

Appendix 1

Albrighton Assessment

Part 1: Settlement Context

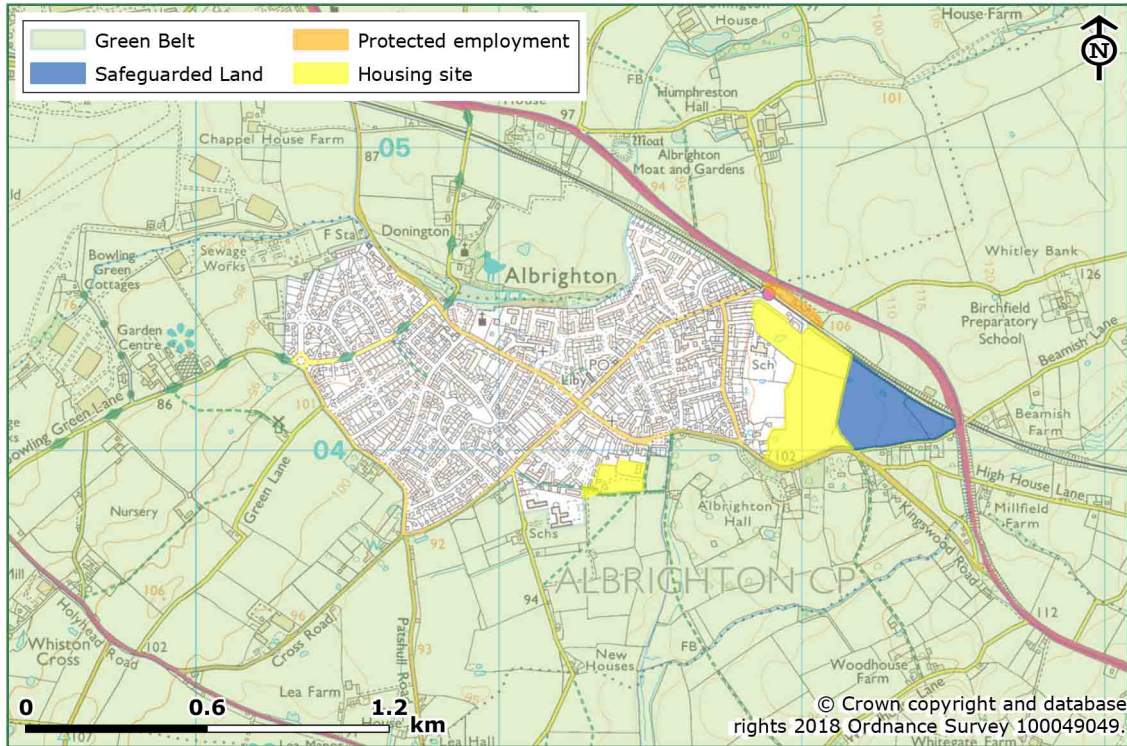


Figure A1.1: Albrighton Settlement Context

The village of Albrighton is located in the northeast of the Shropshire Green Belt. The population of Albrighton is estimated to be around 4,870 persons living in approximately 2,205 dwellings¹. The historical growth of the village was limited until the 1960s when the A41 Albrighton bypass moved traffic away from the village roads and the north of the village significantly expanded through major housing development². The existing built area of the village now has limited remaining infill opportunities.

There is both geographical proximity and functional relationship between Albrighton and RAF Cosford which lies within the Green Belt just to the north west of the village Albrighton. It is notable that a number of the identified parcels in Albrighton directly adjoin those parcels assessed to the east and south of Cosford.

Shropshire Council has identified Albrighton as a proposed 'Key Centre' settlement within its Preferred Scale and Distribution of Development consultation document (2017), (informed by its Hierarchy of Settlements Assessment³), as it offers a range of services and facilities and therefore presents opportunities to deliver growth at a moderate scale⁴.

¹ Shropshire Council (2017), Hierarchy of Settlements.

² Albrighton, Donington with Boscobel and Boningale Parish Councils (2013) Albrighton Neighbourhood Plan 'Light'.

³ Shropshire Council (2017), Hierarchy of Settlements.

⁴ Shropshire Council (2017), Preferred Scale and Distribution of Development consultation document.

Shropshire Council's Preferred Scale and Distribution of Development consultation document (2017)⁵, proposes an 'urban focus' for development, with around 18% of the total growth in Shropshire in the period to 2036 to occur in the 'Key Centres' such as Albrighton. The Preferred Scale and Distribution of Development consultation document (2017) goes on to propose that in Albrighton, 500 homes and 5ha of employment land should be delivered in the period up to 2036, including at sites already allocated to the east and south of the existing built area of the village. This means there is a need to identify sites for around a further 250 dwellings and 5ha of employment land.

The land allocated to the east of Albrighton was previously removed from the Green Belt and safeguarded for future development. Further land to the east of Albrighton remains safeguarded for future development, beyond 2026. The Inspectors Report on the Examination into the SAMDev Plan (2015)⁶ recommended that the openness of the remaining safeguarded land be preserved from Green Belt compatible uses in order to avoid prejudicing the capacity of Albrighton to meet its future needs. The need for further safeguarded land around Albrighton to allow for the future sustainable growth of the village will need to be considered as part of Local Plan Review, particularly if some or all of the remaining safeguarded land is allocated for development within the review.

Albrighton benefits from an existing Neighbourhood Plan 'Light' (adopted June 2013), this is a Community Led Plan which was endorsed and adopted for development management purposes by resolution of Shropshire Council on 26 September 2013. The document informed and provides policies that supplement those in the adopted Local Plan. Given the ongoing Local Plan Review, there may be a need to consider a similar update of the Neighbourhood Plan 'Light'.

⁵ Shropshire Council (2017), Preferred Scale and Distribution of Development consultation document

⁶ The Planning Inspectorate (2014), Shropshire Council Site Allocations and Management of Development Local Plan, Inspector's Report

Part 2: Parcels - Assessment of Harm on the Green Belt

The map and aerial show the location and extent of all the parcels around Albrighton that were considered in the Stage 1 Green Belt Assessment (2017) (outlined purple and blue on Figures A1.2 and A1.3). The parcels outlined in purple are those around Albrighton that are being considered in further detail as part of the assessment of harm. This assesses the harm to the Green Belt as a consequence of releasing land for development.

