



Alcester Neighbourhood Development Plan 2026

Submission Version



Planning for Alcester's Vision 2025 - 2035

March 2026

Foreword

This Neighbourhood Development Plan Review has been produced by a Steering Group consisting of volunteer residents and town councillors. All are keen to ensure that any future development respects the character of the town and that Alcester continues to be an attractive place in which to live, work and visit.

I would like to thank members of the Steering Group for their work and enthusiasm over the many months it has taken to follow the formal process in producing the updated Neighbourhood Development Plan. We have been extremely well supported by the Town Clerk and her staff at Alcester Town Council who devoted many hours helping to compile the document and administer meetings. I would especially like to thank Andrew Matheson for chairing the Review Steering Group and adding his expertise to this updated version of the Plan.

Our thanks also extend to Craig Lippett from Lippett Creative, who designed and formatted the original document; to Will Tudor for the cover photograph and to Liz Taylor, Spatial Information Officer, Stratford on Avon District Council for her assistance with most of the maps.

Finally, but most importantly, we would like to thank all the residents and businesses who completed the various questionnaires and consultations which were such a vital part in making sure that the policies in this document reflect community opinion on future development in Alcester.

Cllr Wendy Mills

Vice-Chair of Alcester Neighbourhood Development Plan Review Steering Committee



	Page No
1 Introduction	6
2 Historical information	9
3 Alcester today	11
4 Key issues	12
5 Vision statement	13
6 Objectives and Policies	
6.1 Housing and the Built Environment	15
6.2 Economy	27
6.3 Transport and Infrastructure	34
6.4 Community, Leisure and Well-being	37
6.5 Natural Environment	41
7 Projects	50
8 CIL and Project Funding	52
9 Appendices	53
10 Glossary	65
11 References	67



HOUSING AND THE BUILT ENVIRONMENT

Policy	Subject	Page No
Policy HBE 1	Residential development within the Built Up Area Boundary	15
Policy HBE 2	Local Needs Housing	18
Policy HBE 3	Housing mix	19
Policy HBE 4	Bungalows	20
Policy HBE 5	Specialist accommodation	20
Policy HBE 6	Development design	21
Policy HBE 7	Public Realm	23
Policy HBE 8	Heritage Assets	23

ECONOMY

Policy	Subject	Page No
Policy EC 1	Development within the Town Centre	28
Policy EC 2	Supporting employment on brownfield sites	31
Policy EC 3	Supporting business start up	31
Policy EC 4	Employment land changes of use and mixed use development	31
Policy EC 5	Support for commercial development	31
Policy EC 6	Education and childcare provision	32
Policy EC 7	Further and adult education and training	34
Policy EC 8	Support for new or improved tourist attractions and accommodation	34

TRANSPORT AND INFRASTRUCTURE

Policy	Subject	Page No
Policy TI 1	New development and connectivity	36
Policy TI 2	Telecommunication	37

COMMUNITY, LEISURE AND WELL-BEING

Policy	Subject	Page No
Policy CLW 1	Community and leisure facilities development	39
Policy CLW 2	Enhancing access to and utilisation of open green spaces	39
Policy CLW 3	Health provision	40
Policy CLW 4	Allotments and growing spaces	40

NATURAL ENVIRONMENT

Policy	Subject	Page No
Policy NE 1	Trees, hedges and landscape features	42
Policy NE 2	Biodiversity	43
Policy NE 3	Local Green Spaces	43
Policy NE 4	Protecting Valued Landscapes and Important Views	44
Policy NE 5	Mitigating and preventing increased flood risk	50

<u>Map</u>	<u>Subject</u>	<u>Page No</u>
Map 1	Neighbourhood Area	8
Map 2	Built Up Area Boundary	16
Map 3	Development Proposals ALC1 and ALC 2	17
Map 4	Heritage Asset Map (Town Centre)	25
Map 5	Heritage Asset Map (Parish)	26
Map 6	Alcester Town Centre	29
Map 7	Local Green Spaces	45
Map 8	Valued Landscapes	47
Map 9	Important Views	48



1. Introduction

1.1 What is a Neighbourhood Development Plan?

- 1.1.1 Neighbourhood Development Plans were established under the Localism Act 2011 in order to give local people more say in the future of where they live.
- 1.1.2 Producing a Neighbourhood Development Plan gives local people the opportunity to shape development in their communities. It is a result of consultation with residents, businesses and landowners. This Neighbourhood Development Plan ("the Plan") aims to ensure that Alcester remains a great place to live, work and visit. At the heart of the Plan are 12 Objectives and 26 Policies, covering 5 topics: Housing and the Built Environment; the Economy; Transport and Infrastructure; Community, Leisure and Well-being; and the Natural Environment. These are local policies that anyone submitting planning applications must follow in order that future development respects the character of the town, is supported by adequate infrastructure and brings benefits to the community.
- 1.1.3 Following a successful referendum in May 2021, the made version of the Neighbourhood Development Plan was adopted by Stratford-on-Avon District Council in July 2021 and Stratford-on-Avon District Council has been taking these policies into account when making its planning decisions. There are also planning policies at National (The National Planning Policy Framework¹) and District Level (Stratford-on-Avon District Council's Core Strategy²). This Plan has regard to national policies and is in general conformity with the strategic policies in the Core Strategy. It however adds local policies pertinent to Alcester.
- 1.1.4 The Plan also includes an update on a number of projects which relate to matters which have been shown during consultation to be important to residents. Developers are sometimes required to make financial contributions for infrastructure and some of this money may be available for these projects. The Town Council therefore agrees to work towards these projects although delivery may be dependent on availability of funding and support from other tiers of local government.
- 1.1.5 The Plan covers the period up to 2035 and will be reviewed every 5 years or as other changes are required.





1.2 The Neighbourhood Plan Area

- 1.2.1 The area covered by this Plan is the same as the administrative area of the Town Council and includes the town of Alcester and the settlements of Oversley Green, Kings Coughton and Alcester Heath. This is defined as the “Neighbourhood Area” and was approved by the District Council in January 2014. The area is washed over in pink on Map 1.
- 1.2.2 For the purposes of the Core Strategy, the District Council identified an Alcester Area Strategy. The area covered by this Strategy includes the Neighbourhood Area, plus part of the parishes of Kinwarton and Arrow with Weethley.
- 1.2.3 Alcester Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group had previously engaged with Kinwarton Parish Council to discuss producing a joint Neighbourhood Plan. However, Kinwarton produced a Parish Plan instead which has been adopted by Stratford District Council.
- 1.2.4 Kinwarton parish has 1082 residents and according to its Parish Plan, identifies itself as a village rather than as part of the town of Alcester. Similarly Arrow with Weethley parish has only 226 residents and is a small hamlet.

1.3 The Plan Making Process

- 1.3.1 There is a formal process set down in Neighbourhood Planning Regulations 2012 for producing a Neighbourhood Plan and its adoption.
- 1.3.2 Key to the process is community involvement and input. Since 2014 there have been a large number of consultations and surveys. The results of these consultations are available on www.alcester-tc.gov.uk

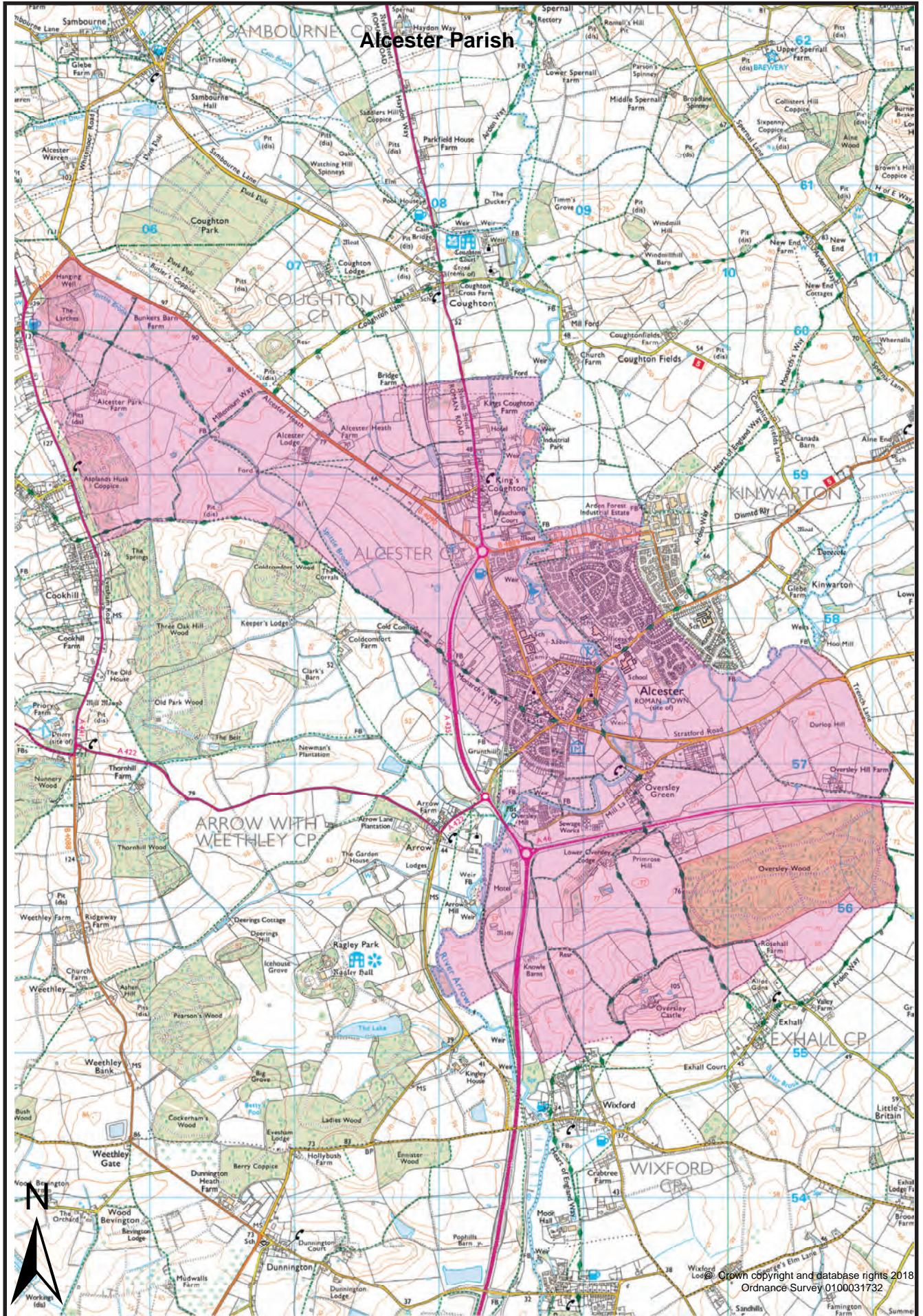
June 2014 - Alcester Grammar School students conducted a Stage 1 questionnaire

June 2014 – “Where we are now” leaflet distributed

August 2014 - Alcester Town Councillors went to 16 locations across the town with the ‘Our Alcester Roadshow’ undertaking Stage 2 surveys

October 2014 – Business Questionnaire distributed

Map 1 – Neighbourhood Area



January 2015 – Older Persons’ Questionnaire distributed

March 2015 - A Neighbourhood Plan Questionnaire was delivered to every household “the Household Questionnaire” and the results were published in the Town Council’s summer newsletter

January 2017 – Exhibition in conjunction with Alcester Civic Society and Chamber of Trade regarding infrastructure issues

July 2017 - WRCC conducted a Housing Needs Survey for the Town Council

September 2017 - Emerging Policies Document was delivered to every household

February 2018 - A new Steering Group, consisting of residents, Town Councillors and business representatives all passionate about Alcester, met to take forward the production of the Plan with the help of a planning consultant.

September 2018- Regulation 14 Public Consultation. Analysis of the household and business questionnaires revealed support of over 90% of all but one policy. 81% supported policy HBE 2 Local Needs Housing

July 2021 - Following the Regulation 16 Public Consultation, Independent Examination and a successful referendum in May 2021, the Made version of the Neighbourhood Development Plan was adopted by Stratford-on-Avon District Council.

April 2023 - Housing Needs Survey was updated.

September 2023 - An invitation was issued through the Town Council newsletter for community views on matters that should be addressed/readdressed in the Neighbourhood Plan Review and for volunteers to join the Review Steering Group.

January 2024 - Neighbourhood Plan Review Steering Group formed and started to meet.

April 2025 - Report on progress at the Annual Parish Meeting.

December 2025/January 2026 Regulation 14 Public Consultation.

- 1.3.3** The Town Council is committed to regularly monitoring changes in national and local policy and the way in which the Neighbourhood Plan is implemented in planning decisions in the Neighbourhood area. A review of the Plan at least every 5 years can help to ensure that the policies contained within it are effective and up to date and reflect any reviews or updates of the Core Strategy/Local Plan.

2. Historical Information

- 2.1** In Roman times, Alcester (thought to have been called Alauna) was a walled town of some importance. Around 47AD a fort was built at the top of Primrose Hill. The town grew up on the lower ground, around a possible second fort west of Bleachfield Street which may have replaced the one on Primrose Hill. It was at a strategic location on the junction of two major routes. Ryknield Street (a later name - its Roman name, if it had one, is unknown) ran from Bourton-on-the-Water, on the Fosse Way to Gloucestershire, to Templeborough in South Yorkshire. A second road, later known as the Saltway, ran from Droitwich to Alcester and continued eastwards beyond Stratford on Avon. In the 2nd century AD, part of the town, roughly the area of the present historic core centred on High Street, Church Street and Henley Street was surrounded by a defensive rampart, which was replaced by a substantial stone wall in the 4th century. There were extensive suburbs to the south and west which remained outside the wall.

- 2.2** Roman control of Britain ceased around 410AD, after which occupation of the towns dwindled and, in most cases, ceased. Alcester was no exception. There is almost no evidence for activity in Alcester during the ensuing Anglo-Saxon period. A few metal items have been found, including a buckle, a brooch and a coin, and a very small amount of pottery recovered from the excavations in the town, but there is nothing to suggest occupation on any significant scale. Stories of a church synod in Alcester in 709AD, and visits by Saint Ecgwine and Saint Chad have been proved to be based on medieval forged documents and legend. It is not mentioned in the Domesday Book compiled after the Norman Conquest, probably because the manor was then in royal ownership.



- 2.3** The town was re-occupied in the medieval period, although exactly how and when this happened is unclear. Human skeletons, radiocarbon dated as very late Anglo-Saxon or early post-Conquest, were found near the site of Boteler's Castle to the south-west of the town. The Castle itself was built in the early 12th century; nothing of it is visible today. A 13th-century document describes Alcester as having been a free borough from the time of King Henry I (1100-1135), and it sent members to Parliament in 1275.
- 2.4** Alcester Abbey, a Benedictine monastery, was founded in 1138 by Ralph le Boteler, on a site just to the north of the town. Initially well-endowed, by the 15th century it was very run-down as a result, it appears, of negligent management by several abbots. Richard de Tutbury, the last abbot, resigned his office in 1467 when Alcester Abbey was demoted to the status of a priory and absorbed into Evesham Abbey. Its church was reported to be ruinous in 1515, and in 1536 the priory was one of the earliest closures under Henry VIII's Dissolution of the Monasteries. The site came into the ownership of the Greville family, who used it as a source of stone to rebuild their family seat of Beauchamp Court.
- 2.5** Alcester has been a market town since well before 1274, when the market is referred to in a document as being held there 'as in ancient time'. The Grade I Listed 17th-century Town Hall was originally built as the market house with an open ground floor. Fairs and markets continued until the 19th century, and the town also developed a range of industries, particularly needle manufacturing which lasted as late as the 1980s. The railway from Redditch to Evesham via Alcester was completed in 1868, with a further line from Alcester to Bearley opening in 1876, but both are now closed and dismantled. Since the Second World War considerable expansion has taken place around the historic core of Alcester, and the population of the parish, which was consistently between 2,000 and 2,500 from 1821 - 1931, rose to 3,424 in 1961 and 5,228 in 1981, reaching 6,273 in 2011.
- 2.6** Alcester possesses many historic buildings as well as the Town Hall. St Nicholas Church has a 14th-century tower; the nave and aisles were rebuilt in the 18th century, and the east end is 19th-century. The clock on the tower is in an unusual position on the south-west corner, so that it can be easily seen from the High Street. The church contains the tomb of the first Sir Fulke Greville, grandfather of Sir Fulke Greville, 1st Baron Brooke who, as well as being Lord of the Manor of Alcester, was Chancellor of the Exchequer from 1614 to 1621. Churchill House (Listed Grade II*) has an ornate brick frontage, with stone detailing and balcony, dating from 1688. There are numerous timber-framed houses and shops, including the Grade I Listed Malt House of c.1500, and many others which were re-fronted with brick in the 18th and 19th centuries. The Old Rectory and Acorn House, both Listed Grade II, are fine examples of large Georgian houses, and on the east side of Church Street is an elegant group of Georgian townhouses. Minerva Mill, a substantial factory built of red brick in the 1880s and Listed Grade II, is the most spectacular survival from Alcester's needle-making industry; it has been imaginatively converted to provide a variety of office accommodation from single-desks to self-contained office suites.

