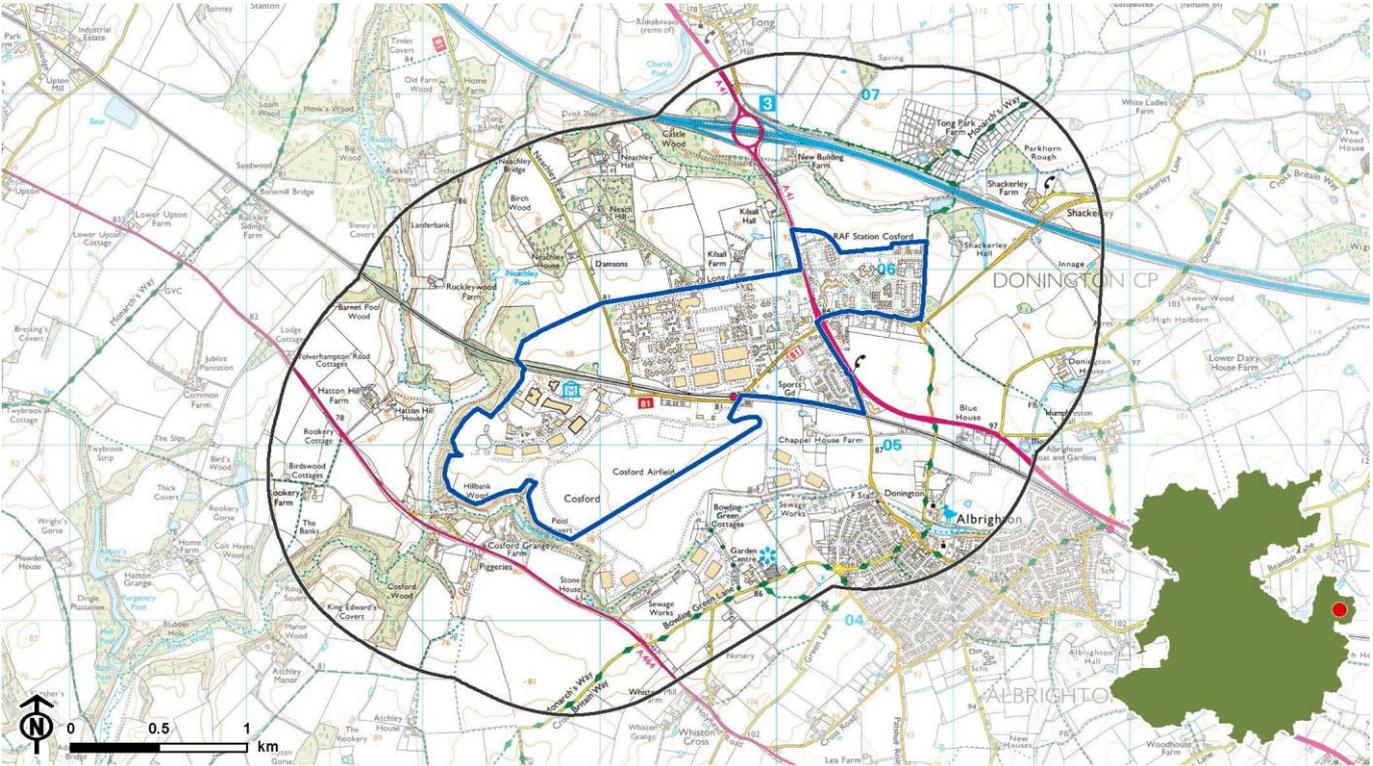


Strategic Site – RAF Cosford

Location



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Summary of Settlement Study Area and Location

Introduction

The Pre-Submission Draft Local Plan (2020) identifies RAF Cosford as a Strategic Site. A study area covering the settlement and a 1km buffer around it has been used as the study area for this Green Infrastructure Strategy.

The site, which is located between Albrighton and Shifnal is a military base entirely within the Green Belt, consisting of four sections: the airfield to the south west; north of this is the main site to the west and the sports area to the east; and north east of this is the accommodation.

The study area associated with RAF Cosford overlaps with the Albrighton study area to the south.

