

Sustainability Appraisal of the Mansfield Local Plan Review

Regulation 19

Non-Technical Summary

September 2026

Quality information

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1. Introduction

- 1.1.1. Mansfield District Council is preparing a new Local Plan that will guide development across the district to 2043. The plan will set out a vision, objectives and strategy for future housing, employment and infrastructure growth for the district (see **Figure 1-1** and **Figure 1-2**).
- 1.1.2. AECOM has undertaken a Sustainability Appraisal to assess the likely environmental, social and economic effects of the Local Plan and to help inform plan preparation.
- 1.1.3. This Non-Technical Summary presents the main findings of the Sustainability Appraisal that accompanies the Regulation 19 version of the Local Plan.
- 1.1.4. The Sustainability Appraisal Report:
 - explains how the Local Plan and Sustainability Appraisal have been prepared, including the consideration of alternative options;
 - assesses the policies and proposals included in the Regulation 19 Local Plan; and
 - sets out the proposed monitoring framework and next steps in the plan-making process.
- 1.1.5. Further detail is provided in the full Sustainability Appraisal Report.

Figure 1-1: Mansfield district

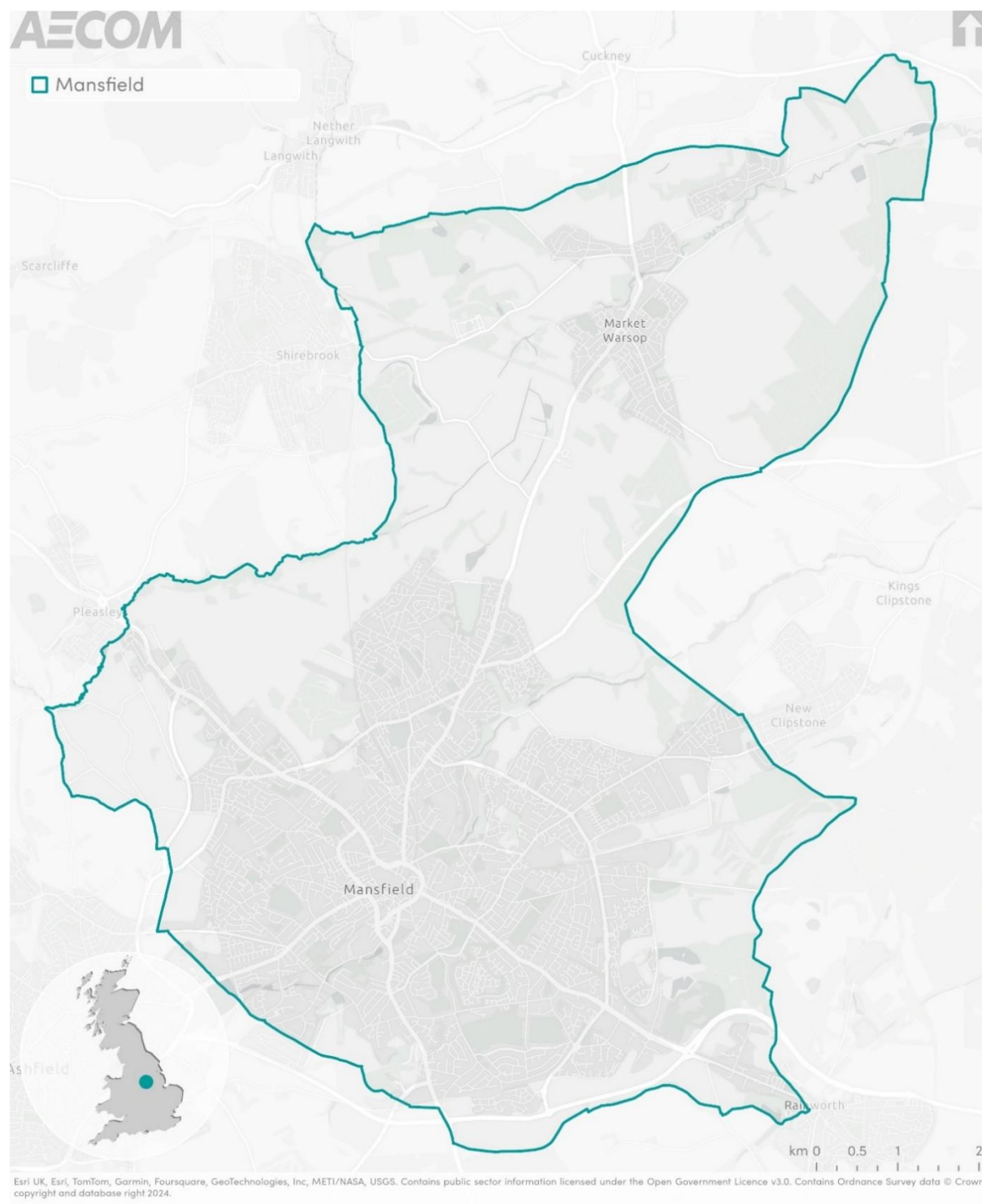
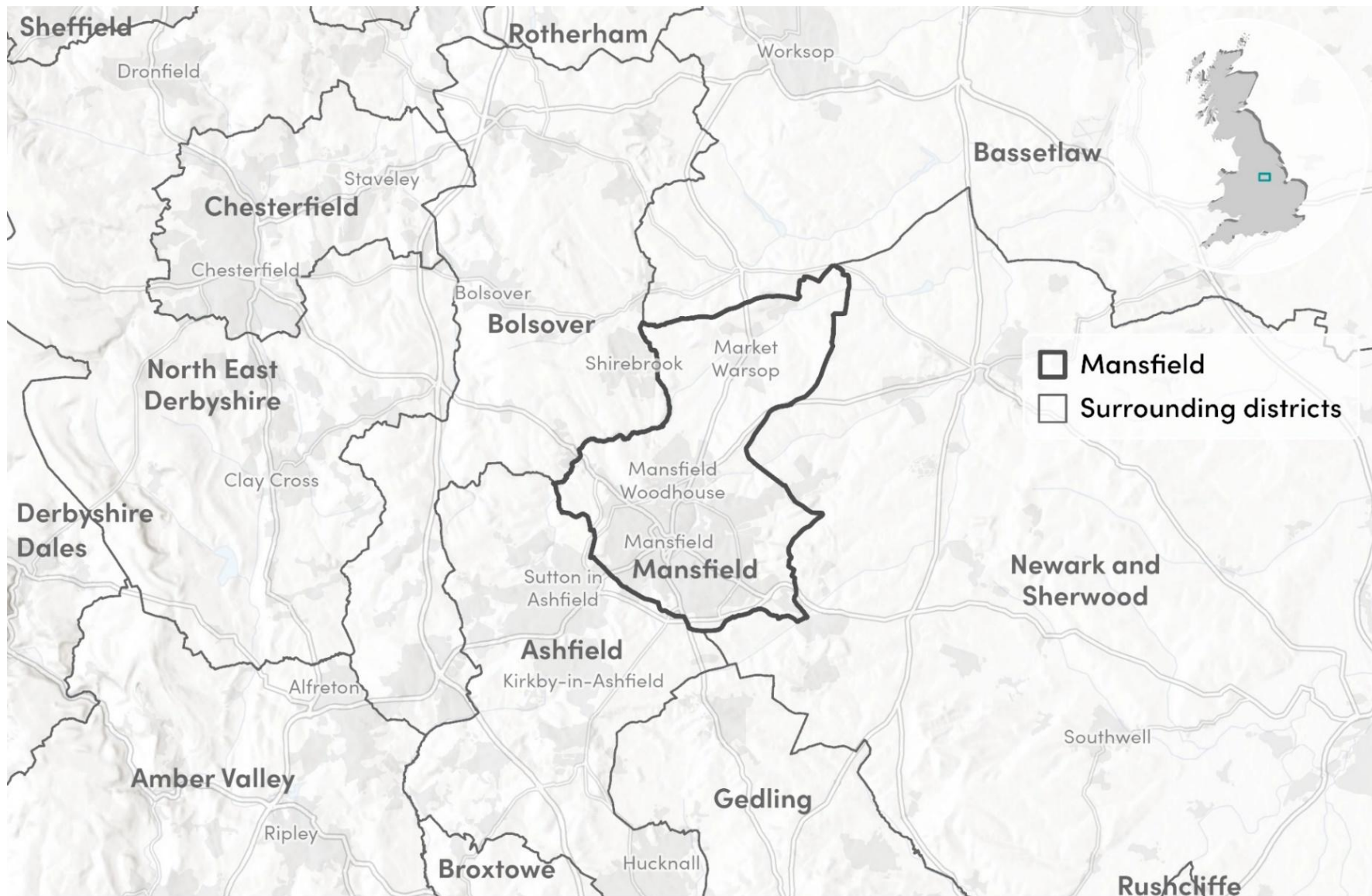