3. Alcester Today

- 3.1** Alcester is an attractive and thriving rural town on the western side of Warwickshire, located at the confluence of the River Arrow and smaller River Alne. Whilst an attractive situation, over the years Alcester has been subject to flooding due to river levels increasing and surface water build-up. Flood prevention measures were implemented after severe flooding in 2007 but it remains a risk which further development must take into account. Please see Policy NE 5.
- 3.2** It is situated in a valley and little of the built environment can be seen when approaching from any direction. It benefits from many open green spaces with a variety of wildlife and habitats and several recreational areas. Oversley Wood comprises 230 acres of managed woodland and is one of the most popular recreation attractions. Access to the river corridor has been increased over recent years providing pleasurable walking areas.
- 3.3** Its population is just over 6,000 rising to around 8,000 if you include housing developments on the east side of the town which, for historical reasons, are in Kinwarton parish rather than the Neighbourhood Area.
- 3.4** It is a festival town with many events throughout the year attracting both residents and visitors. These events include Food Festivals, Duck Race, Pancake Races and a Summer Market. A bypass to the south and west reduces through traffic and facilitates closure of the High Street for these events.
- 3.5** There is a good community spirit with many active groups and organisations. Community facilities include the Greig Leisure Centre (comprising gym, multi-use courts and studios), the Town Hall, The Greig Hall, the Guide and Scout Centre, Alcester Community Shed and the Eric Payne Community Centre. The latter is a community centre which is also base to a Youth Club and Dementia Café. Local secondary schools also act as venues for some community activities and groups.
- 3.6** Residents value the large number of small independent shops concentrated in or adjacent to the High Street. There is also a small prestigious supermarket. Residents are concerned that the smaller shops are gradually being lost to other uses and, of course, the increased use of the internet for shopping is a threat to the vibrancy of every High Street. In the Town Centre there are a variety of cafes and traditional inns providing attractive places to eat and drink in an historic atmosphere. The town has a wide range of services, including primary and secondary schools, doctors, physiotherapists, hairdressers/beauty therapists, dentists, a library, Roman Museum, fire station and a primary care centre incorporating two GP practices.
- 3.7** Although Alcester supports a wide range of shops and services, its catchment is relatively small. It serves a range of communities, including the large village of Bidford-on-Avon for certain purposes, and neighbouring parts of Worcestershire. This is because the shopping areas of Stratford-upon-Avon and, to a lesser extent, Redditch and Evesham are not far away. The 2008 Stratford-upon-Avon District Retail Survey revealed that for residents of the Alcester and Bidford-on-Avon area, the main destinations for principal food shopping is Stratford-upon-Avon (34%), Alcester itself (25%), Evesham (14%) and Redditch (10%). For non-food shopping, the dominant relationship is with Stratford-upon-Avon (33%), followed by Redditch (16%). A new Waitrose supermarket opened in 2008 and may have made a significant difference. The Retail and Town Centre Uses Study produced as part of the evidence base of the SWLP in 2022²⁶ indicates that there are 116 commercial units in Alcester, with 49% being retail units and 66% independent retailers. Some 56% of town centre users visit Alcester for convenience shopping with 20% visiting for leisure purposes.
- 3.8** Whilst the bypasses have reduced through traffic, local traffic volumes have increased over time, partly due to extra housing and increased numbers of cars per household. Many residents travel to the town centre by car and parking is also required by shop staff, making parking sometimes difficult. The presence of three well-regarded secondary schools attracts pupils from a wider area and together with journeys to the primary schools there is a significant build-up of traffic at school start and finish times. Alcester is a 'Health and Well-being Town' so encouraging cycling and walking to reduce traffic and encourage healthy living are key objectives.
- 3.9** Alcester has a wide range of residential and non-residential buildings, both in terms of construction and age. Its historical background means that its central core comprises a Conservation Area containing numerous listed buildings, including the 17th Century Town Hall and St Nicholas Church. More modern developments are outside the Conservation Area. Whilst Alcester has grown rapidly over the last 50 years, the pace of construction has slowed in recent years. The town is surrounded by Green Belt and a Special Landscape Area and there are few new development opportunities within the town's boundaries; infill and brown field sites being the most likely development options.
- 3.10** Most industry is based on the well-established Arden Forest Industrial Estate, which has recently been enlarged, and which overlaps into the neighbouring parishes of Kinwarton and Coughton and the high-technology innovation centre/business incubation units at Minerva Mill.
- 3.11** The town has a diverse economy with a wide range of jobs. According to the 2021 Census²⁸, 43% of those in employment work within 2 km of Alcester with a further 37% within 30 km.

4. Key Issues

4.1 The Key Issues identified during the consultation are:



4.2 Whilst these Key Issues have been identified, some of them are the responsibility of other statutory authorities such as Warwickshire County Council, Stratford-on-Avon District Council and the NHS.

5. Vision Statement

5.1 The following proposed Vision has been prepared for Alcester:

In 2035 Alcester will be an attractive, thriving rural town with a valued historic character located in a beautiful natural environment offering a wide range of high quality housing, good opportunities for business and local employment, a learning environment for all ages and excellent community and recreational facilities

5.2

This version of the updated Plan, called the Submission Version, is being submitted to the Local Planning Authority, Stratford-on-Avon District Council, for approval. Having taken into account any comments, the updated Plan will then be submitted for Independent Examination. If the updated Plan passes this scrutiny, possibly with further minor modifications, the updated Plan will be adopted.





6. Objectives and policies for the development of Alcester

The Alcester Neighbourhood Plan should be read as a whole. Proposals will be judged against all relevant policies in the Development Plan which includes the Stratford-on-Avon District Core Stratford (or the South Warwickshire Local Plan when it is approved) and the Alcester Neighbourhood Development Plan.

The policies in the Alcester Neighbourhood Plan draw on evidence in a large number of publications and reports, some of which were commissioned specifically to support the preparation of the Plan and other published by other bodies. These publications are listed in Section 11, which also provides weblinks to them. Where these documents are referred to in policies or in reasoned justification, the references are to the number of the document in Section 11.

6.1 Housing and the Built Environment

6.1.1 The Alcester Heritage Asset Map produced by Stratford District Council (Map 4) shows the Conservation Area, Listed Buildings and Scheduled Monuments in the centre of the town. Map 5 shows the heritage assets more broadly in the Neighbourhood Area. Stratford District Council published a Character Appraisal of the Conservation Area in 2008⁴ and the Area has undergone little change since then. This Plan seeks to protect this historic heart of Alcester.

6.1.2 The visual impact of new development around the perimeter of the town in particular, needs to be carefully controlled. Alcester is a “Valley Settlement” and has nestled unobtrusively into the surrounding landscape for hundreds, if not thousands of years. Even today, after the most recent developments of 1960’s-2000’s, little of the built environment can be seen when approaching the town from any direction, including the roads and public footpaths. This is one of the most important elements of the distinctive and unique character of Alcester. It is therefore highly important that this character is maintained and enhanced. The fact that our town is surrounded by Green Belt and a Special Landscape Area should have a very strong influence on any new development, particularly around the edges of the town. High ground should be avoided, and tallest buildings sited at lower levels. Views into the town from the surrounding countryside must be carefully considered.

6.1.3 Oversley Green and Kings Coughton have not been given separate Built Up Area boundaries. They are both small communities washed over by Green Belt with very limited opportunities for development other than alterations to existing properties. In 2017 WRCC conducted a Housing Needs Survey and published a report in September 2017¹³. This was updated in April 2023. These together with consultation via the 2014 Stage 2 Questionnaire, and the 2015 Household Questionnaire, form the basis for much of the evidence for the policies. Feedback on the Emerging Policies in 2017 showed that 79% of respondents agreed with the objectives and policies relating to providing the right mix and type of housing to meet the particular needs of Alcester, and the need to support and protect the Town’s rural character and identity.

Objective A - Provision of a range of housing types to meet community needs, whilst protecting the Town's character.

To contribute to meeting strategic housing needs in Stratford-on-Avon District and to provide a range of housing types which meet the aspirations and needs of the whole community, ensuring safe and healthy living in a supportive, inclusive social environment, together with supporting infrastructure and facilities, whilst protecting and enhancing the character of the town and its surroundings.

Policy HBE 1- Residential Development within the Built-up Area Boundary

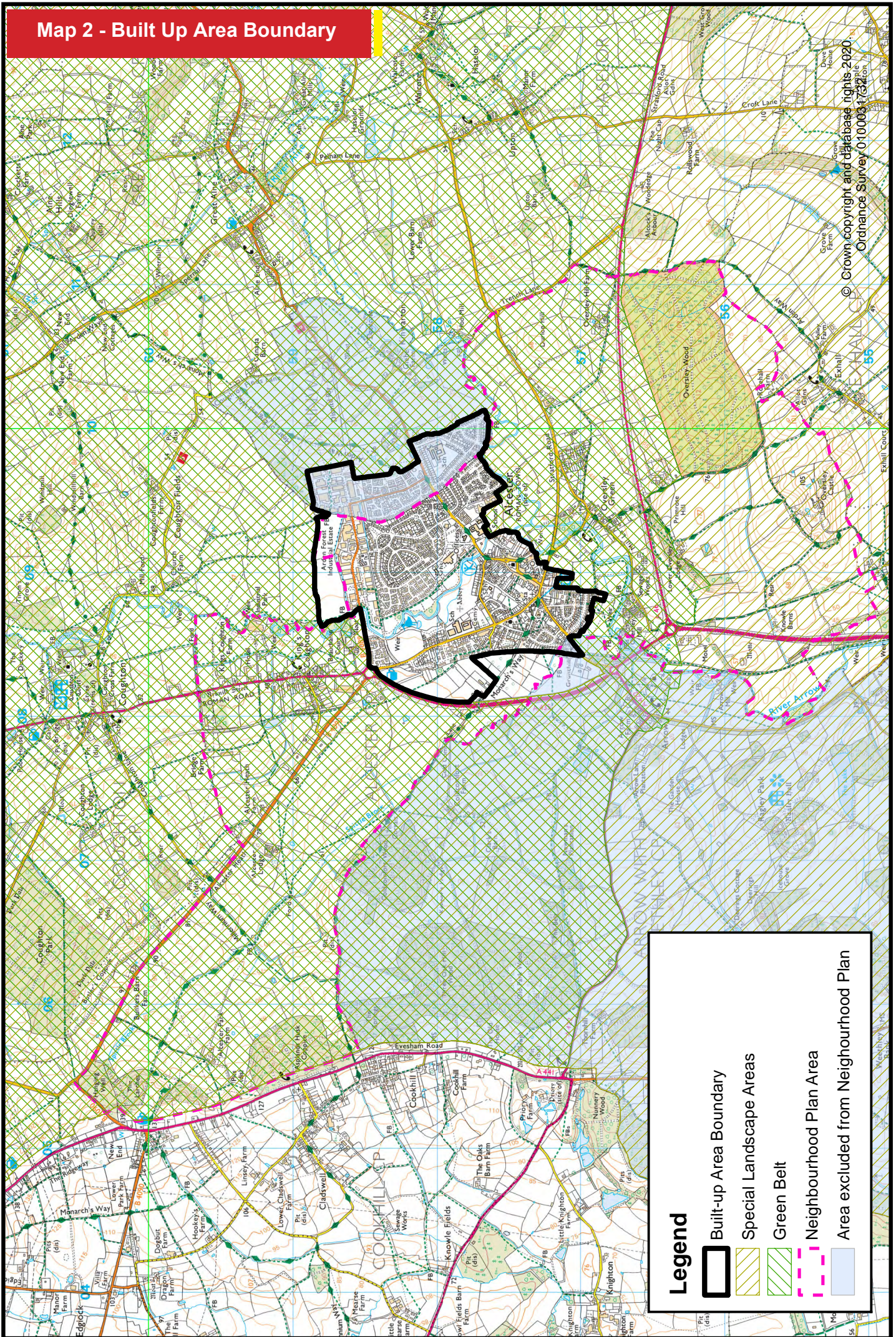
Proposals for new housing within the Built-up-Area Boundary, either by means of new build, or by converting, extending and/or redeveloping existing vacant or partly occupied buildings, will be supported, where appropriate having regard to Policies EC1, EC4 and CLW1. The use of small sites exclusively to address the shortfall in affordable housing is particularly encouraged.

The Built-Up-Area Boundary as defined in the Core Strategy is shown on Map 2. For the avoidance of doubt, the sections which are within the parishes of Kinwarton and Arrow with Weethley and not included in the Neighbourhood Area are shaded blue.






Within the Built-up-Area boundary, community-led housing schemes and serviced plots for those wishing to build or commission their own housing will be supported.

All areas outside of the Built-up-Area Boundary are classed as countryside. New housing in the countryside will only be supported in accordance with the criteria in paragraph 80 of the NPPF and Policies AS.10 and CS.10 of the Core Strategy.

Map 2 - Built Up Area Boundary



Legend

-  Built-up Area Boundary
-  Special Landscape Areas
-  Green Belt
-  Neighbourhood Plan Area
-  Area excluded from Neighbourhood Plan

Alcester Built-Up Area Boundary

© Crown copyright and database rights 2020.
Ordnance Survey 0100031732

Explanation

- 6.1.4 Two major housing sites were identified and allocated in the Core Strategy. They were Proposal ALC1 (up to 190 dwellings) and Proposal ALC2 (up to 160 dwellings), both between Allimore Lane and Birmingham Road and shown on Map 3. Outline planning permission was granted for these on appeal in 2014 – reference APP/J3720/A/13/2202101 and APP/J3720/A/13/2205529. Reserved matters applications were granted and the sites are being built out. No other sites were identified in the Core Strategy.
- 6.1.5 Given the restraints of the Green Belt, the Conservation Area, the river network and the Scheduled Monument sites, there is very little opportunity to develop in Alcester other than by infill within the Built Up Area Boundary.
- 6.1.6 Housing accommodation for key workers is required as Alcester is a relatively high-value area relative to many workers' pay. Average house prices in Alcester (B49 postcode) are £380k, which is 41% higher than the national average. This gives a high ratio of 12.8% private rented accommodation (Warwickshire Observatory). The report "Measuring Social Inclusion in Stratford-on-Avon District"²⁴ states "On the one hand, high house prices might be seen in a positive light as it reflects desirable places to live. But this is likely to have an impact for those people working in key occupations. The District is going to need a strong labour market for the care sector, for example, a lower paid occupation but it is unlikely that these jobs will be filled by many local people."
- 6.1.7 The Core Strategy (see para 6.2.22 of that document) refers to an indicative target of about 530 homes, plus windfall development for the Alcester area (including the parish of Kinwarton) over the Plan period. To date permissions and commitments in the Alcester area amount to 580 (including 119 homes in the parish of Kinwarton). Stratford-on-Avon District Council has prepared a Site Allocations Plan which allocates reserve sites to be released in defined circumstances which demonstrate the need for additional houses. The sites being considered include two sites to the south of Allimore Lane. If these allocations are made it will be necessary to modify the Built-up Area Boundary to include them.

Higher Level policies

- 6.1.8 SDC Core Strategy Policy CS.15 (Distribution of Development) Requirement 1 requires that, for residential development, the number of homes proposed is consistent with the overall scale of development identified in SDC Core Strategy Policy CS.16 (Housing Development) for the settlement.
- 6.1.9 Strategic allocations were identified in the Core Strategy as ALC.1 and ALC.2.

Map 3 - Development proposals ALC1 and ALC2



Core Strategy - Housing Sites

Policy HBE 2- Local Needs Housing

Local needs housing development will be supported on small sites beyond, but adjacent to the Built-up-Area Boundary where the following is demonstrated:

- There is a proven and as yet unmet local need, having regard to the latest Housing Needs Survey; and
- Secure arrangements exist to ensure the housing will remain affordable and that priority in the allocation of the houses should be given to those with a local connection as defined in this policy.

For the purposes of local needs housing, a local connection is defined as meeting any of the following criteria:

- Born in the parish or whose parents were ordinarily resident in the parish at the time of birth
- Currently lives in the parish and has done so for at least the past 12 months
- Used to live in the parish and did so for a continuous period of not less than 3 years
- Currently works in the parish and has done so for at least the past 12 months for an average of not less than 16 hours per week
- Currently has a close family member (ie mother, father, brother, sister, son, daughter) living in the parish and who has done so for a continuous period of not less than 3 years

Where viability for 100% local needs housing provision cannot be achieved, an element of market housing may be included within a rural exception scheme, to provide sufficient cross-subsidy to facilitate the delivery of affordable homes. In such cases, promoters will be required to provide additional supporting evidence in the form of an open book development appraisal for the proposal containing inputs assessed and verified by an appropriately qualified and independent chartered surveyor.

Explanation

6.1.10 From the results of the 2014 Stage 2 Questionnaire, 73% of residents put affordable housing as their top priority.

6.1.11 From the 2015 Household Questionnaire, 84.8% agreed with the suggested policies supporting new housing to satisfy strategic local policy and to meet local housing need. 79.8% agreed that new housing development in Alcester should include provision for affordable homes and family homes to satisfy local needs.

6.1.12 Question 1 of the Housing Needs Survey 2017 asked respondents whether, in principle, they would “be in favour of a small development of affordable homes in Alcester specifically for people with a local connection to this parish”. 84% responded yes.

6.1.13 Further comments from the Housing Needs Survey 2017 included:

“Alcester does need affordable homes because Alcester has become an expensive town to live in. I have lived in Alcester all my life and its getting very hard to afford even just the little things in life”.

“The affordable homes should be available only to local people as otherwise it defeats the object of housing local people. In the past Alcester people have been on the housing list for Alcester and by passed due to someone outside of the area having more points”.

Policy HBE 3- Housing Mix

Market Housing

Developments of ten dwellings or more should reflect the housing mix in the table below or those in the most up to date published housing needs assessment at district wide or parish level. Smaller developments should also have regard to the need for one and two bedroom dwellings. Developers will be required to justify developments which depart from this approach having regard to viability and the character of the area.

In order to meet the specific needs of the Neighbourhood Area, market housing will be provided with the following mix:

1-bed	2-bed	3-bed	4+ bed	Total
at least 10%	at least 35%	no more than 40%	no more than 15%	100%

Affordable Housing

Affordable housing will be provided in accordance with Policy CS.18 of the Core Strategy.

In order to meet the specific needs of the Neighbourhood Area, affordable housing will be provided with the following mix:

1-bed	2-bed	3-bed	4+ bed	Total
at least 20%	at least 40%	no more than 35%	no more than 5%	100%

The requirement for and provision of affordable housing within the Neighbourhood Area will continue to be monitored by the Town Council throughout the Plan period in order to ensure that the most up-to-date evidence is used to identify the current need. Such evidence will be used to inform the provision of affordable housing on qualifying sites.

Explanation

- 6.1.14** The 2011 Census for Alcester¹² included the following tenure data: Social Rented in Alcester, at 21.2% is higher than national average (17.7%). Council rented in Alcester (2.2%) is less than national average (9.4%). Private rented/landlord in Alcester is 25.5% compared to the national average of 32.2%. The comparable figures from the 2021 Census are not available but we have no indication that anything has changed. We conclude that fewer private landlords and less council housing means more people turn to social housing (which is largely Orbit owned and managed), and this is further evidence of need for more affordable housing.
- 6.1.15** Evidence obtained from the Emerging Policies Survey and the Housing Needs Survey indicate that there is concern in Alcester regarding the need to provide small and affordable homes for sale or rent, to encourage young people to live in the town and to provide bungalows for older people to downsize.
- 6.1.16** Examples of comments received are:
- “Any new development should include more affordable housing and bungalows- too many large houses have already been built which local people cannot afford”* – comment received from respondent to Emerging Policies Survey 2017
- “More housing for single professional/young people i.e 1 bed apartments and 2 bed houses”* – comment received from respondent to Housing Needs Survey 2017
- “Perhaps more single person dwellings suitable for the elderly or more sheltered accommodation”* – comment received from respondent to Emerging Policies Survey 2017
- 6.1.17** The WRCC Housing Needs Survey Report for Alcester Town Council, (Sept 2017) identified a need for 71 homes in Alcester parish for households with a local connection, the majority of these being 1 or 2 bedroom residences. 41 of these required rented premises, 13, shared ownership and 17 owner occupation. This Report was updated in April 2023 identifying 37 households with a local connection seeking alternative homes.
- 6.1.18** In addition, as at May 2018, it is noted that there were 256 households with an Alcester address on Stratford on Avon District Council’s housing register (Homes Choice Plus). By November 2022, this had increased to 360 households.