Development context

The Shropshire Pre-Submission Draft Local Plan (2020) sets out that RAF Cosford is being considered for significant investment which is likely to bring more personnel to the site. The total figures are not yet known.

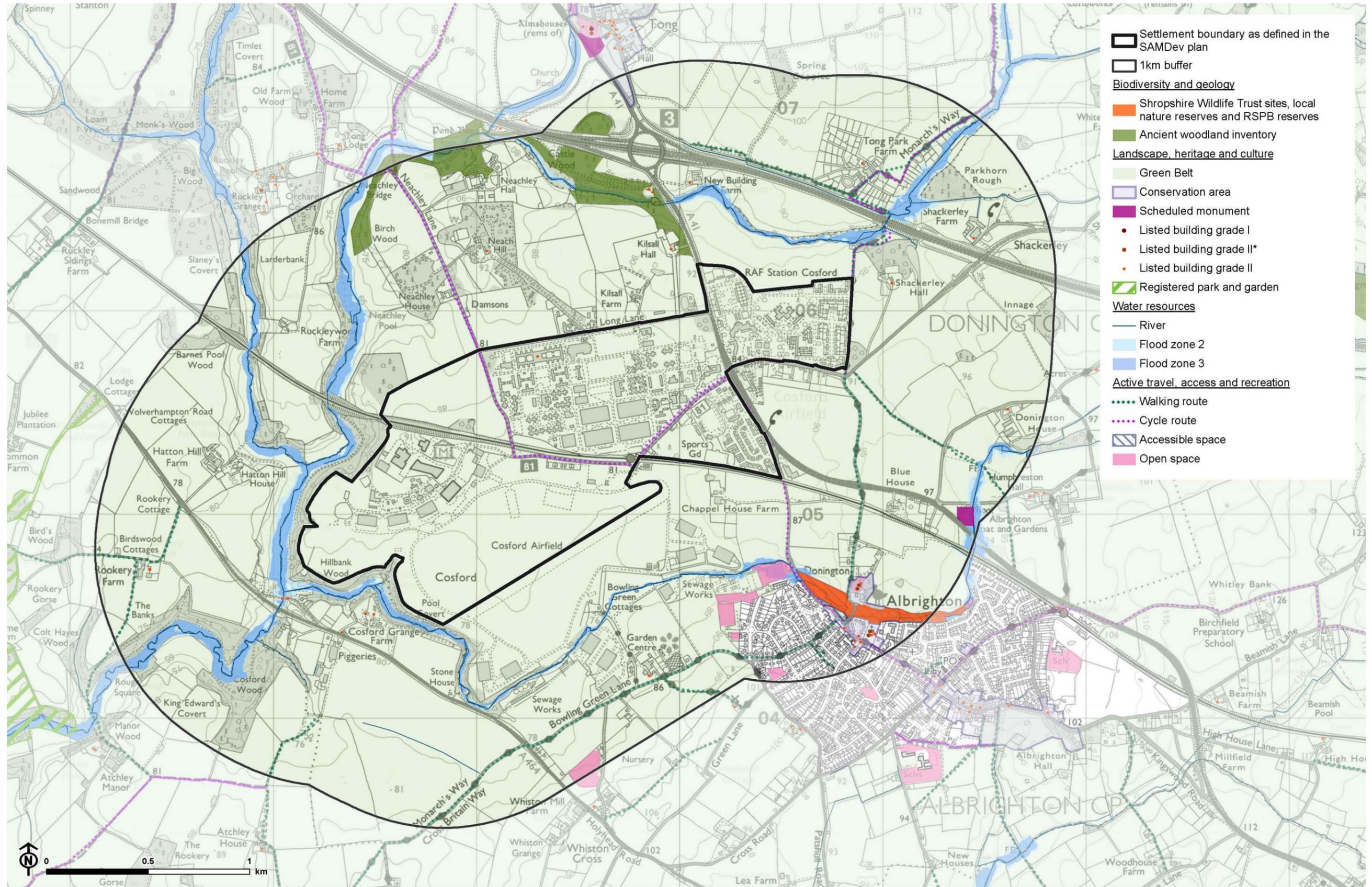


Open Space at Donington and Albrighton LNR



View from RAF Cosford to coniferous woodland

Existing Green Infrastructure Assets and Key Constraints



Existing Green Infrastructure Assets and Constraints

Theme	Existing Green Infrastructure Assets / Constraints
<p data-bbox="164 790 320 871">Key Theme 1: Biodiversity and Geology</p> 	<p data-bbox="363 356 504 385">Biodiversity</p> <p data-bbox="363 405 560 434">Designated Sites</p> <ul data-bbox="363 454 1390 573" style="list-style-type: none"> <li data-bbox="363 454 1390 573">■ Donington and Albrighton (LNR) is located in the south east of the study area, bordering the northern edge of the settlement of Albrighton. This designation includes a meadow, a willow woodland area, pools and Humphreston Brook and is also identified as a core area in the Shropshire Environment Network mapping. <p data-bbox="363 595 695 624">Notable and Priority Habitats</p> <ul data-bbox="363 645 1474 1144" style="list-style-type: none"> <li data-bbox="363 645 1474 703">■ Bordering the M54, west of Junction 3, in the north of the study area, there are tracts of replanted ancient woodland which are also identified as Core areas in the Shropshire Environmental Network. <li data-bbox="363 723 1437 813">■ There are sections of deciduous woodland Priority Habitat, particularly prominent north of the strategic site and along the western border of the site. These are located along the waterways of the River