Figure 1-2: Mansfield's administrative context

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2. Scoping

2.1. What is Scoping?

- 2.1.1. At the start of the Sustainability Appraisal process, a Scoping Report was prepared to establish the evidence base and identify the key sustainability issues facing Mansfield. The report reviewed relevant plans, policies, environmental, social and economic data, and was consulted on with the statutory environmental bodies.
- 2.1.2. Comments received from consultation were used to update the evidence base and refine the Sustainability Appraisal framework used to assess the Local Plan.

2.2. Key Sustainability Issues for Mansfield

- 2.2.1. At the scoping stage, the Sustainability Appraisal identified a number of important sustainability issues that have informed the preparation and assessment of the Local Plan.
- 2.2.2. Key environmental issues include:
- Protecting and enhancing biodiversity, including nationally important wildlife sites within and around the district.
 - Reducing greenhouse gas emissions and supporting the transition to a low-carbon future.
 - Increasing resilience to climate change, including flood risk and extreme weather.
 - Improving air and water quality.
 - Protecting valued landscapes, green spaces, heritage assets and natural resources.
- 2.2.3. Key social issues include:
- Delivering sufficient homes, including affordable housing and housing that meets different community needs.
 - Reducing health inequalities and improving access to services, facilities and green spaces.
 - Supporting safe, inclusive and sustainable communities.
 - Improving access to sustainable transport and reducing reliance on private cars.

2.2.4. Key economic issues include:

- Supporting economic growth and investment.
- Providing high-quality employment opportunities and employment land.
- Improving skills and access to jobs.
- Reducing levels of commuting outside the district.

2.2.5. A full summary of the baseline evidence and sustainability issues is provided in the Scoping Report and the main Sustainability Appraisal Report.

2.3. SA Framework

2.3.1. The Sustainability Appraisal Framework, presented in **Table 2-1**, was developed from the evidence gathered during scoping. It includes a series of sustainability objectives and assessment questions that were used to appraise the Local Plan and reasonable alternatives throughout the plan-making process.

Table 2-1: SA Framework

SA Theme	SA objective
Air quality	Protect and improve local air quality and reduce the potential for negative effects on human health and the environment.
Biodiversity	Protect, restore and enhance habitats and species in Mansfield, including designated sites, locally important features and links between habitats.
Climate change adaptation	Support Mansfield's resilience to the potential effects of climate change, particularly flooding.
Climate change mitigation	Reduce the contribution to climate change made by activities within Mansfield.
Economy	To create high-quality employment opportunities, develop a strong culture of enterprise and innovation, and provide the physical conditions for a modern economic structure, including infrastructure to support the use of new technologies.
Healthy Communities	To improve health and wellbeing and reduce health inequalities; provide better opportunities for people to value and enjoy the district's green spaces and culture; improve community safety, reduce crime and the fear of crime; and promote and support the development and growth of social capital across the district.
Historic Environment	Preserve and enhance Mansfield's historic environment and archaeological features, including designated and non-designated heritage assets and their setting.
Housing	Support timely delivery of an appropriate mix of housing types and tenures, to ensure delivery of high-quality housing that meets the needs of Mansfield residents.
Landscape	Protect and enhance the character and quality of Mansfield's landscapes, townscapes and villagescapes.
Soil and land	To manage prudently the natural resources of the district including soils and minerals, and to minimise waste and increase the re-use and recycling and composting of waste materials.
Transport and accessibility	To make efficient use of the existing transport infrastructure, help reduce the need to travel by car, improve accessibility to jobs and services for all and to ensure that all journeys are undertaken by the most sustainable mode available.
Water resources	Ensure the sustainable management of water resources, helping to protect and enhance value with regards to the environment, human health and economic growth.