Policy HBE 4- Bungalows

Proposals for the development of bungalows within the Built Up Area Boundary will be supported. Developments of 10 or more units within the Built Up Area Boundary (except specialist accommodation) should include at least 10% bungalows.

Explanation

- 6.1.19** Alcester's population is older than the national average. The 2021 Census for Alcester included the following age data: Alcester has 57.7% aged over 45 compared to 50.7 % nationally. Looking at over 65 years, Alcester has 29.5% compared to national average of 19.0. The census data for Economic Activity showed that Alcester has 27% retired compared to England average of 18.6%. Older people often prefer bungalows and this supports the need for bungalows.
- 6.1.20** The WRCC Housing Needs Survey Report for Alcester Town Council (Sept 2017) identified the need for 17 bungalows. The need identified was specifically for "bungalows". The Housing Needs Survey update in April 2023 identified the need for 23 bungalows. The Steering Group does not therefore consider ground floor flats to be equivalent to bungalows.
- 6.1.21** NHBC New Home Statistics Review 2024¹⁴ shows that nationally the number of new bungalows registered has dropped from 26408 in 1986 to 1285 in 2024.
- 6.1.22** Within Alcester, of the commitments and completions listed in Appendix 1, there are only 4 bungalows – two are within the reserved matters application for the northern parcel of Allimore Lane (SDC planning application 17/01084/REM) and one in planning application 15/03906/FUL and one in planning application 21/03482/FUL. In addition, within the list at Appendix 1 one bungalow was replaced by a two storey house.

Policy HBE 5 - Specialist accommodation

Proposals for new specialist accommodation will be supported in principle.

Explanation

- 6.1.23** Specialist accommodation includes retirement villages, extra care living schemes, daycare provision and any other accommodation for people with specific needs. Schemes are encouraged which make provision for local people with special needs of all ages and not solely the elderly.
- 6.1.24** The Coventry & Warwickshire Housing and Economic Development Needs Assessment of November 2022²⁹ indicates that there is substantial unmet need for people needing different types of housing. This is supported by the Warwickshire Healthy Ageing JSNA 2024³⁰ and the Warwickshire Adults with a Learning Disability JSNA 2025³¹.
- 6.1.25** An example of a comment received from 2017 Emerging Policies Survey is "*Remember there are young disabled adults in the community!*"
- 6.1.26** Comments from respondents to the 2017 Housing Needs Survey included:
- "It would be great to have some disability housing for older people. My husband and I are in a very small bungalow, private, as he is very disabled but it is too small to manoeuvre him about in his hoist and wheelchair. So we really battle but there is just nothing else available."*
- "Some consideration for younger disabled people would be nice for example a few bungalows with two or more bedrooms. Building 2, 3 or 4 bedroomed houses is fine and good but there are people with families who have disabilities that make stairs an obstacle."*

Higher Level policies

- 6.1.27** NPPF para 61 requires Local Planning Authorities to assess the need for different groups in the community (including... older people...people with disabilities).

Objective B -To safeguard the quality of the built environment and heritage assets

To ensure that the design of all development is of high quality, in keeping with the character of the town and preserves the town's heritage assets which are a key part of its history and identity.

Policy HBE 6 - Development design

All development proposals in the Neighbourhood Area must demonstrate a high standard of design that is sensitive to the character of its surroundings in accordance with the following principles:

- Be compatible with the distinctive character of the area, respecting the local settlement pattern, building styles and materials whilst taking a positive approach to innovative, contemporary designs that are sensitive to their setting;
- Be of a density and scale that is in keeping with the character of the surrounding development and landscape;
- Use materials that are consistent with the Alcester vernacular;
- Building heights will not exceed three storeys unless the proposal clearly demonstrates that this is appropriate in terms of the function and significance of the building and the building will make a positive contribution to the street scene.
- Take into account connectivity requirements contained in Policy TI1 (Transport and Infrastructure).

Proposals for major development as defined in the NPPF are encouraged to apply the Design for Homes "Building for a Healthy Life" (June 2020) criteria²⁵ and achieve as many green ratings as possible with no red ratings.

Explanation

6.1.28 This policy seeks to guide new development to achieve high standards of design quality and to ensure schemes make a positive contribution to their surroundings and Alcester as a whole.

6.1.29 It is important to ensure that local character is preserved and where appropriate enhanced. New development that is at odds with a distinctive local character can be harmful so will be resisted. The purpose of this policy is to manage development so that the most appropriate design is found for the site having regard to local character to ensure that all developments are of high quality and reflect the character of the areas around them in spatial layout, scale, materials, design and landscape terms.

6.1.30 From the results of the 2015 Household Questionnaire, 91.7% of residents agreed that the quality of design for new development in Alcester is important.

6.1.31 The Alcester Conservation Area Character Appraisal dated December 2008 provides a comprehensive assessment of the character of the Conservation Area

Higher Level Policies

6.1.32 SDC Core Strategy Policy CS.9 (Design and Distinctiveness) requires developments to improve the quality of the public realm and enhance the sense of place, reflecting the character and distinctiveness of the locality. It further requires design to be attractive, sensitive, distinctive, connected, environmentally sustainable, accessible, safe and healthy.

6.1.33 SDC Development Requirements SPD Part A: How to Achieve Good Design.

6.1.34 NPPF para 140 requires Local Planning Authorities to seek to ensure that the quality of approved development is not materially diminished between permission and completion as a result of changes being made to the permitted scheme.

6.1.35 NPPF para 132 requires that "design policies should be developed with local communities so they reflect local aspirations, and are grounded in an understanding and evaluation of each area's designing characteristics"

6.1.36 NPPF para 135 states that developments should be "sympathetic to local character and history"



Minerva Mill

OFFICES
◆
SINGLE DESKS
◆
MEETING ROOMS
◆
MAILBOX/TELEPHONE SERVICE
ALL ENQUIRIES
01789 400446

Policy HBE 7 - Public Realm

New residential and town centre developments should provide a high quality of public realm, recognising its role in enhancing and improving places and connecting new developments with existing uses/neighbourhoods and should include related street furniture such as litter and dog bins, benches and noticeboards that will enhance the sense of place in Alcester.

All development proposals will be expected to demonstrate how design has been influenced by the need to plan positively to minimise crime. Developments will be expected to achieve Secured By Design (SBD) Silver Level certification or, if not, the developer must demonstrate what has not made this possible.

Explanation

6.1.37 This policy seeks to make public areas (Public Realm) within Alcester more attractive. The aim is to create spaces in which people want to spend time, visit and invest. The Neighbourhood Plan seeks these improvements by promoting awareness of the value of heritage assets, the sensitive nature of the Conservation Area in addition to careful choice of materials and colour.

6.1.38 Improvements to public areas can address and improve the visual impression of 'arriving' and 'transitioning' from rural to urban and residential to commercial, ensuring that the character and scale of Alcester's built form is represented with high quality soft and hard landscaping making a positive impression.

Higher Level Policies

6.1.39 NPPF para 135 states that development should “establish or maintain a strong sense of place, using the arrangements of streets, spaces, building types and materials to create attractive, welcoming and distinctive places to live, work and visit”

6.1.40 SDC Core Strategy Policy CS.9 (Design and Distinctiveness) requires developments to improve the quality of the public realm and enhance the sense of place, reflecting the character and distinctiveness of the locality. It further requires design to be attractive, sensitive, distinctive, connected, environmentally sustainable, accessible, safe and healthy.

Policy HBE 8 - Heritage Assets

Development within or adjacent to the Alcester Conservation Area and/or affecting a heritage asset or within the setting of a heritage asset, will only be supported where the public benefits of the proposal clearly outweigh any harm to the Conservation Area, a heritage asset, or its setting.

Developments which ensure that heritage assets remain in an active and viable use appropriate to their location or bring heritage assets back into such a use in a manner appropriate to their heritage value, will be supported.

This policy will be applied to applications affecting both designated and non-designated heritage assets and their settings. Maps 4 and 5 show the heritage assets in the Neighbourhood Area.

Explanation

6.1.41 Alcester is home to a large number of heritage assets. The town benefits from quality architecture both in terms of individual buildings (many of which are listed) and the collective value of buildings for example on the High Street.

6.1.42 From the results of the 2014 Stage 2 Questionnaire, 97% considered heritage to be “very” or “somewhat” important. From the 2015 Household Questionnaire, 91.7% agreed that the quality of design for new development in Alcester is important.

6.1.43 The Neighbourhood Plan supports the assessment and conclusions of the SDC Alcester Conservation Area Appraisal (2008), to which appropriate weight will be given when applications are determined. ‘For example, building- to-plot ratios, plan forms and architectural scale, massing and detailing must be fully considered in any new development. Large 3 storey residential units (i.e. flats or large houses with over-sized attics) are generally unsuitable within the Conservation Area because they distort the established scale of the built environment.’

Higher Level Policies

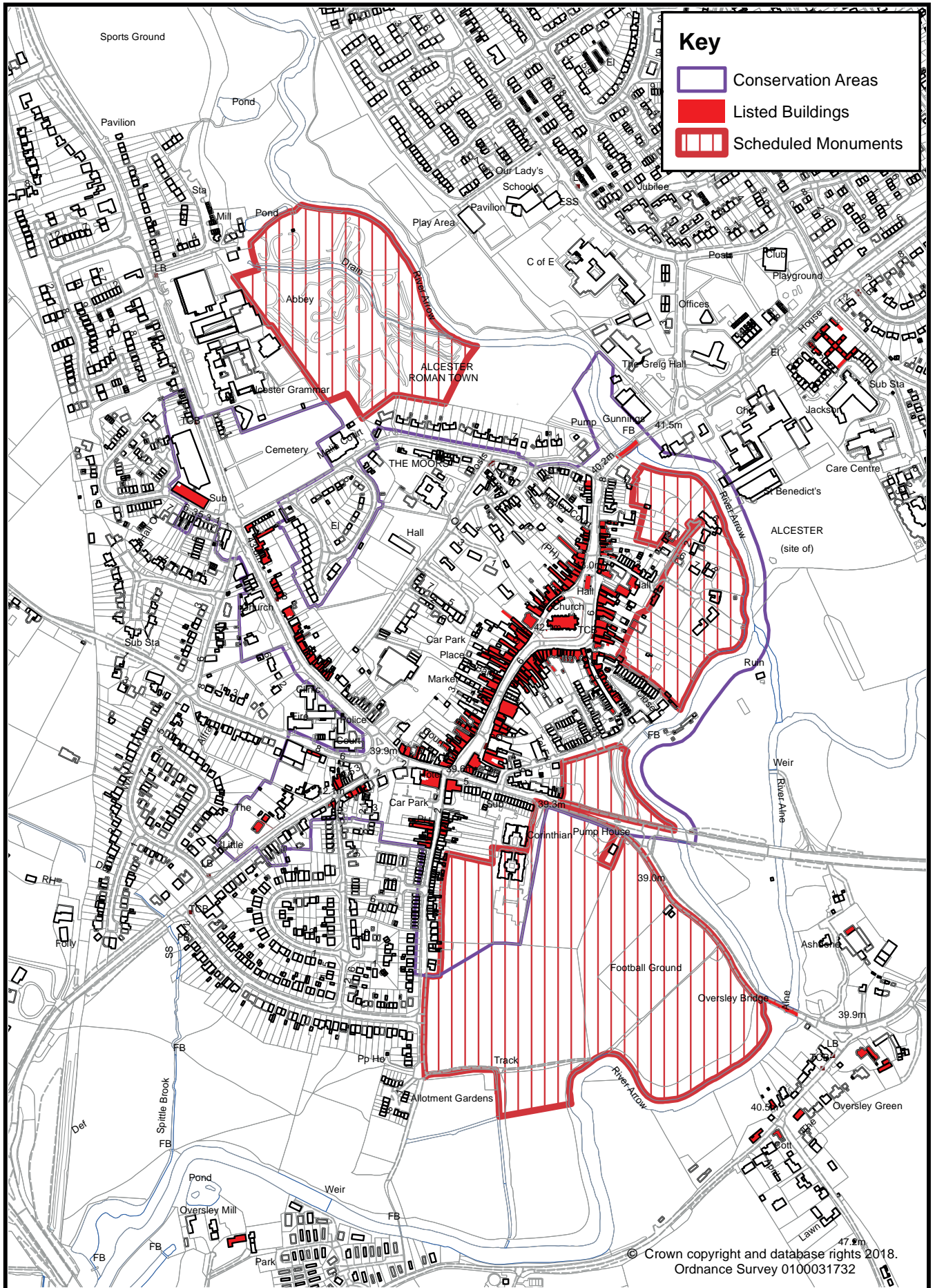
6.1.44 Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990

6.1.45 NPPF Section 16 (Conserving and enhancing the historic environment), Paragraph 210 states “... local planning authorities should take account of ... the positive contribution that conservation of heritage assets can make to sustainable communities including their economic vitality”

- 6.1.46** NPPF Section 16 (Conserving and enhancing the historic environment), Paragraph 219 highlights "Local planning authorities should look for opportunities for new development within Conservation Areas...and within the setting of heritage assets to enhance or better reveal their significance. Proposals that preserve those elements of the setting that make a positive contribution to the asset (or which better reveal its significance) should be treated favourably."
- 6.1.47** NPPF Section 16 (Conserving and enhancing the historic environment). Paragraph 220 emphasises "...Loss of a building (or other element) which makes a positive contribution to the significance of the Conservation Area...should be treated either as substantial harm under paragraph 214 or less than substantial harm under paragraph 215, as appropriate..."
- 6.1.48** SDC Core Strategy Policy CS.8 (Historic Environment) Section A "Priority will be given to protecting and enhancing the wide range of historic and cultural assets that contribute to the character and identity of the District, including: ... , Conservation Areas, and their settings;"
- 6.1.49** SDC Core Strategy Policy CS.9 (Design and Distinctiveness) Section B (2) ".... Proposals will reflect the context of the locality, ensuring a continuity of key design features that establishes the identity of the place, making best use of on-site assets including landscaping features as well as public views and vistas and not harming existing ones."
- 6.1.50** SDC Core Strategy Policy AS.2 A. Environmental 1 requires SDC to "protect and enhance the historic fabric of the town and its associated green spaces."



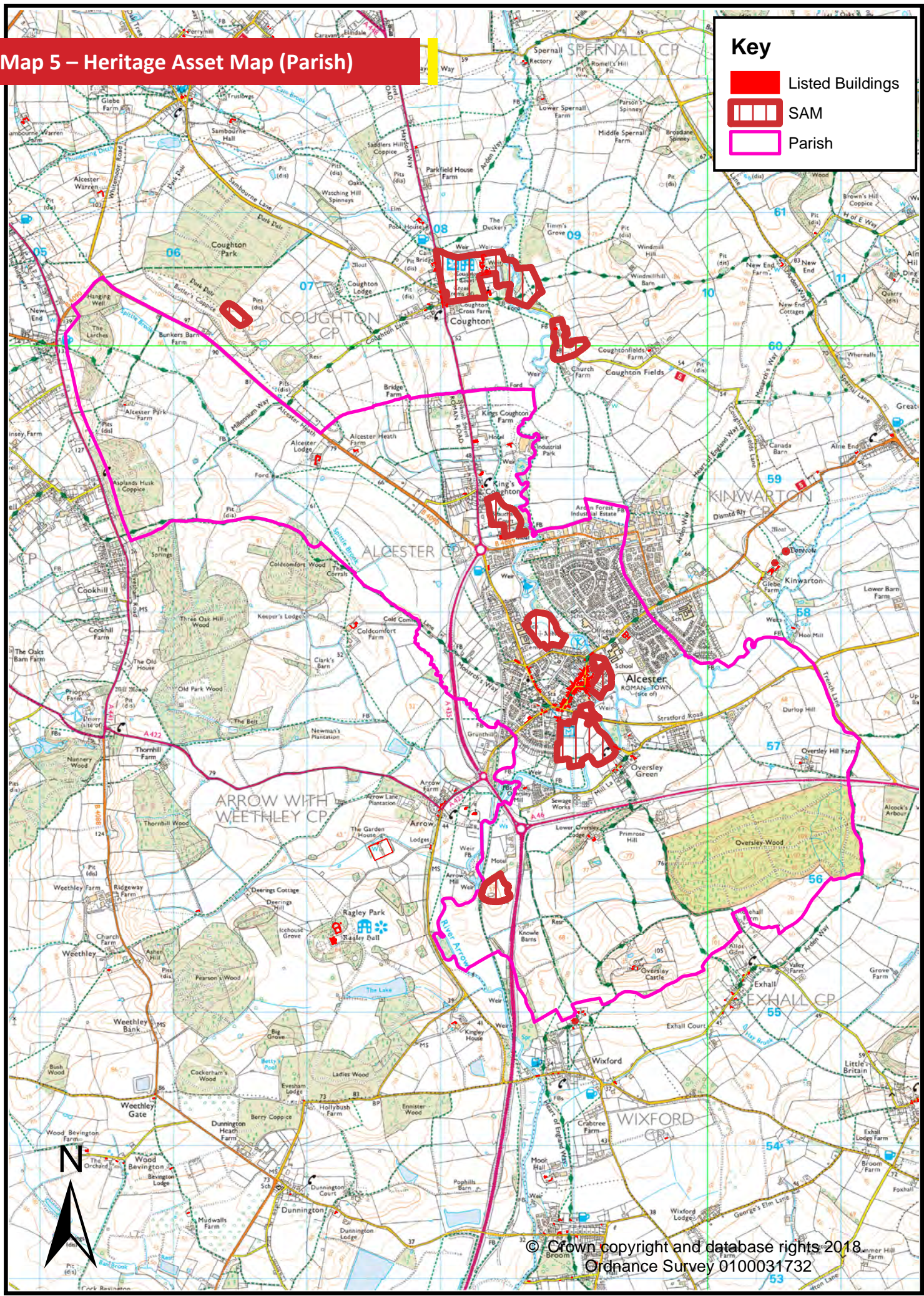
Map 4 – Heritage Asset Map (Town Centre)



Map 5 – Heritage Asset Map (Parish)

Key

- Listed Buildings
- SAM
- Parish



Heritage Assets - Alcester Parish

6.2 Economy

- 6.2.1** Alcester has a historic Town Centre which contains a variety of shops, many independent, and local services. It has a valued supermarket with associated car parking adjacent to the SDC carpark. There are several attractive public houses and cafes used both by residents and visitors, particularly cyclists due to the proximity of several national cycle routes. Antique/curio shops and charity shops are also a draw for tourists. The extent of the Town Centre as defined in the Core Strategy is shown on Map 6.
- 6.2.2** A short distance north-east of the Town Centre a group of small shops called Hopkins Precinct serves the schools and residents living in that area.
- 6.2.3** It is important for the future of Alcester that the Town Centre continues to be attractive, lively and viable. Like many towns nationally internet shopping poses a significant challenge to local shops. In the Household Questionnaire 98% of respondents agreed that it is important that the businesses and services in the town centre continue to thrive and should be supported in the Neighbourhood Plan. A key issue identified by the consultation was the need to improve and sustain the diversity of the retail offer and services in the town centre. The Town Council is pro-active in addressing vacant shops as they arise.
- 6.2.4** Alcester also has a business park to the north of the town centre called Arden Forest Industrial Estate offering employment opportunities to townfolk and those from the environs. This includes Class B1, B2 and B8 uses and is home to a variety of trades including manufacturing, catering and retail premises. There is little further land for expansion.
- 6.2.5** Minerva Mill Business Centre provides business facilities for local and national companies. It comprises offices to rent and workshops for small scale manufacturing, research and development projects.
- 6.2.6** As the town's facilities also meet the needs of a large catchment area, with a growing population, the source of the pressure on its schools is not just from within the town. There has been recent development in Kinwarton parish to the north of the town and, within Alcester's Neighbourhood Plan area itself, in particular the development of Alcester Park will add to pressure on childcare provision and schools.
- 6.2.7** Whilst education is a County Council function, a policy in support of new or extended facilities is included, particularly since school fabric needs renewal. Learning opportunities are available in the town for senior citizens for example, computer workshops, and U3A, but there are few facilities for younger adults and these would also be supported.