Worfe and its tributary running parallel to the M54, and Neach Hill. <li data-bbox="363 833 1445 922">■ In the north east border of the study area there is a small section of Good Quality Semi-Improved Grassland, defined as a Priority Habitat. This runs alongside the small watercourse that runs through the northern part of the study area. <li data-bbox="363 943 1219 972">■ A traditional orchard is located within the settlement, west of Newport Road. <li data-bbox="363 992 1474 1144">■ Large sections of land within the study area have been identified as corridors within the Shropshire Environmental Network. These corridors consist of linear features within the landscape: The River Worfe, Cosford Brook, the watercourse running through the northern part of the settlement, the M54 and the railway line. In the north west of the study area there are wider corridors, particularly associated with Neachley Hall and Neach Hill and woodland pasture to the west of the A41. <p data-bbox="363 1167 456 1196">Species</p> <ul data-bbox="363 1216 1474 1368" style="list-style-type: none"> <li data-bbox="363 1216 1474 1368">■ There are a high number of records of the native White-claw crayfish along the River Worfe, particularly along the western edge of the strategic site. There are also records of the invasive American Signal Crayfish in the same watercourses. Please note that species records only reflect what was present when the surveyor was on site and may not be exhaustive of the true species and geographic spread within the study area <p data-bbox="363 1391 464 1420">Geology</p> <ul data-bbox="363 1440 847 1469" style="list-style-type: none"> <li data-bbox="363 1440 847 1469">■ There are no RIGs within the study area.