3. Influencing Policy Development at Regulation 18 stage

3.1. Introduction

- 3.1.1. At the Regulation 18 stage of plan-making, Mansfield District Council consulted on proposed updates to Local Plan policies and a list of potential development sites. Sustainability Appraisal was undertaken alongside this to understand the likely sustainability effects of these proposed changes and to help refine the emerging Plan.
- 3.1.2. Overall, the appraisal concluded that the proposed policy updates were likely to support sustainable development across the district. The greatest positive effects were identified for housing delivery, economic growth, sustainable transport and accessibility, and the protection of the historic environment.
- 3.1.3. Positive effects were also identified for biodiversity, climate change adaptation, health and wellbeing, and water resources. These benefits were linked to stronger policy requirements relating to biodiversity net gain, climate resilience, sustainable drainage, active travel, healthy communities and environmental protection.
- 3.1.4. The appraisal identified several opportunities to strengthen the emerging policies further, including:
- enhancing biodiversity protection and nature recovery measures;
 - strengthening climate resilience requirements;
 - supporting sports and recreation facilities to improve health outcomes; and
 - ensuring heritage considerations are fully integrated into future site selection and assessment.
- 3.1.5. The findings and recommendations from the Sustainability Appraisal were used to inform the ongoing development of the Local Plan and the preparation of the Regulation 19 version of the Plan.
- 3.1.6. Further detail, including the full Regulation 18 policy appraisal and recommendations, is provided in Appendix A of the Sustainability Appraisal Report.

4. Assessing Site Options

4.1. Introduction

- 4.1.1. As part of the Local Plan review, Mansfield District Council considered a range of potential development sites. Sites identified through the Housing and Economic Land Availability Assessment were assessed using a consistent process that considered factors such as flood risk, biodiversity, heritage, landscape, accessibility, transport, viability and deliverability.
- 4.1.2. The Sustainability Appraisal formed part of this process and helped identify the key sustainability opportunities and constraints associated with each site. The findings were used alongside technical evidence and professional judgement to inform decisions on which sites should be taken forward for further consideration.
- 4.1.3. Further information on the site assessment process is provided in Appendix B of the Sustainability Appraisal Report.

5. Establishing Reasonable Alternatives

- 5.1.1. A key requirement of Sustainability Appraisal is to assess reasonable alternatives before identifying a preferred approach.
- 5.1.2. For the Mansfield Local Plan, the main alternatives relate to how housing and employment growth could be distributed across the district. The Council considered a range of possible locations and development strategies, taking account of the settlement hierarchy, infrastructure capacity, environmental constraints and consultation feedback.
- 5.1.3. In developing the alternatives, some sources of housing supply were treated as fixed components of the strategy. These included homes that had already been completed, sites with planning permission, existing allocations expected to be delivered, brownfield commitments and an allowance for windfall development. The alternatives therefore focused on different combinations of additional sites required to meet future development needs.
- 5.1.4. The Council's preferred approach was based on meeting the identified housing requirement of 9,900 homes, together with a modest flexibility allowance to support delivery. A higher growth option was also considered to understand the potential implications of planning for additional housing above the identified need.
- 5.1.5. A series of distinct spatial strategies were then developed and assessed through the Sustainability Appraisal. These reflected different approaches to accommodating growth across Mansfield, including within the urban area, at Market Warsop, through larger strategic sites, and through a more dispersed pattern of development.
- 5.1.6. The assessment of these reasonable alternatives helped inform the selection of the preferred strategy included in the Regulation 19 Local Plan.
- 5.1.7. **Table 5-1** and **Figures 5-1 to 5-6** below set out the six distinct approaches that were established as the reasonable alternatives for appraisal through the SA.

Table 5-1: Summary of the Reasonable Alternatives (RAs)

Reasonable alternative	Level of housing planned	Summary
1. The emerging preferred strategy.	Local Housing Need +5%	Broadly follows the existing spatial strategy, focusing most development in Mansfield and other sustainable locations.
2. Warren Farm instead of Market Warsop sites.	Local Housing Need +5%	Tests concentrating more growth within the Mansfield urban area through a strategic-scale allocation at Warren Farm.
3. Warren farm instead of dispersed sites.	Local Housing Need +5%	Tests whether growth should be focused on a strategic site rather than being spread across a number of smaller allocations.
4. Emerging strategy plus Warren farm.	Local Housing Need +20%	Tests a higher-growth scenario with an additional strategic-scale allocation.
5. Emerging strategy plus 'amber sites'.	Local Housing Need +20%	Tests a higher-growth scenario using a larger number of smaller sites rather than a strategic urban extension.
6. Emerging strategy minus dispersed sites	> Local Housing Need	Tests a more cautious approach to potential transport constraints, although it may not fully meet housing needs.

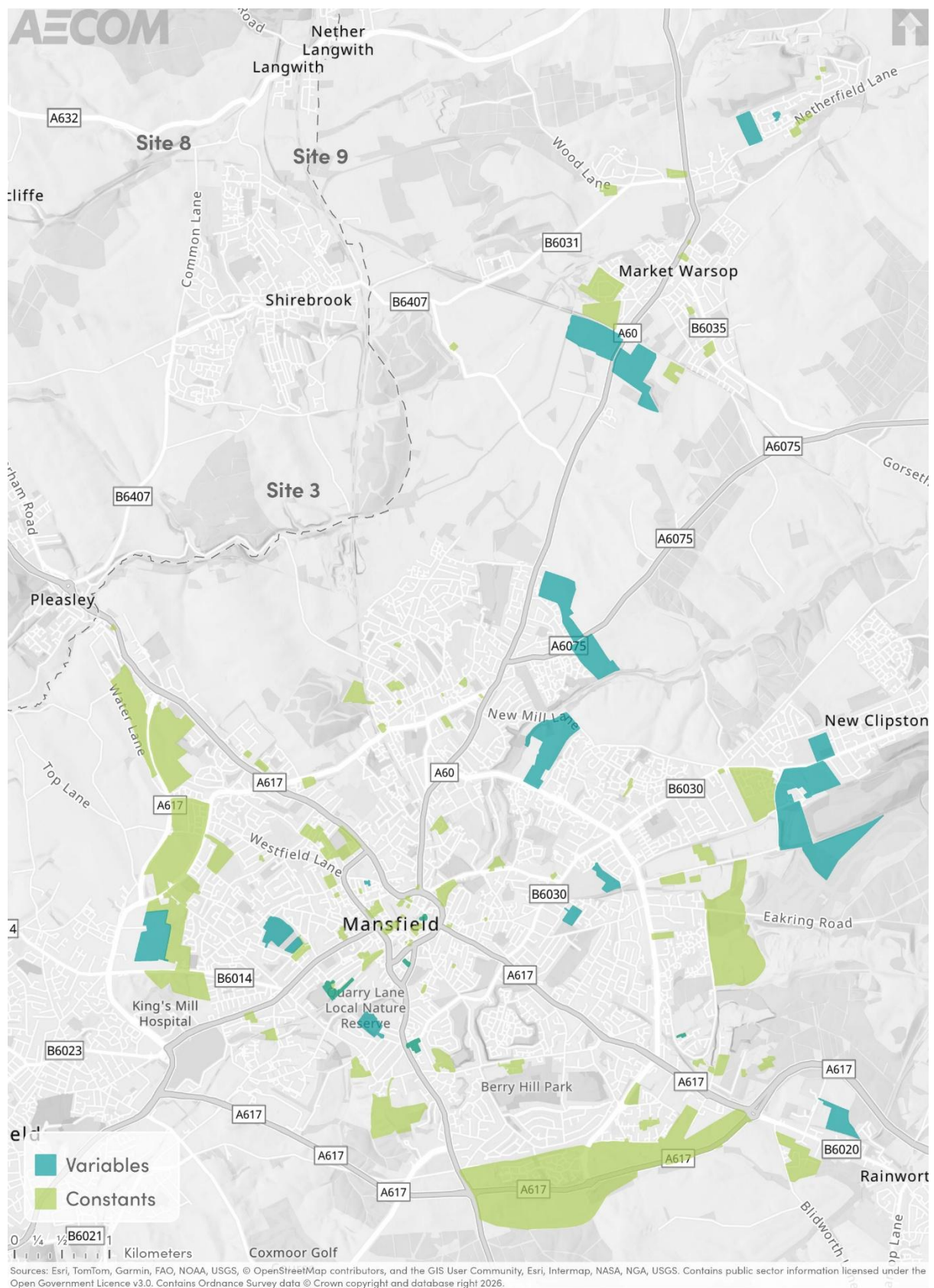
Figure 5-1: Alternative 1 - the emerging preferred approach