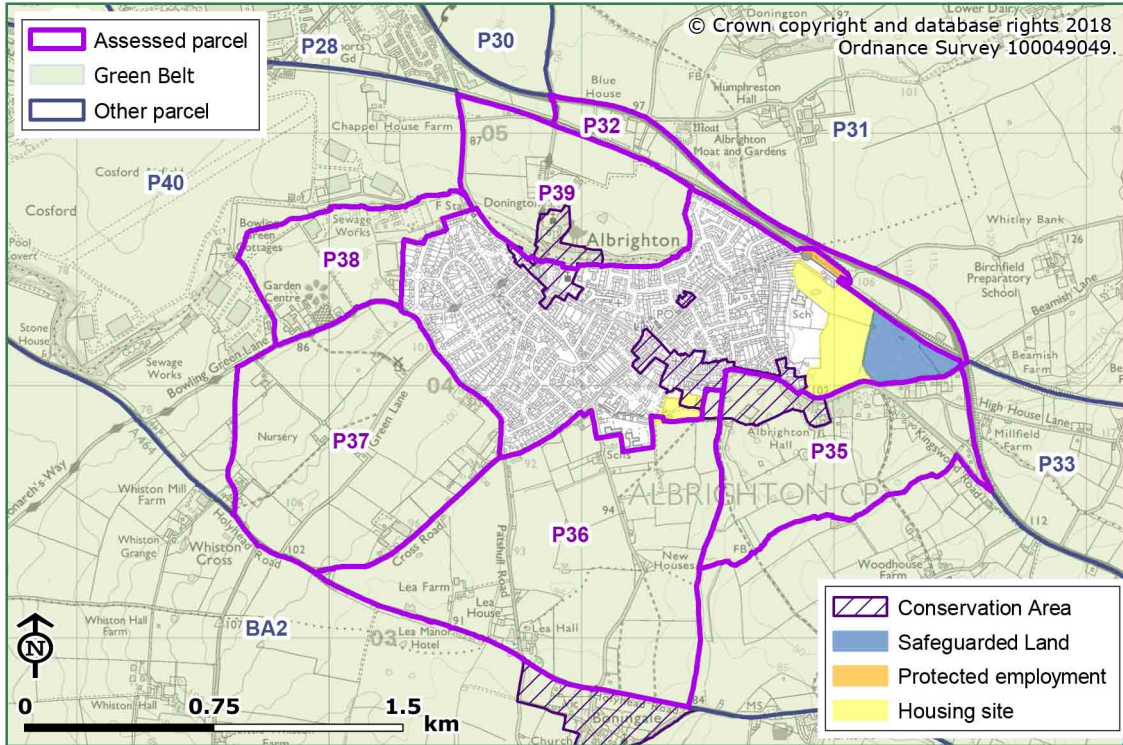


Figure A1.2: Green Belt Parcels Surrounding Albrighton

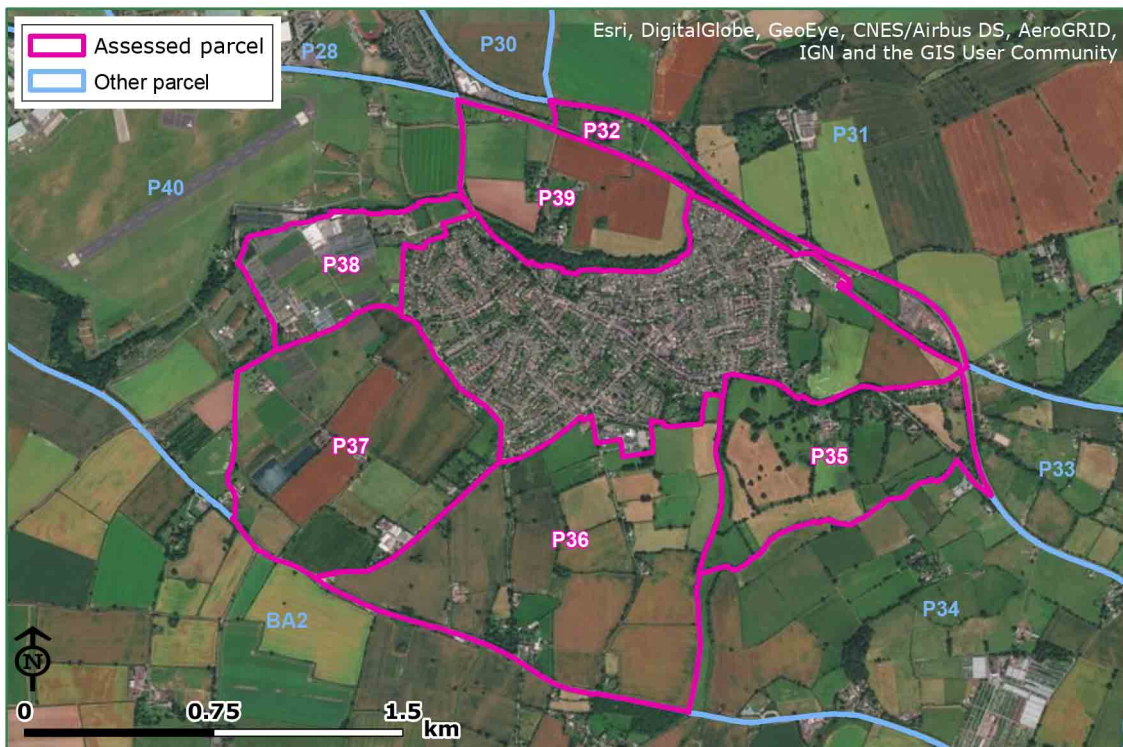


Figure A1.3: Aerial View of Green Belt Parcels Surrounding Albrighton

Parcel P32

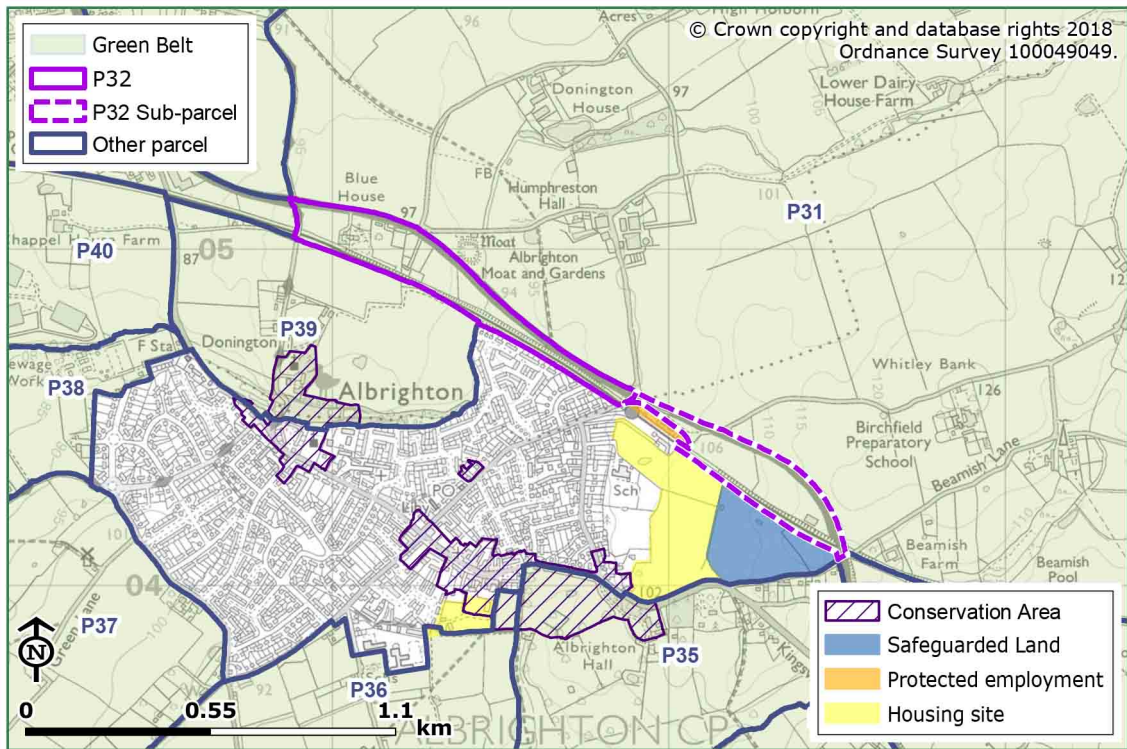


Figure A1.4: Parcel P32



Figure A1.5: Horse paddock adjacent to a light industrial complex located within Sub-parcel P32

Relationship to settlement/countryside

Parcel P32 forms a narrow strip of land, tightly bound to the north by the A41 (Albrighton Bypass) and to the south by a railway line. These boundaries separate the parcel from the surrounding land including open agricultural land to the north of the A41. This provides a degree of disconnect between the parcel and the wider countryside. Similarly, P32 is separated from the settlement edge of Albrighton to the south by the railway line and associated earth embankments. Development within Parcel P32 includes a large area of hardstanding and associated buildings to the east of the parcel, and a small number of large detached dwellings. The parcel also lies adjacent to a light industrial complex and office building. The separation provided by the road and urbanising influence of development mean that the eastern extent of the parcel is more closely associated with the settlement edge of Albrighton, whereas the western extent has a slightly stronger relationship with the countryside to the north.

The conclusions on the contribution of parcel P32 to the Green Belt purposes and the harm of releasing it from the Green Belt are set out in the descriptions below. This includes the identification of a sub-parcel within Parcel P32 (delineated on Figure A1.4 in a purple hatch line) which the assessment concludes would have a lower level of harm associated with its release.

Purpose 1 - To check the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas

No Contribution

This parcel does not lie adjacent to a large built up area and therefore makes no contribution to Purpose 1.

Purpose 2 - To prevent neighbouring towns merging into one another

Weak

Parcel P32 is located adjacent to the northern settlement boundary of Albrighton. The south eastern portion of the parcel is located between Albrighton and Codsall, a settlement approximately 3.1km east of the parcel which is inset in the Green Belt within South Staffordshire. It also lies between Albrighton and the West Midlands conurbation. The parcel plays a very limited role in preventing the merging or erosion of the visual or physical gap between settlements. Loss of openness would not be perceived as reducing the gap between settlements.

Purpose 3 - To assist in the safeguarding of the countryside from encroachment

Weak

There is a strong sense of encroachment within Parcel P32 as a result of the narrow nature of the parcel, being tightly bound on either side by the A41 and the railway. Additionally, the majority of the southern boundary of this parcel is also adjacent to the settlement of Albrighton which is either composed of residential development, land safeguarded for settlement expansion, land designated for housing, or protected for employment according to the Shropshire Council Local Plan. Development within Parcel P32 includes a large area of hardstanding and associated buildings to the east of the parcel, residential properties and farm buildings. The parcel does not display the characteristics of open countryside. The Green Belt plays a weak role in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment.

Purpose 4 - To preserve the setting and special character of historic towns

Moderate

Digital analysis, based on bare earth height data, indicates that this parcel is theoretically visible from the historic settlement area located within Albrighton/Donington. In practice, there is some intervisibility between this parcel and the Donington Conservation Area, although the railway line forms a substantial visual barrier. The openness of the flat land within this parcel is considered to make a moderate contribution to the immediate setting of this historic settlement.

Purpose 5 - To assist in urban regeneration by encouraging the recycling of derelict and other urban land

All parcels make an equally significant contribution to this purpose.

Alternative Green Belt Boundaries

The A41 road along the northern edge of the parcel would form an alternative consistent Green Belt boundary that is readily recognisable. To the east of the parcel this would be as strong as the existing Green Belt boundary along the settlement edge of Albrighton which is defined by the railway line. To the west, release of the parcel would have a readily recognisable boundary in the form of the A41 and railway line but would lead to a more convoluted boundary (due to the presence of Green Belt in P39 to the south) and would be less aligned to the existing settlement edge.

Harm to Green Belt Resulting from Release

This parcel contains existing development and lies adjacent to a light industrial complex. The eastern extent of the parcel has a number of urbanising developments within it and does not have a strong connection to the wider countryside to the north due to the separating feature of the A41. The release of the western extent of the parcel from the Green Belt would lead to a greater sense of encroachment on neighbouring parcel P39 as this land would be contained on three sides by development which would weaken the role it plays as Green Belt due to its containment. Releasing Parcel P32 from the Green Belt would lead to a **Moderate** level of harm to the Green Belt in this local area.