Objective A – Promoting and Protecting economic activity and job opportunities

To support development that contributes to the economic activity of Alcester, maintains the vitality of the Town Centre, and provides employment opportunities.

Policy EC 1 - Development within the Town Centre (as defined on Map 6)

Proposals that provide new retail, offices, hospitality, or tourism facilities or which look to enhance/extend existing units for the same uses will be supported. Preference should be afforded to the reuse of existing premises having regard to the Conservation Area and the desire to retain a compact and self-sustaining commercial area. Retaining the variety of small businesses along and adjacent to the High Street is seen as key to sustainability and attractiveness of the Town Centre. Subdivision will be supported if it encourages reuse.

Development that adds to the public parking provision and/or improves signposting will be supported. Proposals that result in any loss of parking provision will not be supported unless it is replaced by equivalent or enhanced provision in a suitable location.

Development proposals which require permission to change the use of existing retail, office, hospitality or tourism units to alternative business use must demonstrate how the proposals will enhance or support the vitality and economic diversity of the Town Centre.

Where permission is required, change of use of ground floor level commercial premises, and pubs in particular, to residential will be resisted unless it can be demonstrated that a commercial use is no longer viable. Any application for change of use will need to be supported by evidence that the site has been marketed for a minimum of 12 months for a range of possible business uses at a price reflecting open market value for these uses. Full details of the marketing arrangements will be agreed with Stratford-on-Avon District Council.

Where permission is required, change of use of commercial premises above ground level to residential will be supported where separate access and adequate resident parking provision with 24 hour availability is provided and where development would not result in the loss of, or adversely affect the ground floor business use.



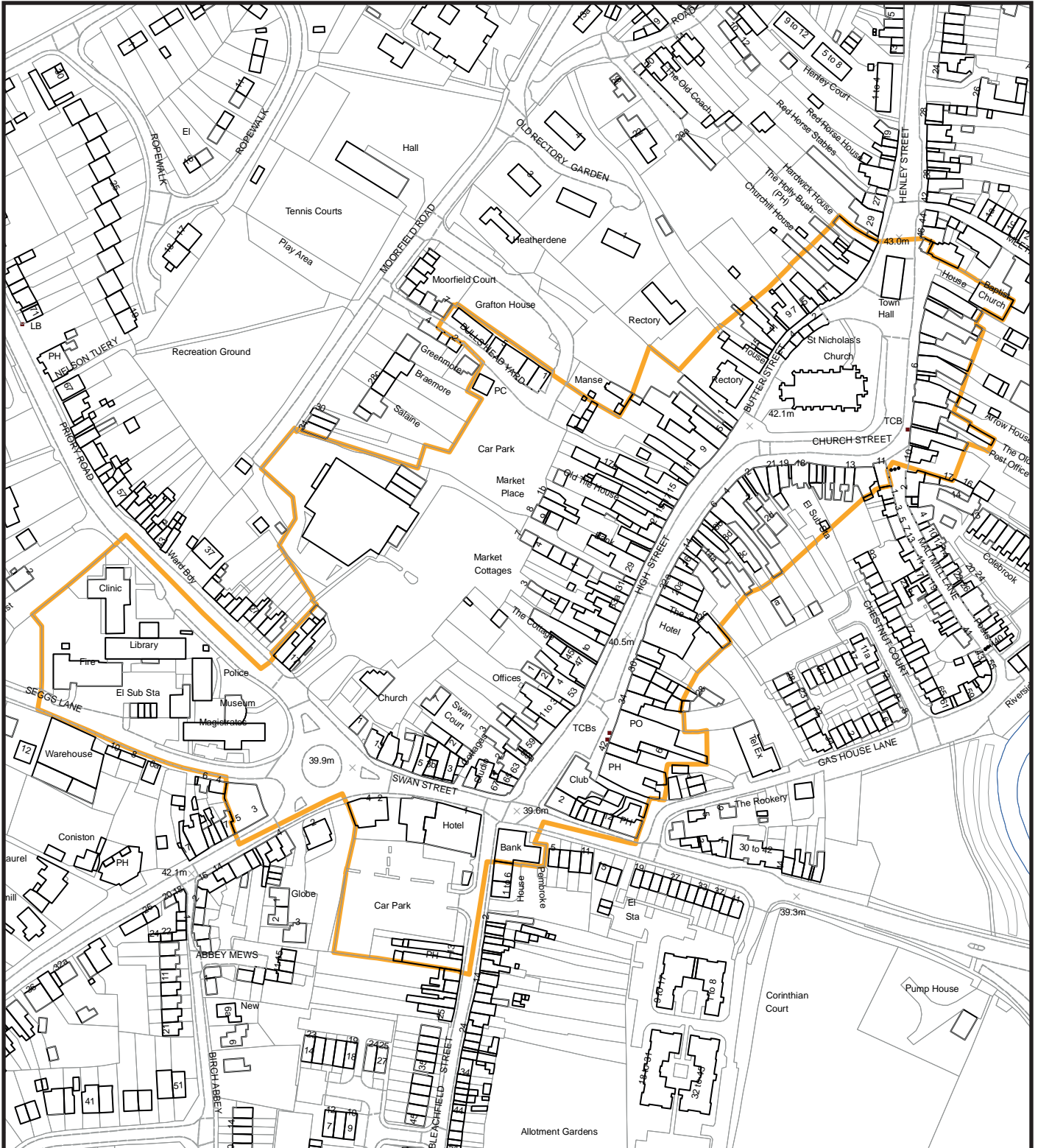
Explanation

6.2.8 From the results of the 2014 Stage 2 Questionnaire, of the 121 respondents who chose this option, 74% put retail as their top priority.

6.2.9 Results from the 2014 Business Questionnaire revealed that 77% considered that town centre improvements would improve the competitiveness of Alcester as a business location and 85.7% considered that the town centre was a “strength” of Alcester as a business location. From the 2015 Household Questionnaire, 88.3% agreed with suggested policies to improve and diversify shopping and other services in Town Centre plus ancillary facilities. 98.1% agreed that it was important that businesses and services in the town centre continue to thrive and should be supported in the Neighbourhood Plan.

Map 6 : Alcester Town Centre

Note: This map defining the Town Centre is taken from the Core Strategy



Policy EC 2 - Supporting employment on brownfield sites

Proposals for employment uses on brownfield Sites within the Neighbourhood Area will be supported subject to ensuring the environment and amenity of neighbouring uses is protected, and the size and scale is appropriate to its location.

Explanation

- 6.2.10** This Plan supports the retention of sites or buildings for employment uses and will encourage proposals for the creation of employment opportunities associated with knowledge based and other high value-added sectors.
- 6.2.11** From the results of the 2014 Stage 2 Questionnaire, 97% of respondents said that access to employment was “very” or “somewhat” important.
- 6.2.12** Results from the 2014 Business Questionnaire revealed that 75% of those businesses planning to relocate in the next 10 years wished to do so in Alcester.

Policy EC 3 - Supporting business start up

Proposals for small-scale business space suitable for start-ups will be supported.

Support will also be given to the development of flexible units that can be altered to meet the needs of new and small businesses.

Development proposals for new build or conversions providing live/work space will be supported where the amenity of neighbouring properties is fully addressed.

Explanation

- 6.2.13** From the 2015 Household Questionnaire, 44.7% felt that there were insufficient employment opportunities for local people. Results from the 2014 Business Questionnaire revealed that 75% of those businesses planning to relocate in the next 10 years wished to do so in Alcester.

Policy EC 4 - Employment land changes of use and mixed use development

Where planning permission is required for land currently in employment use (including offices, retail, hospitality, tourism and other commercial uses, proposals for changes of use to other employment uses will be supported.

Where permission is required, change of use from employment use to residential use will only be supported where it can be clearly demonstrated that the continued business use is no longer viable. Any applications will need to be supported by evidence that the site has been marketed for a minimum of 12 months for a range of possible business uses at a price reflecting open market value for these uses. Full details of the marketing arrangements will be agreed with Stratford-on-Avon District Council.

Proposals for changes of use from employment use to provide a mix of employment and residential use will only be supported if the residential element is subsidiary and necessary to make the scheme viable.

Explanation

- 6.2.14** This policy seeks to protect existing employment sites within the town by resisting their change of use to residential. Employment uses can include a wide range of activities including industrial, tourism and retail uses. The retention of employment opportunities within Alcester is essential to maintain the vibrancy of the town.

Policy EC 5 - Support for commercial development

Proposals for new commercial developments, particularly where they demonstrate direct benefits to the local area and support and promote use of the local workforce and products, will be supported within the Built Up Area Boundary provided that they provide adequate parking provision for staff and visitors.

Any proposals for retail development outside the Town Centre, whether on greenfield or brownfield sites, will be subject to an impact assessment in relation to the Town Centre and will only be supported where it can be shown that the impact on the Town Centre's vitality and viability is not adversely affected and such retail development is accessible by footpath and cycle links and public transport.

Environmental improvements to existing employment land will be supported within the Built Up Area Boundary. Proposals that include business conferencing and meeting facilities will be supported within the Built Up Area Boundary.

Proposals that include the provision of low-cost business space within the Built Up Area Boundary to meet the needs of micro or small enterprises and to support firms wishing to start-up or expand will be supported.

Explanation

6.2.15 From the results of the 2014 Stage 2 Questionnaire, 113 respondents considered this to be one of their top three priorities. Results from the 2014 Business Questionnaire revealed 96% considered that a better range of premises would improve the competitiveness of Alcester as a business location.

Higher level policies for Objective A

6.2.16 SDC Core Strategy Policy CS.23 supports the retention of the commercial core of each Main Rural Centre such as Alcester.

6.2.17 SDC Core Strategy Policy CS.22 supports retention of existing employment land.

6.2.18 NPPF para 124 requires as much use as possible of “brownfield” land.

Objective B- Supporting Education

To support development of facilities which provide education, learning and training for people of all ages.

Policy EC 6- Education and childcare provision

Development proposals for the provision and expansion of educational and childcare facilities will be supported where they:

- Meet an identified need
- Are accessible to the area they serve by adequate footpath and cycle links and appropriate public transport
- Demonstrate high quality design
- Can provide on-site parking in accordance with the standards of Warwickshire County Council

Explanation

6.2.19 From the results of the 2014 Stage 2 Questionnaire, of the 110 respondents who chose this option, 74% put primary schools as their top priority.

6.2.20 WCC Briefing note for Alcester Town Council- School Places in Alcester Area (August 2024) supports statement that schools are nearing capacity.

6.2.21 NPPF para 100 states “It is important that a sufficient choice of school places is available to met the needs of existing and new communities”.



Policy EC 7- Further and adult education and training

Developments which include tertiary education, adult education, apprenticeship training and general learning and training facilities will be supported.

Such facilities will be supported where they are of high quality design, accessible via footpath / cycle links/ public transport and include adequate parking for staff and students.

Explanation

- 6.2.22** From the results of the 2014 Stage 2 Questionnaire, 110 respondents considered this to be one of their top three priorities.
- 6.2.23** Results from the 2014 Business Questionnaire revealed 35% reported that they had been unable to fill vacancies due to candidates having insufficient qualifications/skills. 76.5% felt that workforce qualifications were a “weakness” in Alcester as a business location. 87.5% considered that better links with schools and colleges would improve the competitiveness of Alcester as a business location.

Higher level policies for Objective B

- 6.2.24** NPPF para 100 states that Local Planning Authorities “should take a proactive, positive and collaborative approach to meeting this requirement, and to development that will widen choice in education”.

Objective C– Promoting Tourism

To support developments which encourage visitors and enhance their experience.

Policy EC 8 - Support for new or improved tourist attractions and accommodation

Development proposals that will increase or improve the amount and range of visitor attractions and accommodation in the town will be supported.

Proposals will need to demonstrate how they contribute towards other objectives of the Neighbourhood Plan by providing adequate parking provision, cycle storage, linkages or improvements to public transport, new and improved footpath and cycle routes and ensuring all facilities are fully accessible for all.

Development proposals that contribute to the creation of new Town Centre facilities for providing visitor and tourist information will be supported.

Proposals that enhance the visitor enjoyment of or engagement with Alcester’s natural environment and historical sites including Alcester Abbey and Beauchamp Court will be supported.

Explanation

- 6.2.25** Alcester’s attractive Town Centre with its variety of shops, cafes and restaurants, and many heritage assets draw many tourists each year.
- 6.2.26** Sufficient available parking and connectivity of transport are important aspects in attracting tourists.
- 6.2.27** An independent survey of visitors conducted every 5 years by The Research Solution Ltd, has provided useful insight as to what is important to tourists visiting Alcester. (Latest survey ref: Alcester Market Town Destination Benchmarking Survey 2017¹¹)
- 6.2.28** Availability of accommodation is important to attracting tourists. There has been an increase in the number of staying visitors since 2012. A sixth (17%) of all visitors surveyed for the Alcester Destination Benchmarking Survey 2017 were staying overnight in commercial or non-commercial accommodation within Alcester, up from both 2007 and 2012 (11% and 12% respectively). 71% of overnight visitors were staying in some form of commercial accommodation.
- 6.2.29** 31% of visitors indicated that shopping/looking around the shops was the primary motive for visiting Alcester. Other activities undertaken in the town included stopping for lunch and for tea/coffee and 20% cited general sightseeing and interest.

- 6.2.30** 88% of all visitors to Alcester arrived by private vehicle (car, van, motor home or motorcycle).
- 6.2.31** The use of public transport to arrive in Alcester has remained fairly static over the ten-year period under review at approximately 3%, but there has been a gradual increase in those arriving by bicycle (from 1% in 2007 to 3% in 2017).
- 6.2.32** Whilst almost three fifths (57%) of visitors indicated that Alcester did not need any additional facilities or services, 8% said that there should be a wider range of shops with longer opening hours. 23% of visitors rated display maps and information boards as average and 12% were dissatisfied or very dissatisfied.
- 6.2.33** Tourists help the local economy by spending money. The Destination Survey found that shopping and eating and drinking makes up a fair proportion of all visitor expenditure from 2007 to 2017 with over a third of spend in 2017 attributed to both shopping and eating and drinking, (36% respectively), although the level of spend on shopping in 2017 has fallen since 2012. Accommodation spend has remained on a par over all three survey years with around a quarter of all spend in Alcester attributed to staying in some form of accommodation.

Higher level policies for Objective C

- 6.2.34** SDC Core Strategy Policy AS.2C Economic 2 states that development should promote the town as an attractive destination for tourists and day visitors.

6.3 Transport and Infrastructure

- 6.3.1** Alcester is a compact town which suffers from the effects of vehicular traffic. This problem is intensified by the historic nature of the Town Centre and is evident by the visual intrusion and congestion of on street parking much of which is under considerable pressure from residents and visitors alike. Vehicular traffic contributes to noise and air pollution which adversely affects our historic buildings along the main traffic routes.
- 6.3.2** Alcester benefits from its schools. However, they do have an adverse effect upon the Town Centre contributing to traffic congestion and parking issues, including concerns for children’s safety.
- 6.3.3** In the Household Questionnaire, 60.6% of respondents highlighted Traffic and Safety as a key issue. 87.6% also agreed that parking facilities in the Town Centre are insufficient at peak times.
- 6.3.4** Use of footpaths and cycleways have health benefits and help reduce pollution. Within the built-up area of Alcester there is an extensive network of footpaths and cycle ways which link up with routes from elsewhere, including the Heart of England Way and Monarch’s Way. National Cycle Network Route 5 runs just to the north of Alcester. Many of the footpaths are, however, unsuitable for wheelchair users.
- 6.3.5** The Plan’s objectives are therefore to improve movement into and around the town in a healthy and safe manner, promoting walking or cycling and ease of access for all people, thereby assisting in the improvement of the overall environment and air quality. We also want to improve cycle routes with nearby towns.
- 6.3.6** Section 7 includes projects relating to promoting and enhancing cycle and pedestrian routes; Town Centre traffic flows; and additional parking.
- 6.3.7** Another objective to achieve these aims is to ensure that new developments provide good connectivity, where they can be easily accessed by pedestrians, disabled persons and cyclists and public transport, including extending footpath and cycle route systems.
- 6.3.8** A further goal of these policies is to ensure that Alcester’s infrastructure keeps pace with the latest energy efficiency and telecommunications technology to benefit residents and businesses. The number of electric cars is expected to increase significantly during the period of this Neighbourhood Plan so the Plan’s policies will support installing electric vehicle charging points in car parks and new residences. The policies will also seek to encourage a reduction in the carbon footprint of Alcester by promoting energy efficiency and renewable energy generation.

Objective A - Accessibility for pedestrians, cyclists and disabled persons

To ensure that developments provide full and easy access for all persons and link with existing routes, whilst providing appropriate screening and planting.

Policy TI 1 – New development and connectivity

Residential developments of ten or more units and commercial developments should provide direct connections to the existing network of public footpaths, cycleways, bridleways and rights of way with clear signposting (with distance and time markers) and ensure full accessibility for all users except where it can be clearly demonstrated to be physically impossible.

Such developments should improve and not impede accessibility to existing routes and should seek to encourage a modal shift (or transition) to reduce car journeys by integrating with existing footpaths, cycleways and bus routes, which may require developers liaising with local public transport providers.

Such developments should also provide bike storage.

