



Hinckley & Bosworth
Borough Council

Hinckley & Bosworth Borough Council

Local Plan 2024–2045

Interim Site Selection and Discount Paper

Interim document to support the Regulation 19 Pre-Submission Local
Plan

August 2026

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1.0 Introduction

Purpose of this paper

- 1.1 Hinckley and Bosworth Borough Council has prepared a Regulation 19 Pre-Submission Local Plan (consultation scheduled for August to September 2026). The Local Plan allocates land to deliver housing and to support other development needs, including employment, open space and community uses, over the period 2024 to 2045.
- 1.2 This Site Selection and Discount Paper explains how the Borough Council decided which sites to allocate in the Local Plan and, just as importantly, why the great majority of the sites promoted to the Council were not allocated. It sets out the process that was applied, the order in which it was applied, the evidence used at each point, and the reason each site was discounted.
- 1.3 The paper is written to serve three audiences:
 - residents, parish and town councils and other interested parties, who should be able to find a site they are concerned about and understand in plain terms why it was or was not allocated;
 - officers, who need a process that can be applied consistently and repeatably to several hundred sites, and re-applied if and when new evidence emerges; and
 - the Planning Inspector appointed to examine the Local Plan, and anyone taking part in the examination, who needs to be satisfied that the selection of sites is justified, that reasonable alternatives have been properly considered, and that the process is transparent and evidence-led.

Relationship to previous site selection work

- 1.4 The Borough Council published a Site Selection Paper in October 2025 alongside the Regulation 18 draft Local Plan. That paper explained the three broad stages of the process as it then stood: the Strategic Housing and Economic Land Availability Assessment (SHELAA); detailed evidence gathering and site assessment; and Sustainability Appraisal. It made clear that the paper would be reviewed and updated to detail the final stage of site selection, and would be published alongside the draft Plan at Regulation 19. This paper is that update.
- 1.5 The process described in Section 6 is not a different process. It applies the same tests, in the same order, using the same evidence. What has changed is that it is now expressed as five sequential 'sifts', each with a single question and a single recorded outcome, so that the precise point at which each site left the process can be identified, recorded and understood. Table 7 sets out how the stages consulted upon in 2025 map onto the five sifts used in this paper.
- 1.6 This paper also builds on the draft allocations published at the Regulation 19 Pre-Submission consultation in February to March 2022, the Regulation 18 consultation in July to September 2024, and the Regulation 18 consultation in October to November 2025. Some sites identified as preferred options at those earlier stages have since

been discounted. Where that is the case, the reason is recorded in the same way as for any other discounted site, together with an explanation of what has changed.

What this paper does and does not do

- 1.7 This paper explains the site selection and discount process in full, signposts the evidence relied upon at each sift, and explains how the outcome for every site is recorded. The record itself — the outcome for each individual site — is held in the accompanying site assessment spreadsheet, which is published alongside this paper. This paper explains the method; the spreadsheet records its application.
- 1.8 This paper does not:
- re-publish the evidence base. Where a judgement rests on technical evidence — for example landscape sensitivity, transport, heritage, ecology, flood risk or viability — the relevant study is identified and should be read alongside this paper;
 - duplicate the Strategic Housing and Economic Land Availability Assessment, which is the Borough Council's assessment of land availability and is published separately. It is one of the sources of information available at Sift 2. It is not the mechanism by which sites are selected or discounted through this process (paragraph 6.23);
 - duplicate the Sustainability Appraisal, which is the record of the appraisal of the selected sites and the reasonable alternatives and is published separately; or
 - determine planning applications. A decision not to allocate a site is not a decision that planning permission would necessarily be refused. Sites which are not allocated may still come forward through the development management process where they accord with the policies of the Local Plan and national policy as a whole.

How to find a particular site

1.9 Readers looking for the reasoning on a particular site should follow four steps:

Step 1	Look at the flow chart at Appendix 1. It shows the whole process on a single page: the five sifts, the question asked at each, and the point at which a site leaves the process.
Step 2	Open the site assessment spreadsheet published alongside this paper and go to the worksheet for the relevant tier of the settlement hierarchy — Urban, Key Rural Centres, Rural Villages, Rural Hamlets, or Other Countryside Locations. The two proposed new settlements are on a separate worksheet.
Step 3	Find the site by its settlement and site reference. Read across the row. The sift columns are completed in order and stop at the point the site left the process.
Step 4	Read the final two columns of that row for the outcome and, where the site was not selected, the discount reason code (D1 to D5). Then turn to the corresponding part of Section 6 of this paper for the explanation of what that sift tests and why.

Table 1: How to find the reasoning on a particular site

Related evidence base documents

- 1.10 All evidence that is relevant to a site has been taken into account. All evidence is available on the website: [Evidence base, supporting documents and studies | Evidence base and supporting studies | Hinckley & Bosworth Borough Council](#), and listed in Appendix 5 of the Regulation 19 Local Plan.

2.0 Policy and legal context

National Planning Policy Framework

2.1 The Local Plan 2024–2045 is being prepared under the National Planning Policy Framework published in December 2024 ('the Framework'). The sifting process has been designed to respond directly to the following requirements.

- **Paragraph 11** establishes the presumption in favour of sustainable development. For plan-making this means that plans should positively seek opportunities to meet the development needs of the area, and that strategic policies should as a minimum provide for objectively assessed needs unless the Framework provides a strong reason for restricting development, or any adverse impacts of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits.
- **Paragraph 31** requires plans to be underpinned by relevant and up-to-date evidence which is adequate and proportionate, focused tightly on supporting and justifying the policies concerned. The sifting process reflects this: the depth of work increases as a site progresses, so that detailed assessment is concentrated on the sites realistically capable of being allocated.
- **Paragraph 36** sets out the four tests of soundness. Table 4 explains how the process responds to each.
- **Paragraph 72** requires strategic policy-making authorities to have a clear understanding of the land available in their area through a strategic housing land availability assessment, and to identify a sufficient supply and mix of sites taking into account their availability, suitability and likely economic viability. Those three questions are asked of every site at Sift 2, using whichever of the sources at Table A2.2 bear on the site, so that the same questions are asked of every site whether or not a current land availability assessment exists for it.
- **Paragraph 73(a)** requires at least 10% of the housing requirement to be accommodated on sites no larger than one hectare, unless there are strong reasons why this cannot be achieved. The approach to small sites is explained in Section 5, and the mix of site sizes is considered at Sift 5.
- **Paragraph 78** requires a buffer to be applied to the supply of specific deliverable sites. The 5% buffer applied is set out in Policy PS04.
- **Chapter 9 (paragraphs 114–118)** require significant development to be focused on locations which are or can be made sustainable, and require a vision-led approach to transport. Paragraph 116 makes clear that development should only be prevented or refused on highways grounds where there would be an unacceptable impact on highway safety, or where the residual cumulative impacts on the road network would be severe. Accessibility is considered at Sift 1 and the highway assessment is undertaken at Sift 2.
- **Chapter 11** requires an effective use of land, and paragraph 125(c) requires substantial weight to be given to the value of using suitable brownfield land within settlements. This is given effect through the sequential preference applied at Sift 1 and through the comparison between competing sites and the portfolio considerations applied at Sift 5.

- **Chapter 14** requires a sequential, risk-based approach to the location of development. Land within the functional floodplain is excluded at Sift 2, where the sequential test is also applied; residual flood risk and drainage matters are summarised at Sift 3.
 - **Chapter 15** requires policies to contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment, and paragraph 187 requires the protection of valued landscapes, sites of biodiversity value and soils, recognising the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside and the benefits of the best and most versatile agricultural land. Sites of Special Scientific Interest and the River Mease catchment are applied as constraints of record at Sift 2; all other landscape, ecological and soil matters are considered at Sift 3.
 - **Chapter 16** requires the conservation of heritage assets in a manner appropriate to their significance. Assets of the highest significance — Scheduled Monuments and the Registered Battlefield — are treated as constraints of record at Sift 2; all other heritage matters, including setting and archaeological potential, are considered at Sift 3 alongside the scope for mitigation.
- 2.2 The borough does not contain Green Belt. The Framework's policies on Green Belt, grey belt and the golden rules are therefore not engaged by the site selection process, and no Green Belt review has been necessary. The Borough Council's local landscape and separation designations — principally Green Wedge under Policy NE06 — are locally defined. Whether a site lies within a Green Wedge is recorded at Sift 1, and the effect of development on the purposes of the designation is assessed at Sift 3 rather than being treated as a constraint which rules the site out.

Planning Practice Guidance

- 2.3 The Planning Practice Guidance on Housing and Economic Land Availability Assessment shapes the process in two particular respects.
- 2.4 First, the guidance is explicit that a land availability assessment does not itself determine whether a site should be allocated. It provides information on the range of sites which are available; it is for the development plan to determine which of those sites are the most suitable. The SHELAA is therefore the starting point of the process and not the end of it, and the distinction between the technical SHELAA judgement and the policy judgement made through site selection is maintained throughout this paper.
- 2.5 Second, the guidance provides that a site can be considered suitable if it would provide an appropriate location for development when considered against relevant constraints and their potential to be mitigated. Constraints are therefore not treated as automatically fatal. A site is discounted only where the evidence shows that a constraint cannot reasonably be overcome, or where the harm that would remain after mitigation is unacceptable. This principle runs through every sift and was a matter raised by a number of respondents to the consultation on the SHELAA Methodology.

Legal requirements

- 2.6 The Local Plan is subject to Sustainability Appraisal incorporating Strategic Environmental Assessment under the Environmental Assessment of Plans and

Programmes Regulations 2004. The Sustainability Appraisal is required to identify, describe and evaluate the likely significant effects of implementing the plan and of reasonable alternatives. Sift 4 is the point at which the site options are appraised as reasonable alternatives. The appraisal has been prepared iteratively alongside the Plan rather than as a retrospective justification of decisions already taken.

- 2.7 The Local Plan is also subject to Habitats Regulations Assessment under the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017. The River Mease Special Area of Conservation, which the north-western part of the borough drains towards, is the principal European site engaged.
- 2.8 The Borough Council worked collaboratively with neighbouring authorities, statutory consultees, infrastructure providers and other relevant organisations throughout the preparation of the Plan. This engagement has informed the strategy, evidence base and site selection process, particularly in relation to cross-boundary infrastructure, the strategic road network and the distribution of housing and strategic distribution floorspace across the Leicester and Leicestershire Housing Market Area and Functional Economic Market Area. The outcomes of that engagement are recorded separately in Statements of Common Ground and other supporting documents. An Equality Impact Assessment and a Health Impact Assessment have also been prepared and have informed the Local Plan as a whole.

How the process responds to the tests of soundness

Test of soundness	What is required	How the sifting process responds
Positively prepared	The Plan must provide a strategy which as a minimum seeks to meet the area's objectively assessed needs.	Every sift works towards the requirement in Policy PS04. If insufficient sites remain at Sift 5, earlier sifts are revisited rather than the requirement being reduced. No site is discounted for want of evidence about it.
Justified	The Plan must represent an appropriate strategy, taking into account the reasonable alternatives, and be based on proportionate evidence.	All sites capable of being allocated are carried forward and appraised as reasonable alternatives through the Sustainability Appraisal at Sift 4, together with those sites discounted earlier which remain reasonable alternatives. The choice between competing sites is made once, at Sift 5, on the whole of the evidence, and the reason for discounting each site is recorded against a standard code and tied to the evidence relied upon.
Effective	The Plan must be deliverable over the plan period, including through joint working on cross-boundary strategic matters.	Sift 2 tests whether the site could be brought forward within the plan period. Sift 3 tests whether the harm identified can be mitigated and how that mitigation would be secured. Sift 5 tests confidence in delivery and whether infrastructure needs can be met individually and cumulatively. Statutory consultees and infrastructure providers are engaged throughout the preparation of the Local Plan.