A sub-parcel has been identified within Parcel P32 that would lead to a lower level of overall harm to the Green Belt if it was to be released. Sub-parcel P32 comprises the eastern extent of the parcel which includes an area of hardstanding and horse paddocks lying adjacent to a light industrial complex. Releasing this sub-parcel from the Green Belt would not lead to further containment of the neighbouring parcel P39 and would not weaken the role this parcel is playing as Green Belt. Its release would also not lead to any significant degree of encroachment on neighbouring areas of land; the area to the south is not designated as Green Belt. Releasing Sub-parcel P32 from the Green Belt would lead to a **Low-Moderate** level of harm to the Green Belt in this local area.

Parcel P35

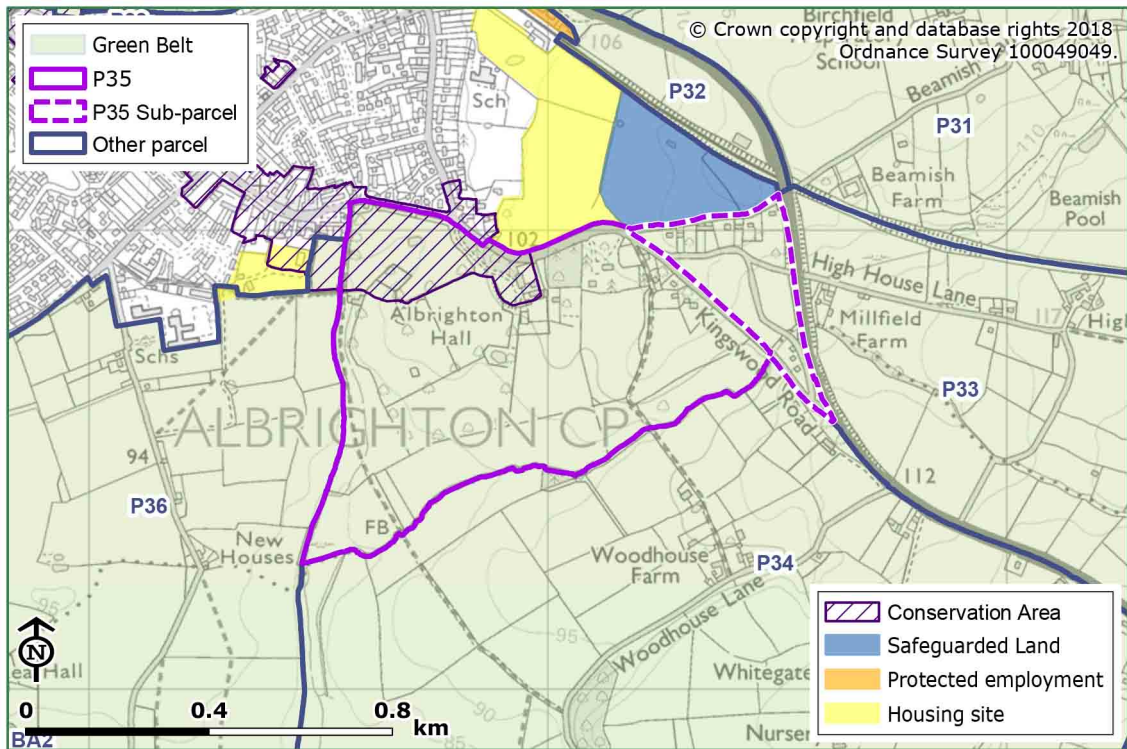


Figure A1.6: Parcel P35



Figure A1.7: Small field within Sub-parcel P35 enclosed by mature trees and hedgerows along Kingswood Road and a tree belt along the A41.

Relationship to settlement/countryside

Parcel P35 is separated from the adjacent agricultural land to the south by field hedgerows with trees. The parcel forms part of a large area of wider countryside that stretches south from the settlement edge of Albrighton. The eastern extent of the parcel is separated from the wider countryside to the east by the A41 and to the south and west by Kingswood road. Both roads are lined with mature trees and hedgerows which provide a degree of separation between the eastern extent of the parcel and the wider countryside.

The conclusions on the contribution of parcel P35 to the Green Belt purposes and the harm of releasing it from the Green Belt are set out in the descriptions below. This includes the identification of a sub-parcel within Parcel P35 (delineated on Figure A1.6 in a purple hatch line) which the assessment concludes would have a lower level of harm associated with its release.

Purpose 1 - To check the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas

No Contribution

This parcel does not lie adjacent to a large built up area and therefore makes no contribution to Purpose 1.

Purpose 2 - To prevent neighbouring towns merging into one another

Weak

This parcel is located adjacent to the eastern settlement boundary of Albrighton. The parcel is located between Albrighton and Codsall, a settlement approximately 3km east of the parcel which is inset in the Green Belt within South Staffordshire. It also lies between Albrighton and the West Midlands conurbation. The parcel does not extend further than the easternmost section of Albrighton and therefore the parcel plays a very limited role in preventing the merging or erosion of the visual or physical gap between settlements. Loss of openness would not be perceived as reducing the gap between settlements.

Purpose 3 - To assist in the safeguarding of the countryside from encroachment

Moderate

There is some sense of encroachment within the parcel as a result of clusters of residential properties in the northeast of the parcel and due to the settlement of Albrighton along the northern edge of the parcel. This consists of residential development or land safeguarded for settlement expansion according to the Shropshire Local Plan. The land parcel does however contain the characteristics of countryside, has limited urbanising development, and is relatively open. The Green Belt plays a moderate role in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment.

Purpose 4 - To preserve the setting and special character of historic towns

Strong

Digital analysis, based on bare earth height data, indicates that this parcel is theoretically visible from the historic settlement area located within Albrighton/Donington. In practice, the parcel is located partially within the Albrighton Conservation Area with the openness of the land playing a major role in its setting. The openness of the land within the parcel is considered to contribute positively to the historic significance of Albrighton and to its special character.

Purpose 5 - To assist in urban regeneration by encouraging the recycling of derelict and other urban land

All parcels make an equally significant contribution to this purpose.

Alternative Green Belt Boundaries

The field boundary hedgerows with trees that form the majority of the parcel's boundaries would potentially constitute a weaker and less readily recognisable Green Belt boundary than the existing settlement edge defined by Kingswood Road and Beamish Lane.

However, the A41 along the eastern boundary and Kingswood Road running through parcel P35 and defining the identified sub parcel would represent a readily recognisable alternative Green Belt boundary if the sub-parcel was released for development.

Harm to Green Belt Resulting from Release

This parcel contains a limited amount of urban development and forms part of the wider open countryside. Releasing this parcel from the Green Belt would constitute significant encroachment on the countryside and weaken the role neighbouring areas of land, particularly to the south and west are playing as Green Belt with regard to Purpose 3. The eastern side of P36 would be contained by development on two sides. The openness of the land within the parcel plays an important role in preserving the setting of the historical settlement area of Albrighton. Releasing Parcel P35 would significantly compromise the role this Green Belt land is playing in regard to Purpose 4. It is considered that releasing parcel P35 from the Green Belt would lead to a **High** level of harm to the Green Belt within this local area.

A sub-parcel has been identified within Parcel P35 that would lead to a lower level of overall harm to the Green Belt if it was to be released. Sub-parcel P35 comprises the eastern extent of the parcel and comprises two small fields and residential gardens enclosed by the A41, Kingswood Road and a row of residential properties along Beamish Lane. To the north west of the parcel lies an area of open agricultural land that is not in the Green Belt and has been safeguarded for future development according to the adopted Shropshire Local Plan. Kingswood Road is lined with hedgerows and mature trees and the A41 is lined with a belt of mature trees, these provide a good degree of separation of the sub-parcel from neighbouring areas of open countryside to the east and south, as well as the Albrighton Conservation Areas to the west. Releasing this parcel from the Green Belt would be unlikely to cause significant encroachment on the countryside, or significantly weaken the role neighbouring areas of Green Belt are playing with regard to Purpose 3 or Purpose 4. Releasing Sub-parcel P35 from the Green Belt would lead to a **Moderate** level of harm to the Green Belt in this local area.

Parcel P36

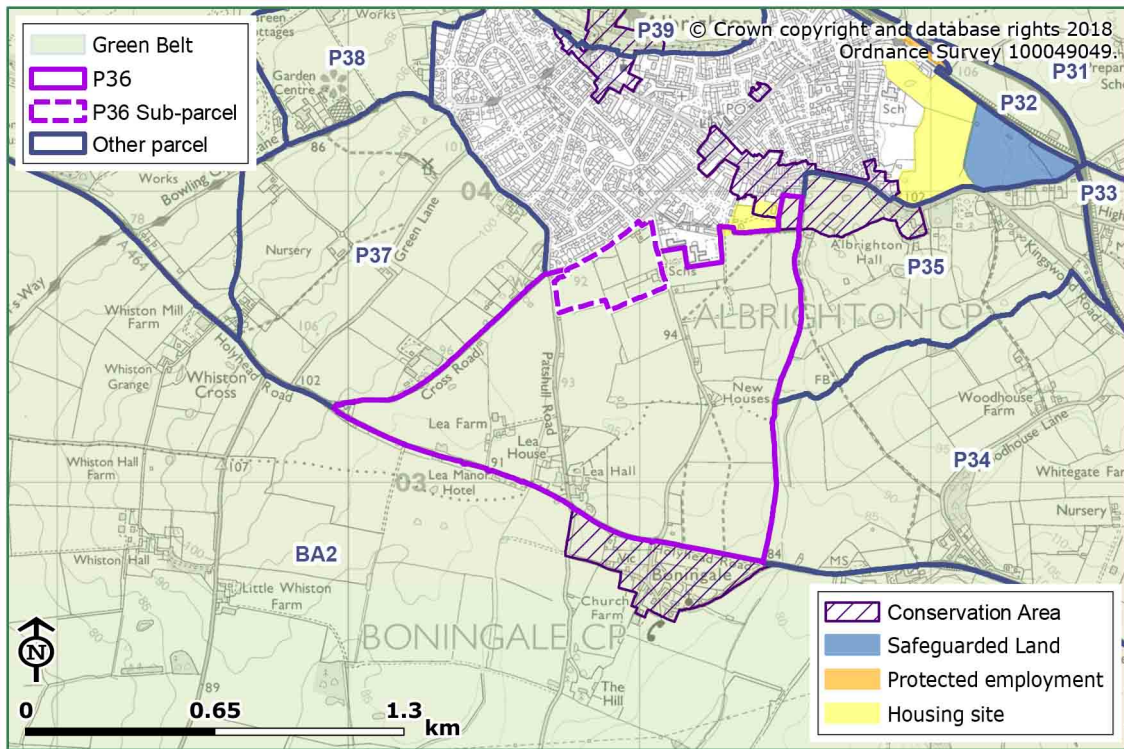


Figure A1.8: Parcel P36



Figure A1.9: Small field the along the southern edge of Albrighton within Sub-parcel P36 and to the immediate west of Albrighton Primary School.