Explanation

- 6.3.9 Alcester is a highly walkable town, as it is fairly flat and compact. However few of the footpaths are signposted. There are also few dedicated cycle routes with most cyclists using streets to get around.
- 6.3.10 60% of residents who responded to the question concerning other issues that this Plan should deal with, highlighted traffic and safety as important (2015 Alcester NDP Household Questionnaire. Improved footpaths, cycleways and bridleways will contribute to reducing traffic.
- 6.3.11 There is congestion on roads near to schools during drop-off times so Safer Routes to Schools, reducing car journeys via encouraging and enabling safer walking and cycling, are important to address this.
- 6.3.12 The Manual for Streets 2 (MfS2, published September 2010¹⁶, by the Department for Transport, sets out the requirement to consider the needs of pedestrians first when designing, building and improving streets. It refers to creating a network of streets that provide connectivity to main destinations.
- 6.3.13 Cyclenation, the federation of local cycling campaign groups, has produced a guide for developers called Making Space For Cycling (second edition 2014¹⁷, which sites out guidance for new developments and street redesigns incorporating cycling. It highlights the benefits of cycling including producing a family friendly healthy environment, reducing congestion, noise and pollution, and making use of low carbon transport. The Bicycle Association, on behalf of the Cycle Industry, funded this publication and states. 'The future of everyday cycling is crucially linked to making our cities, towns and streets attractive for people to live and work. "Cycle proofing" every new development is a vital part of that.' The publication is also supported by British Cycling and the Campaign to Protect Rural England.

Higher Level policies for Objective A

- 6.3.14 NPPF para 117 states that applications should "a) give priority first to pedestrian and cycle movements" and "b) address the needs of people with disabilities and reduced mobility in relation to all modes of transport".
- 6.3.15 SDC Core Strategy Policy CS.9 requires development to enhance the network of footpaths and retain existing rights of way.
- 6.3.16 SDC Core Strategy Policy AS.2 B6 requires creation of additional cycle routes connecting to nearby settlements and National Cycle Network Route 5.
- 6.3.17 SDC SPD Part O Parking and Travel includes cycle parking standards for residential and non- residential developments.
- 6.3.18 Paragraph 117 of the NPPF states that development should be "to enable charging of plug-in and other ultra-low emission vehicles in safe, accessible and convenient locations"
- 6.3.19 Stratford on Avon District Development Requirements SPD Part R Air Quality identifies that Stratford-on-Avon District Council is committed to helping people travel in a more sustainable way. To promote a greater role for plug-in vehicles, the District Council will expect development proposals to provide for the use of electric vehicles.

Objective B – Access to the latest communication technologies

To ensure that businesses, residents and visitors benefit from the most up to date technologies, while managing any adverse impacts.

Policy TI 2 – Telecommunication

New and enhanced telecommunications development will be supported in principle subject to the following factors:

- The operational requirements of the telecommunication networks and the technical limitations of the technology, including any technical constraints on the location of telecommunications apparatus.
- The need to comply with the most up-to-date guidelines on safety in place at the time of the application.
- The need to avoid interference with existing electrical equipment and transmission services.
- The potential for sharing existing masts, buildings and other structures. Sufficient evidence and justification for any new site should accompany any application.
- The impact of the development on its surroundings with particular regard to the siting and appearance of the proposed apparatus and associated structures and the surrounding area. If on a building, apparatus and associated structures should be sited and designed in order to seek to minimise impact upon the external appearance of the building with a preference for underground rather than overhead cabling.
- The safe removal of all redundant masts and apparatus.

Explanation

6.3.20 This policy seeks to balance environmental, visual, amenity and health concerns with the future development needs of mobile technology.



6.4 Community, Leisure and Well-being

- 6.4.1** Alcester has a great sense of community with many organisations and groups providing opportunities to meet and learn and take part in recreation and sport.
- 6.4.2** There are meeting facilities at the Eric Payne Community Centre, Malt Mill Lane Community Centre, Church House, the Catholic Church Hall, the Alcester War Memorial Town Hall, Minerva Mill and the Guide and Scout Centre. Globe House provides a one-stop shop for the Town Council, Library and also houses the Roman Museum. The Greig Leisure Centre is the town's leisure facility with sports hall, dance studio and gym. The Greig Hall, a community event centre is now operational again.
- 6.4.3** The town benefits from many green spaces and a river corridor which are important for both their environmental and well-being aspects. The charity Fields in Trust states that green spaces save the NHS c £111m a year as their use can improve overall health for all. (See Natural Environment Section for references to protecting these green spaces.) The open spaces in the town would be utilised more if they had improved pathways and were better waymarked. Enhancing these green spaces by providing better access, whilst protecting biodiversity, is a key policy of this Plan.
- 6.4.4** Both walking and cycling are leisure pursuits which provide health benefits and help reduce traffic pollution. Monarch's Way and the Heart of England Way pass within the town and National Cycle Route 5 passes just to the north. Promotion of new and existing cycling and walking routes are included in the Transport and Infrastructure Section of this Plan.
- 6.4.5** The Town Council manage 4 sites of allotments, all well-used, and the most recent one in School Road met the shortfall that was referred to in the SDC Core Strategy (Policy AS.2, B5). A new allotment site was also included on the Alcester Park development.
- 6.4.6** Alcester is a 'Health and Well-being Town' (the first in Warwickshire) and formed a Health and Well-being Board in 2015. The town is fortunate to have a highly successful dementia café which meets twice a week in the Eric Payne Community Centre. The Health and Well-being Board now called the Health and Wellbeing Partnership, which reports to the Town Council, supports this important facility and recognises the need for more support for those living with dementia.
- 6.4.7** Many of the town's parks include outdoor children's play equipment and at the Eric Payne Community Centre there is a multi-use games area, skate park, as well as adult exercise equipment. The Youth Club also meets in the Depot at the Eric Payne Community Centre.
- 6.4.8** The SDC Core Strategy sets out the need for improved recreation and leisure facilities in the town and to improve outdoor play and leisure facilities on Jubilee Fields and on the western side of the town.
- 6.4.9** During the Neighbourhood Plan consultation events community and recreational facilities were mentioned by many people. In the 2017 Emerging Policies Household Questionnaire 89% agreed that the quality and range of community facilities and the quality and range of indoor and outdoor recreational facilities should be improved. The question as to whether there are enough community facilities had a balanced response, but of those that disagreed, 63.92% selected the Greig Hall, 26.8% selected Youth facilities and 23.71% selected a community centre as those which should be provided. In relation to recreational facilities, of the 33.5% who responded to the question as to what should be provided, 50.9% favoured a swimming pool, 22.4% said sports/fitness improvements and 21.8% said the Greig centre.
- 6.4.10** Funds were allocated by SDC to upgrade sports/fitness facilities at the Greig Leisure Centre following its acquisition by the Council. After securing a lease of the building, the Town Council led the refurbishment and re-opening of The Greig Hall which had been a project in the original Neighbourhood Plan.
- 6.4.11** Reducing pollution is a global issue and exposure to particulates has a direct impact on local health. According to the British Medical Journal "The effects of air pollution on the lungs and heart are now widely appreciated with expanding evidence for an important role in cardiac disease". <https://www.bmj.com/content/350/bmj.h1510>
- 6.4.12** This Plan aims to ensure that additional building and traffic do not cause pollution affecting our Town Centre, residential areas and rivers.

Objective A - Promoting and enhancing community and leisure facilities

To safeguard and enhance current facilities for leisure, well-being and the community, to benefit local residents' physical and mental health.

Policy CLW 1 – Community leisure facilities development

The sites listed in Appendix 2 are recognised as Community Leisure Facilities.

Development proposals which enhance and improve these Community Leisure Facilities will be supported, where shown to be economically sustainable and serve a demonstrable need.

Proposals for new community leisure facilities will be supported provided that they are compatible with existing neighbouring uses. New sites for such facilities will be supported where they are accessible or can be made accessible via good footpath/cycle links.

The loss or partial loss of Community Leisure Facilities will not be supported unless it can be demonstrated that the facility is no longer required and has no prospect of being brought back into use.

Explanation

6.4.13 From the results of the 2014 Stage 2 Questionnaire, 92% of residents put leisure and sports facilities as their first or second priority.

6.4.14 From the 2015 Household Questionnaire, only 40.1% agreed that there were sufficient community facilities in Alcester. 89% supported policies to improve the quality and range of community facilities in Alcester.

6.4.15 Alcester is a growing town (with 350 houses being built at Alcester Park) and Community Leisure Facilities are therefore in demand.

Higher Level policies for Objective A

6.4.16 NPPF para 103 "Access to a network of high quality open space and opportunities for sport and physical activity is important for the health and well-being of communities."

6.4.17 SDC Core Strategy AS.2 B4- provide additional play spaces for children and young people given the shortfall against the standard set out in Policy CS.25 Healthy Communities.

6.4.18 SDC Core Strategy AS.2 B2 supports the improvement of indoor recreation and leisure facilities in the town.

6.4.19 SDC Core Strategy Policy CS.25 support for enhancement of and provision of new built leisure facilities for residents of all ages.

Objective B- Maximising use of our green spaces

To help the community get maximum benefit from Alcester's open green spaces.

Policy CLW 2 - Enhancing access to and utilisation of open green spaces

Proposals to improve access to and recreational usage of open green spaces, especially the river corridors, and Oversley Wood will be supported.

Consideration should be given to wheelchair users as well as pedestrians and cyclists. Level, safe pathways, and appropriate signage/waymarking should be provided where possible.

In relation to Abbey Fields and Priory Meadow any changes must be compatible with protection of the underground and surface features of the heritage asset. Any development must not harm or threaten the open nature of the area as this is an Area of Restraint identified under Policy CS.13 of the Core Strategy.

Explanation

6.4.20 For the purposes of policy CLW 2 'open green space' means land that is accessible to the public and partly or completely covered with grass, trees, shrubs or other vegetation.

6.4.21 From the results of the 2014 Stage 2 Questionnaire, of the 118 respondents who chose this option, 65% put open spaces as their top priority.

6.4.22 From the 2015 Household Questionnaire, only 42.1% agreed that there were sufficient recreational facilities in Alcester. 89% supported policies to improve the quality and range of recreational facilities in Alcester.

Higher Level Policies for Objective B

- 6.4.23 NPPF para 106 allows communities to “identify and protect green areas of particular importance to them”.
- 6.4.24 The Local Green Space designation should only be used:
- Where the green space is in reasonably close proximity to the community it serves;
 - Where the green area is demonstrably special to a local community and holds a particular local significance, for example because of its beauty, historic significance, recreational value (including as a playing field), tranquillity or richness of its wildlife; and
 - Where the green area concerned is local in character and is not an extensive tract of land (NPPF para 100).
- 6.4.25 NPPF Section 8 (Promoting healthy and safe communities), Paragraph 103 states “Access to a network of high quality open spaces and opportunities for sport and physical activity is important for the health and well-being of communities.”
- 6.4.26 NPPF para 105- Protecting and enhancing public rights of way and access.
- 6.4.27 SDC Core Strategy Policy AS.2 B7 – Utilise the Arrow and Alne river corridors as linear features for recreational opportunities.
- 6.4.28 SDC Core Strategy Policy CS.13 - Areas of Restraint
- 6.4.29 SDC SPD Consultation Draft Part D includes Design Principles for External open spaces.

Objective C Promoting an active and healthy community

To support development which provides facilities which encourage exercise and improve health. Also, to protect public health by proposing that developments that would cause pollution and have an adverse impact on health be rejected.

Policy CLW 3 – Health provision

Any development proposal, meeting a proven local need, which would create, enhance or expand facilities for supporting or improving people’s mental or physical health will be supported in principle. Proposals for such facilities should be in an accessible location.

Explanation

- 6.4.30 The 2021 Census data re Communal Establishment Residents shows that Alcester has 42 people living in communal establishments such as care homes. The 2021 census data shows that 19.6% of all adults in Alcester are classed as disabled under the Equality Act 2010. This data supports the need for healthcare developments in Alcester.
- 6.4.31 From the results of the 2014 Stage 2 Questionnaire, 94% of residents considered healthcare to be “very important” when ranking services. The provision of doctors, dentists and community nurses all ranked highly in the priority of facilities.

Policy CLW 4 - Allotments and growing spaces

Proposals for the provision of new allotments in locations which are accessible to the community they will serve and where ground conditions are suitable for cultivation will be supported. Proposals for new allotments should clearly demonstrate the following criteria:

- There are no adverse impacts on the landscape or character of the area;
- There are satisfactory arrangements for water supply; and
- There would be no adverse impacts on neighbouring uses

Explanation

- 6.4.32** The Town Council owns four allotment sites on Bleachfield Street (North and South), Allimore Lane and School Road. There are also new allotments at the Alcester Park development. This policy seeks to support more new sites.
- 6.4.33** Research suggests that “allotments and community gardens can improve people’s quality of life, help to curb exclusion, increase physical exercise, encourage a nutritious diet, support mental health, help people relax, teach new life skills, empower people, give individuals self- esteem, reconnect people with the food they eat, educate citizens about healthy food and environmental stability, tackle CO2 emissions, reduce packaging, support more sustainable waste management, conserve biodiversity, facilitate social interaction, build cohesive communities, strengthen social ties and networks, secure our food supplies and even reduce perceptions of crime” Hope, N. & Ellis, V. (2009) Can You Dig It? Meeting Community Demand for Allotments. NLGN: London¹⁸.

Higher level policies for Objective C

- 6.4.34** SDC Core Strategy Policy CS 25 Healthy Communities supports healthy inclusive communities and sets out the Council’s approach to open space and recreation facilities provision for residential developments.
- 6.4.35** Stratford-on-Avon District Active Communities Strategy (2024-2027) seeks to ensure effective planning and co-ordination of opportunities for participation in sport and physical activity.
- 6.4.36** SDC SPD 12 Healthy Communities refers to the importance of design of the built environment on health. The way in which buildings and areas are connected through street layout, footpaths and cycle paths and open space can have an impact on physical and mental health and the amount of physical activity that people can undertake. The public realm should be designed to encourage and promote physical exercise and mental well-being.
- 6.4.37** SDC SPD 9.4 refers to Dementia Friendly communities and how to create better environments for those living with dementia.
- 6.4.38** SDC Core Strategy Policy CS.7 (Green Infrastructure) is supported by section 3.6.6 “Allotments are an important community facility and demand for them is growing steadily. They make a valuable contribution to biodiversity and healthy lifestyles, represent years of public and individual investment, and are worthy of protection.”
- 6.4.39** SDC Core Strategy Policy AS.2 B Social 5. allows for the provision of additional allotments
- 6.4.40** WCC Neighbourhood Development Planning for Health promotes healthy, active communities through the neighbourhood planning process¹⁹.





6.5 Natural Environment

- 6.5.1** Alcester is a rural town and the Warwickshire Wildlife Trust has designated it a 'Living Landscape'. Its natural setting with many open green spaces and riverside corridors makes a vitally important contribution to the quality of life for people living in Alcester. It is also a major attraction for visitors and tourists, and as a result makes a significant contribution to the local economy.
- 6.5.2** In the Household Questionnaire 96% of respondents agreed that the green belt and landscape setting are important, and 69.5% picked out spaces important to them. This Plan therefore proposes that many of these green spaces are designated Local Green Spaces thus affording them greater protection.
- 6.5.3** Alcester's River Arrow Nature Reserve, owned by SDC and managed by the Warwickshire Wildlife Trust, contains a mosaic of habitats which support a variety of wildlife.
- 6.5.4** The town is positioned at the confluence of the rivers Arrow and Alne. Being close to two rivers, much of the town is at risk of flooding. Over the years the town has been subject to flooding from surface water and the watercourses running through it, the most recent being in 2007 when severe flooding affected a large number of properties. Since then much work has been undertaken to improve drainage, install two pumping stations and an underground storage tank for management of excess water. However, the risk of flooding is still a concern for many residents and climate change and further development may increase flood risk unless development is properly managed.
- 6.5.5** Oversley Wood is designated as ancient woodland. Para 175 (c) of the NPPF states that "development resulting in the loss or deterioration of irreplaceable habitats (such as ancient woodland...) should be refused, unless there are wholly exceptional reasons and a suitable compensation strategy exists." The Steering Group were advised that Oversley Wood is protected by this designation and no further protection is necessary in this Plan.

Objective A - Protecting the green landscape, green spaces and rivers and bio-diversity.

To protect the rural nature of the town and ensure that its green environment is preserved.

Policy NE 1 – Trees, hedges and landscape features

All new development will be expected to protect mature healthy trees and hedges where appropriate, in accordance with BS 5837: 2012 or the latest British Standard. Where this is not feasible, new trees and hedges should be planted to replace those lost as part of a mitigation scheme. Where feasible and appropriate, new development should incorporate new native tree and hedge planting of a suitable size and species. The new hedge or shrub planting should be implemented in accordance with the recommendations in BS 4428:1989 and any new tree planting should be carried out in accordance with BS 8545:2014 or the latest British Standard.

Major developments, as defined by the NPPF, and other proposals which would have a significant impact on the landscape will need to demonstrate that they have been shaped by a landscaping strategy which takes into account the essential characteristics of the site.

Explanation

- 6.5.6 From the results of the 2014 Stage 2 Questionnaire, 96% of residents put trees as their first or second priority.
- 6.5.7 The Ecological Report produced by the Habitat Biodiversity Partnership for Alcester Town Council (August 2018)¹³ identified that there were 76 km of hedgerows within Alcester with the majority kept intact.

Policy NE 2 – Biodiversity

Development (unless exempt from Biodiversity Net Gain requirements) must provide at least 10% Biodiversity Net Gain although proposals exceeding this level of provision are encouraged where possible. Where developments would result in significant harm to biodiversity it will be necessary to demonstrate how this harm will be mitigated by the creation of new habitats and ecological assets.

Existing ecological networks should be retained and enhanced. New ecological habitats and networking of spaces are particularly encouraged and measures to improve landscape quality, scenic beauty and tranquillity and to reduce light pollution are encouraged.

Explanation

- 6.5.8 The planning system has a crucial role in helping to reverse pollinator decline and boost biodiversity.
- 6.5.9 Government reports and documents such as 'Making Spaces for Nature' (2010)²¹, the 'Natural Environment White Paper' (2011), 'Biodiversity 2020' (2011) and National Pollinators Strategy (2014) all emphasise the importance of maintaining and improving biodiversity and the quality of current wild-flower, and rich natural and semi-natural habitats.
- 6.5.10 Alcester lies within a 'Living Landscape' as defined by the Wildlife Trusts. The Warwickshire Wildlife Trust manages the River Arrow Nature Reserve (a Local Green Space). According to their website <http://www.warwickshirewildlifetrust.org.uk/reserves/river-arrow> the nature reserve is a mosaic of habitats, supporting a range of flora and wildlife. It is valuable for locally rare small teasel and kingfishers.
- 6.5.11 The Habitat Biodiversity Audit in 2015 (a partnership exercise conducted by WCC, University of York and Warwickshire Wildlife Trust) showed a high diversity of habitat and connective hedgerows in the area in the Alcester Neighbourhood Area.
- 6.5.12 The Ecological Report commissioned by Alcester Town Council in August 2018¹⁰ from the Habitat Biodiversity Audit Diversity Partnership for Warwickshire, Coventry and Solihull reported that there was a wide range of habitats within the parish and reports of many protected species. It also identified the wildlife corridors created by the rivers, hedgerows and the disused railway track as important ecological networks.