Test of soundness	What is required	How the sifting process responds
Consistent with national policy	The Plan must enable the delivery of sustainable development in accordance with the Framework.	Each sift is tied to an identified requirement of the Framework, as set out at paragraph 2.1 above and in the description of each sift in Section 6.

Table 4: The sifting process and the tests of soundness (Framework paragraph 36)

3.0 The development needs to be met

- 3.1 The purpose of site selection is to identify sufficient land, in the right places, to meet the development needs identified for the borough. Those needs are set out in Policy PS04 (Delivering Sustainable Growth).

Housing

- 3.2 Policy PS04 makes provision over the period 2024 to 2045 for a minimum of 15,687 dwellings (747 dwellings per annum), including a 5% buffer, a contribution towards Leicester City's unmet housing need, and provision towards the specific requirements of self-build and custom housebuilding, affordable housing and Gypsy and Traveller accommodation.
- 3.3 After accounting for completions and commitments, a small site windfall allowance and sites allocated in made neighbourhood plans, the residual requirement to be met through allocations in this Local Plan is 11,487 dwellings. The Plan identifies allocations providing for 14,208 dwellings in total, of which 11,692 are expected to be delivered within the plan period.
- 3.4 The process therefore has to do two things at once: identify enough sites to meet the residual requirement, and provide a degree of flexibility beyond it so that the strategy is resilient if individual sites are delayed or do not come forward as expected.
- 3.5 It follows that the Local Plan deliberately allocates a number of sites which will not be built out in full by 2045. A site is not discounted simply because part or all of its capacity falls beyond the plan period. Where that is the case, the position is recorded and the site contributes to the flexibility of the portfolio and to supply beyond 2045.

Employment

- 3.6 Policy PS04 also makes provision for approximately 65 hectares of general employment land for Use Classes E(g), B2 and smaller-scale B8 uses, and for at least 300,000 square metres of strategic B8 storage and distribution floorspace, supported by a larger allocation portfolio to provide flexibility and resilience in supply.
- 3.7 Employment sites pass through the same five sifts, but the considerations applied at Sifts 1 to 3 differ, because the locational requirements of employment development, and of strategic distribution in particular, are different from those of housing. This is explained at paragraphs 6.61 to 6.65.

Other needs

- 3.8 The Local Plan also makes provision for Gypsy and Traveller accommodation (Policy HH01), open space, sport and recreation (Policies LST03 and LST04) and community, cultural and tourism facilities (Policy LST01). Where land has been promoted for these uses, or where a site has been assessed for a use other than housing or employment, this is identified in the site assessment spreadsheet.

4.0 The spatial strategy and settlement hierarchy

- 4.1 Site selection cannot be understood in isolation from the spatial strategy. The strategy determines where growth should go; site selection determines which particular parcels of land within those locations should be allocated. The two are tested together through the Sustainability Appraisal.
- 4.2 Policy PS04 directs development to sustainable locations in accordance with the spatial strategy and settlement hierarchy, with the majority of development focused within the borough's main urban areas where access to services, employment and infrastructure is greatest.
- 4.3 The settlement hierarchy is set out in the Settlement Hierarchy Paper (2026) and reproduced in the Local Plan. It groups settlements into four tiers according to their role, function and level of service provision. The site assessment spreadsheet is organised on exactly the same basis, with a worksheet for each tier.
- 4.4 Two consequences of the hierarchy are particularly important to site selection.
- 4.5 First, settlement boundaries have been reviewed for all settlements in the top three tiers and are defined on the Policies Map and Settlement Inset Maps. The Borough Council has concluded that it is no longer appropriate to define settlement boundaries for Rural Hamlets, given their limited built form, lack of services and strong relationship with the surrounding countryside. Rural Hamlets and Other Countryside Locations are therefore treated as open countryside for policy purposes and are subject to Policy PS23 (Development in the Countryside) and other relevant policies.
- 4.6 Second, there is not sufficient land within settlement boundaries to meet the residential requirement. It is therefore necessary to allocate sites adjacent to settlements, in accordance with the preferred development strategy and the Settlement Hierarchy Paper (2026). Land adjoining existing settlement boundaries is sufficient to meet the majority, but not all, of the housing requirement, and the strategy accordingly also includes strategic-scale growth, including a new settlement at Lindley Meadows (Policy PS08).
- 4.7 Policies PS19 to PS22 set out the aims and aspirations for each tier of the hierarchy. These policies, together with the settlement profiles which accompany them, are used to test whether a site would support or undermine what the Plan is seeking to achieve in that particular settlement. Site selection is not solely an exercise in identifying sufficient dwelling numbers to meet a housing requirement; equally important is whether a site supports the role and function assigned to a settlement through the Plan and reflects how that settlement operates in practice.

5.0 The site register

- 5.1 The site register is the baseline for the whole process. It comprises every site submitted to the Borough Council or otherwise identified as a potential development site, and it is the pool from which the allocations are drawn. Every site in the register enters Sift 1.

Where the sites came from

- 5.2 Sites are put forward to the Borough Council principally through the Call for Sites exercise, in which sites are submitted by landowners, site promoters, house builders and agents. Other sources include:
- the Brownfield Land Register;
 - existing allocations in the adopted Local Plan and in made neighbourhood plans;
 - sites with extant, lapsed or pending planning permissions;
 - Council-owned land and other public sector land; and
 - vacant and derelict land and buildings identified through Council records.
- 5.3 The Call for Sites has been continuously open throughout the production of the new Local Plan. As at September 2025 the SHELAA database contained approximately 330 sites. The sites considered for this Local Plan, and the outcome for each, are listed in full in the site assessment spreadsheet.

Sites for housing

- 5.4 The SHELAA is an evidence base document on the potential supply of housing, economic, leisure and retail land in the borough. It assesses whether a site is suitable, available and achievable for development and highlights any potential constraints. Where a current SHELAA assessment exists it is a valuable source of evidence at Sift 2. It is not, however, the only source, and it is not a gateway: see paragraph 6.24.

Sites for employment

- 5.5 Employment sites have been drawn from the same sources, supplemented by a separate Call for Employment Sites undertaken to inform the Employment Land and Premises Study Addendum (2025). Employment sites are assessed for two distinct needs: general employment land for Use Classes E(g), B2 and smaller-scale B8; and strategic B8 storage and distribution floorspace in units of 9,000 square metres and above.

Sites promoted for more than one use

- 5.6 Some sites have been promoted for both housing and employment. Where this is the case the site is assessed for both uses, and the assessment records which use, if either, is considered the more appropriate, together with the primary use indicated in the site submission. Sites within Category A employment areas are not considered suitable for housing, consistent with the SHELAA Methodology and Policy EP01.

Small sites

- 5.7 Consistent with the SHELAA Methodology and the joint Leicester and Leicestershire methodology, sites below 0.25 hectares, or which cannot deliver five or more dwellings, are not assessed individually through the land availability assessment. Small sites are not, however, disregarded. The Local Plan makes provision for them in three ways:
- a small site windfall allowance of 1,488 dwellings over the plan period (93 dwellings per annum from 2029 to 2045), based on historic delivery rates evidenced through the SHELAA and monitoring;
 - Policy HH08 (Self-Build and Custom Housing), which supports the delivery of self-build and custom-build plots; and
 - Policy PS24 (Small-scale Residential Development Immediately Adjacent to the Settlement Boundary), which enables limited growth of small sites adjoining the Key Rural Centres and Rural Villages.
- 5.8 Taken together, these mechanisms enable the Borough Council to demonstrate compliance with paragraph 73(a) of the Framework in relation to the 10% small sites target, as set out in the Local Plan.
- 5.9 Separately, a number of sites in the register have not been assessed through the SHELAA, or have a SHELAA conclusion which predates evidence which has since become available. Those sites are neither excluded from consideration nor treated more favourably. The Borough Council does not treat the SHELAA as a gateway to the process. Instead, at Sift 2 the same three questions — is the site available, is it suitable, is it achievable — are asked of every site, answered from whichever of the sources at Table A2.2 are available, and the sources relied upon are recorded. Where the evidence is not sufficient to reach a firm conclusion, the site is carried forward rather than discounted. This is explained at paragraphs 6.22 to 6.24 and 6.34.

6.0 The sifting process

Overview

- 6.1 Every site in the site register is passed through five sifts, applied in the same order. A site which passes moves to the next sift. A site which does not pass leaves the process at that point, is recorded against the discount reason code for that sift, and is not carried any further. The sites which remain after Sift 5 are the sites allocated in the Local Plan.
- 6.2 The sifts move from matters regarding the strategic, to the particular context of a site. Sift 1 asks whether the strategy directs growth to the location at all. Sift 2 asks whether the site could realistically be developed within the plan period, and whether it is affected by anything which cannot be mitigated. Sift 3 draws the remaining topic evidence together into a single summary for each site. Sift 4 records the outcome of the Sustainability Appraisal and the Habitats Regulations Assessment. Sift 5 is the final commentary, in which professional planning judgement is applied to sites which are all, in principle, capable of being allocated. The process is therefore deliberately prescriptive at the front end, where a largely mechanical test is applied to several hundred sites, and deliberately narrative at the back end, where a formulaic approach would obscure rather than reveal the reasoning.
- 6.3 The whole process is shown on a single page at Appendix 1. Readers are encouraged to look at that flow chart first: it shows the sequence of sifts, the question asked at each, and where a site leaves the process if the answer is no. Appendix 2 sets out the criteria applied at each sift. Appendix 3 explains how the outcome is recorded in the accompanying site assessment spreadsheet.
- 6.4 The five sifts are summarised below.

Sift	What it does	Principal evidence	Discount code
Sift 1: Strategic fit	Tests the site against the settlement hierarchy and the spatial strategy, and against its relationship to the settlement boundary and the existing built form.	Settlement Hierarchy Paper (2026); Settlement Boundary Review (2026); the settlement inset maps to the Regulation 19 Local Plan; Policies PS04 and PS19–PS23	D1
Sift 2: Availability, suitability and achievability within the plan period, including any non-mitigatable constraints	Establishes whether the site could realistically be developed within the plan period, and whether it is affected by a constraint which cannot be mitigated — in particular highways and access, planning history, and flood risk.	Local Highway Authority advice and transport evidence; planning history; Strategic Flood Risk Assessment; the Borough Council's constraints mapping; the wider sources at Table A2.2	D2
Sift 3: Summary of other key	Brings the remaining topic evidence together into a single summary for the	Employment Land and Premises Study and Addendum; Strategic Flood	D3

Sift	What it does	Principal evidence	Discount code
constraints and evidence	site: employment, flood risk, heritage, landscape and townscape, ecology, and any other evidence which has informed the Local Plan.	Risk Assessment; Heritage Impact Assessment; Landscape Sensitivity and Capacity Assessment; habitat surveys; Policy NE06 (Green Wedge); other Local Plan evidence	
Sift 4: Sustainability Appraisal outcomes	Records how the site performs against the sustainability objectives, and applies the Habitats Regulations Assessment.	Sustainability Appraisal incorporating Strategic Environmental Assessment (JBA Consulting, 2026); Habitats Regulations Assessment	D4
Sift 5: Final site assessment commentary	Applies professional officer judgement to the sites which remain and states whether the site is selected for allocation, and why.	The outcome of Sifts 1 to 4; the requirement in Policy PS04; completions and commitments; Policies PS19–PS22 and the settlement profiles; representations received	D5

Table 6: Summary of the five sifts

Principles applied at every sift

6.5 Six principles govern the application of the process and should be borne in mind when reading any individual site record.