Relationship to settlement/countryside

Parcel P36 is separated from the wider countryside to the south by the A464 and the small hamlet of Boningale. The parcel forms part of a wide area of open countryside that stretches south from the settlement edge of Albrighton. The fields in closest proximity to the settlement edge and partly contained by the school to the east have a closer relationship to the settlement than the more open fields beyond to the south.

The conclusions about the performance of Parcel P36 are set out in the descriptions below. This includes the identification of a sub-parcel within Parcel P36 (delineated on Figure A1.8 in a purple hatch line) which the assessment concludes would have a lower level of harm associated with its release.

Purpose 1 - To check the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas

No contribution

This parcel does not lie adjacent to a large built up area and therefore makes no contribution to Purpose 1.

Purpose 2 - To prevent neighbouring towns merging into one another

Weak

This parcel is located adjacent to the settlement of Albrighton and lies between the settlements of Telford and Wolverhampton. Due to the relative size of the parcel and the distance between the settlements, the parcel plays a very limited role in preventing the merging or erosion of the visual or physical gap between settlements. Loss of openness would not be perceived as reducing the gap between settlements.

Purpose 3 - To assist in the safeguarding of the countryside from encroachment

Moderate

Built development within the parcel includes scattered residential properties and farm buildings. There is some sense of encroachment within the parcel to the north as a result of the settlement edge of Albrighton. The parcel itself however contains the characteristics of countryside, has limited urbanising development, and is relatively open.

Purpose 4 - To preserve the setting and special character of historic towns

Strong

Digital analysis, based on bare earth height data, indicates that this parcel is theoretically visible from the historic settlement areas located within Albrighton/Donington. In practice, a small portion of the north eastern corner of the parcel is located partially within the Albrighton Conservation Area, with the openness of the land within this parcel playing a major role in its setting. Therefore much of the parcel is considered to contribute positively to the historic significance of Albrighton and its special character. It should be noted that the land located along the settlement edge in the north-west of this parcel has no intervisibility with the Albrighton Conservation Area or any other historic settlement areas assessed under Purpose 4. It therefore does not play a key role in the immediate setting of these historic settlements and performs a weaker role under Purpose 4.

Purpose 5 - To assist in urban regeneration by encouraging the recycling of derelict and other urban land

All parcels make an equally significant contribution to this purpose.

Alternative Green Belt Boundaries

The existing Green Belt boundary to the south of Albrighton is formed by Cross Road and field boundaries with some sections such as through the school having no readily recognisable features defining the boundary on the ground. The A464 along the southern edge of the parcel would form a readily recognisable Green Belt boundary. However, the boundaries to the east would comprise of field edges and hedgerows which do not constitute strong boundaries.

Harm to Green Belt Resulting from Release

This parcel contains a limited amount of built development and is strongly associated with the wider area of open countryside to the south of Albrighton. Releasing this parcel from the Green Belt would lead to a significant level of encroachment on the countryside and a weakening of the neighbouring areas of Green Belt land. The openness of the land within the east of the parcel plays an important role in preserving the setting of the historical settlement area within Albrighton. Releasing Parcel P36 would compromise the role this Green Belt land is playing with regard to Purpose 4. It is considered that the release of this parcel as a whole from the Green Belt would lead to a **High** level of harm to the Green Belt in this local area.

A sub-parcel has been identified within Parcel P36 that would lead to a lower level of overall harm to the Green Belt if it was to be released. Sub-parcel P36 comprises a series of small fields in the north-western extent of the parcel, adjacent to the settlement edge of Albrighton. The sub-parcel is contained on two sides by the settlement edge. The sub-parcel is more closely associated with the settlement edge than land within the wider countryside to the south. Releasing this parcel from the Green Belt would be unlikely to significantly weaken the role neighbouring areas of land are playing as Green Belt with regard to Purpose 3. The Sub-parcel also does not play a significant role in contributing to the setting of the historic settlement. It is considered that the release of this sub-parcel from the Green Belt would lead to a **Moderate** level of harm to the Green Belt within this area.

Parcel P37

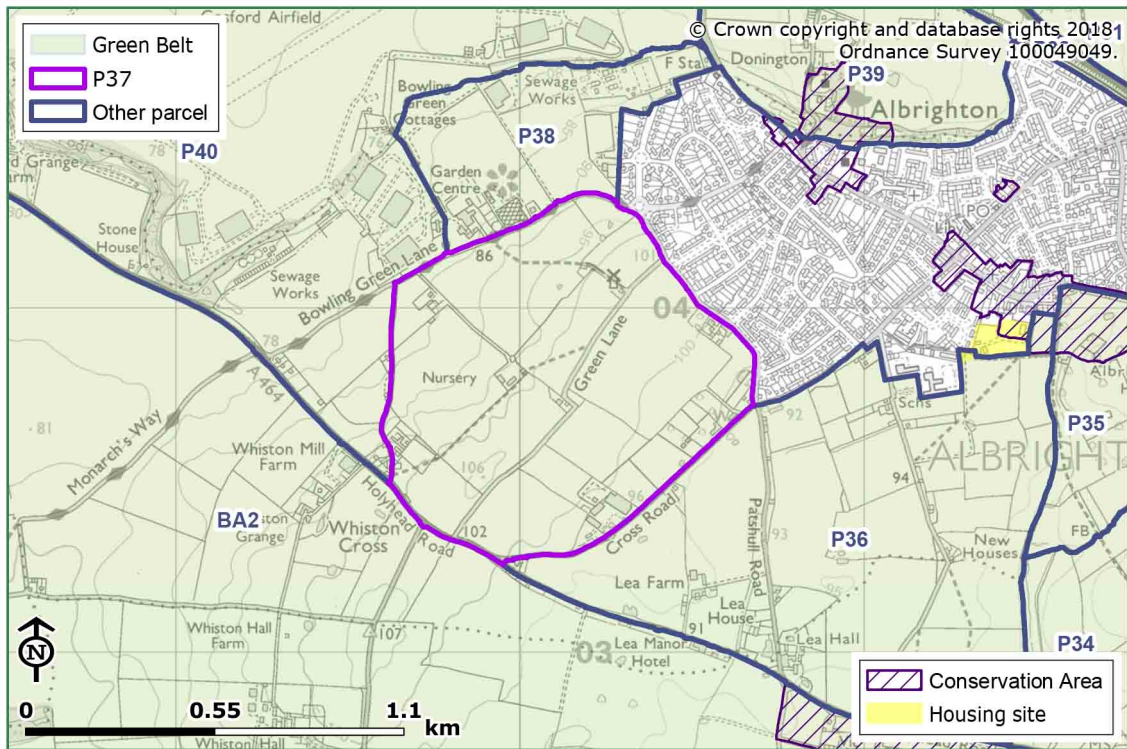


Figure A1.10: Parcel P37



Figure A1.11: Rising arable farmland and the Grade II listed windmill along Green Lane within Parcel P37.

Relationship to settlement/countryside

Parcel P37 is separated from the wider countryside to the south by the A464. The parcel forms part of a wide area of open countryside that stretches south from the settlement edge of Albrighton. The parcel is separated from the wider countryside to the north west by RAF Cosford.

The conclusions about the performance of Parcel P37 are set out in the descriptions below. No sub-parcels were identified that would have a lower level of harm.

Purpose 1 - To check the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas

No contribution

This parcel does not lie adjacent to a large built up area and therefore makes no contribution to Purpose 1.

Purpose 2 - To prevent neighbouring towns merging into one another

Weak

This parcel is located adjacent to the settlement of Albrighton. The parcel is located between the settlements of Albrighton and Shifnal, approximately 2.8km to the northwest. There is limited physical or visual relationship between the settlements, which are over 3km apart, and RAF Cosford is located between the settlements. The parcel plays a very limited role in preventing the merging or erosion of the visual or physical gap between settlements. Loss of openness would not be perceived as reducing the gap between settlements.

Purpose 3 - To assist in the safeguarding of the countryside from encroachment

Moderate

There is some sense of encroachment within the parcel as a result of the settlement of Albrighton bordering the parcel to the northeast and the A464 bordering the parcel to the southwest. In addition to this, floodlit tennis courts at Albrighton Cricket Club are located adjacent to the parcel along its western edge, as well as the hamlet of Whiston Cross. A cluster of houses are also located in the east of the parcel and Enterprise Business Park is located in the southeast. However the urbanising influences are limited and the majority of the parcel contains the characteristics of the countryside, has limited urbanising development, and is open. The Green Belt plays a moderate role in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment.