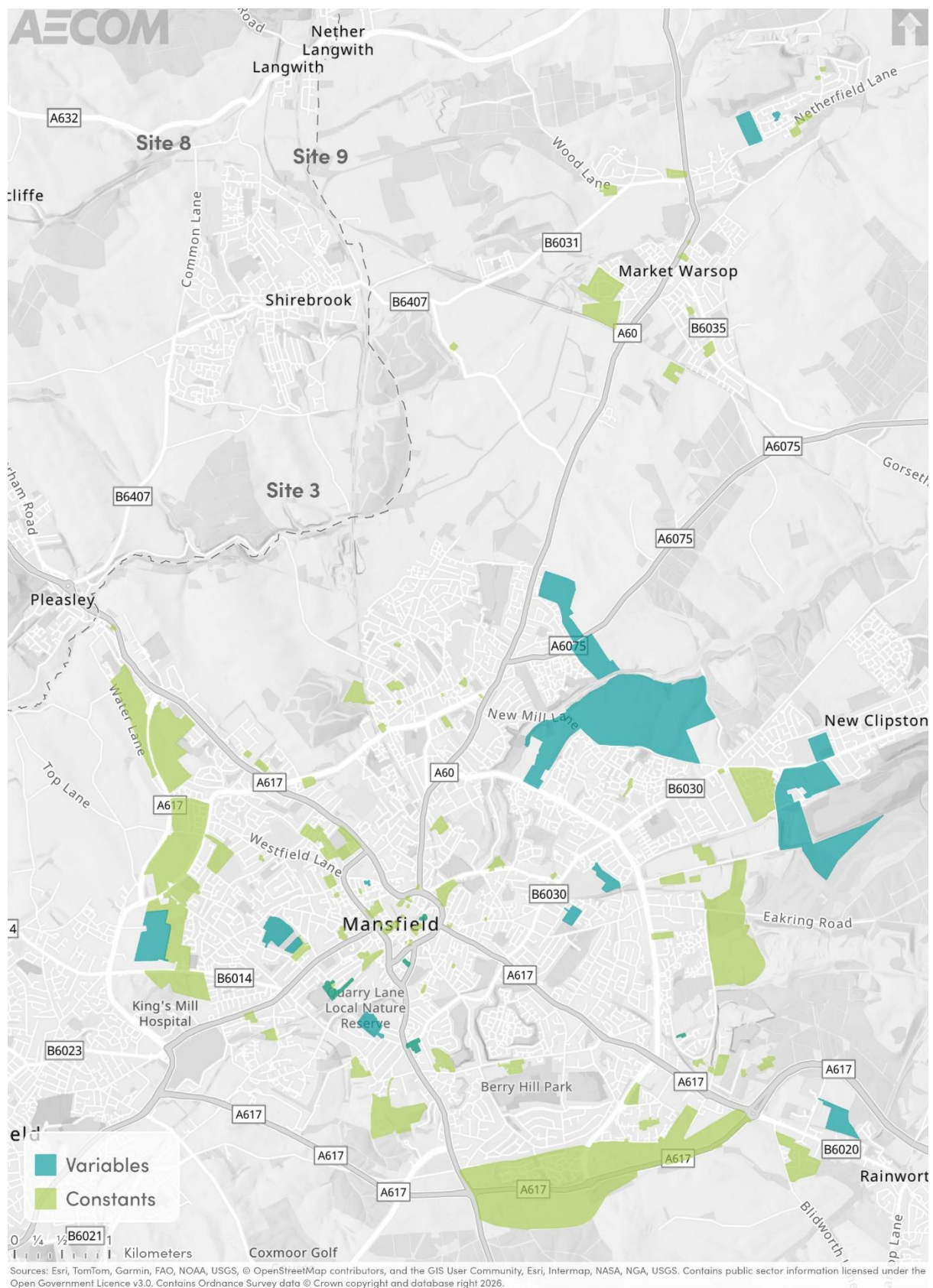
Figure 5-2: Alternative 2 - Warren Farm instead of Market Warsop sites