<p>Key Theme 2: Landscape, Heritage and Culture</p> 	<p>Landscape</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ The majority of the study area is characterised as Sandstone Estate lands, which have arable land use with regular field patterns and are noted for parklands and associated country houses¹. This character type and the Timbered Plateau Farmlands located in the eastern part of the study area have a low sensitivity to development. ■ In the west of the study area the land is more sensitive to development, with the Incised Sandstone Valleys associated with the water course, and the Estate Farmlands to the east of this defined as having a medium and sensitivity to development respectively. ■ The land within the study area is classified as grade 2 and 3 best and most versatile agricultural land. ■ There is no land north of the settlement under countryside or environmental stewardship agreement. <p>Heritage</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ There is a Scheduled Monument at Albrighton Moat and Gardens in the south of the study area. This is located south of Humphreston Hall. ■ A number of Grade II listed buildings are located within the study area. These are scattered across the area, with clusters around Junction 3 of the M54, in the settlement of Albrighton and on the western edge of the strategic site. ■ There is one listed building within the strategic site: Fulton Block, RAF Cosford. ■ The conservation area within the north of the settlement of Albrighton is located in the south of this study area and in the northern edge, at Junction 3 of the M54, Tong conservation area lies partially within the study area.
<p>Key Theme 3: Water Resources</p> 	<p>Freshwater Resources</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ There are a number of rivers and brooks within the study area: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – The River Worfe runs north-south east of the strategic site, in places only 100m from the edge of the strategic site; – In the north of the study area an unnamed Brook which is a tributary to the River Worfe runs east – west, roughly parallel to the M54; and – South of RAF Cosford strategic site, Cosford Brook runs east-west, joining the River Worfe at the south east corner of the strategic site. <p>Flooding</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ All three of these water courses have associated land defined as being Flood zone 2 and 3 according , although this is very localised, only covering the land immediately adjacent to the watercourses. ■ The land surrounding the water course south of Albrighton, east of Newhouse Lane is categorised as Flood Zone 3. This is predominantly agricultural land. <p>Pollution</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ There are issues with diffuse agricultural pollution throughout the study area. With the exception of the eastern edge, the land within the study area is within in the Groundwater West Midlands NVZ. ■ In addition, the entire study area lies within the Surface Water River Worfe (Wesley Book to River Severn) NVZ. <p>Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems (SUDs)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ The highly varied permeability across the study area means both infiltration and attenuation SUDs are considered to be suitable².

¹ The Shropshire Landscape Typology, 2006

² Shropshire Outline Water Cycle Study (2010)

**Key Theme 4:
Active Travel,
Access and
Recreation**



Transport Context

- The M54 is located in the north of the study area and runs from east to west. The Albrighton/Newport Road/A41 runs to the east of the study area from north to south. The A464 runs east to west across the southern section of the study area.
- Cosford train station is located in a central position within the study area and is served by West Midlands trains with links to Shrewsbury, Wolverhampton and Birmingham New Street

Active Travel

Walking

- The PRoW network within this study area is sparse, with limited rights of way extending from the strategic site to the wider countryside. From the eastern edge of the site there are currently three routes:
 - Bridleway 0122/DS1/1 heads north east;
 - Bridleway 0122/3/1 runs along the eastern extent of the strategic site; and
 - Footpath 0122/2/2 heads south east.
- A few footpaths exist in the western part of the study area, linking to the land outside of the study area but these are separated from the strategic site itself by the A464.
- The Monarch Way long distance footpath runs through the study area, utilising Bowling Green Lane and Rectory Road and meeting the 0122/3/1 bridleway to run north through the study area, along the western edge of the strategic site.