Purpose 4 - To preserve the setting and special character of historic towns

Moderate

Digital analysis, based on bare earth height data, indicates that this parcel is theoretically visible from the historic settlement areas within Albrighton/Donington. In practice, there is very little intervisibility between this parcel and these settlement areas. However, due to its close proximity to both the Donington and Albrighton Conservation Areas, the openness of the land plays a role in providing a sense of these historic settlements being contained by a rural landscape.

Purpose 5 - To assist in urban regeneration by encouraging the recycling of derelict and other urban land

All parcels make an equally significant contribution to this purpose.

Alternative Green Belt Boundaries

The existing Green Belt boundary is formed by Elm Road to the west of the settlement of Albrighton. The A464 along the southern edge, Cross Road along the eastern edge, Bowling Green Lane to the north and Kennel Lane to the east of the parcel would form alternative Green Belt boundaries which would be readily recognisable and of similar strength to the existing Green Belt boundary. There are no existing alternative boundaries within the parcel that would form any stronger boundaries.

Harm to Green Belt Resulting from Release

This parcel contains a limited amount of built development and has a strong association with the wider area of open countryside to the south of Albrighton. This parcel contains a ridge of elevated farmland and its release from the Green Belt would lead to a significant level of encroachment both within the parcel itself and on the wider countryside. It would weaken the role neighbouring areas of Green Belt land are playing with regard to Purpose 3. The openness of land within the parcel also contributes to the setting of the historic areas within the settlement. It is considered that the release of this parcel from the Green Belt would lead to a **High** level of harm to the Green Belt in this local area.

Parcel P38

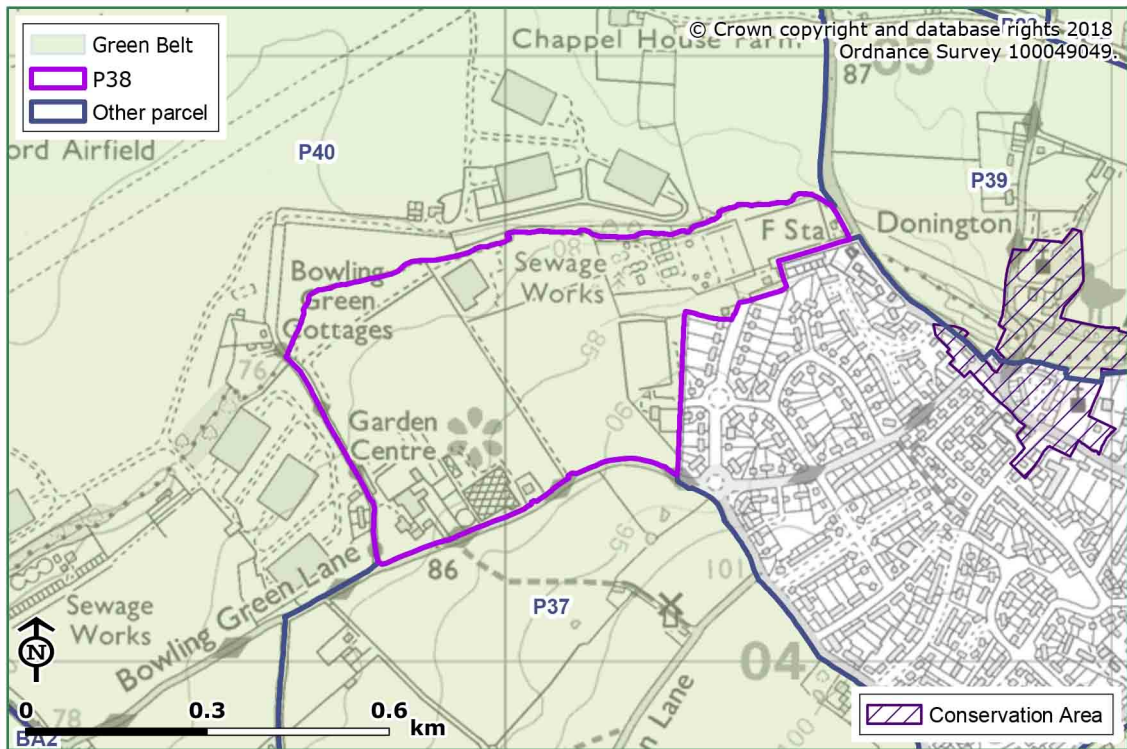


Figure A1.12: Parcel P38



Figure A1.13: Garden centre and plant nursery within parcel P38.

Relationship to settlement/countryside

Parcel P38 is separated from the wider countryside to the south of Albrighton by the elevated ridge farmland within parcel P37. This provides a strong degree of disconnect between the parcel and the wider countryside. Furthermore, the parcel contains built development and is enclosed by the settlement edge of Albrighton to the east and development within RAF Cosford to the north and west which exert an urbanising influence on its character. The parcel has a stronger association with the settlement than the wider countryside.

The conclusions about the performance of Parcel P38 are set out in the descriptions below. No sub-parcels were identified that would have a lower level of harm.

Purpose 1 - To check the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas

No contribution

This parcel does not lie adjacent to a large built up area and therefore makes no contribution to Purpose 1.

Purpose 2 - To prevent neighbouring towns merging into one another

Weak

This parcel is located adjacent to the western settlement boundary of Albrighton. The parcel is located between the settlements of Albrighton and Shifnal, approximately 5km northwest of the parcel. RAF Cosford located to the west and north of the parcel, lies between the two settlements and already leads to the perception of narrowing the gap between Shifnal and Albrighton, especially when viewed from the railway line travelling between Shifnal and Albrighton. The parcel plays a very limited role in preventing the merging or erosion of the visual or physical gap between settlements. Loss of openness would not be perceived as reducing the gap between settlements.

Purpose 3 - To assist in the safeguarding of the countryside from encroachment

Weak

There is a sense of encroachment within the parcel as a result of the settlement of Albrighton bordering the parcel to the east. Additionally, the floodlit Albrighton Bowling Club is also located in the east of the parcel, including a large area of hard standing for the car park, and a sewage works is located in the northeast of the parcel. A large plant nursery occupies the majority of the parcel with associated large areas of hardstanding, car park, and large metal buildings which give the parcel a semi-developed character. RAF Cosford borders much of the northwest and southwest of the parcel, however this part of RAF Cosford is less urbanised than the area further north, and is comprised mainly of grass covered bunkers and the runway approximately 300m northwest of the parcel border. Whilst the parcel remains relatively open it does not have strong characteristics of the countryside. The Green Belt plays a weak role in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment.

Purpose 4 - To preserve the setting and special character of historic towns

Weak

Digital analysis, based on bare earth height data, indicates that this parcel is theoretically visible from the historic settlement areas within Albrighton/Donington. In practice, there is very little intervisibility between the flat land within this parcel and these areas. The parcel contains a relatively high amount of development which weakens any rural character; therefore it does not make an important contribution to the wider rural setting of these historic areas.

Purpose 5 - To assist in urban regeneration by encouraging the recycling of derelict and other urban land

All parcels make an equally significant contribution to this purpose.

Alternative Green Belt Boundaries

The existing Green Belt boundary is formed by the gardens of residential properties along the existing urban edge of Albrighton. Bowling Green Lane along the southern edge of the parcel, Old Worcester Road to the west, Newport Road to the east and the small stream to the north would form readily recognisable alternative Green Belt boundaries which are stronger than the existing boundary.

Harm to Green Belt Resulting from Release

Parcel P38 contains built development but it is largely open in character. It is contained by development to the east, north and west and does not have a strong association with the area of wider countryside to the south of Albrighton. Releasing Parcel P38 from the Green Belt could lead to a limited level of encroachment within neighbouring parcel P37 to the south but is considered unlikely to significantly weaken the role parcel P37 is playing as Green Belt due to the existing level of development within parcel P38. It is considered that the release of this parcel from the Green Belt would lead to a **Low-Moderate** level of harm to the Green Belt in this local area.

