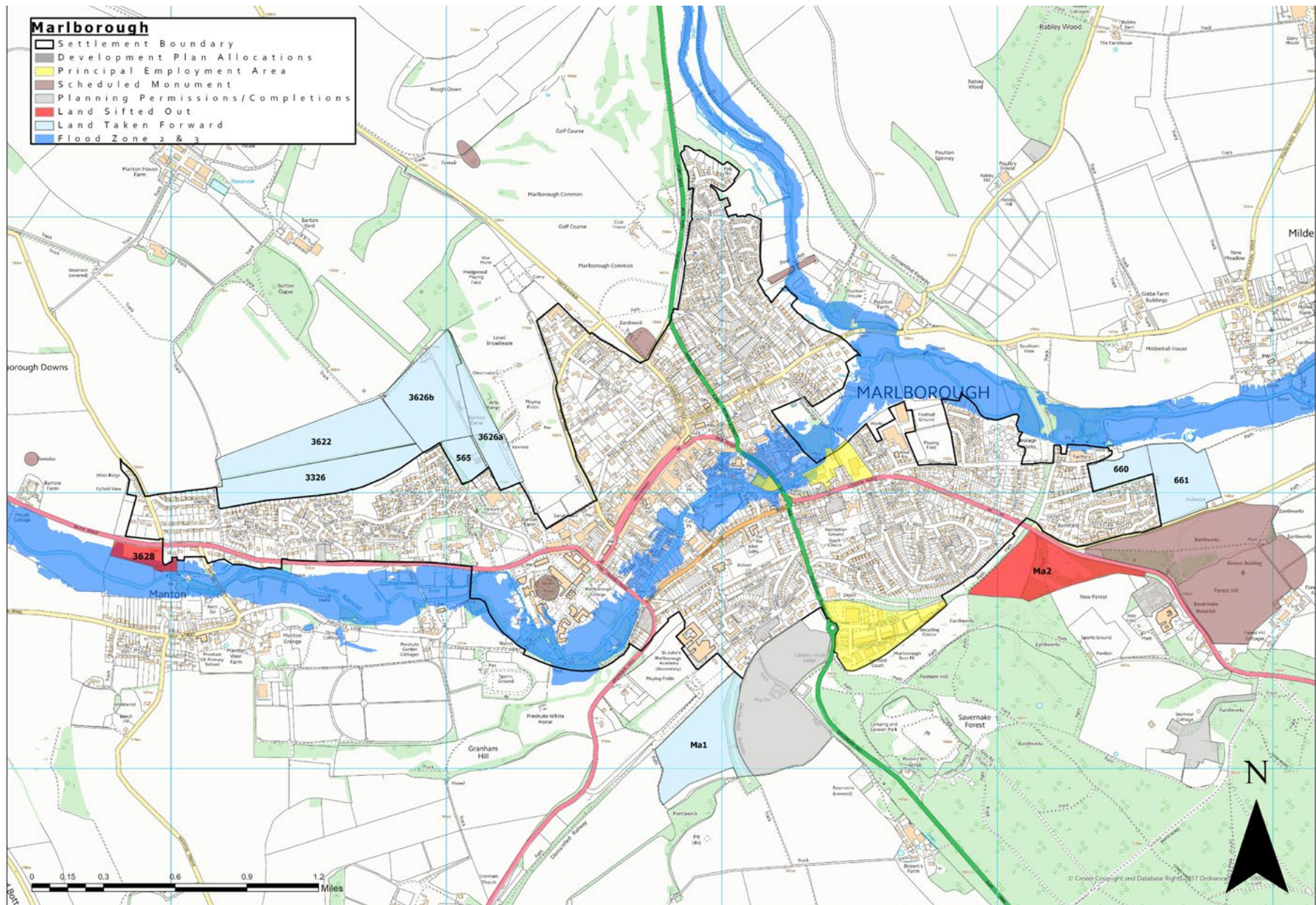
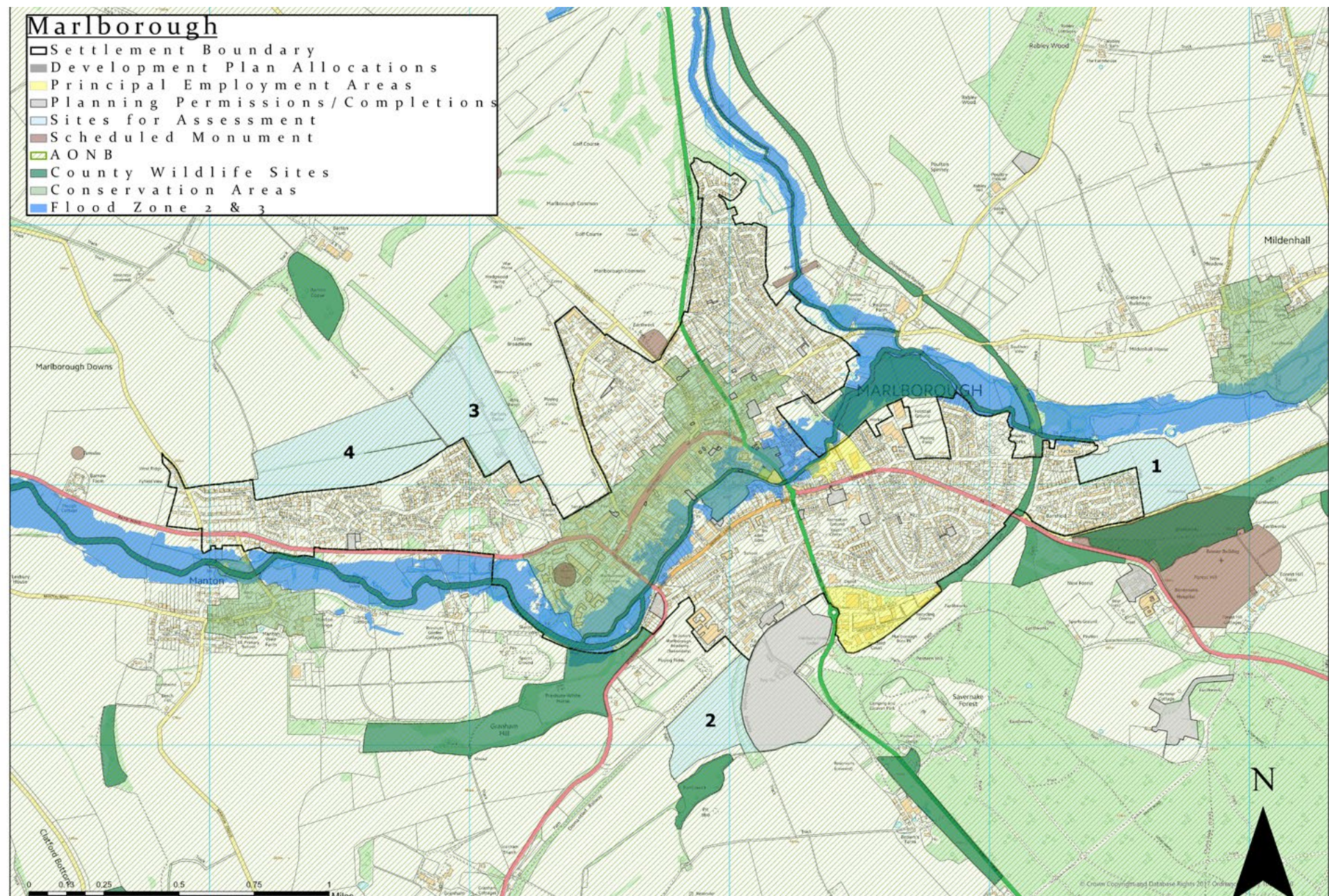


Figure 4: Final pool of potential sites for further detailed assessment'



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**This document was published by the Spatial Planning Team,
Economic Development and Planning, Wiltshire Council**
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www.wiltshire.gov.uk