- **Consistency.** Every site is passed through the same sifts, in the same order, and the same questions are asked of every site. Where judgement is exercised, consistency is achieved through a common structure and through moderation rather than through a fixed checklist or score.
- **Earliest justified point, and proportionate depth.** A site is discounted at the earliest sift at which the evidence justifies it, and is discounted once only. It is not carried through the remaining sifts so that further reasons can be added. The depth of assessment increases as a site progresses, because it is neither necessary nor proportionate to undertake detailed work on a site which has already been shown to be incapable of allocation.
- **The reason given is sufficient to the decision.** A decision not to allocate a site does not require the Borough Council to demonstrate that the site could never be developed. Where the reason is that the strategy does not direct growth to that location, or that another site is the more appropriate means of delivering the growth directed there, that reason is complete in itself. This reflects paragraph 31 of the Framework, which requires the evidence underpinning a plan to be proportionate to the decisions it supports.
- **Constraints are not automatically fatal.** Consistent with Planning Practice Guidance, a constraint results in a site being discounted only where it cannot reasonably be overcome, or where the harm remaining after mitigation would be

unacceptable. Where a promoter has submitted evidence demonstrating that a constraint can be overcome, that evidence has been considered and, where accepted, applied.

- **Absence of evidence is not evidence of unsuitability.** A site is not discounted because the evidence about it is thin. Where the available evidence is insufficient to reach a firm conclusion, that is recorded and the site is carried forward, not removed.
- **Discounting is not refusal.** A decision not to allocate a site is a decision about the most appropriate way of delivering the Local Plan strategy. Sites which are not allocated may still come forward through the development management process where they accord with the policies of the Local Plan as a whole.

Relationship with the stages consulted upon in 2025

6.6 The Site Selection Paper (October 2025) described a three-stage process. The same tests are applied here, using the same evidence. What has changed is that they are expressed as five sequential sifts, so that the specific point at which a site left the process can be identified and recorded consistently across several hundred sites, and so that the final selection stage foreshadowed in the 2025 paper is made explicit. No test has been removed, and no new test has been introduced which was not foreshadowed in the 2025 paper.

Stage in the 2025 paper	Sift in this paper	What has changed
Stage 1: Strategic Housing and Economic Land Availability Assessment	Sift 2	The questions asked are unchanged in substance — is the site available, is it suitable, is it achievable. What has changed is that they are asked of every site in the register, using whichever evidence the Borough Council holds, rather than only of those sites for which a current land availability assessment exists (paragraphs 6.22 to 6.24).
Stage 2: Detailed evidence gathering and site assessment	Sifts 1, 2 and 3	The spatial judgement — is this the right sort of location? — has been separated out and placed first, so that officer time and technical resources are not spent assessing sites which the strategy does not support in any event (paragraph 6.8). The technical analysis described in the 2025 paper is undertaken at Sifts 2 and 3, with Sift 3 bringing the topic evidence together into a single summary for each site.
Stage 3: Sustainability Appraisal	Sift 4	Unchanged in substance. The Sustainability Appraisal remains the appraisal of reasonable alternatives and informs, but does not determine, the selection of sites.
Referred to in the 2025 paper as the 'next stage: Regulation 19'	Sift 5	The 2025 paper stated that the final stage of site selection would be set out at Regulation 19. Sift 5 is that final stage, made explicit: a written officer commentary which draws the earlier sifts together and states whether the site is selected for allocation.

Table 7: How the stages consulted upon in 2025 map onto the five sifts

Sift 1: Strategic fit

Sift	Sift 1 — Strategic fit
The question	Is the site in a location to which the spatial strategy and the settlement hierarchy direct growth; is the scale of growth proposed consistent with the role and function of that settlement; and does the site relate to that settlement and its built form in a way which would make an allocation there a sustainable one?
If the answer is no	The site is not suitable for allocation on strategic grounds. It may still be capable of coming forward through the development management process (discount code D1).

6.7 Sift 1 asks whether the Local Plan directs growth to this location, and whether an allocation here would be consistent with the spatial strategy set out in Policy PS04 and the settlement hierarchy established by the Settlement Hierarchy Paper (2026). It does not ask what the land is physically capable of accommodating, nor how the site compares with other sites in the same settlement. Those questions are asked at Sifts 2 and 5.

Why the strategic test is applied first

6.8 The Borough Council has placed the strategic test at the front of the process for three reasons.

- **Proportionality.** Framework paragraph 31 requires the evidence underpinning a plan to be adequate and proportionate, focused tightly on supporting and justifying the policies concerned. A site in a location to which the strategy does not direct growth could not be allocated whatever the technical evidence showed. Undertaking detailed technical assessment of such sites would not inform any decision, and would divert resources from the sites the Plan can realistically allocate.
- **The strategy has itself been tested.** The spatial strategy and the settlement hierarchy are not assumptions made for the purpose of site selection. They are evidence-based policy positions, established through the Settlement Hierarchy Paper (2026) and appraised through the Sustainability Appraisal, which has tested reasonable alternative spatial strategies and growth scenarios. Applying them at Sift 1 is applying a tested policy position, not pre-judging the outcome.
- **It can be applied to every site equally.** Sift 1 can be applied consistently to every site in the register from information the Borough Council already holds — the settlement, the relationship of the site to the defined settlement boundary and to the built form, and the scale of development proposed. It does not depend on site-specific technical evidence.

6.9 Four safeguards accompany this ordering. No site is removed from the site register: the outcome is recorded for every site, whichever sift it left the process at. Sites

discounted at Sift 1 may still come forward through the development management process. The exceptions at paragraphs 6.18 and 6.19 carry strategically significant sites through to full assessment notwithstanding their location. And where insufficient sites remain at Sift 5 to meet the requirement, the sites discounted at Sift 1 are the first to be revisited (paragraph 6.52).

What Sift 1 considers

6.10 Four matters are considered, in this order.

- **Tier of the settlement hierarchy.** Whether the settlement is one to which the strategy directs growth, and whether the scale of development proposed is proportionate to the role and function of that settlement as identified in the Settlement Hierarchy Paper (2026) and Policies PS19 to PS22. Every site in the Urban Areas, the Key Rural Centres and the Rural Villages passes this part of the test, because the tier itself establishes that the settlement is one to which the strategy directs growth, whether or not an allocation is ultimately proposed there. Sites in the Rural Hamlets and Other Countryside Locations are considered at Section 7.
- **Fit with the spatial strategy.** Whether allocation of the site would deliver, or would undermine, the spatial strategy set out in Policy PS04 and the aims for that tier of the hierarchy.
- **Relationship to the settlement boundary and the built form.** Whether the site lies within the settlement boundary, immediately adjoining it, or away from it and detached from the existing built form of the settlement. The boundaries applied are those shown on the settlement inset maps to the Regulation 19 Local Plan, established through the Settlement Boundary Review (2026).
- **Green Wedge.** Whether any part of the site lies within a Green Wedge designated under Policy NE06. Two Green Wedges are designated in the borough, so for most settlements this question does not arise.

6.11 A site which lies within or immediately adjoining the settlement boundary is, in principle, well related to the settlement whose services and facilities give it its place in the hierarchy. A site which is detached from the built form is not: development there would be unlikely to relate well to the established pattern of development, would be poorly related to services and facilities, and would generate a reliance on the private car, while extending built development into open countryside. As a starting point, a site in that position does not represent a sustainable location for an allocation for the purposes of the Framework.

6.12 That starting point is a consideration, not a rule, and it is not applied mechanically. Where a site is detached from the present built form but there is a reason why an allocation would nevertheless be sustainable, the site is carried forward and the reason is recorded in the Sift 1 column. The circumstances in which this has arisen are principally where the site adjoins, or lies within the wider context of, a proposed strategic allocation which will itself change the built form of the settlement, so that the site would relate to the settlement as it will be rather than as it is; and where the site forms part of a larger proposal which falls to be assessed as a whole.

- 6.13 Where a site lies within a Green Wedge, that fact is recorded at Sift 1 and the effect of development on the purposes of the Green Wedge is assessed at Sift 3, alongside the other landscape and townscape evidence. A site is not discounted at Sift 1 by reason of the Green Wedge designation alone.
- 6.14 In applying those four matters the officer also has regard to the following, which are set out in full at Table A2.1 in Appendix 2: the sequential preference in Chapter 11 of the Framework, and paragraph 125(c) in particular, under which previously developed land within settlements is considered before greenfield land within settlements, which is considered before land adjoining settlements; whether development would result in coalescence or the loss of an important gap between settlements, and whether a logical and defensible settlement edge can be created; and accessibility, having regard to the vision-led approach required by paragraphs 114 to 118 of the Framework.

What discount code D1 does and does not mean

- 6.15 . A site discounted at Sift 1 has not been found to be unsuitable for any development, and no finding has been made about whether it could physically be developed. What has been concluded is that it is not an appropriate site to allocate for growth through the Local Plan, because allocating it would direct development to a location the strategy does not support, at a scale the role of the settlement does not justify.
- 6.16 Development in the smaller rural settlements is not necessarily unsustainable in all circumstances. The Borough Council considers that development in such locations is better managed through the development management process, where the scale, form and justification for a particular proposal can be assessed on its own merits. Opportunities may still arise for:
- appropriately scaled windfall development;
 - self-build and custom-build schemes under Policy HH08;
 - rural exception sites meeting an identified local affordable housing need;
 - rural needs housing under Policy HH09 and the conversion of redundant rural buildings under Policy HH07;
 - small-scale residential development immediately adjacent to the settlement boundaries of Key Rural Centres and Rural Villages under Policy PS24; and
 - the forms of development supported in the countryside by Policy PS23.
- 6.17 This approach enables limited development to come forward where it is justified, while avoiding the allocation of sites for significant growth in locations that do not align with the overall spatial strategy. It is also consistent with Policy PS04, which expressly identifies windfall development and small-scale development adjacent to settlement boundaries as components of housing supply.

Exceptions

- 6.18 Two categories of site are carried through Sift 1 notwithstanding their location, and are assessed at Sift 2 onwards. The first is sites of a strategic scale capable of creating a new settlement. A proposal for a new settlement is not, by its nature, constrained by the service provision of an existing settlement, because it would create

its own services, facilities and infrastructure. It would be circular to discount such a site on the basis that the settlement nearest to it is small. Sites of this scale are therefore assessed in full, with the question of whether they can create a genuinely sustainable community being tested at Sifts 2 and 3 and through the Sustainability Appraisal at Sift 4. These sites are recorded on a separate 'New Settlement Proposals' worksheet in the site assessment spreadsheet.