Parcel P39

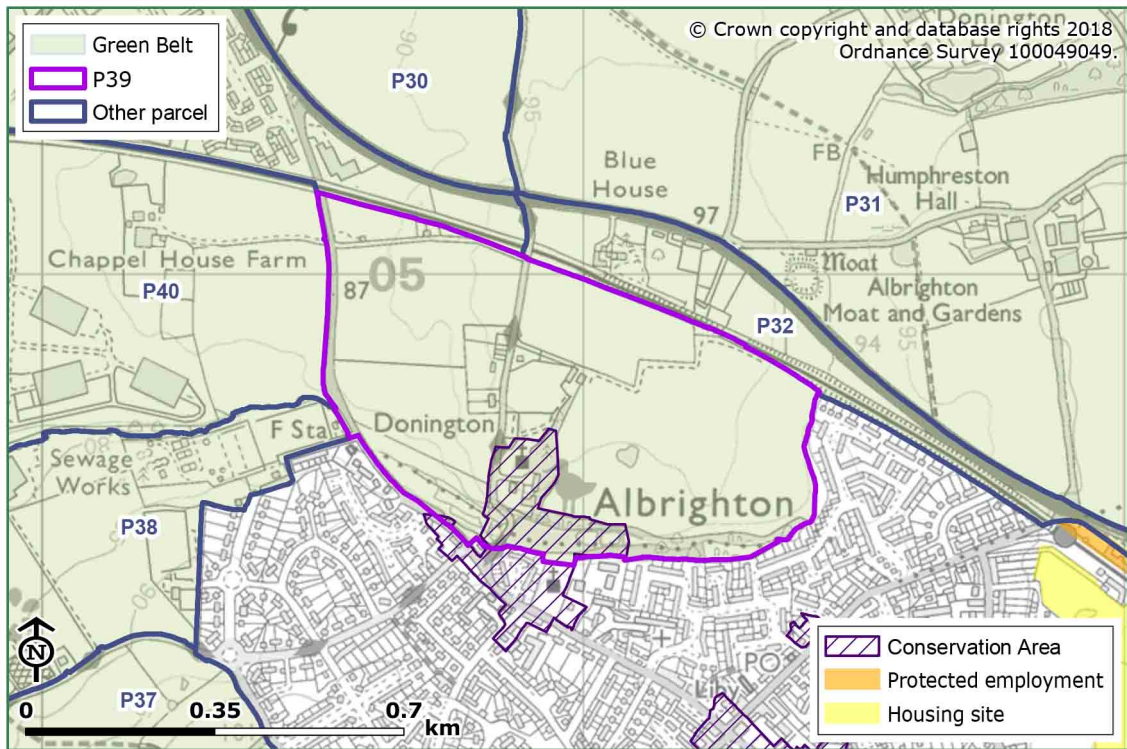


Figure A1.14: Parcel P39



Figure A1.15: Arable field on the edge of Donington and Albrighton Conservation Area within Parcel P39.

Relationship to settlement/countryside

Parcel P39 contains a series of small fields, pools, a belt of woodland and part of the Donington Conservation Area. It is separated from neighbouring areas of agricultural land to the north by a railway line and the A41. These provide a degree of disconnect between the parcel and the wider countryside. The mature tree belt along the southern boundary of the parcel provides a degree of separation between the parcel and the settlement edge of Albrighton, however the parcel is more closely associated with the settlement than the wider countryside to the north.

The conclusions about the performance of Parcel P39 are set out in the descriptions below. No sub-parcels were identified that would have a lower level of harm.

Purpose 1 - To check the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas

No contribution

This parcel does not lie adjacent to a large built up area and therefore makes no contribution to Purpose 1.

Purpose 2 - To prevent neighbouring towns merging into one another

Weak

This parcel is located adjacent to the northern settlement boundary of Albrighton. The parcel is located between the settlements of Albrighton and Shifnal, to the northwest of the parcel. There is limited physical or visual relationship between the settlements, which are over 3km apart, and RAF Cosford is located between the settlements. The parcel plays a very limited role in preventing the merging or erosion of the visual or physical gap between settlements. Loss of openness would not be perceived as reducing the gap between settlements.

Purpose 3 - To assist in the safeguarding of the countryside from encroachment

Moderate

There is some sense of encroachment within the parcel as a result of the hamlet of Donington and a care home, including a large area of hard standing for the car park. In addition, the railway track runs adjacent to the parcel to the north, the development of RAF Cosford is located to the north east of the parcel, and the settlement of Albrighton is located to the south and east of the parcel. However vegetation and the embankment along the railway track, the vegetation along the boundary of RAF Cosford, and the woodland within Donington and Albrighton local nature reserves in the south of the parcel all reduce the sense of encroachment felt within the parcel. The majority of the parcel contains the characteristics of countryside, has limited urbanising development, and is relatively open. The Green Belt plays a moderate role in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment.

Purpose 4 - To preserve the setting and special character of historic towns

Strong

Digital analysis, based on bare earth height data, indicates that this parcel is theoretically visible from the historic settlement area located within Albrighton/Donington. In practice, the parcel is located partially within the Donington Conservation Area with the rural character of the parcel playing a major role in its setting. The openness of the parcel is considered to contribute positively to the historic significance of Albrighton and to the special character and setting of the Donington Conservation Area.

Purpose 5 - To assist in urban regeneration by encouraging the recycling of derelict and other urban land

All parcels make an equally significant contribution to this purpose.

Alternative Green Belt Boundaries

The existing Green Belt boundary is formed by Newport Road and the back gardens of residential properties. The railway line along the northern boundary of the parcel and Newport Road would constitute a readily recognisable and stronger Green Belt boundary.

Harm to Green Belt Resulting from Release

Parcel P39 contains a limited amount of built development and is predominately open. The openness of the parcel plays an important role in the setting of the historic settlement area within Albrighton (Donington Conservation Area). Releasing this parcel from the Green Belt would have an impact on the setting of the historic settlement and lead to encroachment on the countryside. It is considered that the release of this parcel from the Green Belt would lead to a **High** level of harm to the Green Belt in this local area.

Conclusion

Figure A1.16 below shows the level of harm associated with the release of parcels/sub-parcels considered within the assessment around Albrighton.

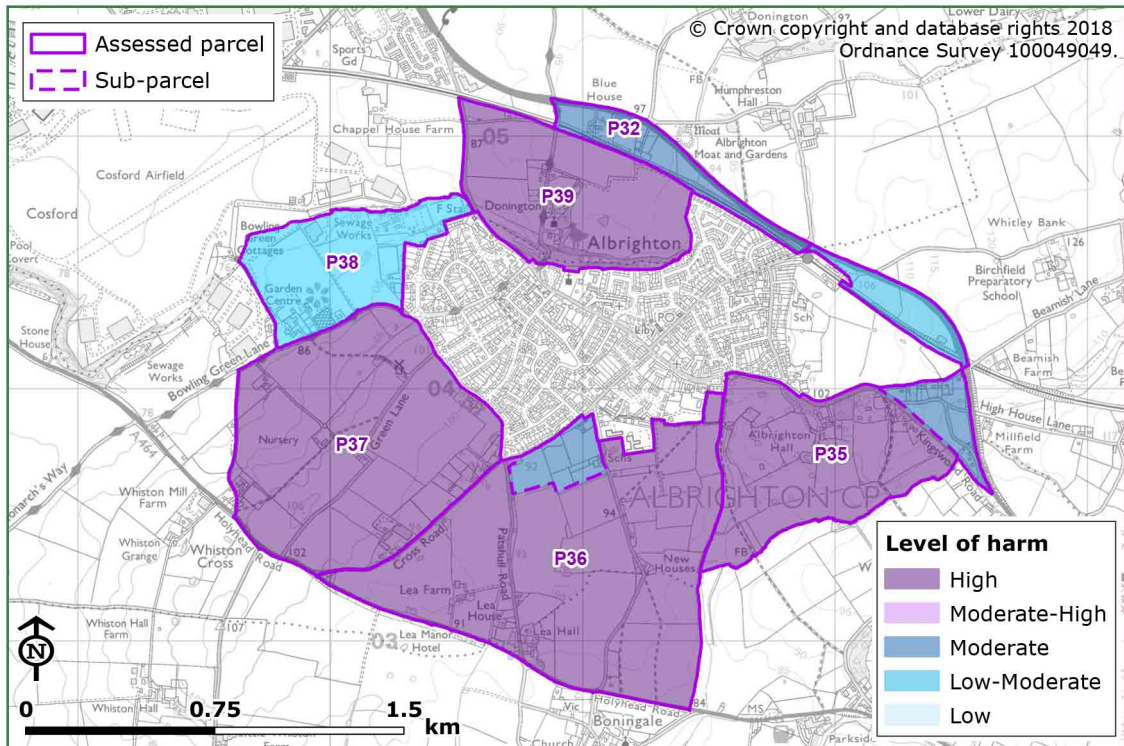


Figure A1.16: Individual Harm from Release of Parcels Surrounding Albrighton

The parcel assessment summarised on Figure A1.16 indicates that the release of Green Belt land for development could result in a 'High' level of harm to the Green Belt in the south of Albrighton, as well as to the north of Albrighton (Parcel P39). In comparison, the release of land for development in between Albrighton and the airfield of RAF Cosford (parcel P38) and the eastern extent of P32 could result in a 'Low-Moderate' level of harm with the smaller sub-parcels of P32, P35 and P36 resulting in 'Moderate' harm.

Part 3: Opportunity Areas – Assessment of Harm on the Green Belt

The assessment of the harm that could be caused by releasing Green Belt land for development has been tested through the identification of two Opportunity Areas around Albrighton and by the identification of two further Sub-Opportunity Areas. The findings of these assessments are set out below.