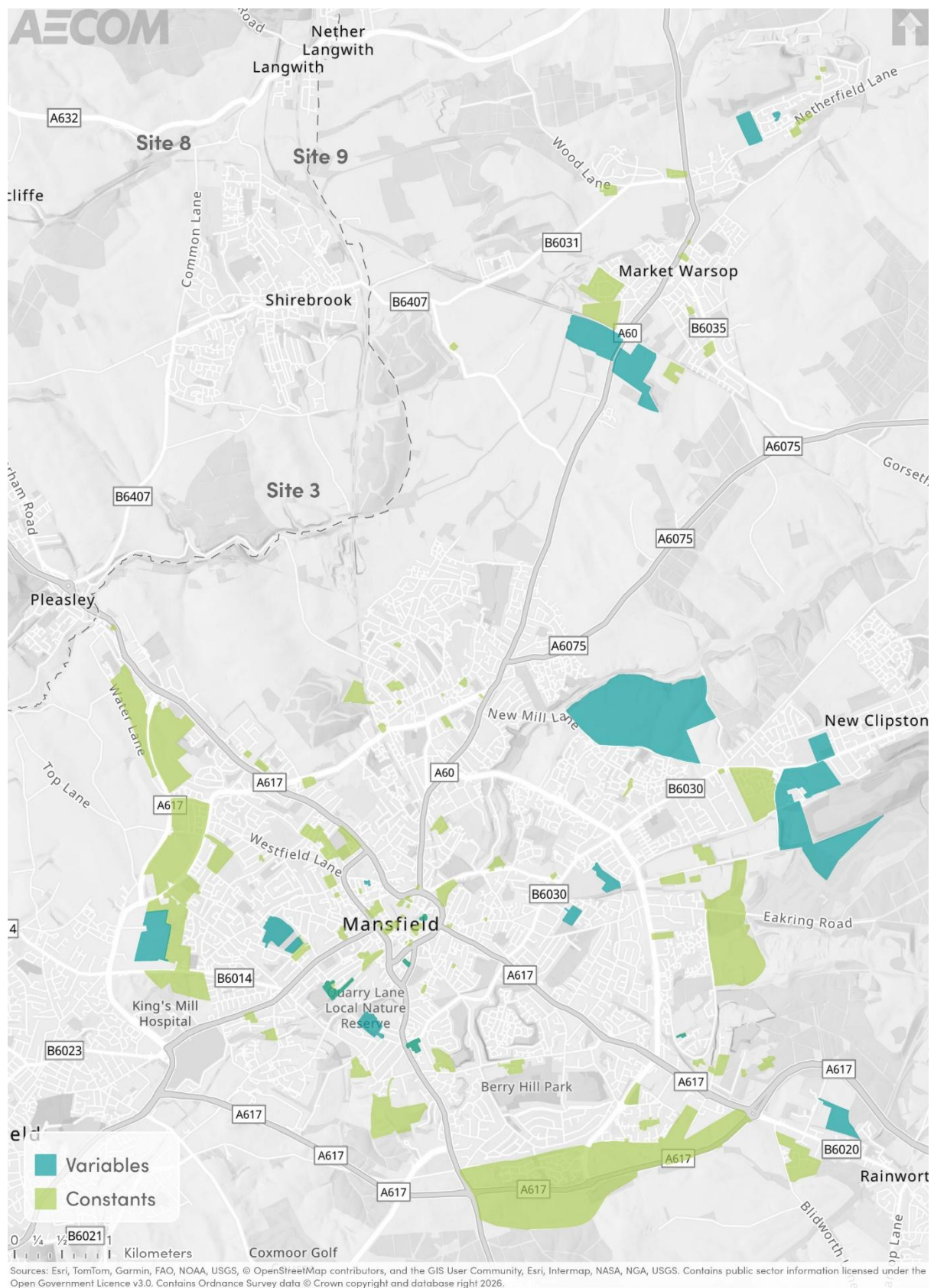
Figure 5-3: Alternative 3 - Warren Farm instead of dispersed sites

Figure 5-4: Alternative 4 - emerging preferred approach plus ‘amber sites’