- 6.19 The second is sites which, although in a lower-tier location, would deliver a specific identified need which cannot be met elsewhere — for example an employment site whose locational requirements can only be met by proximity to the Strategic Road Network, or land required to deliver infrastructure identified in the Plan. Where either exception is applied, the reason is recorded in the Sift 1 column against the site.

Sift 2: Availability, suitability and achievability within the plan period, including any non-mitigatable constraints

Sift	Sift 2 — Availability, suitability and achievability within the plan period, including any non-mitigatable constraints
The question	Is the site available, suitable and achievable for development within the plan period, and is it free of any constraint which cannot be mitigated — in particular a safe and suitable access and the wider highway considerations, the planning history of the site, and the outcome of the Strategic Flood Risk Assessment?
If the answer is no	The site could not realistically be brought forward as an allocation within the plan period, or it is affected by a constraint or would cause harm which cannot reasonably be overcome or mitigated. The site is not carried forward (discount code D2).

- 6.20 Sift 2 is the first substantive assessment of the individual site. It asks two related questions. The first is whether the site is available, suitable and achievable for development within the plan period. The second is whether the site is affected by any constraint which cannot be mitigated. A site which fails on either ground is discounted at Sift 2 under code D2, and the ground relied upon is stated in the entry.
- 6.21 The reference to the plan period requires explanation, because it does not mean that a site must be built out in full by 2045. As paragraph 3.5 explains, the Local Plan deliberately allocates sites which will continue to deliver beyond the plan period, in order to provide flexibility and a continuing supply of housing land. What Sift 2 asks is whether development could realistically commence and make a meaningful contribution within the plan period. A site whose full capacity extends beyond 2045 is not discounted on that ground; the delivery period is recorded and taken into account at Sift 5 in considering the balance and phasing of the allocations as a whole. Because the Plan is prepared on this basis, no separate deliverability stage is required after Sift 5.

The evidence used

- 6.22 The assessment is made by applying the criteria set out in Appendix 2 to each site, using the evidence the Borough Council holds. The criteria are the same for every site and are applied in the same way to every site. What differs between one site and another is which sources bear on the particular site and the particular constraint at issue: an access question is answered from the advice of the Local Highway Authority, a flood risk question from the Strategic Flood Risk Assessment, and so on. Table A2.2 at Appendix 2 lists the sources available and what each is used to establish; they include the Borough Council's constraints mapping, the Local Plan evidence base, planning history, consultee and infrastructure provider responses, officer site visits, the site submission and any technical work provided by the promoter, the Brownfield Land Register, neighbourhood plan evidence, previous plan-making assessments and monitoring information. The officer records the sources relied upon in the Sift 2 column, so that a reader can see not only what was concluded about a site but what that conclusion was based on.
- 6.23 Where sources conflict, the more recent and the more site-specific evidence carries the greater weight, and the reason for preferring one source over another is recorded. Evidence submitted by a promoter is not accepted uncritically, but nor is it disregarded because it was produced by an interested party: it is tested against the Borough Council's own evidence and the advice of the relevant consultee, and accepted where it is robust and consistent with them.
- 6.24 The Strategic Housing and Economic Land Availability Assessment is one of the sources of information listed above. It is not the mechanism by which sites are selected or discounted through this process, and it is not applied as a gateway to it: no site is carried forward, and no site is discounted, by reason of a conclusion recorded in that assessment. This reflects Planning Practice Guidance, which is explicit that a land availability assessment does not itself determine whether a site should be allocated. That judgement is a matter for the plan-making process, and it is made here by applying the criteria at Appendix 2 to each site in turn and recording the result. Sites assessed through this process will be considered again at the next review of the land availability assessment, so that the two evidence bases are reconciled.

Constraints which rule a site out

- 6.25 Certain constraints are of a kind which, where they cover the whole of a site, mean that no feasible development potential can be demonstrated over the long term. Consistent with the definition applied in Section 3 of the SHELAA Methodology, these are in almost all cases imposed by national or international designation. They are matters of record rather than of judgement, and can be applied to every site from the Borough Council's own mapping. They are land within the functional floodplain (Flood Zone 3b); the 22 Scheduled Monuments within the borough; the Battle of Bosworth Registered Battlefield; the seven Sites of Special Scientific Interest within the borough; and major hazardous facilities and their exclusion zones as defined by the Health and Safety Executive. Table A2.3 at Appendix 2 sets out how each is applied.
- 6.26 Partial coverage does not exclude a site. Where such a constraint covers only part of a site, the site is not discounted. The developable area is reduced to exclude the constrained land, the capacity is recalculated on the reduced area, and the

assessment continues. A site is discounted on this ground only where the constraint is so extensive that no meaningful developable area remains.

Highways and access

- 6.27 Highways is the consideration which arises most frequently at Sift 2, because a site which cannot be safely accessed cannot be developed at all, whatever its other merits. The matters considered are:
- **Safe and suitable access.** Whether an access of an appropriate standard can be achieved to the site, having regard to visibility, geometry and the frontage available.
 - **Recorded road speeds.** Whether the recorded 85th percentile speeds on the adjoining highway allow the required visibility splays and crossing facilities to be provided.
 - **Connection to the wider highway network and to other development sites.** Whether the site can connect to the wider network, and whether access is dependent on land in third party control or on the delivery of an adjoining site.
 - **Pedestrian and cycle links.** Whether continuous, safe pedestrian and cycle connections can be provided to the services and facilities of the settlement, including any crossing facilities required.
 - **Residual cumulative impact.** The effect of the development, together with other committed and proposed development, on the local and strategic road network.
- 6.28 These matters are assessed on the advice of the Local Highway Authority, together with National Highways and Warwickshire County Council in relation to the A5, and the South Leicestershire transport evidence. That advice is recorded against each site on a red, amber and green basis. Where the advice is that the site cannot be provided with a safe and suitable access, or that the highway impact could not be mitigated, the site is discounted at Sift 2. Where an issue is identified which can be mitigated, or where no issue arises, the site is carried forward and the mitigation required is recorded and, if the site is allocated, carried into the site-specific policy requirements. This is consistent with paragraph 116 of the Framework, under which development should only be prevented or refused on highways grounds where there would be an unacceptable impact on highway safety, or where the residual cumulative impacts on the road network would be severe.
- 6.29 Where the information needed to reach a conclusion is not yet available — most commonly where recorded speed data has not been obtained — the uncertainty is recorded and the site is carried forward rather than discounted, in accordance with paragraph 6.34.

Planning history

- 6.30 The planning history of a site is direct evidence of what can and cannot be delivered on it. An extant permission, or a site under construction, is evidence that development is acceptable in principle and physically achievable. Where a site has already been built out, or is committed through a permission which is being implemented, it is no longer available to be allocated and is recorded as such: the site contributes to supply as a commitment rather than as an allocation. A refusal, or an appeal dismissed on

grounds which go to the acceptability of development on the site, is evidence to the contrary and is given weight according to the reasons given and the currency of the decision. Pending applications are recorded and the position kept under review.

Flood risk

- 6.31 Land within the functional floodplain is excluded, as set out above. Beyond that, the sequential test required by Chapter 14 of the Framework is applied across the reasonable alternatives, so that development is directed to areas at the lowest risk of flooding. Where the Strategic Flood Risk Assessment identifies flood risk on a site which could not be managed through layout, sustainable drainage and the retention of undeveloped corridors, the site is discounted at Sift 2. Where flood risk can be managed, the position is recorded and carried forward, and the residual matters are summarised at Sift 3.

Availability, suitability and achievability

- 6.32 Suitability asks whether the site would provide an appropriate location for development when considered against the relevant constraints and their potential to be mitigated. The matters considered are listed at Table A2.4 in Appendix 2. Availability asks whether there is a reasonable prospect that the land will be released for development — whether the owner or promoter intends to bring it forward, and whether there is any ownership, tenancy, ransom strip, covenant or other legal impediment. Achievability asks whether development would be viable and could realistically be delivered, having regard to the Whole Plan Viability Assessment, market conditions and the characteristics of the site.
- 6.33 A negative finding is not, of itself, the end of the matter. Where a site is assessed as unsuitable, unavailable or unachievable, the officer records whether and how that finding could reasonably be overcome — for example through mitigation, a reduced or amended developable area, a change in the use or scale proposed, the resolution of an access or ownership issue, or evidence submitted by the promoter which addresses the point. A site is discounted on this ground only where the conclusion is that the finding cannot reasonably be overcome on the evidence available.

Where the evidence is incomplete

- 6.34 Because the evidence available differs from site to site, it is essential that a site is not discounted simply because less is known about it. Where the available evidence is not sufficient to reach a firm conclusion, the site is not discounted on that ground. The uncertainty and the reason for it are recorded, and the site is carried forward. A site is discounted at Sift 2 only where there is positive evidence that the site could not be brought forward within the plan period, or of harm which cannot be avoided or mitigated. This ensures that the outcome for a site turns on the planning merits rather than on the completeness of the Borough Council's records, and that reasonable alternatives are not excluded from the Sustainability Appraisal for want of evidence.

The Sift 2 column records the sources of evidence used, the conclusion reached on availability, suitability and achievability within the plan period, the constraints which arise and whether they can be mitigated and how, and, where the evidence is

incomplete, what is not known and why the site has nonetheless been carried forward.

Sift 3: Summary of other key constraints and evidence

Sift	Sift 3 — Summary of other key constraints and evidence
The question	Taking the remaining evidence together — employment, flood risk, heritage, landscape and townscape, ecology, and any other evidence which has informed the Local Plan — does the site give rise to harm which cannot be avoided or mitigated, or which clearly outweighs the benefits of allocating it?
If the answer is no	The harm identified cannot be avoided or mitigated, or clearly outweighs the benefits of allocating the site (discount code D3).

6.35 The Local Plan is supported by a substantial topic-based evidence base. Each of those documents assesses sites against its own discipline. Sift 3 is the point at which those separate conclusions are brought together into a single summary for each site, so that a reader can see the whole picture in one place rather than having to assemble it from several documents. It is the evidence summary on which the final judgement at Sift 5 rests. There may not be relevant evidence for every site under every category; only the relevant evidence is summarised.

6.36 The matters that may be summarised are:

- **Employment.** Whether the site is within or adjoining a designated employment area, the conclusions of the Employment Land and Premises Study (2024) and Addendum (2025), and the compatibility of the proposed use with neighbouring uses.
- **Flood risk and drainage.** The outputs of the Strategic Flood Risk Assessment which were not determinative at Sift 2 — surface water flow routes, ordinary watercourses and groundwater — and how they would be managed through layout and sustainable drainage.
- **Heritage.** The effect on the significance of designated and non-designated heritage assets and their setting, and archaeological potential, drawing on the Heritage Impact Assessment and the advice of Historic England and Leicestershire County Council Archaeology.
- **Landscape and townscape.** Landscape character, sensitivity and capacity, drawing on the Landscape Sensitivity and Capacity Assessment; the effect on valued landscapes and on the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside; the effect on the character and appearance of the built-up area; and, where relevant, the effect on the purposes of the Green Wedge designated under Policy NE06.
- **Ecology.** The effect on designated sites, priority habitats, protected species and ecological networks, the opportunities identified in the Local Nature Recovery Strategy, and the deliverability of biodiversity net gain.

