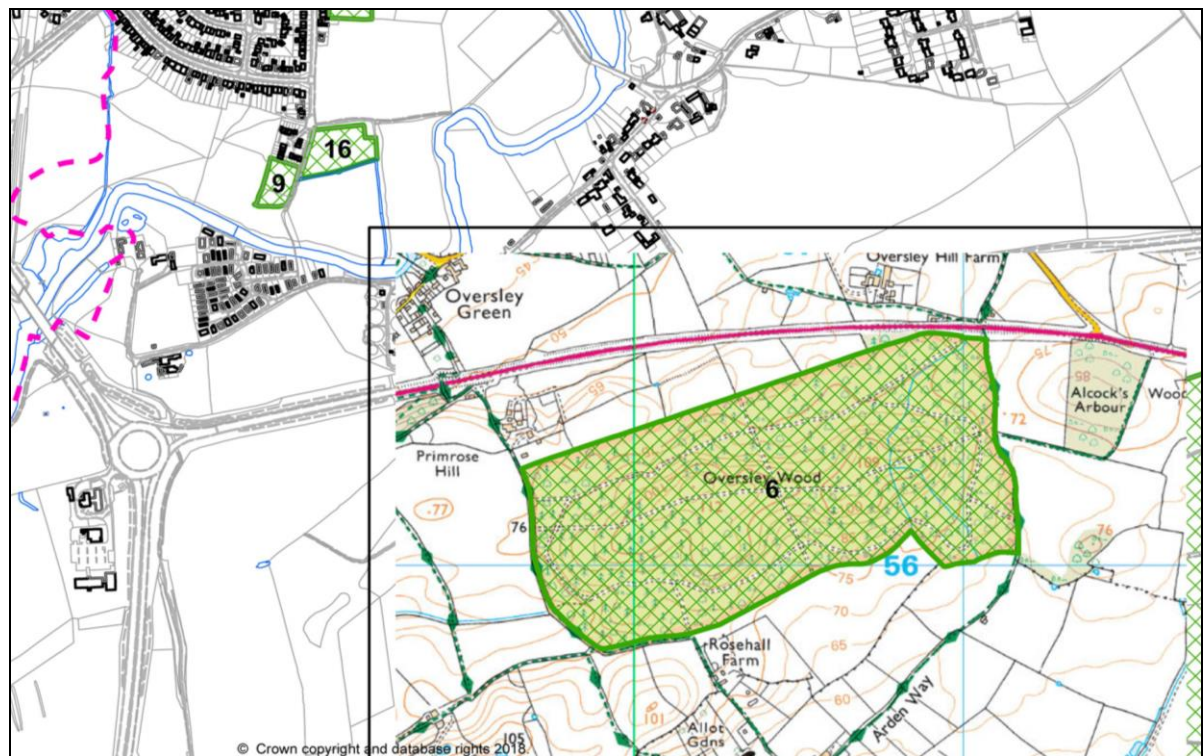


**Alcester Neighbourhood Development Plan
Local Green Space Site Assessment - August 2018**

Site Address	Site Area	Site Ref
Oversley Wood, South of A46, Alcester	Approx. 96.8ha	LGS 6

Plan



Site Description and Current Land Use

Oversley Wood comprises over 230 acres of woodland, managed by the Forestry Commission. It is a tranquil, pocket of ancient woodland, swathed across a gently rolling south Warwickshire hillside.

The site is criss-crossed with gravelled paths with wide vergers and is densely populated with numerous mature and semi-mature, indigenous trees such as lime, holly, wild cherry, oak and ash. It is rich with many unusual flowers and insects and is home to a varied mammal and bird population.

It is a popular with joggers, horse riders and dog walkers and routes extend out via a network of public footpaths across the area including the coterminous Heart of England Way to the east. The Arden Way runs along its western and eastern boundaries Higher reaches of the wood afford excellent views of Alcester.

Open countryside and field surround the site on all sides with the exception of the northwest and southwest where farm houses and some residential dwellings can be found.

Relevant Planning History
No relevant planning history found.
Site Ownership
Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs c/o Forestry Commission Title Ref: WK425246
Site Constraints
The site sits outside the Built-up Area Boundary and is designated Ancient Woodland (SDC Core Strategy Policy CS.6). The site is identified as a Local Wildlife Site in the B2 Alcester Landscape Sensitivity Study (2011) by White Consultants for Stratford District Council
Public Access
The site is open and accessible to the public. Access from Alcester from a path located at the southern end of Primrose Lane, across the A46 overpass and along a public bridleway which forms part the Heart of England Way / Arden Way.
Site Photo


Ecological Significance

As a designated Local Wildlife Site in the B2 Alcester Landscape Sensitivity Study (2011) by White Consultants, the site has notably high ecological value. With its numerous mature and semi-mature, indigenous trees such as lime, holly, wild cherry, oak and ash, it is home to a varied mammal and bird population. It is also rich with many unusual flowers, wildflowers and insects.

The mixed species trees 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. These are all vital for the wider food web and species diversity within the town's ecosystem.

Special Qualities and Local Significance

This tranquil ancient woodland, which once formed the southern end of the Forest of Arden, is one of the most popular attractions for personal recreation in the Alcester area. As of August 2018, it was ranked number 5 out of 18 attractions in the Alcester area on www.tripadvisor.co.uk. It is popular with joggers, horse riders and dog walkers and routes extend out via a network of public footpaths across the area.

The site attracts residents and visitors throughout the year as each season offers something to catch the eye, from the profusion of bluebells in late spring, wild orchids and abundance of wildflowers in summer, to the feast of seasonal colours and toadstools in autumn and winter. It is also possible to see glimpses of deer through the trees.

The site is locally significant because of its historical significance and because it is well used and valued by the local community. The special qualities of the site include its strong contribution to local character, recreational value and distinctiveness due to its natural beauty. It is also highly appreciated and prized by the local community as an undeveloped tranquil area which contributes to the area's overall green setting.

Summary and Suitability for Designation as Local Green Space

This site is well related to and used by the local community and makes a positive contribution to the health and well-being of local residents. This site as outlined on the above plan is not considered to be suitable for Local Green Space designation in accordance with paragraphs 99 - 101 of the National Planning Policy Framework because it is considered to be a large tract of land and slightly divorced from the town.

However, in recognising that it is clearly demonstrably special to a local community and holds a particular local significance because of its tranquillity and richness of its habitats and wildlife and the contribution it makes to sustainability and having regard to its status as a Local Wildlife Site, there may be more suitable ways of protecting the longevity of the site through the Neighbourhood Plan such as recognising it as a stand alone area of recreational and wildlife value under a separate policy.