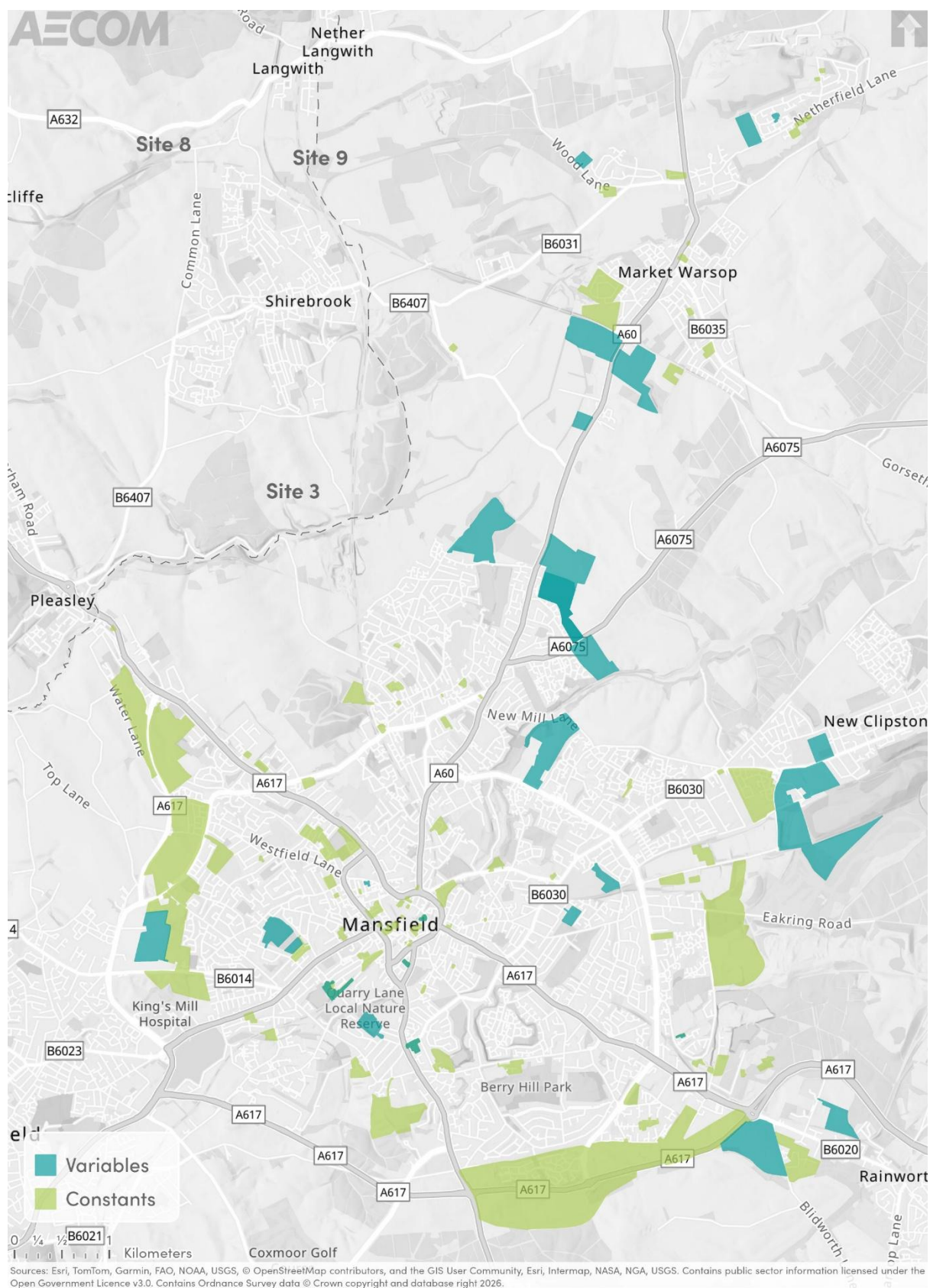


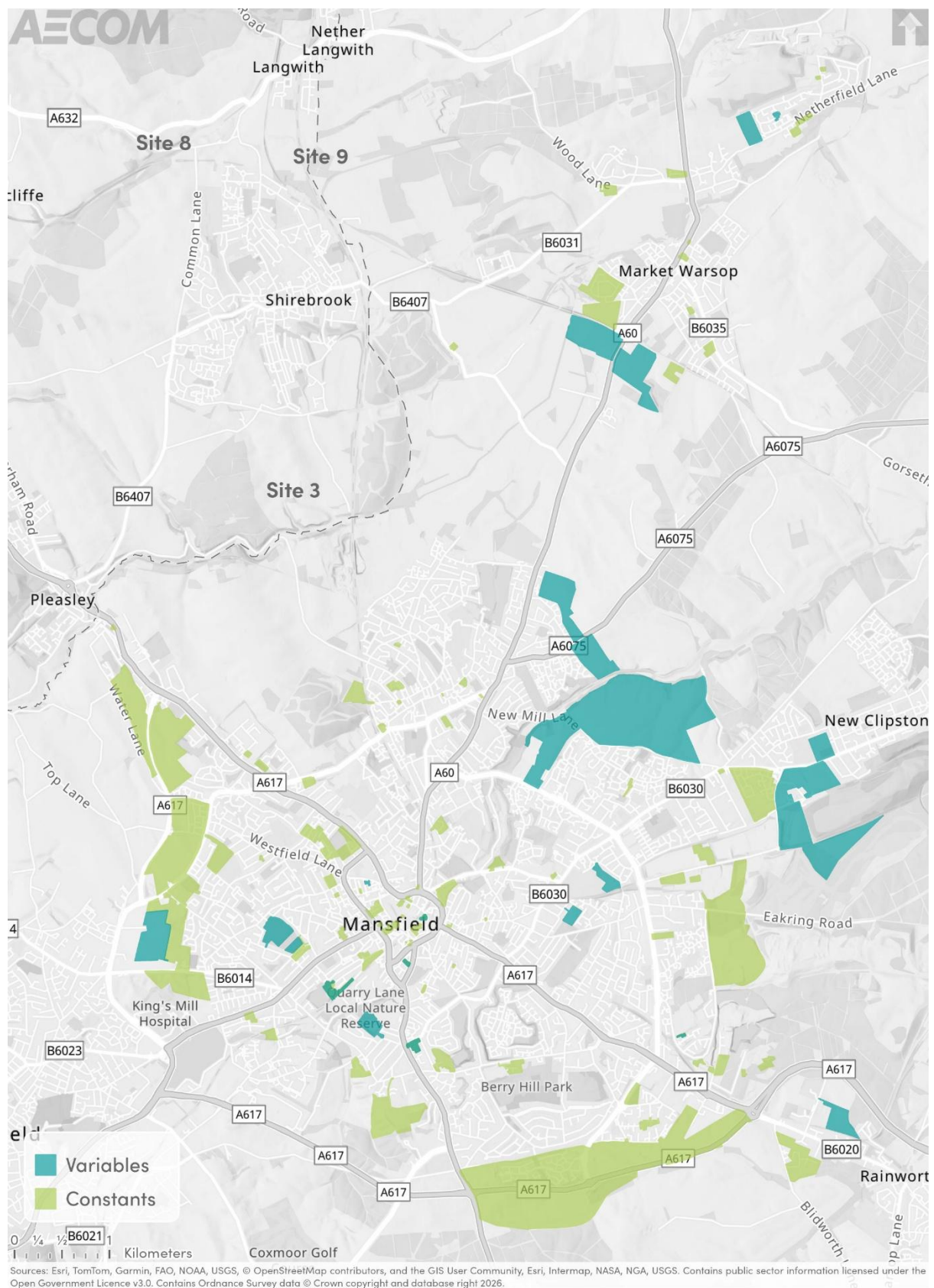
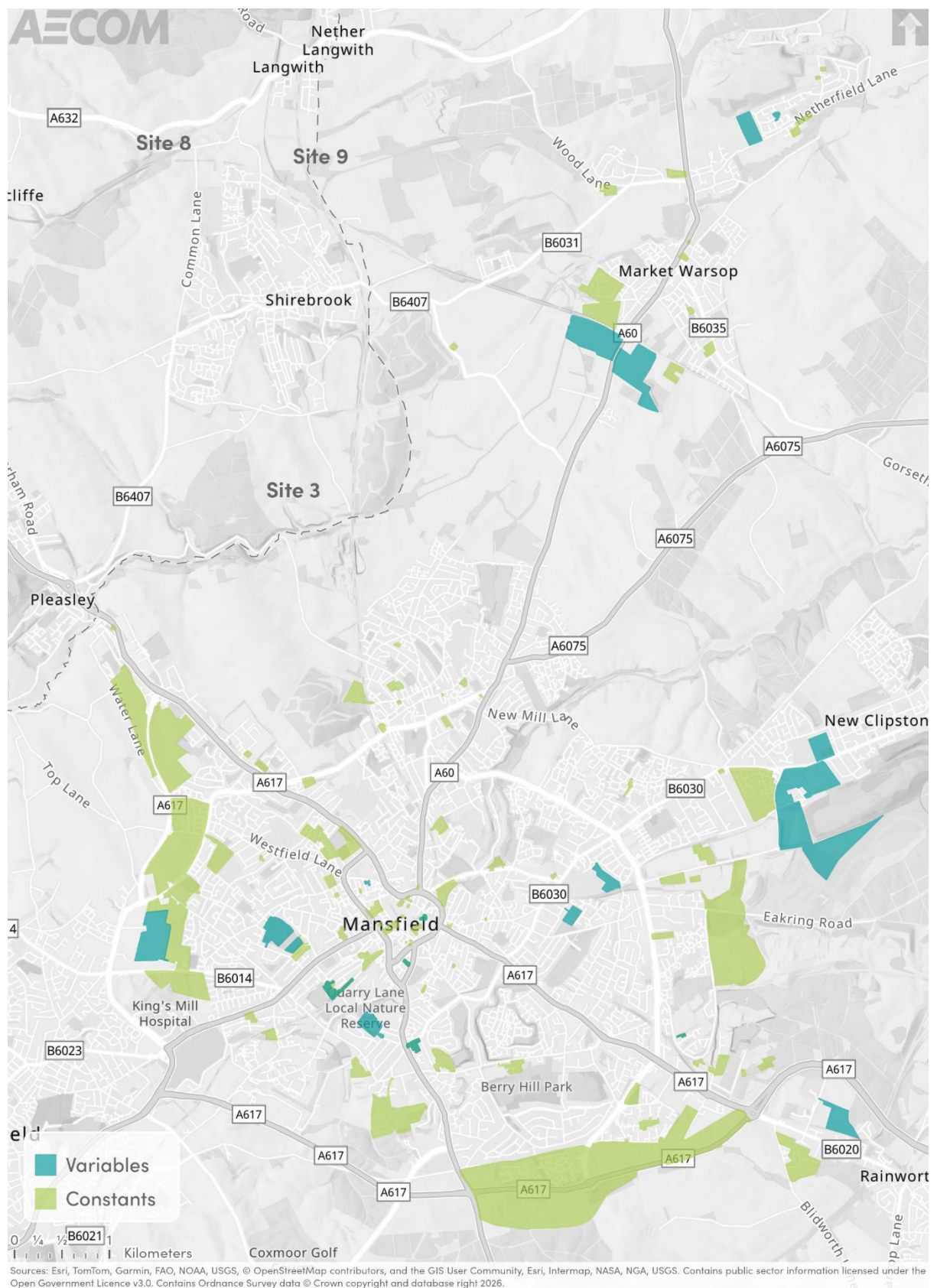
Figure 5-5: Alternative 5 - emerging preferred approach plus Warren Farm