- **Any other relevant evidence.** Including infrastructure and utilities capacity, the loss of best and most versatile agricultural land, minerals and waste safeguarding, air quality, noise and amenity, the National Forest and Charnwood Forest, open space and public rights of way, neighbourhood plan evidence, and recent application and appeal decisions.
- 6.37 Table A2.5 at Appendix 2 sets these matters out in full, together with the evidence and the Local Plan policy engaged by each. That table is a prompt, not a checklist. Officers use it to make sure nothing relevant has been overlooked; they are not required to work through it item by item, and matters which do not arise on a particular site are simply not recorded. Equally, the list is not exhaustive: where a site raises an issue which is not on it, the officer addresses that issue.
- 6.38 Two points of approach should be noted. In relation to heritage, the assessment considers the contribution the site makes in its current form to the significance of any heritage asset, and the impact allocation would have on that significance, rather than applying distance-based criteria — an approach which Historic England advised against during consultation on the SHELAA Methodology and which the Borough Council does not use. In relation to every matter, the officer considers whether mitigation is available and deliverable Mitigation which is theoretically possible but which could not be secured or funded is not treated as available. Where a site is allocated, the mitigation identified is carried into the site-specific policy requirements in Policies PS05 to PS17.
- 6.39 A discount at Sift 3 is the exception rather than the norm. Most sites which reach Sift 3 pass it, because most of the matters it covers are capable of mitigation. Code D3 is applied only where a single matter, or the matters taken in combination, gives rise to harm which cannot be avoided or mitigated, or which clearly outweighs the benefits which allocation would deliver. Where that threshold is not met, the harm and the mitigation required are recorded and carried forward, and they form part of the material weighed at Sift 5.
- 6.40 Because the Sift 3 summary is compiled from evidence the Borough Council already holds, it has been recorded for a number of sites which left the process at Sift 1 or Sift 2. That information has been retained rather than deleted. It adds to the transparency of the record, it allows the reason for discount to be tested against the fuller evidence picture, and it means the Borough Council retains a usable evidence base for future plan-making. It does not alter the point at which the site was discounted, which remains as recorded in the discount code column.

Sift 4: Sustainability Appraisal outcomes

Sift	Sift 4 — Sustainability Appraisal outcomes
The question	How does the site perform against the sustainability objectives; what are the main positive and negative effects and the recommendations of the appraisal; and does the Habitats Regulations Assessment rule out an adverse effect on the integrity of a European site?

If the answer is no	The site would give rise to significant adverse effects which cannot be avoided or mitigated, or an adverse effect on the integrity of a European site cannot be ruled out (discount code D4).
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- 6.41 The Sustainability Appraisal, incorporating Strategic Environmental Assessment, has been integral to site selection. It provides a structured and transparent framework for appraising the environmental, social and economic implications of potential development sites against a consistent set of 14 sustainability objectives. The Sustainability Appraisal has been undertaken by JBA Consulting. The preferred allocations are appraised at Appendix C.1 of the Environmental Report and the reasonable alternatives at Appendix C.2.
- 6.42 The appraisal of reasonable alternatives is a legal requirement and is not confined to the sites the Borough Council prefers. The sites remaining after Sift 3 are appraised as reasonable alternatives, together with those sites discounted at earlier sifts which nonetheless remain reasonable alternatives. Whether a site was appraised as a reasonable alternative is recorded for every site in a dedicated column of the site assessment spreadsheet. The Sustainability Appraisal has also tested reasonable alternative spatial strategies and growth scenarios, providing the basis for testing the strategic judgement applied at Sift 1
- 6.43 The Sustainability Appraisal does not determine site allocations. It informs decision-making by presenting evidence on the relative sustainability of the options and identifying where mitigation would be required to address potential adverse effects. The Sift 4 column records the main positive and negative effects identified for the site, the appendix and table of the appraisal in which they are found, the Local Plan policies which would mitigate them, and the overall recommendation of the appraisal.
- 6.44 In parallel, the Habitats Regulations Assessment considers whether the allocation of a site, alone or in combination with other plans and projects, would be likely to have a significant effect on a European site. The River Mease Special Area of Conservation is the principal consideration, together with the effects of recreational pressure and of water quality and quantity. Where the Habitats Regulations Assessment identifies that an adverse effect on integrity cannot be ruled out and cannot be avoided or mitigated, the site is not allocated and is discounted under code D4.

Sift 5: Final site assessment commentary

Sift	Sift 5 — Final site assessment commentary
The question	Taking the outcome of Sifts 1 to 4 together, and applying professional planning judgement, is this site one of the sites the Borough Council selects to deliver the growth the strategy directs and to meet the requirement in Policy PS04?
If the answer is no	The site is capable of being allocated but has not been selected — because better sites exist in the settlement or the wider borough, because there is insufficient confidence in delivery, or because the settlement has already received sufficient growth (discount code D5).

6.45 By Sift 5 the sites which remain are, in principle, all capable of being allocated. Each is in a location the strategy supports, could be developed within the plan period, is free of any constraint which cannot be mitigated, has been assessed against the wider evidence base, and has been appraised through the Sustainability Appraisal. Sift 5 is therefore not a further test of technical acceptability. It is the point at which the Borough Council chooses between sites which are all acceptable, and explains that choice. It is where the substantive selection decision is made, and it comes down to professional officer judgement.

6.46 The considerations applied at Sift 5 are:

- **Whether better sites exist**, either in the settlement or in the wider borough, to meet the strategy for growth. Where a settlement has more sites capable of accommodating development than the growth directed to it requires, the Borough Council does not need to demonstrate that the sites it does not prefer are unsuitable for development. What it must do is explain why the sites it prefers are the more appropriate means of delivering that growth. The comparison is undertaken settlement by settlement, and the reason for the preference is recorded against every site involved in it, naming the site or sites preferred.
- **Confidence in delivery**. Whether the site can be relied upon to come forward: ownership and control, promoter intentions, lead-in times, viability, any dependency on a third party or on the delivery of an adjoining site, and the certainty and timing of delivery relative to the trajectory of the Plan. A lack of confidence in delivery is a reason not to select a site even where it is otherwise acceptable.
- **Wider benefits for the community**. Whether the site can provide or contribute to services, facilities or infrastructure, or to their enhancement — for example a community facility, an access or active travel improvement, open space, a landscape buffer, a school contribution or a needed type of housing. A site which delivers against the aims of Policies PS19 to PS22 and the settlement profile performs better than a site which simply adds dwellings.
- **Settlement balance and distribution, and cumulative growth**. Whether the level of growth already directed to the settlement, through completions, commitments, sites allocated in made neighbourhood plans and other preferred development sites, is already sufficient for the role and function of that settlement and for what its infrastructure can support. This is the point at which a site which is individually acceptable may nevertheless not be selected, because the settlement has had enough. Where this occurs, the reason is stated explicitly, including the identity of the site or sites preferred.
- **Place-making and local character**. Whether the site would produce a well-designed place which responds to local character — the relationship to the existing built form, the ability to create a logical and defensible settlement edge, the effect on the form and identity of the settlement, and the scope for high quality design under Policies HPD01 and HPD02. The Borough Council has a preference for sites which offer positive local character and place-making opportunities.

- 6.47 These considerations are not weighted or scored, and they are not applied as a checklist. The Framework does not require a scoring system; what it requires is that the choice made is justified and that the reasons for it are given. A single consideration may be determinative on one site and carry little weight on another. Consistency is achieved through a common structure for the commentary and through officer moderation, rather than through a formula. Where there is a locally identified preference for a particular site, including through a made or emerging neighbourhood plan or through representations from a parish or town council, this is taken into account; local preference is a material consideration but is not determinative on its own.
- 6.48 It records what and where the site is and what is proposed; summarises the outcome of Sifts 1 to 4; sets out what the site would contribute; explains how the site sits within the portfolio of allocations as a whole — whether the requirement in Policy PS04 is met with an appropriate margin of flexibility, whether the distribution across the settlement hierarchy is consistent with the spatial strategy, whether there is a good mix of site sizes consistent with paragraph 73 of the Framework, whether opportunities to use previously developed land have been taken, and whether the trajectory is over-reliant on a small number of large or complex sites — and states the conclusion and the reasons for it. Its length is proportionate to the site: a short paragraph may be sufficient, while a strategic allocation will require several.
- 6.49 The Borough Council has not been limited to accepting or rejecting sites as submitted. Where the evidence indicates that part of a site is suitable and part is not, the boundary of the proposed allocation has been amended and the capacity adjusted accordingly, and the reason recorded. Conversely, where two or more adjoining submissions can sensibly be planned together, they may be assessed and allocated collectively to ensure comprehensive delivery, with the commentary explaining why and each site reference cross-referring to the others.
- 6.50 Where the sites remaining at Sift 5 are insufficient to meet the requirement, the Borough Council does not reduce the requirement. It returns to the earlier sifts and re-examines the sites discounted there, beginning with those discounted at Sift 1 and with those where the reason for discount was most finely balanced, in order to establish whether any could be allocated with additional mitigation or in an amended form. This is the mechanism by which the Plan remains positively prepared, and any site reinstated in this way is recorded together with the reason.

The outcome of Sift 5

- 6.51 **The sites which remain after Sift 5 are the sites the Borough Council has selected for allocation in the Local Plan.** No further sift is applied to them. Each is carried into a site allocation policy — Policies PS05 to PS17 — together with the mitigation and the site-specific requirements identified through the process, and each is recorded as ‘Selected’ in the site assessment spreadsheet with no discount code. Every other site in the register is recorded as ‘Discounted’ against the code for the sift at which it left the process.

Recording the outcome: discount reason codes

6.52 Every site is recorded in the site assessment spreadsheet. Where a site is not selected, a single primary discount reason code is recorded, corresponding to the sift at which the site left the process. The codes run in the same order as the sifts, so that the code alone tells a reader how far the site progressed.

Code	Sift	Reason	What it means in practice
D1	Sift 1	Strategic fit — location or scale not supported by the strategy	The site is not in a location to which the strategy directs growth; the scale proposed is disproportionate to the role of the settlement; or the site is detached from the settlement and its built form, so that an allocation there would not be a sustainable one. No finding has been made about whether the site could physically be developed. Development may still be capable of coming forward through the development management process.
D2	Sift 2	Not available, suitable or achievable within the plan period, or a constraint which cannot be mitigated	The site could not realistically be brought forward within the plan period — for example because it has already been built out or committed, is not available, or has no means of access — or it is affected by a constraint which cannot be mitigated. The most common grounds are highways and access, the planning history of the site, and flood risk. Constraints of record, such as the functional floodplain or a national designation covering the whole site, are also applied here.
D3	Sift 3	Other key constraints — harm which cannot be mitigated	Taking the employment, flood risk, heritage, landscape and townscape, ecological and other evidence together, the site would give rise to harm which cannot be avoided or mitigated, or which clearly outweighs the benefits allocation would deliver.
D4	Sift 4	Sustainability Appraisal or Habitats Regulations Assessment — significant adverse effects	The Sustainability Appraisal identifies significant adverse effects which cannot be avoided or mitigated, or the Habitats Regulations Assessment cannot rule out an adverse effect on the integrity of a European site.
D5	Sift 5	Not selected on the final site assessment	The site is capable of being allocated but has not been selected. Better sites exist in the settlement or the wider borough to deliver the strategy for growth; or there is insufficient confidence in delivery; or the settlement has already received sufficient growth through completions, commitments, neighbourhood plan allocations or other preferred sites; or another site offers greater wider benefits or a better place-making outcome. Where the reason is that another site is preferred, that site is named. A site given this code has not been found to be unsuitable for development.