Opportunity Area Ab-1

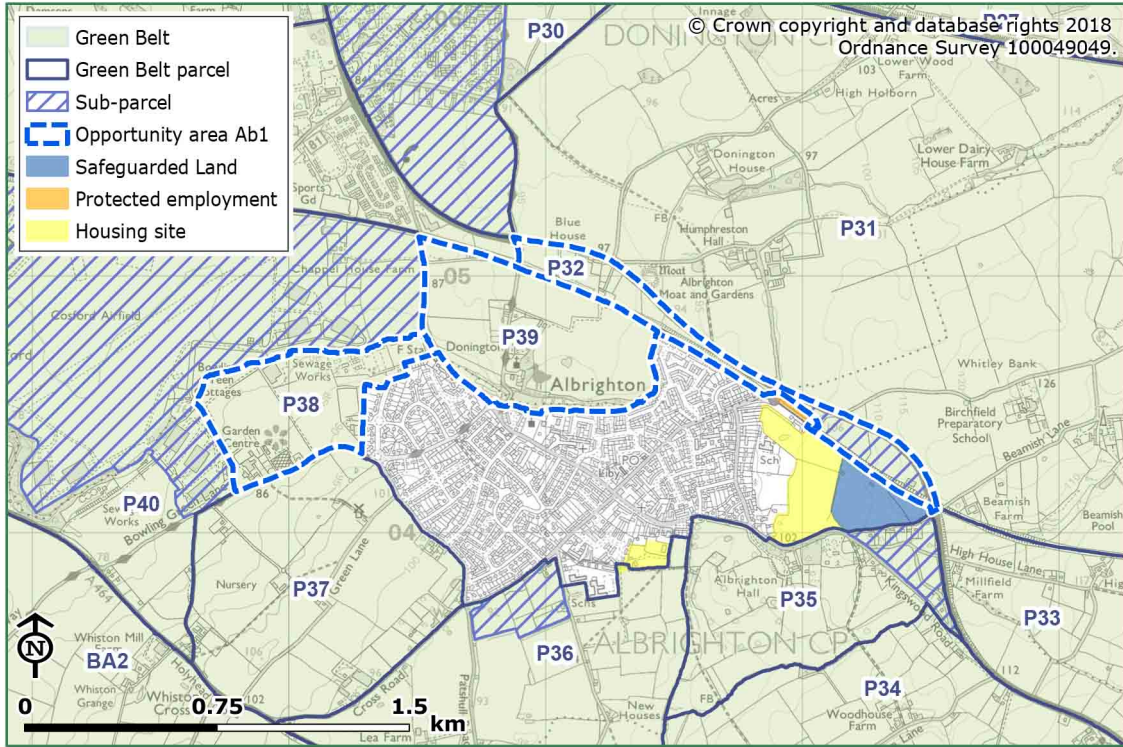


Figure A1.17: Opportunity Area Ab-1

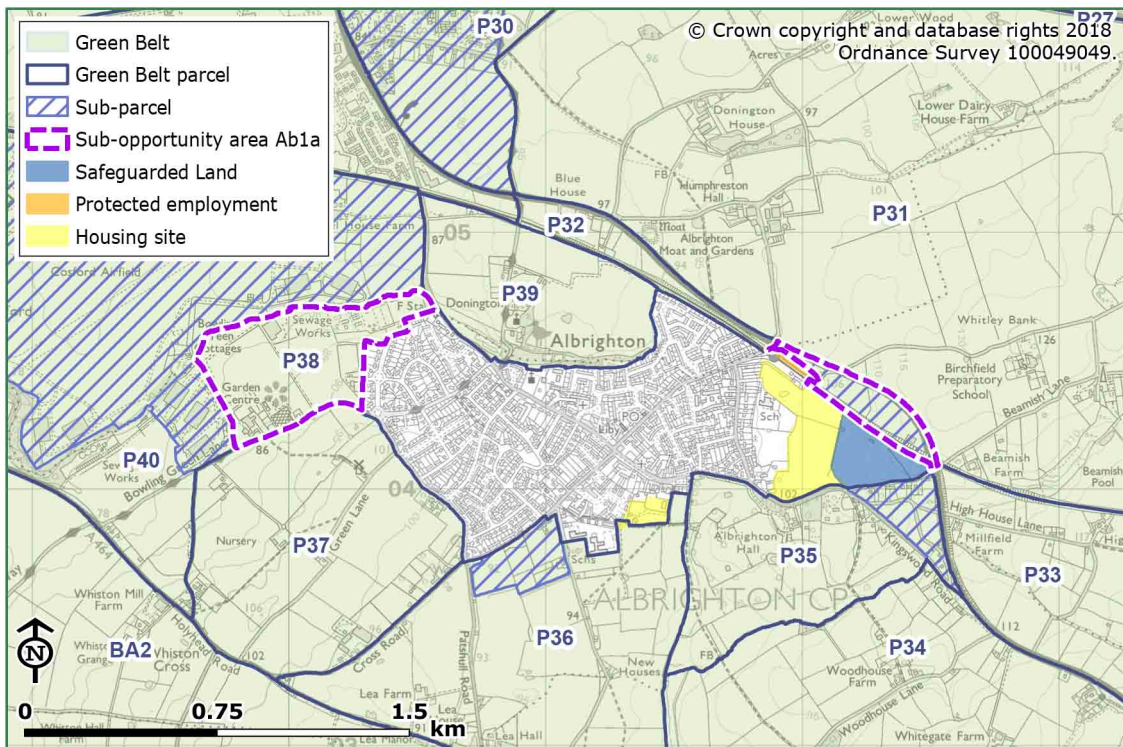


Figure A1.18: Sub-opportunity Area Ab-1a

Description of Opportunity Area Ab-1

Opportunity Area Ab-1 comprises the entire areas of parcels P32, P38 and P39 to identify a potential direction for growth across the northern boundary of Albrighton.

Sub-opportunity Area Ab-1a

A sub-opportunity area has been identified that would lead to a lower level of overall harm to the Green Belt. Sub-opportunity Area Ab-1a comprises the release of the eastern extent of parcel P32 and the release of parcel P38.

Summary of Assessment of Harm for Individual Parcels

The individual release of parcel P39 would have a **High** level of harm on the Green Belt. The individual release of parcel P32 would have a **Moderate** level of harm on the Green Belt. The individual release of parcel P38 would have a **Low-Moderate** level of harm on the Green Belt.

Assessment of Harm for sub-parcels

The release of Sub-parcel P32 would have a **Low-Moderate** level of harm to the Green Belt.

Assessment of harm

Removal of Opportunity Area Ab-1

The release of Ab-1 would result in development being sited beyond the current settlement edge of Albrighton to the north and into an area of predominately open land (parcel P39). Release of the Opportunity Area would enable a readily recognisable Green Belt boundary to be identified however, the openness of parcel P39 forms an important part of the setting of the Donington Conservation Area, part of the historic settlement area of Albrighton. The release of Opportunity Area Ab-1 would therefore result in a **High** level of harm to the Green Belt in this local area.

High Harm

No mitigation measures have been identified, as release of the opportunity area would lead to a high level of harm to the Green Belt.

Removal of Sub-opportunity Area Ab-1a

Sub-parcel P32 contains existing development in the form of an area of hard standing and lies adjacent to a light industrial complex, both of which have compromised the sense of openness and rural character of the sub-parcel. The sub-parcel is bound by the A41 which separates it from the wider countryside to the north. Development within this sub-parcel would not lead to a significant loss of open land or lead to a significant level of encroachment on neighbouring areas of the wider countryside. Unlike the western extent of parcel P32, releasing Sub-parcel P32 would not further enclose parcel P39 with development and weaken the role this land is playing as Green Belt.

Parcel P38 contains built development and is enclosed by Albrighton to the east and development within RAF Cosford to the north and west. Releasing this parcel would not constitute a significant loss of an area of open countryside, or lead to a weakening of the role of neighbouring Green Belt.

Releasing sub-opportunity Area Ab-1a from the Green Belt would lead to a **Low-Moderate** level of harm to the Green Belt in this local area.

Low-Moderate Harm

The following section sets out the mitigation measures that could be considered in order to minimise the degree of harm to the Green Belt associated with the release of Ab-1a.

Mitigation Measures

- Lines of trees along the northern boundary of Sub-parcel P32 should be retained and protected against any construction activity in accordance with best practice. These trees help to define a strong Green Belt edge.

- Tall hedgerows along the northern boundary of Sub-parcel P32 should be retained and enhanced, with any weak points strengthened.
- Trees and tall hedgerows along the northern side of the A41 (Albrighton bypass) should be preserved and enhanced.
- Hedgerows and hedgerow trees defining the southern boundary P38 should be retained and strengthened at any weak points.
- Lines of trees along the small water course defining the northern boundary of parcel P38 and lines of trees along Old Worcester Road defining its western boundary, should be retained to create a new coherent and clearly defined natural edge to the Green Belt.
- Development within Sub-opportunity Area Ab-1a should be restricted to appropriate small scale and low density residential development of up to two storeys, or single storey/low profile two storey employment in keeping with existing buildings to minimise encroachment on neighbouring Green Belt land.

