

Alcester Neighbourhood Development Plan Local Green Space Site Assessment - August 2018

Site Address	Site Area	Site Ref
Westbury Park, south of the B4089, Alcester	Approx. 1.35ha	LGS 1

Plan



Site Description and Current Land Use

The site is part of a large wedge of green infrastructure that runs through Alcester from north to south. It is a restful park bordered by the B4089, Arden Road, to the north and the River Arrow to the south. It is an enclosed grass area with a dense canopy of trees and shrubs surrounding the site with numerous benches spread throughout. This site is widely used as evidenced by the worn gravelled public footpaths that run diagonally across the site from southwest to northeast and across the site's northern boundary. A public footpath also runs coterminous to the site's eastern border on the opposite side of the River Arrow.

Being adjacent to residential dwellings to the west and the commercial Arden Forest Industrial Estate to the east, it is regularly used both by householders and workers. Views can be seen to the River Arrow (which runs along its east boundary) and the bridge that crosses it. Jubilee (recreational) Fields lies to the south and B4089 /Arden Road to the north with the Grade II medieval Beauchamp Court, moated site beyond. A large pipe runs under the B4089 enabling local wildlife to pass to and from fields north of the site.

Relevant Planning History
No relevant planning history found.
Site Ownership
Alcester Town Council, Title Ref: WK335337
Site Constraints
<p>The site sits within the Built-up Area Boundary but is in a designated Area of Restraint (SDC Core Strategy CS 13) and Nature Reserve Site (SDC Core Strategy CS 6).</p> <p>The site is also designated as Parks, Gardens and Amenity Spaces in the B2 Alcester Landscape Sensitivity Study (2011). It is situated in Zone A09 and borders Zone A10, both of which have high sensitivity to both commercial and residential development. The report states:</p> <p><i>“This flat valley floor zone, mostly in the floodplain of the River Arrow, runs through the centre of the settlement separating the older part of the town to the west from the new to the east. It comprises well used and managed amenity space to the east and north west and permanent grazed pasture to the west, part of which is a scheduled ancient monument [Alcester Abbey- with no visible remains] and part of which is the River Arrow local nature reserve. The river has a winding natural course and strong riparian tree cover and with other trees and hedgerows on boundaries strongly enclose the area screening the settlement edge and acting as a setting for the town including Gunners Bridge to the south. Overall the area is either a valuable community resource or provides a rural setting for a SAM. It is therefore highly sensitive and unsuitable for housing development..” p.28</i></p> <p><i>“The area's sensitivity lies in its role as floodplain, its ecological and recreational value along the river corridor, its visual interest and its role as part of the setting for the SAM.” p.31</i></p>
Public Access
The site is open and accessible to the public. There are access points off the B4089 and also via a path off Greville Road.

Site Photo



Ecological Significance

The grassed areas of the site have low ecological value. However the dense mix of trees and shrubs as well as the proximity to the River Arrow have high ecological value.

The mixed species hedgerows and shrubs are important for a number of birds and mammals as they provide food, shelter and nesting sites. They increase the diversity of insect species (including butterflies and bees which are currently in decline), which are a food source for bird and mammal species and can also play an important role in the pollination of plants and crops in the surrounding area. The diversity and population numbers of insects directly impacts the food chain for other fauna in the area and has a wider impact on the cultivation of crops.

The river and river bank serve as a wildlife corridor and habitat for amphibians, invertebrates and insects along the brook. These are all vital for the wider food web and species diversity within the town's ecosystem.

In the town, there have been sightings of larger fauna species such as bats, birds of prey (e.g. buzzards and owls), rabbits and hedgehogs. The site plays an important contributory role in the wider ecological significance of the town.

Special Qualities and Local Significance

The site is locally significant because it is well used and highly valued by the local community for pedestrians, local residents and dog walkers.

The path off Greville Road leading to the site makes it the nearest green space accessible to residents of the Westbury Park development. Being in such close proximity to the Arden Forest Industrial Estate; it is regularly used by local workers as well.

The special qualities of the site include its strong contribution to local character and green infrastructure. It is also distinctive due to its natural beauty and restful, open aspect as well as its views to and gentle sounds of the River Arrow.

Summary and Suitability for Designation as Local Green Space

This site is well related to and appreciated and valued by the local community and makes a positive contribution to the local distinctiveness of the village.

The LGS as outlined on the above plan is considered to be suitable for Local Green Space designation in accordance with paragraphs 99-101 of the National Planning Policy Framework in that it is:

- in reasonably close proximity to the community it serves;
- demonstrably special to a local community and holds a particular local significance because of its recreational value (including as a playing field), tranquillity and richness of its habitats and wildlife potential; and
- local in character and is not an extensive tract of land.