Table 8: Discount reason codes

- 6.53 The distinction between D2 and D5: D2 records that the site itself could not be brought forward, or is affected by something which cannot be mitigated. D5 records that the site could be developed, but that the Borough Council has chosen other sites. All comparison between competing sites is made at Sift 5, so that the choice between sites is made once, on the whole of the evidence, rather than piecemeal. Where more than one code could be said to apply, the code recorded is the earliest, consistent with the principle of discounting at the earliest justified point.
- 6.54 The purpose of the codes is consistency. With several hundred sites to record, a standard code allows the same reason to be expressed in the same way each time, allows sites to be grouped and reported by reason, and allows a reader to move quickly between the site, the sift and the explanation.
- 6.55 Where a site was previously proposed for allocation at Regulation 18, or at the Regulation 19 consultation in 2022, and is now discounted, the code is accompanied by an explanation of what has changed — new evidence, a change in the availability of the site, a change in the spatial strategy, or the outcome of consultation.

Proportionate recording, iteration and new sites

- 6.56 The sift columns of the spreadsheet are completed in order and stop at the point the site left the process. Where a site is discounted at Sift 2, the Sift 4 and Sift 5 columns are marked 'N/A — discounted at Sift 2' rather than being completed. Two qualifications apply. The Sift 3 summary has been recorded more widely than the strict sequence requires, for the reason given at paragraph 6.42. And the Sift 4 column is completed for every site the Sustainability Appraisal has appraised, whenever that site left the process, so that the record shows both that the site was appraised and the point at which it was discounted.
- 6.57 Although the sifts are described sequentially, the process has been iterative in practice. Where a later sift generates evidence relevant to an earlier one, the earlier sift is revisited. For example, transport work undertaken at Sift 2 may show that access can be achieved in a way not previously anticipated, and the Sustainability Appraisal of alternative spatial strategies may indicate that growth should be distributed differently, which bears on Sift 1. Where this occurs, the site is reinstated and the reason recorded.
- 6.58 Sites submitted after the point at which the main assessment was undertaken — including any sites promoted through representations to this Regulation 19 consultation — are passed through the same five sifts, in the same order, using the same criteria and the same range of evidence sources. Late submission does not result in a site being treated differently, but nor does it entitle a site to be assessed on a different basis from those submitted on time.

Employment sites: additional considerations

- 6.59 Employment sites pass through the same five sifts. Sifts 4 and 5 are applied in the same way. Sifts 1 to 3 apply differently, because the locational requirements of employment development are different.

- 6.60 At Sift 1 the settlement hierarchy is not the primary spatial test for employment land. For general employment land the considerations are proximity to the settlements the land is intended to serve, integration with existing employment clusters, compatibility with neighbouring uses, and accessibility for the workforce by means other than the private car. Consistent with the SHELAA Methodology, land surrounded on all sides by residential development is not considered suitable for employment uses on grounds of incompatibility, and sites within Category A employment areas are not considered suitable for housing.
- 6.61 For strategic B8 storage and distribution the considerations are different again and reflect the borough's established role within the Leicester and Leicestershire Functional Economic Market Area and the wider strategic logistics market. They include access to the Strategic Road Network, in particular the A5, M69 and M1 Junction 22; drive-time to the motorway network; access to labour supply and to consumer markets; access to multi-modal interchanges; and the ability to deliver units of the size the market requires. These matters are assessed in the light of the Employment Land and Premises Study (2024) and Addendum (2025) and the Leicester and Leicestershire Strategic Distribution Floorspace Needs Update and Apportionment Report (2025).
- 6.62 At Sifts 2 and 3 the assessment gives particular weight to the standard of access required for heavy goods vehicles, to the landscape and visual effects of large-scale buildings, to the effect on the amenity of nearby residential areas from vehicle movements, lighting and noise, and to the cumulative effect of strategic distribution development on the highway network and on the character of the areas concerned.
- 6.63 At Sift 5 the portfolio considerations for employment reflect the approach set out in Policy PS04. The Local Plan deliberately identifies a portfolio of strategic B8 opportunities which exceeds the minimum floorspace provision, in order to provide flexibility and resilience, to reflect the differing characteristics, market attractiveness and delivery trajectories of individual sites, and to enable the borough to respond positively to changing economic circumstances. The minimum requirement is not a cap, and a site is therefore not discounted at Sift 5 simply because the minimum requirement has already been met by other allocations.

7.0 Rural Hamlets and Other Countryside Locations

- 7.1 This section explains the application of Sift 1 to sites in the Rural Hamlets and Other Countryside Locations. It is set out separately because the reason applies to a group of sites rather than to each site individually, and because those sites account for a substantial proportion of the sites discounted.
- 7.2 Sites within Rural Hamlets and Other Countryside Locations have been discounted from allocation because these locations are not suitable for strategic or major residential growth. The settlements are limited in size, have little or no services or facilities, and are heavily reliant on private car use, which conflicts with the spatial strategy of directing growth to the most accessible and sustainable locations. Their rural nature means that development is likely to harm settlement character and

landscape setting and would extend built form into the open countryside. Accessibility constraints and limited potential for infrastructure improvement further undermine site suitability and deliverability. The Borough Council has also concluded, through the Settlement Boundary Review (2026), that it is no longer appropriate to define settlement boundaries for Rural Hamlets, given their limited built form, lack of services and strong relationship with the surrounding countryside. These areas are treated as open countryside for policy purposes and are subject to Policy PS23.

- 7.3 Sites in these locations are therefore discounted at Sift 1 and recorded under discount code D1. Every such site is individually recorded in the site assessment spreadsheet, in the Rural Hamlets and Other Countryside Locations worksheets, with the site reference, name, size, indicative capacity and the reason for discount, cross-referring to this section.
- 7.4 It follows from the ordering of the sifts that no finding has been made about whether these sites could physically be developed. They have been discounted because of where they are, not because of what they are. Development in hamlets is not necessarily unsustainable in all circumstances, and the Borough Council considers that any development in such locations should come forward on a carefully managed basis through the development management process, where the scale, form and justification for a particular proposal can be assessed on its own merits. The routes through which such development may come forward are listed at paragraph 6.16.
- 7.5 Sites in these locations remain on the site register and will be considered again at any future review of the Local Plan and of the land availability assessment. The presence of a site on the register does not indicate that it is suitable for allocation or for development.

Exceptions

- 7.6 As explained at paragraphs 6.18 and 6.19, sites of a strategic scale capable of creating a new settlement are not discounted at Sift 1, because such a proposal would create its own services, facilities and infrastructure rather than relying on those of an existing settlement. The same applies to a site which would deliver a specific identified need which cannot be met elsewhere. Sites to which either exception has been applied are identified as such in the Sift 1 column of the site assessment spreadsheet and are carried forward for full assessment at Sifts 2 to 5. The two proposed new settlements are recorded on a separate 'New Settlement Proposals' worksheet.

8.0 The site assessment spreadsheet

- 8.1 The record of the outcome for every site is held in the site assessment spreadsheet, which is published alongside this paper. This paper explains the method; the spreadsheet records its application to each individual site. The two documents are designed to be read together and use the same terms, the same sift numbers and the same discount codes.

- 8.2 The spreadsheet contains a worksheet for each tier of the settlement hierarchy — Urban, Key Rural Centres, Rural Villages, Rural Hamlets and Other Countryside Locations — mirroring Table 5 of this paper, together with a sixth worksheet for the two proposed new settlements, which are assessed under the exception at paragraph 6.18. Within each worksheet the sites are grouped by settlement and each site occupies a single row.
- 8.3 Reading from left to right, each row records what the site is (columns A to F), then the outcome of each sift in turn (columns G to N), then the outcome and, where the site was not selected, the discount code (columns O and P). Because the sift columns are completed in order and stop at the point the site left the process, the structure of the row itself shows how far the site progressed. This is the principal transparency device of the whole process: a reader does not need to interpret a score or follow a cross-reference to establish where a site was discounted.
- 8.4 Two further columns sit alongside Sift 1 and record, for each site, whether any part of it lies within a Green Wedge and whether it is within, adjacent to or away from the defined settlement boundary. A further column, between Sift 3 and Sift 4, records whether the site was appraised as a reasonable alternative in the Sustainability Appraisal.
- 8.5 Appendix 3 sets out each column of the spreadsheet and how it is completed.