Figure 5-6: Alternative 6 - emerging preferred approach without dispersed sites

5.2. Other Alternatives Considered

- 5.2.1. The Council considered whether other approaches should be assessed. However, some options were not taken forward because they would not support the overall objectives of the Local Plan or would be unlikely to create sustainable patterns of development.
- 5.2.2. For example, an approach based on isolated sites away from Mansfield and the district's established settlements was not considered reasonable because it would increase reliance on private cars and reduce access to jobs, services and public transport.
- 5.2.3. The Council also considered whether a significantly greater proportion of development should be directed to Market Warsop. However, concerns relating to infrastructure capacity, together with Mansfield's role as the district's main centre for jobs, services and public transport, meant that this approach was not considered a reasonable strategic alternative.

5.3. Employment Strategy

- 5.3.1. The Sustainability Appraisal also considered the approach to employment growth.
- 5.3.2. Evidence showed that the district has sufficient employment land available to meet forecast needs under most growth scenarios. As a result, the Council did not identify any fundamentally different employment strategies that required assessment through the Sustainability Appraisal.
- 5.3.3. The Local Plan therefore continues to support the protection of existing employment areas, delivery of existing employment allocations and employment growth in the most sustainable locations, particularly within the Mansfield urban area.
- 5.3.4. Further detail on the development and assessment of reasonable alternatives is provided in the full Sustainability Appraisal Report.

6. Appraisal of Strategic Housing Alternatives

6.1. Introduction

- 6.1.1. The Sustainability Appraisal assessed the six reasonable alternatives against a range of environmental, social and economic objectives.
- 6.1.2. Overall, all options had strengths and weaknesses and no single alternative performed best against every sustainability objective.

6.2. Key Findings

Alternative 1: Preferred Strategy

- 6.2.1. The preferred strategy performs well overall and provides a balanced approach to delivering housing growth across the district.
- 6.2.2. Key benefits include:
 - Meeting identified housing needs with a modest flexibility allowance.
 - Supporting economic growth and access to jobs.
 - Providing significant benefits for housing delivery, healthy communities and accessibility.
 - Directing growth towards the district's most sustainable locations.
- 6.2.3. Potential adverse effects include:
 - Loss of greenfield land and agricultural land.
 - Impacts on landscape character in some locations.
 - Increased traffic on key transport corridors, particularly between Mansfield, Mansfield Woodhouse and Market Warsop.

Alternatives 2 and 3: Warren Farm Alternatives

- 6.2.4. These options would replace some proposed allocations with a new strategic-scale allocation at Warren Farm.
- 6.2.5. They would provide similar housing and economic benefits to the preferred strategy but may:
 - Increase reliance on a single large development site.
 - Increase delivery risks due to longer lead-in and build-out periods.
 - Create greater pressure on transport corridors north of Mansfield.
 - Result in additional impacts on the setting of heritage assets.

Alternatives 4 and 5: Higher Growth Options

- 6.2.6. These options would plan for housing growth above the identified requirement.
- 6.2.7. Benefits of these approaches over alternatives 1-3 include:
- Additional housing supply.
 - Greater flexibility in the housing land portfolio.
 - Increased support for local spending, labour supply and infrastructure investment.
- 6.2.8. However, they would also result in:
- Greater loss of greenfield and agricultural land.
 - Increased pressure on the transport network.
 - Increased potential for landscape impacts.
- 6.2.9. Option 5, which combines higher growth with development at Warren Farm, performed least favourably overall due to the concentration of growth and associated environmental and infrastructure pressures.

Alternative 6: Reduced Growth Option

- 6.2.10. This option would reduce planned housing growth by approximately 1,000 homes.
- 6.2.11. It performed best against several environmental objectives because it would:
- Reduce traffic impacts.
 - Reduce the loss of agricultural land.
 - Reduce landscape impacts.
 - Reduce pressure on infrastructure.
- 6.2.12. However, it would not fully meet identified housing needs and would provide fewer benefits in terms of housing delivery, community infrastructure and economic growth.

6.3. Why was the Preferred Strategy Selected?

6.3.1. The Council selected Alternative 1 because it:

- Meets identified housing needs in full.
- Provides a balanced distribution of growth across the district.
- Supports the role of Mansfield as the district's main centre while continuing to direct growth to Warsop Parish.
- Maintains a diverse and deliverable housing land supply.
- Avoids excessive reliance on a single strategic site.
- Provides an appropriate balance between social, economic and environmental objectives.

6.3.2. The alternatives involving higher levels of growth were not considered necessary to meet identified needs, while the reduced growth option would not deliver sufficient housing. The Warren Farm alternatives were not preferred because they would increase reliance on a single strategic allocation and could result in greater delivery, transport and heritage risks.

7. Whole Plan Appraisal

7.1. How was the Local Plan assessed?

- 7.1.1. The Sustainability Appraisal assessed the Regulation 19 Local Plan against a range of environmental, social and economic objectives. The assessment considered the likely effects of both the spatial strategy and the proposed policies, including how policies could help avoid, reduce or mitigate potential adverse effects.