Policy NE 3 – Local Green Spaces

The following sites are designated as Local Green Spaces:

LGS 1 Westbury Park

LGS 2 Arrow Valley corridor

LGS 3 Jubilee Fields

LGS 4 St Mary's Park, Kinwarton

LGS 5 Bleachfield Street Play Area

LGS 6 Collins Way Play Area

LGS 7 Moorfields Park

LGS 8 Gas House Lane Recreation Ground (Centenary Field)

LGS 9 Alcester Town Cemetery

LGS 10 Whitehall Farm Green Space

LGS 11 Land at Eclipse Road

LGS 12 Land adjoining old Stratford Road

LGS 13 Alcester Park Green Space

LGS 14 The Bowling Green

LGS 15 Bleachfield Street Allotments North

LGS 16 Bleachfields Street Allotments South

LGS 17 School Road Allotments

LGS 18 Allimore Lane Allotments

LGS 19 Alcester Park Allotments

The Local Green Spaces are identified on Map 7 and full details are included in Appendix 3.

Development that would harm the openness or special character of a Local Green Space or its significance and value to the local community will not be supported unless there are very special circumstances which outweigh the harm to the Local Green Space.

Explanation

- 6.5.13 The charity Fields in Trusts estimates that nationally Britain's parks provide more than £34 billion of well-being benefits, by improving mental and physical health – Revaluing Parks and Green Spaces (2018).²⁰
- 6.5.14 The above green spaces all contribute to quality of life and the health and well-being of the community being spaces used for leisure and having social and environmental benefits.
- 6.5.15 The Stratford-on-Avon District Social Inclusion Statement May 2015²² reports that the Neighbourhood Area contains two of the least privileged Local Super Output Areas (LSOA's) in the District.
- 6.5.16 From the results of the 2014 Stage 2 Questionnaire, 118 respondents considered these to be one of their top three priorities. The results of the 2015 Household Questionnaire revealed that 96.3 % of residents agreed that Alcester's green belt and landscape setting are important.
- 6.5.17 The area abounding the River Arrow includes Westbury Park, River Arrow Nature Reserve, Abbey Field, Priory Meadow, and Jubilee Fields which all form a unique green space at the heart of Alcester. SDC Core Strategy Policy AS.2 B7 refers to utilising the river corridors as linear features for recreational purposes.
- 6.5.18 Detailed descriptions of each Local Green Space are included in Appendix 3.

Policy NE 4 – Protecting Valued Landscapes and Important Views

Development proposals must demonstrate how they are appropriate to, and integrate with, the character of the landscape setting whilst conserving, and where appropriate, enhancing the character of the landscape including important landscape features.

Development proposals should demonstrate that they maintain the essential character of the important landscapes as seen from the viewpoints on Map 8 and the important views within, into or out of the Conservation Area indicated on Map 9. Where development would have a significant adverse effect on these views it will only be permitted where the benefits of the proposal clearly outweigh the harm.

Explanation

- 6.5.19 Vistas from key viewpoints are a major asset to Alcester and characterise the town. The views over open land bring the countryside into the town. New development should enhance or maintain these views.
- 6.5.20 The detailed description and photos of the Valued Landscapes are included as Appendix 4.
- 6.5.21 The Alcester Conservation Area Character Appraisal of December 2008⁴ identified a number of "Important Views" as shown on Map 9.



Higher level policies for Objective A

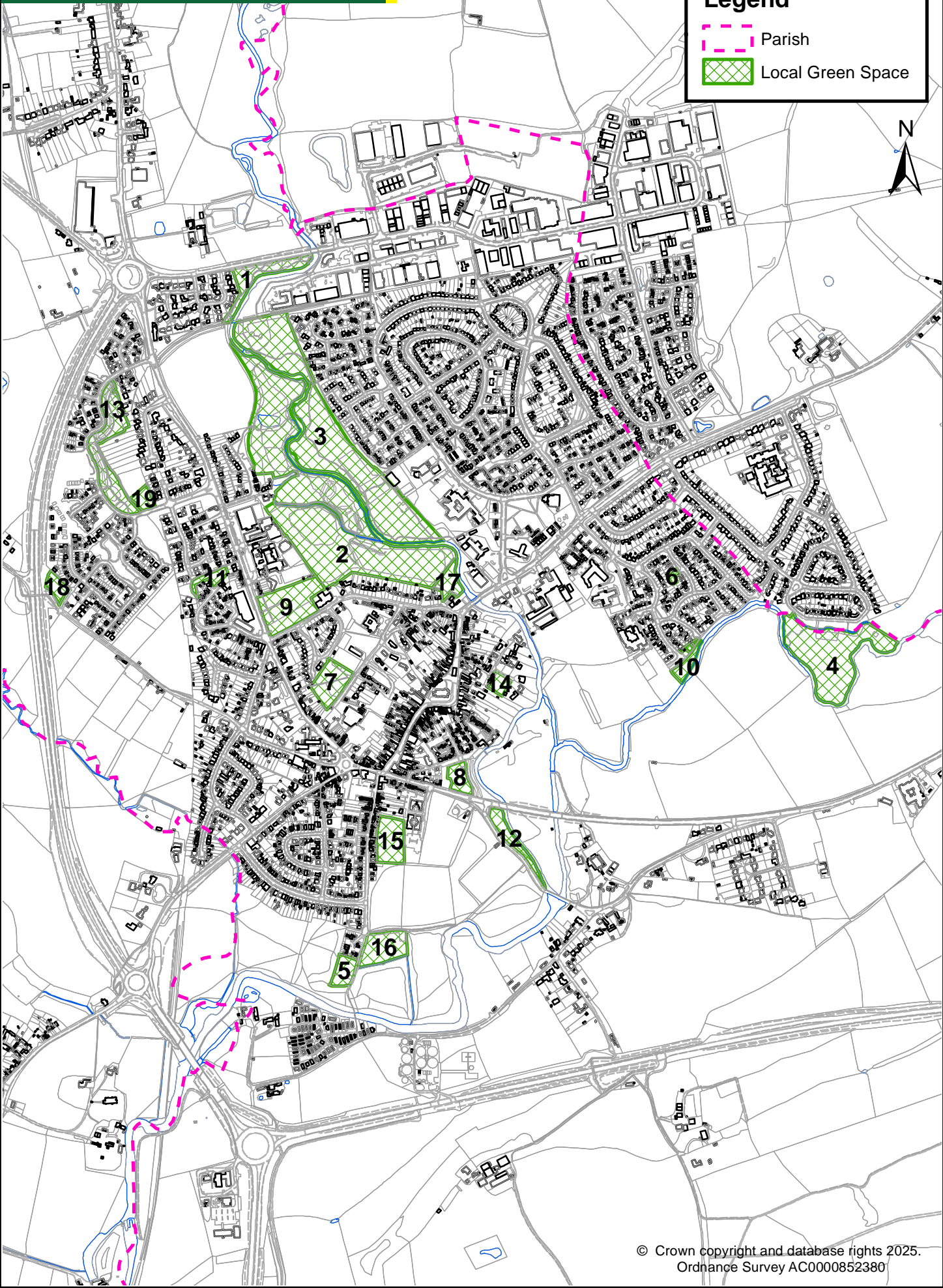
- 6.5.22 NPPF Section 8 (Promoting healthy and safe communities), Paragraph 108 states “policies for managing development within a Local Green Space should be consistent with policy for Green Belts.”
- 6.5.23 NPPF Section 15 (Conserving and Enhancing the Natural environment) para 187 states that policies should contribute to and enhance the natural environment by “protecting and enhancing valued landscapes, sites of biodiversity or geological value”
- 6.5.24 NPPF para 192-195 support protection of biodiversity and geodiversity.
- 6.5.25 SDC Core Strategy Policy CS.5 (Landscape Section A (2, “Development should protect landscape character and avoid detrimental effects on features which make a significant contribution to the character, history and setting of a settlement or area.”
- 6.5.26 SDC Core Strategy Policy AS.10 (Countryside and Villages) “All proposals will be subject to a thorough assessment to make sure their scale, nature and location are appropriate, including the need to: minimise impact on the character of the local landscape, communities and environmental features...”
- 6.5.27 SDC Core Strategy Policy AS.2 A Environmental 3. requires development to “enhance the biodiversity and recreational value of the River Arrow Nature Reserve”
- 6.5.28 SDC Core Strategy Policy AS.2 A Environmental 4 requires development to “protect existing woodland and reverse fragmentation, including through the provision of development buffer zones.”
- 6.5.29 NPPF para 127 requires that planning policies should aim to ensure that developments are visually attractive as a result of appropriate and effective landscaping (amongst others).
- 6.5.30 NPPF para 180 provides that policies should ensure that “new development is appropriate for its location taking into account the likely effects including cumulative effects of pollution on health, living conditions and the natural environment...”
- 6.5.31 Government reports and documents such as ‘Making Spaces for Nature (2010²¹, the ‘Natural Environment White Paper’ (2011, ‘Biodiversity 2020’ (2011, and National Pollinators Strategy (2014 all emphasise the importance of maintaining and improving biodiversity and the quality of current wild-flower rich natural and semi-natural habitats.
- 6.5.32 SDC Core Strategy Policy AS.2 B7 refers to utilising the river corridors as linear features for recreational purposes.
- 6.5.33 SDC Core Strategy Policy CS 5 refers to protection of woodlands, hedges and trees.
- 6.5.34 SDC Core Strategy Policy CS.6 (Natural Environment) requires development to contribute to “a resilient ecological network”
- 6.5.35 SDC Core Strategy Policy CS.7 (Green Infrastructure) requires the green infrastructure network to be protected and enhanced.
- 6.5.36 SDC Core Strategy Policy CS.8 (Historic Environment Section A, “Priority will be given to protecting and enhancing the wide range of historic and cultural assets that contribute to the character and identity of the District, including: ... (4 the distinctive character of the market towns, villages and hamlets, including their settings, townscapes, streets, spaces and built form;”
- 6.5.37 SDC Core Strategy Policy CS.9 (Design and Distinctiveness Section B (2, “Proposals will reflect the context of the locality, ... making best use of on-site assets including landscaping features as well as public views and vistas and not harming existing ones.”
- 6.5.38 Public Health Warwickshire’s consultation supported tree planting and noted that this can help reduce the impact of climate change and provide ecological habitats.



Map 7: Local Green Spaces

Legend

- Parish
- Local Green Space



© Crown copyright and database rights 2025.
Ordnance Survey AC0000852380

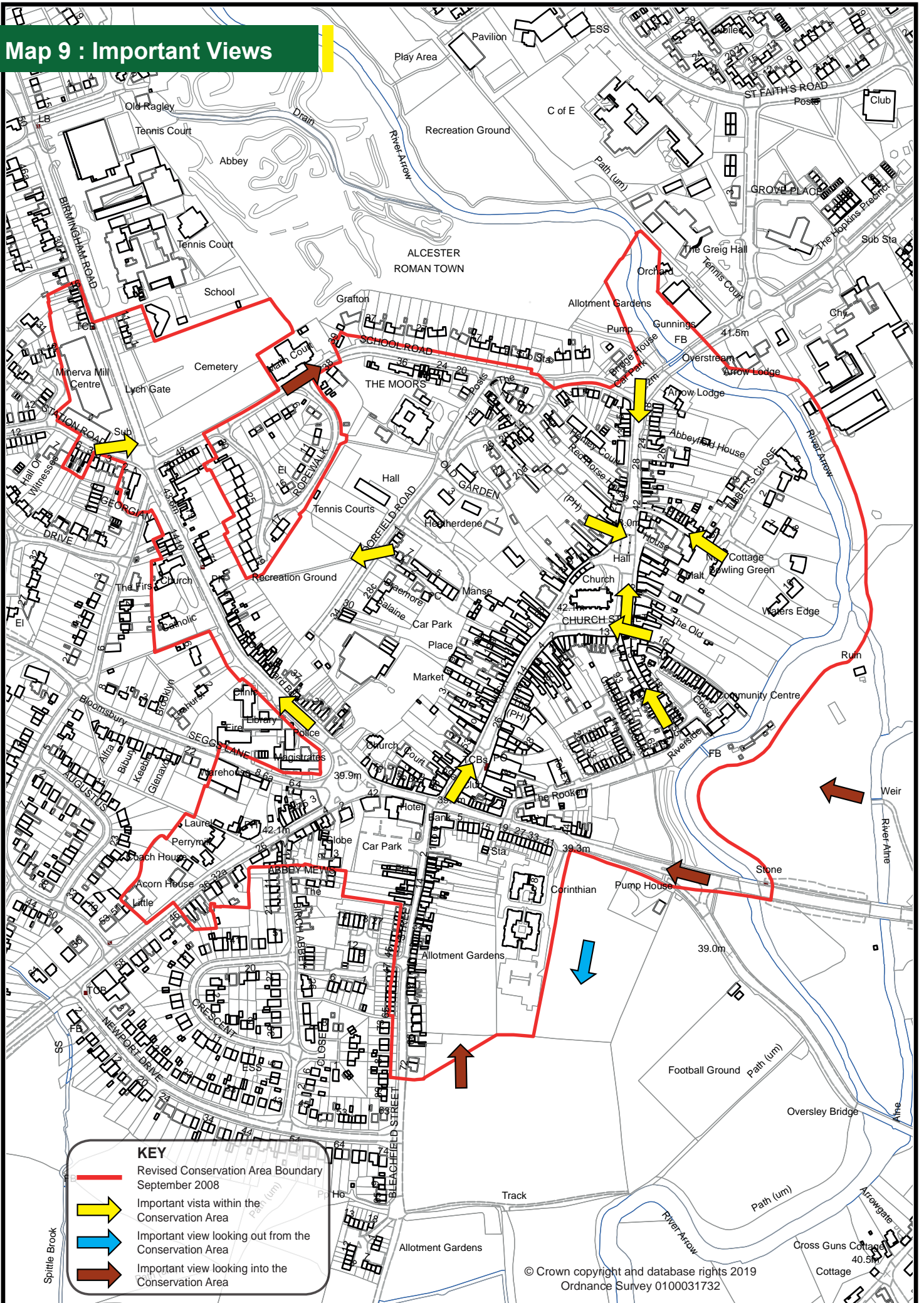


Map 8: Valued Landscapes



© Crown copyright and database rights 2018. Ordnance Survey 0100031732

Map 9 : Important Views



Alcester - Important Views

Objective B– Improve and maintain flood resilience

To ensure that development does not increase current flood risk to properties and that opportunities to reduce risk are taken.

Policy NE 5 – Mitigating and preventing increased flood risk

Development proposals should address and not increase pluvial or fluvial flood risk. Planning applications must be accompanied by a site-specific flood risk assessment in line with the requirements of national and district policy. "Major" development will be reviewed by Warwickshire County Council as the Lead Local Flood Authority (LLFA). Development not meeting the criteria of a "major development" will be reviewed by Stratford-on-Avon District Council.

All developments should seek to control and discharge all surface water runoff generated onsite during the 1 in 100 year plus climate change rainfall event. For greenfield development sites the surface water runoff generated as a result of the developments should not exceed the greenfield runoff rate. For brownfield development sites, developers are expected to achieve a substantial reduction in the existing runoff rate and, where possible, reduce the runoff to the equivalent greenfield rate. The LLFA requirement is a minimum of a 50% betterment to be provided on existing runoff rates on brownfield sites should the greenfield rate not be possible.

All proposals, in areas requiring a flood risk assessment under national policy, must demonstrate that flood risk will not be increased elsewhere and that the proposed development is appropriately flood resistant and resilient. Flood risk assessments should include details of how flood risk from all sources affects the proposed development, whether the development type is appropriate for the proposed location, whether the site's flood risk is too great for the development and whether the sequential and exception test should be applied.

Information accompanying applications should demonstrate how any mitigation measures will satisfactorily be integrated into the design and layout of the development.

All developments will be expected to include sustainable drainage systems and permeable surfaces.

The re-use and recycling of water within developments is encouraged.

Explanation

- 6.5.39** In July 2007, Alcester experienced the biggest flooding event in its recorded history with first surface water flooding which was then combined with river flooding. 150 homes were flooded. Witnesses at the time reported that Gunnings Bridge acted as a dam causing flooding within the town. This policy seeks to restrict additional surface water being discharged into the River Arrow.
- 6.5.40** From the results of the 2014 Stage 2 Questionnaire, 100% considered flood risk to be very or somewhat important.
- 6.5.41** Large parts of the Neighbourhood Area are within Flood Zone 3 as shown on the Environment Agency map in Appendix 5.
- 6.5.42** The LLFA uses the SuDS hierarchy as a list of preferred drainage options when reviewing planning applications and would support developments discharging into a watercourse (subject to conditions). The preferred outfall options are (in order of preference): infiltration (water into the ground), discharging into an existing water body and discharging into a surface water sewer. Connecting to a combined sewer system is not appropriate and not favoured. Connections to foul sewers will not be accepted. Connections made to third party assets will require engagement and permission from the asset owner.
- 6.5.43** The pluvial and fluvial flood risk maps are available via this link: <https://flood-map-for-planning.service.gov.uk/>
- 6.5.44** The Warwickshire County Council Local Guidance for developers is available via this link: <https://api.warwickshire.gov.uk/documents/WCCC-453486374-170>

Higher level policies for Objective B:

- 6.5.45 NPPF Section 14, Meeting the challenge of climate change, flooding and coastal change
- 6.5.46 NPPF para 170 states that “inappropriate development in areas at risk of flooding should be avoided by directing development away from areas at highest risk (whether existing or future. Where development is necessary in such areas, the development should be made safe for its lifetime without increasing flood risk elsewhere”
- 6.5.47 SDC Core Strategy CS.2 require proposals to mitigate and adapt to the impacts of climate change by including SuDS [sustainable drainage] and not compromising flood plains;
- 6.5.48 SDC Core Strategy CS.4C enhancing and protecting the water environment to reduce and mitigate flooding risks;

7. Projects

- 7.1 This document outlines a set of local Projects that will be implemented over the Plan period 2026 – 2035. These projects are not formally part of the Neighbourhood Development Plan, but they are indicated by several of the Plan’s policies.
- 7.2 There is no priority indicated by the list below and many will depend on available funding, but the Plan indicates some will make very significant changes. As the Submission Plan moves forward through the stages to adoption there may be opportunity to add further scope to the Projects.

