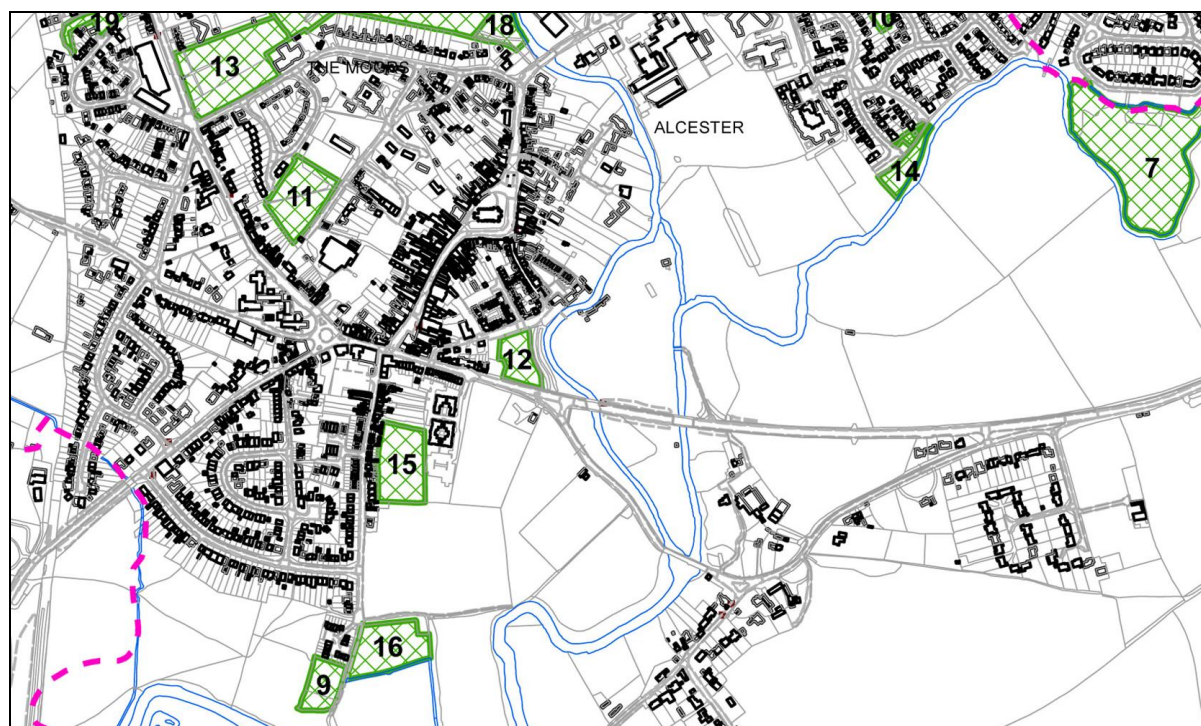


Alcester Neighbourhood Development Plan Local Green Space Site Assessment - August 2018

Site Address	Site Area	Site Ref
Children's Play Area, West of Bleachfield St, Alcester	Approx. 0.85ha	LGS 9

Plan



Site Description and Current Land Use

This well-used and maintained open green space is situated close to residential dwellings at the southern end of the town. Benches and a small selection of young children's play equipment are contained within the site. Tributary meets it at its east boundary. Surrounded on all sides by open countryside with the exception of its north boundary where it is bordered by residential dwellings. The open aspect of the site affords views northwest to the fields and dwellings beyond as well as to the allotment gardens and fields to the east.

Access and vehicle parking is available along the road frontage to the east. A variety of mature trees populate the site. Tall mature trees and shrubs line the east and south boundaries, residential dwellings and associated fencing line the north boundary and dwarf, post and rail fencing line the road frontage – giving the site a sense of enclosure.

The Bleachfield Street (south) allotment gardens lie across the road to the northeast as does access to the Heritage Trail.

Relevant Planning History

Application no: 84/00472/FUL (Land Off Bleachfield Street Alcester Warwickshire)

- Proposed: Change of Use from Bird Sanctuary to Children's Play Area
- Decision: Permitted
- Decision Date: 30/08/84

Site Ownership

This site is owned by Stratford District Council and managed under a long lease by Alcester Town Council. Title Ref: WK454735

Site Constraints

The site sits outside the Built-up Area Boundary but borders it on all but its south boundary. It sits within conservation area, designated Green Belt (SDC Core Strategy Policy PR.2) and Special Landscape Area (SDC Core Strategy Policy EF.2).

The site is situated in Zone A06 of the B2 Alcester Landscape Sensitivity Study (2011) and is identified as having high sensitivity to both residential and commercial development. The northern section of the zone is identified as a Green Area Belt and Schedule Monument area.

Public Access

The site is open and accessible to the public along the road frontage.

Site Photo





Ecological Significance

With the exception of the mature trees and shrubs that frame the site to the south and west and sporadically populate the site, the majority of the site has low ecological value.

The mixed species trees and shrubs include birch, ash, yew, pine and willow and 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.

Trees provide nesting sites for birds as well as habitats for small mammal species e.g. squirrels. 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 a recreational facility and open green space that serves the southernmost extremity of the town. The special qualities of the site include its recreational and social value for children and adults through the playground and walking / dog walking. The open green fields surrounding the site create a sense of space and provide a restful pit stop for walkers passing through along the nearby Heritage Trail.

The site is demonstrably special and locally significant as it is actively used and valued by the local community as a formal area of open space and due to its natural beauty.

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.