9.0 Conclusions and next steps

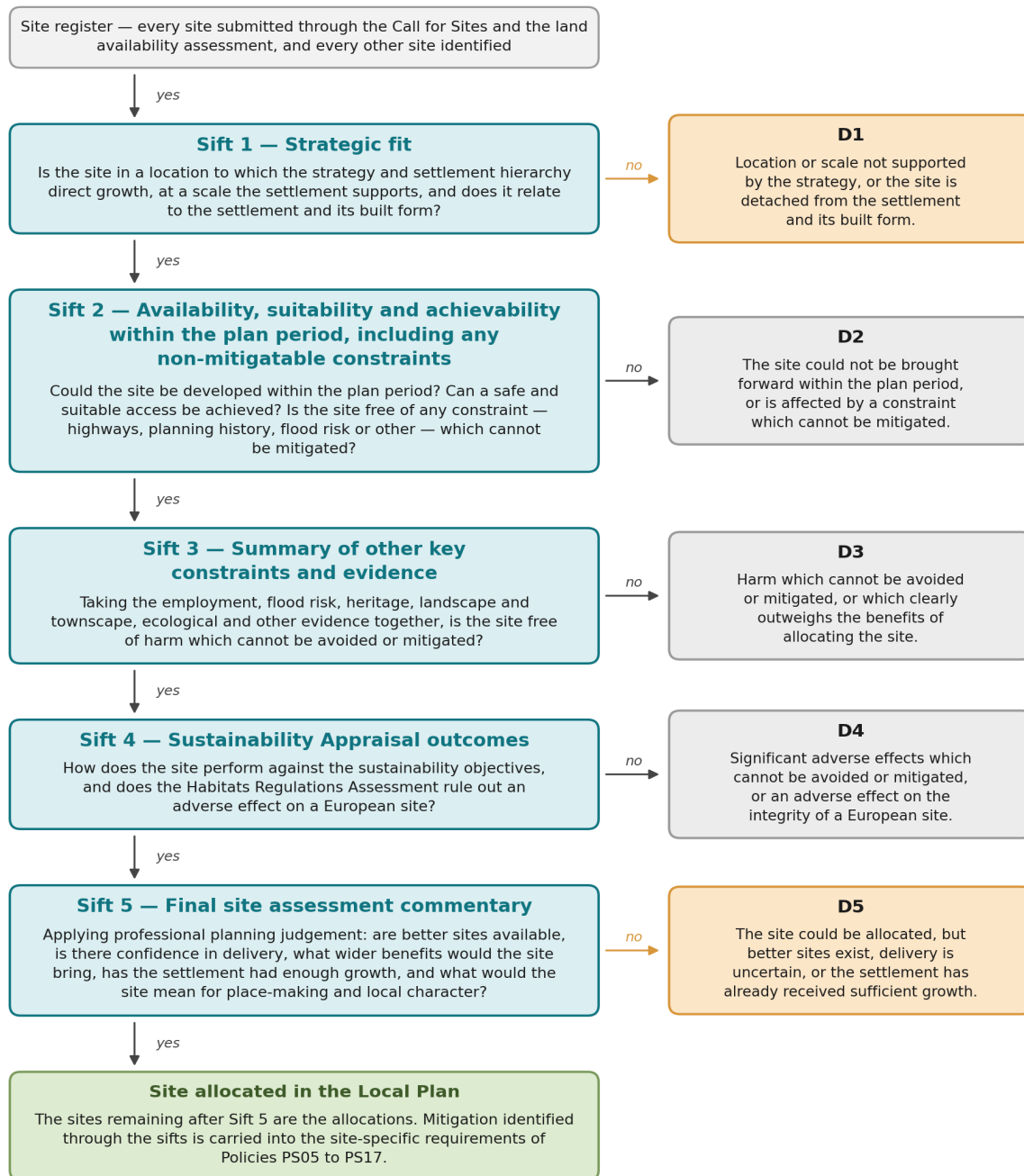
- 9.1 The Borough Council has applied a consistent, staged and transparent process to the selection of sites for allocation in the Regulation 19 Local Plan. The process begins from the site register; applies the spatial strategy and the settlement hierarchy; establishes whether the sites which remain could be developed within the plan period and whether they are affected by anything which cannot be mitigated; summarises the wider constraints and evidence bearing on each site; appraises the reasonable alternatives through the Sustainability Appraisal and Habitats Regulations Assessment; and concludes with a written officer commentary applying professional planning judgement to the sites which remain.
- 9.2 **The sites which remain after Sift 5 are the sites allocated in the Local Plan.** They are carried into the site allocation policies at Policies PS05 to PS17, together with the mitigation and site-specific requirements identified through the process. Every other site in the register is recorded as discounted, against the code for the sift at which it left the process, with the reason written down and published.
- 9.3 The process is deliberately prescriptive in its early sifts, where sites are tested against clear and largely mechanical criteria, and deliberately narrative in its later sifts, where professional planning judgement is required. In both cases the reasoning is written down and published, so that it can be understood and tested.
- 9.4 The process builds directly on the methodology consulted upon in the Site Selection Paper (October 2025). It applies the same tests, expressed as five sequential sifts so that the point at which each site left the process can be identified, recorded against a standard code, and explained. Three features should be noted. The strategic test is applied first, so that assessment effort is concentrated on the sites the Plan can

realistically allocate. The criteria at Appendix 2 are applied to every site which reaches the sift in question, using the evidence the Borough Council holds, so that the same questions are asked of every site and the sources relied upon are recorded. And the choice between competing sites is made once, at Sift 5, on the whole of the evidence, rather than piecemeal.

- 9.5 The Borough Council considers that this approach is consistent with the National Planning Policy Framework (December 2024) and with Planning Practice Guidance, and that it enables the Local Plan to demonstrate that it is positively prepared, justified, effective and consistent with national policy, and that the allocations proposed represent an appropriate strategy when considered against the reasonable alternatives and on the basis of proportionate evidence, as required by paragraph 36 of the Framework.
- 9.6 Representations made on this Regulation 19 consultation, including on this paper and on the process it sets out, will be submitted to the Secretary of State alongside the Local Plan. Any sites promoted through those representations will be passed through the same five sifts.
- 9.7 The site selection process does not conclude with publication. Allocations may be subject to further change following representations and examination by the Planning Inspectorate. Delivery will be monitored through the Authority Monitoring Report and, where monitoring indicates that delivery is falling significantly below the planned trajectory, the Borough Council will take appropriate action, including the release of additional sites or a review of the Plan in accordance with Policy PS18.

Appendix 1: Site selection and discount flow chart

- A1.1 The flow chart overleaf shows the whole site selection and discount process on a single page. It should be read alongside Section 6, which explains each sift in full, and Appendix 2, which sets out the criteria applied at each sift.
- A1.2 **How to read the flow chart.** Sites enter at the top, from the site register. At each sift a single question is asked. Sites for which the answer is yes continue down the left-hand column to the next sift. Sites for which the answer is no leave the process to the right, and the reason is recorded against the corresponding discount code (D1 to D5). Sites which reach the bottom of the chart are the sites allocated in the Local Plan, with any mitigation identified through the process carried into the site-specific policy requirements.
- A1.3 The amber outcome boxes — D1 and D5 — identify the outcomes which are not findings that development would be unacceptable. A site discounted under D1 is in a location to which the strategy does not direct growth, or is detached from the settlement to which it would relate; no finding has been made about whether it could physically be developed. A site discounted under D5 is capable of being allocated, but the Borough Council has selected other sites to deliver the growth the strategy directs.



The process is sequential but iterative. Where a later sift produces evidence relevant to an earlier one, or where insufficient sites remain to meet the requirement, earlier sifts are revisited and the reason recorded. A site is discounted once only, at the earliest sift at which the evidence justifies it, and is never discounted merely because the evidence about it is incomplete. The Sift 3 summary and the Sift 4 appraisal outcome are recorded wherever the evidence is held, including for some sites which left the process at an earlier sift.

Figure 1: Site selection and discount flow chart

Appendix 2: The criteria applied at each sift

A2.1 This appendix sets out the criteria applied at each sift. Tables A2.1, A2.3 and A2.4 are applied to every site which reaches the sift in question. Table A2.2 lists the sources of information available; officers use whichever of them bear on the site and the matter in question, and record which were used. Tables A2.5 and A2.6 are prompt lists: officers use them to check that nothing relevant has been overlooked, and record only those matters which actually arise on the site in question.

Table A2.1: Sift 1 — strategic fit criteria

Criterion	What is considered
Tier of the settlement hierarchy	Whether the strategy directs growth to this settlement, and whether the scale of development proposed is proportionate to the role and function of the settlement (Settlement Hierarchy Paper 2026; Policies PS19–PS22).
Fit with the spatial strategy	Whether allocation would deliver or would undermine the spatial strategy in Policy PS04 and the aims for that tier of the hierarchy.
Relationship to the settlement boundary and the built form	Whether the site is within, immediately adjoining, or away from the defined settlement boundary and detached from the existing built form; whether it is separated from the built form by a significant severance feature; and, where the site is detached, whether there is a reason why an allocation would nevertheless be sustainable, in which case the reason is recorded and the site carried forward (paragraph 6.12).
Green Wedge	Whether any part of the site lies within a Green Wedge designated under Policy NE06. Recorded at Sift 1; the effect of development on the purposes of the Green Wedge is assessed at Sift 3.
Sequential preference	Previously developed land within settlements; then greenfield land within settlements; then land adjoining settlements (Framework Chapter 11 and paragraph 125(c)).
Settlement form and separation	Whether development would result in coalescence or the loss of an important gap between settlements, and whether a logical and defensible settlement edge can be created.
Accessibility	Distance and quality of route to services, facilities, schools, employment and public transport, and the potential for a vision-led approach to improve accessibility (Framework paragraphs 114–118).
Exceptions	Strategic-scale sites capable of creating a new settlement; sites delivering a specific identified need which cannot be met elsewhere. Recorded in the Sift 1 column with reasons.

Table A2.2: Sources of evidence

Officers apply the criteria in this appendix to every site which reaches the sift in question, using whichever of these sources bear on the site and the matter at issue, and record which were used.

Where sources conflict, the more recent and the more site-specific evidence carries the greater weight.

Source	What it is used to establish	Points to note
Local Highway Authority advice and transport evidence	Safe and suitable access, recorded road speeds, pedestrian connectivity, connection to the wider network and residual cumulative impact	Recorded on a red, amber and green basis. Red indicates a matter which cannot be mitigated. Includes National Highways and Warwickshire County Council in relation to the A5
Planning history	Whether the site remains available, and whether development is acceptable in principle and physically achievable	An extant permission or a site under construction is direct and often conclusive evidence; a refusal or dismissed appeal is evidence to the contrary
Borough Council constraints mapping (GIS)	Designations, flood zones, agricultural land classification, mineral and waste safeguarding, pipelines and pylons, heritage and ecological designations and Impact Risk Zones	Held for the whole borough and applied to every site. The means by which the constraints at Table A2.3 are applied
Local Plan evidence base	Flood risk, landscape, heritage, ecology, infrastructure capacity, employment land, viability and habitats	Applies to all sites and is not dependent on a SHELAA assessment having been undertaken
Strategic Housing and Economic Land Availability Assessment	Background information on the site, including constraints mapping, site visit records, consultee responses and capacity assumptions gathered for that assessment	One source of information among several. It is not applied as a gateway, and no site is selected or discounted by reason of a conclusion recorded in it (paragraph 6.24)
Site submission and promoter information	Availability, intentions, capacity, and any technical work commissioned by the promoter	Tested against the Borough Council's own evidence and consultee advice; accepted where robust, not disregarded because of its source
Consultee and infrastructure provider responses	Drainage and utilities, ecology, archaeology, heritage, flood risk and education capacity	Includes responses given for the Local Plan, for the land availability assessment, or on a planning application affecting the site
Officer site visits and local knowledge	Site conditions, boundaries, access, levels, existing uses and relationship to surroundings	Undertaken for the Local Plan, for the land availability assessment, or in the course of development management
Brownfield Land Register and Council land records	Previously developed land; suitability and availability of Council-owned land	Register entries carry a Council judgement that the land is suitable and available for residential development

Source	What it is used to establish	Points to note
Neighbourhood plan evidence	Local site assessment work undertaken by parish and town councils	Used where available and reasoned; a local preference is material but not determinative
Previous plan-making assessments	Earlier conclusions on the same site, and what has changed since	Includes the adopted Local Plan, the 2022 Regulation 19 consultation and the 2024 and 2025 Regulation 18 consultations, and representations on them
Monitoring information	Completions, commitments, delivery rates and build-out	Authority Monitoring Report and housing and employment land monitoring

Table A2.3: Sift 2 — constraints which rule a site out

Constraint	Basis	Application
Functional floodplain (Flood Zone 3b)	Strategic Flood Risk Assessment	Excluded. Where verified evidence shows the land is not within Flood Zone 3b, the site is assessed under the corrected classification.
Scheduled Monuments (22 in the borough)	Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Areas Act 1979; Framework Chapter 16	Excluded where the designation covers the site. Where it covers part only, the developable area is reduced.
Battle of Bosworth Registered Battlefield	Historic England register (list entry 1000004)	Excluded where the designation covers the site. Where only a small percentage of the site is covered, the developable area is assessed on a case-by-case basis.
River Mease Special Area of Conservation and its catchment	Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017; Habitats Regulations Assessment	Excluded. Effects within the catchment are also considered through the Habitats Regulations Assessment at Sift 4.
Sites of Special Scientific Interest (7 in the borough)	Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981; Framework Chapter 15	Normally excluded from allocation where the designation covers the site. Impact Risk Zones are considered at Sift 3.
Major hazardous facilities and exclusion zones	Health and Safety Executive	Excluded where the site falls within a defined consultation or exclusion zone such that development could not be accommodated.