7.3 Project 1 - Promoting and enhancing cycling and pedestrian routes

A review of existing cycle and pedestrian routes will be undertaken to see how best these can be improved. Surface condition, especially in relation to use by wheelchair and pram users, will be considered. New routes will also be explored.

Opportunities will be sought through negotiations with landowners to create additional permissive rights of way, extending the existing paths and cycleways to link essential residential areas with the Town Centre and schools and to better connect the town’s ‘Green River Corridor’ with other local parishes and the countryside and with the Heart of England Way and Monarch’s Way.

Opportunities and appropriate media for promotion of the routes will be considered.

Route signage will be reviewed.

Responsibility for maintenance of the routes, including High Street tueries, will be reviewed, liaising with landowners.

The Town Council will work with Salford Priors PC and Bidford-on-Avon PC on the creation of a cycle route linking the parishes.

Agreed actions will require funding and funding options will include CIL.

7.4 Project 2 - Town Centre traffic flows

This Project will consider traffic flows in the Town Centre and options, including a one-way system, liaising with businesses and highways authorities. Any proposal would seek public consensus before implementation.

Agreed actions will require funding and funding options will include CIL.

7.5 Project 3 - Additional parking

This Project will consider potential sites for additional short and long stay parking, liaising with landowners and appropriate authorities. From the 2015 Household Questionnaire, when asked what facilities were lacking, 55.1% responded that more car parking was needed.

The provision of coach parking will be considered in order to support tourism.

Existing parking spaces will be reviewed to see if re-design could accommodate more vehicles.

The provision of additional disabled/accessible parking spaces will be considered.

Signage and parking information will also be reviewed. The practical implications of including electric vehicle charging points to existing and new carparks will also be considered.

Agreed actions will require funding and funding options will include CIL

7.6 Project 4 - Viability of a swimming pool

It is proposed that a working group be established to look into the viability of a swimming pool, taking into consideration:

- Set up costs
- Ongoing maintenance
- Location options
- Predicted income
- Funding options
- Explore partnerships with schools and business
- Public consultation following viability assessment.

7.7 Project 5 - New footbridge bridge over the River Arrow

A new bridge for pedestrians and wheel chair users across the River Arrow linking Jubilee Fields to Priory Meadow would help increase utilisation of the river corridor for recreational use and provide part of a safer route to schools.

A working group should consider:

- Optimal location
- A rigid construction resilient to flood and satisfying Health and Safety requirements
- Level and Surface of paths to and from the bridge
- Signage
- Responsibility and cost for on-going maintenance
- Funding options

7.8 Project 6 – Local List of non-designated heritage assets

The Town Council will consider whether the list of ‘Key Unlisted Buildings’ in section 8.61 and Map 15 of the Alcester Conservation Area Character Appraisal 2008 should form the basis of an initial assessment for possible inclusion in a local list for Alcester, which should also include any unlisted buildings of comparable significance outside the Conservation Area.

The Core Strategy notes that “Neighbourhood Plans provide an ideal medium to identify, protect and enhance such assets that are valued by the community” (section 3.7.9), and that SDC “will compile a local list of non-designated heritage assets” (section 3.7 ‘Development Management Considerations’, item 3).

This is a Project for which CIL contributions are likely to be required.

Community Infrastructure Levy Regulation 123 (Projects List)

- 8.1 Regulation 123 of the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) Regulations 2010 (as amended) places a requirement to publish a list of infrastructure projects or types of infrastructure that the Charging Authority (Stratford-on-Avon District Council) intends will be, or may be, wholly or partly funded by CIL receipts received from qualifying development.
- 8.2 In England, communities that draw up a Neighbourhood Plan or Neighbourhood Development Order (including a Community Right to Build Order) and secure the consent of local people in a referendum, will benefit from 25% of the levy revenues arising from the development that takes place in their area. This amount will not be subject to an annual limit.
- 8.3 The levy can be used to fund a wide range of infrastructure, including transport, flood defences, schools, hospitals, and other health and social care facilities. This definition allows the levy to be used to fund a very broad range of facilities such as play areas, parks and green spaces, cultural and sports facilities, academies and free schools, district heating schemes and police stations and other community safety facilities. This flexibility gives local areas the opportunity to choose what infrastructure they need to deliver their Neighbourhood Plan.
- 8.4 The neighbourhood portion of the levy can be spent on a wider range of things than the rest of the levy, provided that it meets the requirement to 'support the development of the area'. The wider definition means that the neighbourhood portion can be spent on things other than infrastructure. For example, the pot could be used to fund affordable housing where it would support the development of the area by addressing the demands that development places on the area.
- 8.5 The table included at Appendix 6 has been informed by consultation and preparation of the Alcester Neighbourhood Development Plan. It is important to note that inclusion in this list does not signify a commitment from the Town Council to fund the entirety (or part of) of any particular project through CIL. In addition, the order of projects in the table does not imply any preference for spend.

Monitoring

- 8.6 Parish, Town and Community Councils must make arrangements for the proper administration of their financial affairs (see Section 151 of the Local Government Act 1972). They must have systems in place to ensure effective financial control (see Accounts and Audit (England) Regulations 2011 and Accounts. These requirements also apply when dealing with neighbourhood funding payments under the levy.
- 8.7 For each year when they have received neighbourhood funds through the levy, Parish, Town and Community Councils must publish the information specified in Regulation 62A. They should publish this information on their website or on the charging authority's website. If they have not received any money they do not have to publish a report but may want to publish some information to this effect in the interests of transparency.
- 8.8 There is no prescribed format. Parish, Town and Community Councils may choose to combine reporting on the levy with other reports they already produce. The levy neighbourhood funding income and spending will also be included in their overall published accounts but are not required to be identified separately in those accounts.
- 8.9 Where a charging authority holds and spends the neighbourhood portion on behalf of the local community, it should ensure that it reports this as a separate item in its own accounts.



Application	Address	Homes Net
12/00938/FUL	Shakespeare Chambers, 3 High Street, Alcester	2
12/01437/FUL	2 Plover Close	1
12/02127/FUL	The Globe Hotel, 54 Birmingham Road, Alcester, B49 5EG	7
13/00386/FUL	The Coach House, Evesham Street, B49 5DS	1
13/01316/FUL	8C High Street, Alcester, B49 5AD	-1
13/01599/FUL	9 Tibbets Close, Meeting Lane, Alcester, B49 5QU	1
14/01659/VARY	Acorn House, Evesham Street, Alcester, B49 5DS	1
14/02929/FUL	Alcester Primary Care Centre, Fields Park drive, Alcester, B49 6QR	39
14/02968/VARY	Oversley Castle, Wixford, B49 6DH	8
15/01171/FUL	Riverside, 42 Malt Mill Lane, Alcester, B49 5QR	1
15/02560/REM	Kings Coughton Farm, Kings Coughton, Alcester, B49 5QQ	1
15/02694/FUL	55 High Street, Alcester B49 5AF	3
15/03024/FUL	Dorset House, Church Street, Alcester, B49 5AJ	1
15/03477/FUL	Bridge Garage Services, Stratford Road, B49 6PG	4
15/03906/FUL	19 Roman Way, Alcester B49 5DS	1
15/04043/FUL	Grove House, Gunnings Road, Alcester, B49 6AH	6
16/00042/FUL	Vacant Barn, Ragley Mill Lane, Alcester, Warwickshire, B49 5DU	1
16/01820/FUL	56 Birmingham Road, Alcester, B49 5EG	0
16/04108/COUQ	Barn At Lower Lodge Farm, Oversley Green	1
16/04109/COUQ	Barn At, Lower Lodge Farm, Oversley Green	1
17/00822/FUL	6 Tibbets Close, Meeting Lane, Alcester, B49 5QU	0
17/01732/FUL	13 Swan Street Alcester B49 5DP	1
17/02031/FUL	Mill Meadow, Birmingham Road, Kings Coughton, B49 5QG	1
17/03263/VARY	27 Kings Coughton Lane, Kings Coughton B49 5QE	1
18/00009/FUL	Garages St Faiths Road Alcester	4
18/03345/VARY	White Lion, Evesham Street, Alcester	2
18/03346/VARY	White Lion, Evesham Street, Alcester	2
19/02449/FUL	Garages North Of, Castle Road, Alcester	5
19/02478/FUL	Oversley Castle, Wixford, B49 6DH	0
20/01667/FUL	Garage Block, Hertford Road, Alcester	4
20/02656/VARY	Garage Blocks, Alauna Avenue, Alcester	5
20/03564/REM	Garages South Of Castle Road Alcester	3
21/03482/FUL	Mill House, Kings Coughton	1
22/02923/VARY	48 Hertford Road, Alcester, B49 6AZ	1
18/00569/FUL	9 High Street, Alcester	1
19/01599/FUL	32 Avon Crescent, Alcester, B49 6BJ	1
17/01087/REM	Land North of Allimore Lane, Alcester (Southern Site)	190
20/01543/VARY	Land North of Allimore Lane, Alcester (Northern Site)	160
Total		461

No	Name	Address	Facilities
Sporting Facilities			
1.	Greig Leisure Centre	Kinwarton Road, B49 6AD	Gym, sports hall, outdoor 3g pitch, parking
2.	Alcester Tennis Club	Moorfields Road, B49 5DL	Tennis courts, pavilion, parking
3.	Alcester Bowling Club	Meeting Lane, B49 5QT	Bowling green, pavilion
4.	Alcester Rugby Football Club	Birmingham Road, B49 5QF	Rugby pitches, clubhouse, parking
5.	Alcester Town Football Club	Stratford Road, B49 6LN	Football pitches, clubhouse, parking
6.	Alcester Town Football Club	Old Stratford Road, B49 5AQ	Football pitch
7.	Eric Payne Community Centre	Jubilee Fields, off St Faiths Road, B49 6AG	Multi Use Games Area and skate park
8.	Alcester Grammar School	Birmingham Road, B49 5ED	Sports Hall
Play Areas			
9.	Moorfields Park	Moorfields Road, B49 5DL	Play equipment
10.	Jubilee Fields	Off St Faiths Road, B49 5AG	Play equipment
11.	Bleachfield St Play Area	Bleachfield St, B49 5BH	Play equipment
12.	St Mary's Park	St Mary's Road, B49 6QH	Play equipment
13.	Collins Way	Collins Way, B49 6QS	Play equipment
14.	Hopkins Precinct	Kinwarton Road, B49 6PX	Play equipment
15.	Alcester Park	Birmingham Road, B49 5EH	Play equipment
Community Buildings			
16.	The Greig Hall	Kinwarton Road, B49 6AD	Community arts venue and rooms, parking
17.	Alcester Community Shed	Kinwarton Road, B49 6AD	Community meeting rooms
18.	Alcester Army Cadets	Kinwarton Road, B49 6AD	Training centre

19.	Alcester Guide & Scout Centre	Moorfields Road, B49 5DL	Meeting rooms
20.	Alcester War Memorial Town Hall	Henley Street, B49 5QX	Meeting rooms
21.	Eric Payne Community Centre	Off St Faiths Road, B49 6AG	Function rooms, parking
22.	Church House	Butter Street, B49 5AL	Meeting room
23.	Alcester Baptist Church	Church Street, B49 5AJ	Meeting room
24.	Alcester Methodist Church	Priory Road, B49 5DX	Meeting room
25.	Our Lady & St Joseph's R C Church	Priory Road, B49 5DY	Meeting room, parking
26.	Malt Mill Lane Community Centre	Malt Mill Lane, B49 5QR	Meeting room
27.	Alcester Heritage Trust	Priory Road, B49 5DZ	Museum
28.	Alcester Library	Priory Road, B49 5DZ	Library

LGS1 Westbury Park

Owned and managed by Alcester Town Council. This tranquil green area is bounded by the B4089, Arden Road, to the north and the River Arrow to the south. It is a grassed area, with benches and trees providing shade. It is adjacent to both a residential area and business premises on the Arden Forest Estate so is regularly used both by householders and workers. There are access points off the B4089 and also via a path off Greville Road making it the nearest green space accessible to residents of the Westbury Park development.

LGS2 Arrow Valley corridor

The Nature Reserve is owned by Stratford-on-Avon District Council and managed by the Wildlife Trust, with the support of a local group of volunteers. Designated a Local Nature Reserve in 1993, it contains a variety of habitats including ponds, river, meadow and woodland. Supports a variety of wildlife including bats, small teasel, kingfishers and regionally scarce beetles. It is also designated as a Field in Trust.

The banks of the River Arrow are edged with willow, alder, oak and hawthorn, which provide ideal perches for kingfishers. The sloping pebble beach provides the perfect habitat for reeds and wetland plants, as well as offering an attractive feeding area for many birds and insects such as grey wagtails and several regionally scarce beetles.

In addition to being a popular walking area by residents, the nature reserve is also regularly attended by science groups from nearby Alcester Grammar School to study the flora and wildlife.

The site is identified as a potential Local Wildlife Site in the 2018 Ecological Report by the HBA Partnership

Abbey Field is owned and managed by Stratford-on-Avon District Council and includes a Scheduled Monument site. Mounds and depressions are evidence of a Benedictine Abbey founded in 1140. A foot bridge links it to Priory Meadow.

Priory Meadow is owned and managed by Alcester Town Council, the Scheduled Monument site extends into the meadow, and includes the underground remains of the main Abbey buildings. An Abbey once covered this land in the 12th and 13th Centuries.

This large meadow has recently been acquired by the Town Council and is still being developed. It has mowed pathways and rustic seating and is used by walkers enjoying the river corridor. One of the projects in this Neighbourhood Plan is to create a bridge from this meadow across the river to Jubilee Fields in order to increase accessibility and utilisation of this river corridor.

LGS 3 Jubilee Fields

Designated a Field in Trust this is owned and managed by Alcester Town Council. Bordering the north bank of the River Arrow the fields include a children's and adult play equipment, the community orchard, and a skate boarding park and multi-use games area used by the youth of the town.

Jubilee Fields is the closest recreational area to the residential area known as the Conway Estate, which is one of the most deprived areas in the District, according to the Stratford-on-Avon District Social Inclusion Statement – May 2015. Earlier this century, ATC, together with a group called Vision for Alcester, instigated the provision of improved facilities at Jubilee Fields for all ages. These included the skate park, multi-use games area and adult play equipment and community orchard.

The building at the edge of the fields is known as the Eric Payne Community Centre and is used regularly for community meetings and part of it, called the Depot, is the base for a Youth Club.

The large open grassed area is used by many children for ball games and is also used for community events.

Many walkers, including those with canine friends, use the Jubilee Fields daily.

The Community Orchard project was a partnership between the Warwickshire Wildlife Trust and Alcester Town Council and delivered activities and workshops for the local community which encouraged people to explore their local area and the wildlife it holds.

The project planted 45 mixed fruit trees with some traditional varieties like the Wyken Pippin and Warwickshire Drooper and included a new path with a quiet seating area in the centre for relaxing in and of course to access the fruit to pick in the future. The area was also planted up with wildflower seeds and a new picnic area was opened up for families to enjoy.

Orchards have a significant ecological value - the spring blossom provides food for insects such as bees, butterflies and hoverflies and this can be a benefit to the surrounding area as it will encourage more pollinators into that area. The buds and fruit can be important for birds such as bullfinches, fieldfares and redwings. Over the next few years the orchard will become more established and there will be a variety of fruit for local people to enjoy.

LGS 4 St Mary's Park, Kinwarton

Within the Alcester Neighbourhood Area but is owned and managed by Kinwarton Parish Council. Designated a Field in Trust, it contains a young children's play area (fenced off so that it is dog-free) and parkland bounded by the River Alne to the South.

Older children use the grassed area for games; there is a set of small goal posts. Adults use it for recreation too and there are benches overlooking the river.

It is the only recreation area serving the large residential area to the north of Throckmorton Road/St Mary's Road and south of Captains Hill.

LGS 5, 6 and 7 Spaces with Children's Play areas

These are all recreational green spaces containing children's play equipment close to residential areas and are well used. They are managed by Alcester Town Council.

Bleachfield Street play area is situated at the end of the street in a quiet leafy area which has benches and play equipment.

Collins Way play area is the smallest of all the play areas in the Neighbourhood Area. It serves the residential area bounded by Fields Park Drive and Throckmorton Road in which many young families reside.

Moorfields Park is the only play area near to the Town Centre. In addition to a fenced off area with play equipment for younger children there is grass land for playing ball games and play equipment for older children. Two pathways across the park link the Town Centre to residential areas.

LGS 8 Gas House Lane Recreation Ground ("Centenary Field")

Owned and managed by Alcester Town Council, this green space runs alongside the River Arrow and is a key feature in the approach to the town from Stratford A46 direction. It forms part of a Scheduled Monument covering a large area of Alcester Roman Town.

It is a designated Field in Trust and was renamed Centenary Field on 11th November 2018 as a commemoration of the centenary of the end of the Great War.

A path through it links Stratford Road with Gas House Lane. It offers a good location for riverside picnics and is used for town social events such as Alcester Duck Race.

LGS 9 Alcester Town Cemetery

Owned and managed by Alcester Town Council the cemetery also includes a pedestrian footpath which links Priory Meadow to Birmingham Road. It is a well used quiet place for contemplation with plenty of benches.

LGS 10 Open space near Whitehall Farm

Amenity land owned and managed by Alcester Town Council. This is a tranquil area of grassland, with a bench and edged by trees. It is located at the far end of Fairwater Crescent and is the only green open space on the residential estate to the south of Throckmorton Road, other than a child's play area a few streets away.

LGS 11 Land at Eclipse Road

Amenity land owned by Central Corporate Services Ltd and managed by Alcester Town Council. This is the only green space to the west of Birmingham Road and serves as a recreation area for the residents of the Eclipse Road area.

LGS 12 Land Adjoining old Stratford Road including osier beds

Owned partly by Warwickshire County Council and partly by the Ragley Estate, this site is located at Old Stratford Road Oversley Green.

This tranquil green walkway follows the River Arrow at its eastern boundary to the Grade 2 listed Oversley Bridge. The pathway forms part of the Alcester Heritage Trail which follows important routes dating back to Alcester's Roman history.

It is a grassed area with an avenue of trees providing shade and a bench with views to open countryside. At the opposite bank to the River Arrow lie the osier beds. Located on a small island which is flanked by the River Arrow and the River Alne, the beds provide a pleasing aspect with their distinctive willow trees and the bird life they attract.

LGS 13 Alcester Park Green Space

Owned and managed by Trinity Estates this area is sited within the newly constructed Alcester Park residential development located at the northwestern edge of the town.