Opportunity Area Ab-2

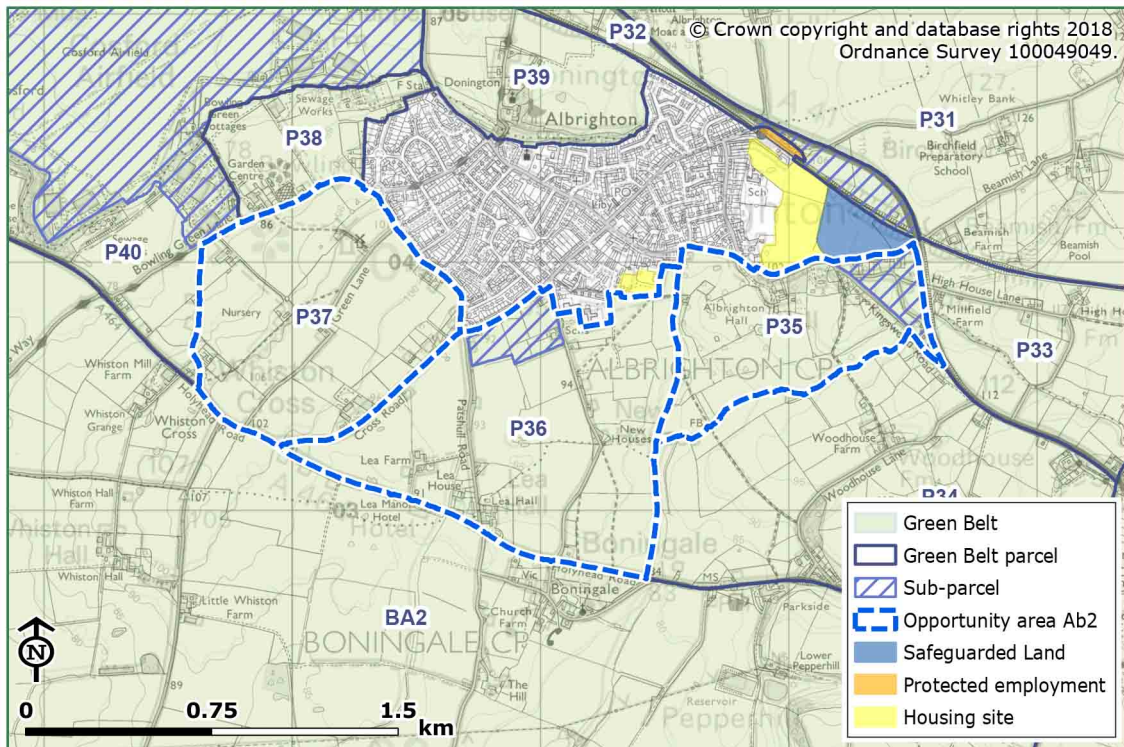


Figure A1.19: Opportunity Area Ab-2

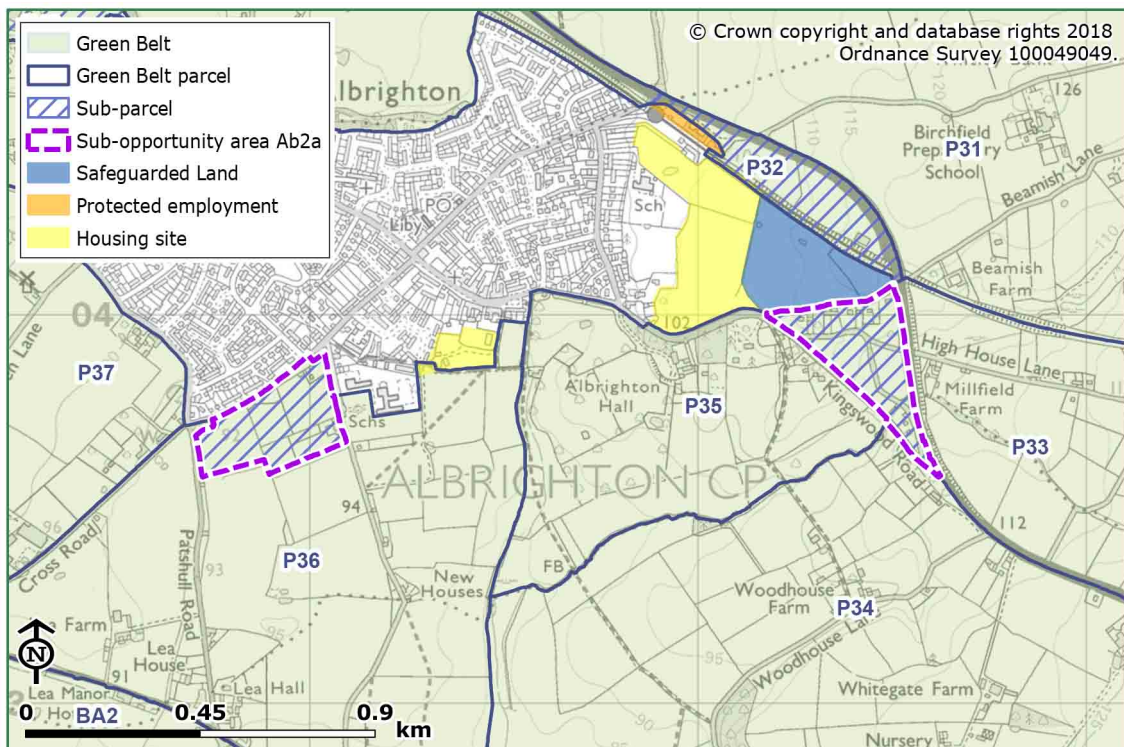


Figure A1.20: Sub-opportunity Area Ab-2a

Description of Opportunity Area Ab-2

Opportunity Area Ab-2 comprises the entire area of parcels P35, P36 and P37 to identify a potential direction for growth across the southern boundary of Albrighton.

Sub-opportunity Area Ab-2a

One sub-opportunity area has been identified that would lead to a lower level of overall harm to the Green Belt. Sub-opportunity Area Ab-2a comprises the release of Sub-parcel P35 and Sub-parcel P36.

Summary of Assessment of Harm for Individual Parcels

The individual release of parcels P35, P36 and P37 would have a **High** level of harm on the Green Belt.

Assessment of Harm for sub-parcels

The release of Sub-parcel P35 and Sub-parcel P36 would have a **Moderate** level of harm on the Green Belt.

Assessment of harm

Removal of Opportunity Area Ab-2

Parcels P35, P36 and P37 all form part of a wide area of open countryside the stretches south from the settlement edge of Albrighton. Releasing the entirety of these parcels from the Green Belt would constitute significant encroachment on the countryside. There is no separation between these parcels and the neighbouring areas of open countryside to the south and their release is likely to weaken the role neighbouring land is playing as Green Belt, particularly with regard to Purpose 3. Furthermore, the openness of the land within then northern element of parcel P35 and the north-eastern portion of P36 is considered to play an important role in the setting of the Albrighton Conservation Area, part of the historic settlement area of Albrighton. Releasing these parcels from the Green Belt, and a subsequent loss of openness, would compromise the historic setting of Albrighton and the role the Green Belt is playing with regard to Purpose 4.

The release of the Opportunity Area Ab-2 would lead to a **High** level of harm to the Green Belt in this local area.

High Harm

No mitigation measures have been identified, as release of the opportunity area would lead to a high level of harm to the Green Belt

Removal of Sub-opportunity Area Ab-2a

The Sub-parcel P35 within sub-opportunity Area Ab-2a is enclosed by Kingswood Road and the A41 both of which are lined with mature tree and tall robust hedgerows. These roads contain the sub-parcel and separate it from the remaining areas of P35, adjacent areas of open countryside and the Albrighton Conservation Area. Releasing Sub-parcel P35 is considered unlikely to significantly compromise the Green Belt in this area with regard to encroachment on the countryside or maintaining the setting of historic settlement areas (Purpose 3 and 4).

Sub-parcel P36 comprises a series of small fields along the settlement edge of Albrighton. It is contained by development on two sides and separated from the Albrighton Conservation Areas by Albrighton Primary School. Releasing this sub-parcel from the Green Belt is unlikely to lead to a significant level of encroachment on the wider countryside or a weakening of neighbouring areas of Green Belt land. Its release is also unlikely to compromise the setting of the historic settlement area of Albrighton.

Releasing Sub-opportunity Area Ab-2a would lead to a **Moderate** level of harm to the Green Belt in this local area.

Moderate Harm

The following section sets out the potential mitigation measures that could be considered in order to minimise the degree of harm to the Green Belt associated with the release of Ab-2a.

Mitigation Measures

- Hedgerows along the western boundary of Sub-parcel P35 (eastern edge of Kingswood Road) and the southern boundary of Sub-parcel P36 should be retained and enhanced, with any gaps strengthened and new hedgerows/trees planted to define a strong Green Belt edge.

- Hedgerows along the western edge of Kingswood Road (west of Sub-parcel P35) and either side of Patshull Road (west of Sub-parcel P36) should be strengthened at any weak points.
- The mature tree belt along the eastern edge of Sub-parcel P35 (western side of the A41) should be retained and protected against any construction activity in accordance with best practice.
- Development within Sub-opportunity Area Ab-2a should be restricted to appropriate small scale and low density residential development of up to two storeys or single storey/low profile two storey employment development to minimise encroachment on neighbouring Green Belt land.

Part 4: Conclusions for Albrighton

The assessment has reviewed the potential harm to the Green Belt of releasing for development, individual parcels or sub-parcels identified in this Green Belt Review. This has subsequently informed the identification of two opportunity areas; and two sub-opportunity areas around the settlement of Albrighton.

The findings of the assessment of harm likely to result from releasing the opportunity areas or sub-opportunity areas for development are summarised in **Table A1.1**:

Table A1.1: Summary Assessment of Harm for Opportunity Areas within Albrighton

Opportunity Area Reference	Area (ha)	Rating
Ab-1	90.1	High
Ab-1a	36.4	Low - Moderate
Ab-2	240	High
Ab-2a	13.9	Moderate

The consideration of the release of Green Belt land around Albrighton, set out in detail in the preceding sections and summarised in the table above, highlights the various potential Green Belt impacts arising from the possible release of land for development or as safeguarded land to meet the future needs of the settlement of Albrighton. The assessment in this Green Belt Review has shown that 36.4ha of land (within opportunity area Ab-1a) could be released from the Green Belt for development with only low-moderate harm to the Green Belt, and up to 13.9ha of land could be released with moderate harm (under opportunity area Ab-2a).

Whilst development on Green Belt land may inevitably lead to some degree of encroachment into the countryside within the Green Belt, the strategic function of the West Midlands Green Belt will not be affected by such small scale releases of land in Albrighton. At both a strategic level and local level, there will be no harm to the role played by the West Midlands Green Belt in checking the unrestricted sprawl of the large built areas, preventing the merging of neighbouring towns, or preserving the setting and special character of historic towns.