7.2. Main Findings

- 7.2.1. The Sustainability Appraisal concludes that the Local Plan is likely to result in significant positive effects overall.
- 7.2.2. The strongest benefits are expected in relation to:
- Housing delivery.
 - Economic growth and investment.
 - Health and wellbeing.
 - Access to jobs, services and facilities.
- 7.2.3. These benefits arise from directing most development to Mansfield and other sustainable locations, providing new homes and employment opportunities, supporting active travel, improving access to green spaces and community facilities, and promoting investment in infrastructure.
- 7.2.4. The appraisal also found that Plan policies help strengthen environmental outcomes. In particular, policies relating to biodiversity, green infrastructure, climate change, flood risk, heritage and sustainable transport help reduce or avoid many of the potential adverse effects associated with growth.

7.3. Key Positive Effects

- 7.3.1. The Local Plan is expected to:
- Deliver sufficient housing to meet identified needs.
 - Support affordable, specialist and self-build housing.
 - Encourage economic growth and job creation.
 - Improve access to services, facilities and employment opportunities.
 - Support healthier lifestyles through walking, cycling, public transport, open space and green infrastructure.
 - Encourage more energy-efficient and lower-carbon forms of development.

- Enhance biodiversity through biodiversity net gain, habitat creation and ecological improvements.
- Improve the long-term management of water resources and river corridors.

7.4. Key Challenges and Trade-Offs

7.4.1. As with all growth strategies, the Local Plan involves some unavoidable trade-offs.

7.4.2. The main adverse effects identified are:

- Loss of some greenfield land.
- Loss of areas of agricultural land, including some higher quality farmland.
- Changes to landscape character at the edges of settlements.
- Increased traffic on parts of the highway network.
- Localised air quality impacts associated with increased traffic.

7.4.3. However, these effects are generally reduced through the Plan's policies, site requirements and proposed infrastructure improvements.

7.5. Overall Sustainability Appraisal Findings

7.5.1. **Table 7-1** provides a summary of the likely sustainability effects of the Plan.

Table 7-1: Overall effects of the Local Plan

Sustainability topic	Overall effect
Air quality	Minor negative
Biodiversity	Neutral
Climate change adaptation	Neutral
Climate change mitigation	Moderate positive
Economy	Major positive
Healthy Communities	Major positive
Historic Environment	Neutral
Housing	Major positive
Landscape	Minor negative Minor positive
Soil and land	Moderate negative
Transport and accessibility	Major positive Minor negative
Water resources	Minor positive

7.6. Overall Conclusion

- 7.6.1. The Sustainability Appraisal concludes that the Regulation 19 Local Plan performs positively overall against the sustainability objectives.
- 7.6.2. While some environmental effects are associated with accommodating future growth, the Plan includes a comprehensive framework of policies and mitigation measures that help reduce adverse effects and improve outcomes for biodiversity, heritage, climate resilience, transport, water resources and community wellbeing.
- 7.6.3. The preferred strategy is considered to provide an appropriate balance between meeting housing and employment needs, supporting sustainable economic growth and protecting environmental assets.

8. Mitigation and enhancement summary

8.1. How the Sustainability Appraisal influenced the Local Plan

- 8.1.1. The Sustainability Appraisal has informed the preparation of the Local Plan from an early stage and has helped shape both the spatial strategy and planning policies.
- 8.1.2. As the Plan developed, recommendations from the Sustainability Appraisal were incorporated into policies and site allocation requirements. This strengthened the Plan's approach to:
- Protecting and enhancing biodiversity.
 - Supporting climate change adaptation and mitigation.
 - Improving health and wellbeing.
 - Protecting heritage assets and their settings.
 - Promoting sustainable transport and accessibility.
 - Managing flood risk and water resources.
 - Supporting housing delivery and economic growth.
- 8.1.3. The appraisal also informed the assessment of site options and reasonable alternatives, helping the Council identify a preferred strategy that balances housing and employment needs with environmental protection.

8.2. Remaining Challenges

- 8.2.1. The Sustainability Appraisal found that most potential adverse effects have been reduced through the Plan's policies and site-specific requirements. However, some effects cannot be entirely avoided because they result from accommodating future growth.
- 8.2.2. The main residual effects relate to:
- The loss of some greenfield land.
 - The loss of areas of best and most versatile agricultural land.
 - Changes to landscape character at the edge of settlements.
 - Increased pressure on parts of the transport network.
 - Minor localised air quality impacts associated with additional traffic.

8.3. Monitoring and Ongoing Improvement

- 8.3.1. The Sustainability Appraisal concluded that no further significant changes to the spatial strategy or policies are required at this stage. However, ongoing monitoring will be important to ensure that the Plan is delivered sustainably.
- 8.3.2. Particular attention will be given to:
- Monitoring transport impacts and congestion on key routes.
 - Delivering high-quality green infrastructure and biodiversity enhancements.
 - Embedding climate resilience measures within new development.
 - Monitoring biodiversity net gain and wider nature recovery outcomes.
 - Ensuring new development is well integrated into the landscape.
- 8.3.3. The detailed recommendations made throughout the Sustainability Appraisal process, and the Council's response to them, are provided in the full Sustainability Appraisal Report.

9. Monitoring and next steps

9.1. What Happens Next?

- 9.1.1. This Sustainability Appraisal accompanies the Regulation 19 version of the Mansfield Local Plan and has informed its preparation.
- 9.1.2. Following consultation, Mansfield District Council will consider all comments received on both the Local Plan and the Sustainability Appraisal before submitting the Plan for independent examination.
- 9.1.3. The examination will consider whether the Local Plan has been prepared in accordance with legal requirements and whether it is sound. If adopted, the Council will continue to monitor the effects of the Plan and publish a Sustainability Appraisal Adoption Statement.

9.2. Monitoring the Effects of the Plan

- 9.2.1. Monitoring will help the Council understand whether the Local Plan is delivering the anticipated environmental, social and economic outcomes and identify whether any unexpected effects arise.
- 9.2.2. Key areas that will be monitored include:
 - Air quality and traffic conditions.
 - Biodiversity net gain and habitat creation.
 - Flood risk, sustainable drainage and climate resilience.
 - Renewable energy generation and carbon reduction measures.
 - Employment land delivery and economic performance.
 - Health and wellbeing, including access to green spaces and community facilities.
 - The condition of heritage assets.
 - Housing delivery, including affordable housing provision.
 - Landscape and green infrastructure.
 - Loss of agricultural land and use of brownfield land.
 - Public transport, walking and cycling infrastructure.
 - Water quality and water resource management.
- 9.2.3. Monitoring information will be reviewed regularly and, where necessary, action can be taken to address any issues that emerge during implementation of the Local Plan.
- 9.2.4. A detailed proposed monitoring framework is provided in the full Sustainability Appraisal.