This table reproduces the constraints set out in Section 3 of the SHELAA Methodology as ruling a site out, and should be read alongside it. Each is applied from the Borough Council's own mapping and can therefore be applied to every site.

Table A2.4: Sift 2 — availability, suitability and achievability

The matters below are drawn from Sections 4 and 6 of the SHELAA Methodology. The same matters are considered for every site, whatever the sources of evidence used to address them.

Category	Matters considered
Access and highways	• safe and suitable access, visibility and geometry • recorded 85th percentile road speeds • connection to the wider highway network and to other development sites • pedestrian and cycle links and crossing facilities • residual cumulative impact on the local and strategic road network
Planning history	• extant, lapsed, pending or refused permissions and resolutions to grant • appeal decisions • whether the site has been built out or is under construction
Land, soil and water	• flood risk (fluvial, surface water and groundwater), watercourses and aquifers • groundwater protection areas • mineral and waste safeguarding areas and historic landfill • contaminated land and land instability, including past coal mining activity
Topography and on-site infrastructure	• levels, gradients and ground conditions • pylons, pipelines, easements and existing structures • public rights of way crossing the site
Utilities	• water supply and wastewater network capacity • electricity and gas infrastructure and the timing of any upgrades required
Availability	• ownership, tenancies and any ransom strip, covenant or legal impediment • the intentions of the owner or promoter, and any confirmed marketing or interest
Achievability	• viability, having regard to the Whole Plan Viability Assessment • market conditions and evidence of comparable delivery • abnormal costs identified through the site submission or officer assessment • lead-in times, build rates and the anticipated period of delivery

Table A2.5: Sift 3 — the constraints summarised, and the evidence

A prompt list, not a checklist. Officers record only those matters which arise on the site, and are not limited to the matters listed here.

Matter	What may be considered	Evidence and policy
Employment	Whether the site is within or adjoining a designated employment area; the compatibility of the proposed use with neighbouring	Employment Land and Premises Study (2024) and Addendum (2025); Leicester and Leicestershire Strategic

Matter	What may be considered	Evidence and policy
	uses; the contribution to the employment land supply	Distribution Floorspace Needs Update (2025); Policies EP01, EP03, EP05
Flood risk and drainage	Surface water and groundwater flood risk, flow routes and ordinary watercourses; the drainage strategy and the scope for sustainable drainage	Strategic Flood Risk Assessment; Lead Local Flood Authority; Environment Agency; Policies ER06, ER07; Framework Chapter 14
Heritage	Effect on the significance of designated and non-designated heritage assets and their setting; archaeological potential	Heritage Impact Assessment; Historic England; LCC Archaeology; Policies HC01–HC03; Framework Chapter 16
Landscape and townscape	Landscape character, sensitivity and capacity; effect on valued landscapes and on the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside; effect on the character and appearance of the built-up area; effect on the purposes of the Green Wedge	Landscape Sensitivity and Capacity Assessment; Policies NE05, NE06; Framework para 187
Ecology and biodiversity	Effect on designated sites, priority habitats, protected species and ecological networks; opportunities identified in the Local Nature Recovery Strategy; the deliverability of biodiversity net gain	Habitat surveys and ecological evidence; LCC Ecology; Local Nature Recovery Strategy; Policies NE01, NE02; Framework Chapter 15
Infrastructure and utilities capacity	School place planning; primary care capacity; open space, sport and recreation; community facilities; green and blue infrastructure; water, wastewater and energy capacity — for the site alone and cumulatively	Infrastructure Capacity Study and Infrastructure Delivery Plan; Leicestershire County Council; Integrated Care Board; Severn Trent Water; Policies IU01, IU02, HPD05, LST01, LST03, LST04, NE03, NE04
Agricultural land and soils	Loss of best and most versatile agricultural land and of soil resources	Agricultural Land Classification; Framework para 187
Amenity and environmental quality	Air quality, noise, light, odour and land contamination, and the amenity of existing and future occupiers	Environmental Health; Policies NE07, NE09, NE10, HPD04
Minerals, waste and forestry	Mineral and waste safeguarding; effect on and opportunities to contribute to the National Forest and Charnwood Forest	Leicestershire Minerals and Waste Local Plan; National Forest and Charnwood Forest guidance

Matter	What may be considered	Evidence and policy
Open space and rights of way	Loss of open space, Local Green Space or public rights of way	Open Space, Sport and Recreation evidence; Policies LST03, LST04
Other evidence	Recent application and appeal decisions; neighbourhood plan evidence and allocations; representations and any other evidence which has informed the Local Plan	As recorded against the site

Table A2.6: Sift 5 — the considerations applied

These considerations are not weighted or scored. Officers apply professional planning judgement and record the reasons.

Consideration	What is considered
Better sites in the settlement or the wider borough	Whether other sites deliver the growth the strategy directs to that settlement, or to the borough as a whole, more appropriately. The comparison is undertaken settlement by settlement and the site or sites preferred are named.
Confidence in delivery	Ownership and control, promoter intentions, lead-in times, viability, any dependency on a third party or on an adjoining site, and the certainty and timing of delivery relative to the trajectory of the Plan.
Wider benefits for the community	Whether the site would provide or contribute to services, facilities or infrastructure, or to their enhancement, and whether it delivers against the aims of Policies PS19–PS22 and the settlement profile.
Settlement balance, distribution and cumulative growth	The level of growth already directed to the settlement through completions, commitments, neighbourhood plan allocations and other preferred sites, and what the settlement and its infrastructure can support.
Place-making and local character	The relationship to the existing built form; the ability to create a logical and defensible settlement edge; the effect on the form and identity of the settlement; and the scope for high quality design under Policies HPD01 and HPD02.
The portfolio as a whole	Whether the requirement in Policy PS04 is met with an appropriate margin of flexibility; the distribution across the settlement hierarchy; the mix of site sizes; the use of previously developed land; and whether the trajectory is over-reliant on a small number of large or complex sites.

Appendix 3: The site assessment spreadsheet

A3.1 The outcome for every site is recorded in the site assessment spreadsheet published alongside this paper. The spreadsheet contains a worksheet for each tier of the settlement hierarchy, together with a worksheet for the proposed new settlements.

Within each worksheet the sites are grouped by settlement and each site occupies a single row. The columns are set out below, in the order in which they appear.

Column	What it records	Notes
A — Settlement	The settlement to which the site relates	Sites are grouped by settlement within each worksheet
B — Site reference	The Call for Sites or land availability assessment reference	Where several submissions are assessed together, all references are listed and cross-referenced
C — Site name	The site name and address as submitted	Amended where the assessed boundary differs from that submitted
D — Site size (Ha)	The area of the site	Where the developable area has been reduced, the reason is given in the relevant sift column
E — Proposed main use	Residential, general employment, strategic B8, or other	Where a site is promoted for more than one use, each use is assessed and the assessment records which, if either, is the more appropriate
F — Estimated capacity	Dwellings or floorspace	Where sites are allocated collectively, the combined figure is given and identified as such
G — Sift 1: Strategic Fit	The tier of the settlement; whether the location and the scale proposed are supported by the spatial strategy; and how the site relates to the settlement boundary and the existing built form	See paragraphs 6.7 to 6.19. For Rural Hamlets and Other Countryside Locations, cross-refer to Section 7. Record here where an exception has been applied, and where a site detached from the built form is nonetheless carried forward, the reason (paragraph 6.12)
H — Green Wedge (Y/N)	Whether any part of the site lies within a Green Wedge designated under Policy NE06	Two Green Wedges are designated in the borough, so for most settlements the answer is N. Where it is Y, the effect on the purposes of the Green Wedge is assessed at Sift 3
I — Relationship to Settlement Boundary	Whether the site is within, adjacent to, or away from the defined settlement boundary	Taken from the settlement inset maps to the Regulation 19 Local Plan. Informs the Sift 1 judgement but does not determine it (paragraph 6.12)
J — Sift 2: Availability, Suitability and Achievability within the Plan Period, including any Non-	The sources of evidence used; whether the site could be brought forward within the plan period; the highways position, the planning history and the flood risk position;	See paragraphs 6.20 to 6.36 and Tables A2.2 to A2.4. A site is not discounted here because the evidence about it is thin — record the uncertainty and carry it forward

Column	What it records	Notes
Mitigatable Constraints	and any constraint which cannot be mitigated	
K — Sift 3: Summary of other key constraints/evidence	A single summary of the employment, flood risk, heritage, landscape and townscape, ecological and other evidence bearing on the site, and whether the harm identified can be mitigated	See paragraphs 6.37 to 6.42 and Table A2.5. Recorded for every site for which the evidence is held, including some sites which left the process earlier (paragraph 6.42)
L — Reasonable Alternative in SA	Whether the site was appraised as a reasonable alternative	Yes / No / N/A. N/A is used for the preferred allocations, which are appraised at Appendix C.1 of the Environmental Report rather than as alternatives
M — Sift 4: Sustainability Appraisal Outcomes	The main positive and negative effects identified by the appraisal, the appendix and table in which they are recorded, the Local Plan policies which would mitigate them, and the outcome of the Habitats Regulations Assessment	See paragraphs 6.43 to 6.46. Completed for every site the appraisal covers, whenever that site left the process
N — Sift 5: Final Site Assessment Commentary	The written officer commentary applying professional judgement to the site and stating whether it is selected for allocation, and why	See paragraphs 6.47 to 6.53. Written in prose, at a length proportionate to the site
O — Selected or Discounted	The outcome for the site	Recorded as 'Selected' or 'Discounted'. Sites recorded as Selected are the allocations in the Local Plan
P — Discount Code	Where the site is not selected, the discount reason code	D1 to D5, as set out at Table 8

Table A3.1: The columns of the site assessment spreadsheet

How the sift columns are completed

- A3.2 The sift columns are completed in order and stop at the point the site left the process. Where a site is discounted, the later sift columns are marked 'N/A — discounted at Sift [n]'. This is what allows a reader to establish, from the row alone, the point at which the site was discounted. Two columns are exceptions: the Sift 3 summary, which has been recorded wherever the evidence is held (paragraph 6.42), and the Sift 4 column, which is completed for every site the Sustainability Appraisal has appraised.
- A3.3 Entries at Sifts 1 to 4 are factual and succinct: they record the conclusion, the reason and the evidence relied upon. They are not narrative assessments. The written narrative is the Sift 5 commentary. At Sift 2 the entry identifies the sources used, so

that a reader, and an Inspector, can see that the same criteria were applied to every site and what each conclusion rests on.

- A3.4 The Sift 5 commentary is written in prose, in continuous paragraphs, and does not use headings or bullet points, so that the reasoning reads as a single connected argument. Where a site is discounted, the commentary states the reason in its concluding sentences, in terms which correspond to the code recorded in the final column. Where a site is selected, the concluding sentences summarise why the site is available, suitable and achievable, what it contributes to meeting the borough's needs, and how identified constraints are to be avoided or mitigated.
- A3.5 Where a group reason applies — principally sites in Rural Hamlets and Other Countryside Locations — the entry records what the site is, applies the group reason to it, and cross-refers to Section 7 of this paper rather than repeating the reasoning in full. This keeps the record complete without duplicating several dozen identical paragraphs.