It contains a young children's play park which is fenced off so that it is dog-free. The adjacent green open space is planted with mixed trees and shrubs and provides a valuable recreational open space for residents.

LGS 14 The Bowling Green

Located down a quiet residential lane within the town centre that houses distinctive listed buildings, the bowling green and pavilion is one of the most southerly Crown Green bowling greens in the country.

Owned by the Alcester Unionist Club and managed by the Alcester Bowling Club, this tranquil green, sited within Alcester Conservation Area, has been the site of continuous crown green bowls since 1605. It is a popular venue with teams from other towns and villages where both players and spectators enjoy this distinctive facility.

Popular community events such as the fun day held, during the Alcester Street Market and Open Days for all to residents to 'have a go' at playing are hosted during the play season.

LGS 15 Bleachfield Street North Allotments

Owned by Ragley Estate and managed by Alcester Town Council, Bleachfield Street North allotment is a large well-used and established allotment.

Accessible to allotment holders from a pathway running through the site from Bleachfield Street to Corinthian Court and surrounded by residential properties on three sides with open views to the southern end of the site, it provides a tranquil area of land close to the town centre.

LGS 16 Bleachfield Street South Allotments

Owned by Stratford District Council and managed by Alcester Town Council, Bleachfield Street South allotment is a well-maintained and well-used allotment. Accessible to allotment holders from Bleachfield Street there is an informal footpath that runs along the perimeters of the site.

The pathway on the northern edge of the site is shared with the Environment Agency which maintains a pumping station at the northeastern end of the site.

Residential properties lie opposite the site at Bleachfield Street with the remainder of the site overlooked by open countryside.

LGS 17 School Road Allotments

Owned and managed by Alcester Town Council this well-used and well-maintained allotment site is located and accessed from School Road via 5-bar gate and pedestrian metal gate.

The allotment is for use by plot holders but is open and accessible to the public.

A pathway runs through the site to Priory Meadow which is part of a Scheduled Ancient Monument. With open views to the River Arrow and the open grassland of Abbey Fields at its eastern and northern boundaries this is an attractive tranquil area close to the centre of the town.

LGS 18 Allimore Lane Allotments

This well-maintained and well-used allotment site is located east of the A345 on the north side of Allimore Lane. It is owned by the Ragley Estate and managed by Alcester Town Council.

Alcester Park residential estate has been developed at its northern boundary. There are attractive views of open fields and farmland to the south and a public bench to enjoy this location.

The site is open and accessible to the public but only for used by allotment holders.

Access is gained from Allimore Lane, along which runs the Monarch's Way: a 625-mile-long footpath that approximates the escape route taken by King Charles II after being defeated in the Battle of Worcester.

LGS 19 Alcester Park Allotments

Sited within the Alcester Park residential development located at the northwestern edge of the town; these new allotments provide 9 plots for residents of the development.

They are owned and managed by Trinity Estates.

These will give important recreational activity and social space within the development and help develop the biodiversity within the estate.

VL1

The view from the footpath in the meadow north of the River Arrow in Oversley Green looking north north west towards Bleachfield Street and Corinthian Court (Grid Reference SP 09091, 56918) shows the wet grasslands leading towards the town.

The area is a protected archaeological site as there is evidence of historical Roman remains and is a designated scheduled monument. There are several paths across the area which are used extensively by walkers and dog walkers. The River Arrow forms the ancient boundary between the Coughton and Ragley Estates. A flood bund crosses the fields, protecting a low-lying area of Alcester. The area includes a ford and ancient hedges, and is a sanctuary for many birds. Owned by Ragley Estate, the fields are cut for fodder once a year and contain many species of wild flowers.



VL2

The view from Mill Lane, Oversley Green looking north north west towards Bleachfield Street and Corinthian Court (SP09163, 56705) shows the varied tree cover alongside the course of the River Arrow with wet grassland and meadows either side. Mill Lane is part of a popular circular route for walkers between Alcester Town and Oversley.



VL3

This view from the high point of Oversley Wood looking north to Alcester Town (SP10097,56180), shows a landscape of hilltop mixed semi-natural and natural woodland overlooking the valley.

The trees were cut about 50 years ago by the Forestry Commission to provide a view of Alcester in the river valley below to the north but the strong tree cover now largely screens the town from view. This view shows how factory units and schools have been built using white material, which look out of keeping with the surroundings. A forest path on the crest of the hill has a seat here providing a fine and interesting view to a weary walker.



VL4

The view from the old railway bridge on Allimore Lane looking south east towards Oversley Wood (SP08463,57468) shows an intimate urban landscape with mixed hedgerows and trees on the edge of the town.

From the old railway bridge, the centre of Alcester is approximately 400 yards ahead. The lane has very little traffic and is extensively used by walkers seeking the countryside.

Not far behind this point on Allimore Lane, development is scheduled up to the by-pass (see Map 3) and therefore the preservation of this landscape is all the more important.













Flood map for planning

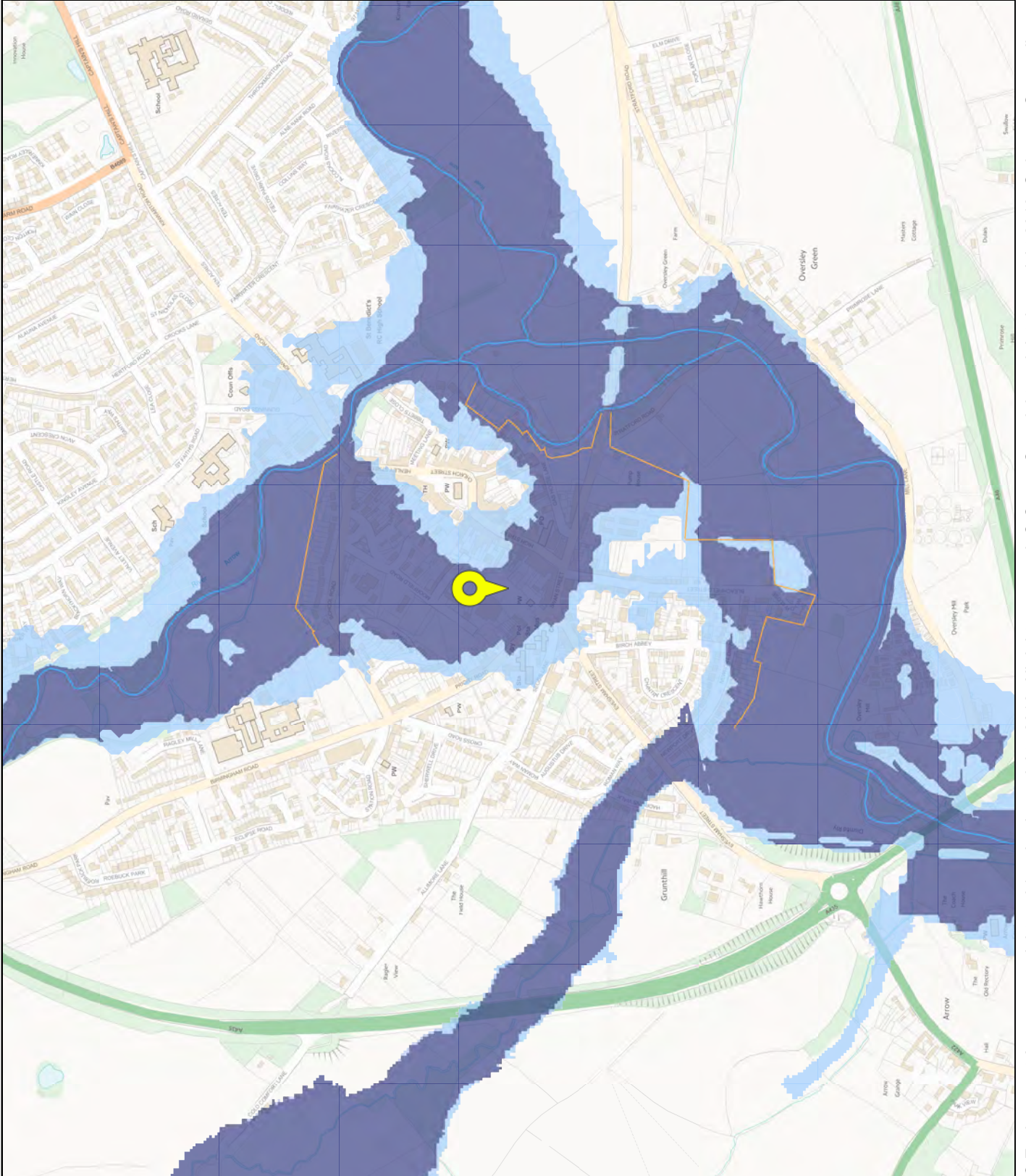
Your reference
Aicester

Location (easting/northing)
408873/257378

Scale
1:10000

Created
11 Mar 2019 1:41

-  Selected point
-  Flood zone 3
-  Flood zone 3: areas benefiting from flood defences
-  Flood zone 2
-  Flood zone 1
-  Flood defence
-  Main river
-  Flood storage area



<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promoting an active and healthy community 	<p>Policy CLW3 Policy CLW4</p>	<p>Support for proposals creating or enhancing facilities enhancing peoples’ mental and physical health. This includes provision of allotments.</p>
<p>Economy</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New and enhanced education facilities • Promoting tourism • Promoting business 	<p>Policy EC6 Policy EC7</p> <p>Policy EC8 Project 1 Project 3</p> <p>Policy EC5</p>	<p>Investment in education and learning facilities for people of all ages to meet skill shortages of local employers and residents learning needs.</p> <p>A policy and two projects contribute to promoting tourism – these include improving attractions and accommodation, cycleways and footpaths, signage and parking.</p> <p>Support for commercial development Promoting a “campus – style” science park with research businesses and an Innovation centre.</p>
<p>Natural Environment</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Protecting our natural environment • Improving and maintain flood resilience 	<p>Policy NE1 Policy NE2 Policy NE3</p> <p>Policy NE5</p>	<p>A number of policies relate to protecting and enhancing our green spaces, rivers and biodiversity which are so important to Alcester’s rural environment.</p> <p>The Town Council will work with and liaise with appropriate authorities to mitigate and prevent increased flood risk to all properties within the NP area.</p>
<p>Housing and the Built Environment</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Housing Needs Surveys 	<p>Policy HBE1 Policy HBE2 Policy HBE3 Policy HBE4</p>	<p>The mix and type of housing and its affordability must be based on the most up-to-date housing evidence.</p>

Alcester Neighbourhood Plan Glossary

A

Affordable Housing	Housing for sale rent for those whose needs are not met by the market (including housing that provides a subsidised route to home ownership) and which complies with one or more of the following definitions in accordance with Annex 2: Glossary of the NPPF 2024: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Social rent • Affordable housing for rent • Discounted market sales housing • Other affordable routes to home ownership
--------------------	---

ATC	Alcester Town Council
-----	-----------------------

B

Brownfield Land	Land which is or was occupied by a permanent structure, including the curtilage of the developed land, and including any associated fixed surface infrastructure. It excludes: land that is or has been occupied by agricultural or forestry buildings; land that has been developed for minerals extraction or waste disposal by landfill purposes where provision for restoration has been made through development control procedures; land in built-up areas such as private residential gardens, parks, recreation grounds and allotments; and land that was previously-developed but where the remains of the permanent structure or fixed surface structure have blended into the landscape in the process of time (also known as Previously Developed Land)
-----------------	---

BS	British Standard
----	------------------

C

CA	Conservation Area
----	-------------------

CIL	Community Infrastructure Levy
-----	-------------------------------

CS	Core Strategy produced by Stratford-on-Avon District Council
----	--

--	--

F

Fields in Trust	Fields in Trust, is a British charity which protects parks and green spaces and promotes the cause of accessible spaces for play, sports and recreation in British cities and towns
-----------------	---

G

Greenfield Land	Land that has not been previously developed including land in agricultural use, private residential gardens and parks, playing fields and allotments
-----------------	--

Green Belt	A specifically defined area within which most forms of development are strictly controlled
------------	--

H	Health and Wellbeing Town	At its Full Council meeting on 26 May 2015 Alcester Town Council declared itself a "Health and Wellbeing Town" as part of an initiative supported by Warwickshire County Council and Warwickshire Public Health
L	Low cost business space	Generally of a lower specification than prime business space and commands rents at or below the market average
N	NDP	Neighbourhood Development Plan
	NPPF	National Planning Policy Framework - national guidance published by the UK Government in December 2024 which sets out the key issues to be considered in relation to planning policy and development management
S	SDC	Stratford-on-Avon District Council
	Special Landscape Area	A designation covering landscape in the District which is judged to be of high quality at the local level and requires protection from inappropriate forms of development and activity.
	SPD	Supplementary Planning Document (to the Core Strategy)
W	WCC	Warwickshire County Council
	WRCC	Warwickshire Rural Community Council - a registered charity which conducts independent Housing Needs Surveys

Readers of this Neighbourhood Plan are also referred to the Glossary of Technical Terms at the end of the SDC Core Strategy <https://www.stratford.gov.uk/doc/173518/name/SDC%20CORE%20STRATEGY%202011%202031%20July%202016.pdf>

11. References

1. National Planning Policy Framework – December 2024
https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/67aafe8f3b41f783cca46251/NPPF_December_2024.pdf
2. Stratford-on-Avon District Core Strategy 2011-2013 - July 2016
<https://www.stratford.gov.uk/templates/server/documentrelay.cfm?doc=173518&name=SDC%20CORE%20STRATEGY%202011%202031%20July%202016.pdf>
3. Stratford on Avon District Council Open Space, Sport and Recreation Assessment – September 2014
<https://www.stratford.gov.uk/doc/205852/name/ED4121%20Open%20Space%20Sport%20and%20Recreation%20Assessment%20Update%20Arup%20September%202014%20.pdf>
4. Alcester Conservation Character Appraisal – September 2008
<https://www.stratford.gov.uk/doc/206112/name/Alcester>
<https://www.stratford.gov.uk/doc/206113/name/Alcester%20Conservation%20Area%20Character%20Appraisal%20Pages%2038%20135%20.pdf>
5. Alcester Conservation Area broadsheet
<https://www.stratford.gov.uk/doc/206114/name/Alcester%20Conservation%20Report.pdf>
6. Historic England National Heritage List for England
<https://historicengland.org.uk/listing/the-list>
7. Alcester Landscape Sensitivity Study – 2011
<https://www.stratford.gov.uk/doc/205826/name/B2%20Alcester%20Landscape%20Sensitivity%20Study.pdf>
8. Green Infrastructure Study for the Stratford-on-Avon District - August 2011
<https://www.stratford.gov.uk/doc/205822/name/ED4132%20District%20Green%20Infrastructure%20Study%20August%202011.pdf>
9. Stratford on Avon District Ecological and Geological Assessment- 2010
<https://www.stratford.gov.uk/doc/205850/name/ED4102%20Ecological%20and%20Geological%20Assessment%20of%20Main%20Settlements%202009%2010.pdf>
10. Ecological Report for Alcester Town Council – Habitat Biodiversity Partnership for Warwickshire, Coventry and Solihull – 2018
<https://www.alcester-tc.gov.uk/wp-content/uploads/2018/10/Alcester-Ecological-Report-Aug-2018.pdf>
11. Alcester Market Town Destination Benchmarking Survey 2017
<https://www.stratford.gov.uk/doc/206718/name/Alcester%20Destination%20Benchmarking%20Final%20Report%202017.pdf/>
12. Census 2011
<https://www.ons.gov.uk/census/2011census>
13. WRCC Housing Needs Survey for Alcester Town Council – 2017
<https://www.stratford.gov.uk/doc/175424/name/Alcester%20HNS%20report%20Sept2017.pdf/>
14. NHBC New Homes Statistics Review 2024
<https://www.nhbc.co.uk/kontentdocuments/809c2405-ddd0-4a43-852a-af21ac2a6c73/New%20Home%20Statistics%20annual%20report-2024.pdf>
15. Stratford on Avon District Design Guide - April 2001
<https://www.stratford.gov.uk/doc/175264/name/District%20Design%20Guide.pdf>
16. Manual for Streets 2 (MfS2) – 2010
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/manual-for-streets-2>
17. Making Space for Cycling – 2014
<https://www.makingspaceforcycling.org/>

18. Can You Dig It? Hope, N & Ellis, V (2009)
<http://www.nlgn.org.uk/public/wp-content/uploads/can-you-dig-it.pdf>
19. WCC Neighbourhood Development Planning for Health
<https://apps.warwickshire.gov.uk/api/documents/WCCC-630-656>
20. Fields in Trust – Revaluing Parks and Green Spaces
<http://www.fieldsintrust.org/Upload/file/research/Revaluing-Parks-and-Green-Spaces-Report.pdf>
21. Making Spaces for Nature – 2010
<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/making-space-for-nature-a-review-of-englands-wildlife-sites-published-today>
22. Stratford on Avon Social Inclusion Statement – May 2015
<https://democracy.stratford.gov.uk/documents/s29590/InclusionPartnershipStatement%20Final.pdf>
23. Stratford-on-Avon District Council - Retail Study June 2008
<https://www.stratford.gov.uk/doc/205890/name/ED454%20Convenience%20Goods%20Retail%20Study%20June%202008.pdf>
24. Measuring Social Inclusion in Stratford on Avon District - August 2013 Warwickshire Observatory
<https://democracy.stratford.gov.uk/documents/s29378/Measuring%20Social%20Exclusion%20in%20Stratford-on-Avon%20District%20appendix%20A.pdf>
25. Building for a Healthy Life
<https://www.designforhomes.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/11/BFL-2020-Brochure.pdf>
26. Retail and Town Centre Uses Study 2022
<https://www.southwarwickshire.org.uk/doc/212531/name/Town%20Centres%20Study%20VOLUME%201%20FINAL.pdf>
27. WRCC Housing Needs Survey for Alcester Town Council – 2023
<https://www.stratford.gov.uk/doc/212123/name/Alcester%20HNS%20report%20April2023.pdf>
28. Census 2021
<https://www.ons.gov.uk/census>
29. Coventry & Warwickshire Housing and Economic Development Needs Assessment - November 2022
<https://www.southwarwickshire.org.uk/doc/211518/name/CW%20HEDNA%20Final%20Report%20171122%20Clean%20.pdf>
30. Healthy Ageing JSNA for Warwickshire 2024
<https://www.warwickshire.gov.uk/directory-record/7896/healthy-ageing-jsna-2024>
31. Adults with a Learning Disability JSNA for Warwickshire 2025
<https://www.warwickshire.gov.uk/directory-record/8076/adults-with-a-learning-disability-jsna-2025->



Acknowledgement:

The photograph on the front cover of this document is reproduced with kind permission of Will Tudor.



Alcester Town Council
Globe House
Priory Road
Alcester
B49 5DZ

01789 766084
clerk@alcester-tc.gov.uk