Cycling

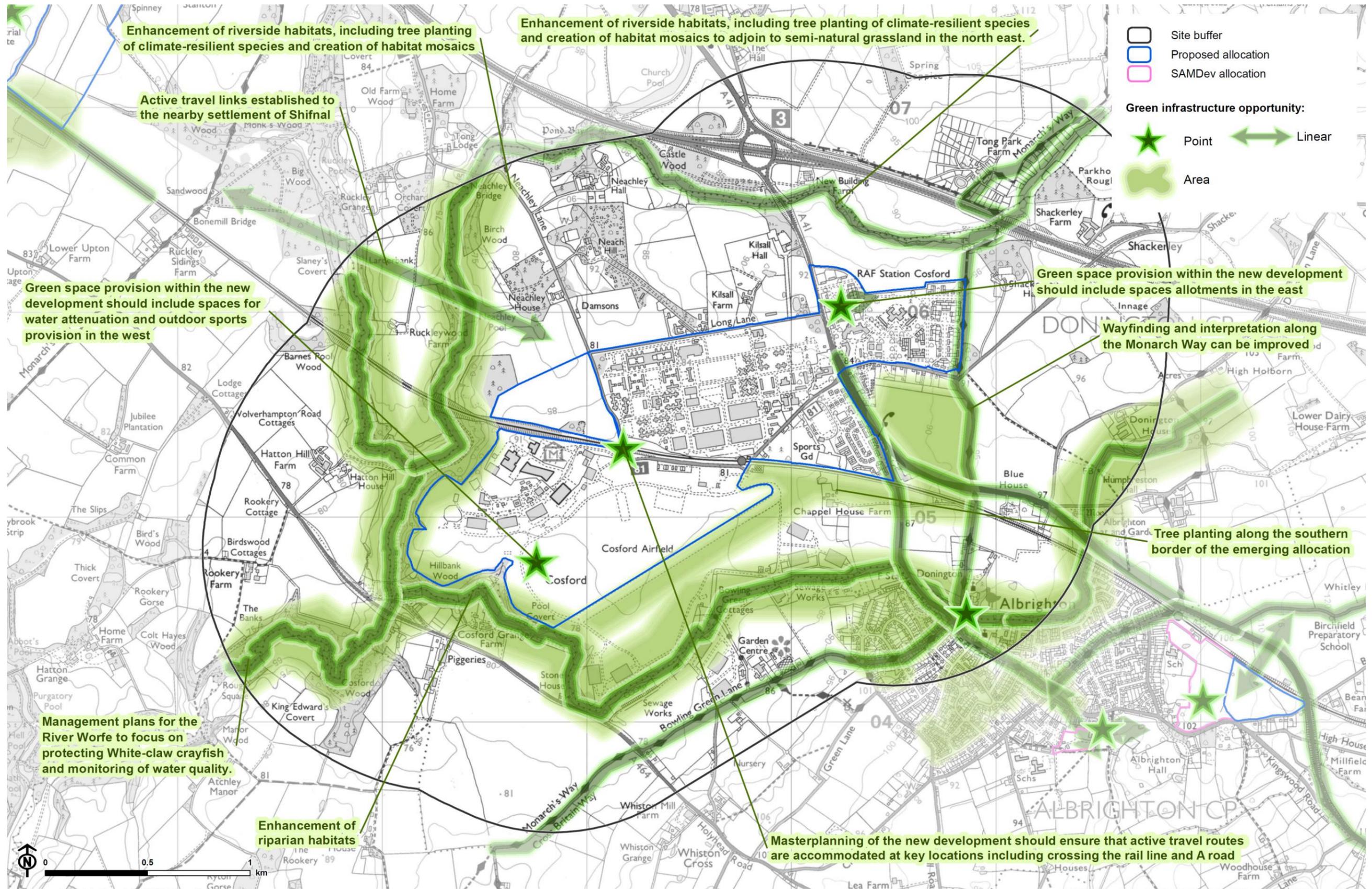
- National Cycle Route 81 runs through the study area and through the middle of the strategic site of RAF Cosford, linking this site to the settlement of Shifnal.
- In the eastern part of the strategic site Shropshire Cycle Route 81 joins the National Cycle Route and runs south to continue the cycle link to Albrighton.

Access and Recreation

- Open space provision within the study area is limited, with only a few small-scale areas in the southern part of the study area, close to the settlement of Albrighton. This includes:
 - Donington Pool Local Nature Reserve. An important provision of natural and semi-natural open space provision; and
 - Outdoor Sports Provision at Clockmills, Albrighton Football club and Albrighton Cricket and Tennis Club.
- The OS Green Space data highlights Other Sports Facilities within strategic site at the RAF Cosford Open Stadium.

<p>Key Theme 5: Health and Wellbeing</p> 	<p>Health</p> <p>Health Deprivation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ The whole of the strategic site is in the 8th decile for health (the 1st decile is the most deprived). ■ The most deprived part of the study area in terms of health is in the south and in particular the western part of Albrighton, which is in decile 5. <p>Childhood Obesity</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Public Health England data highlights that in general child obesity is not a significant problem around RAF Cosford, with the majority of the study area being within the lowest bands for reception and year 6 obesity and reception and year 6 excess weight. ■ The western edge of the study area has greater issues, with nearly a third of year sixes having excess weight and nearly a fifth being obese. <p>Air Quality</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ There are no recorded AQMA within the study area. <p>Wellbeing</p> <p>Accessible Open Space</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ The Open Space Assessment undertaken by LUC to inform this GI Strategy identified the following baseline provision of open space. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Accessible Open Space: 0.0ha per 1000 persons (2018 population base). None of the allocation falls within 400m of such provision. – Allotments: 0ha per 1000 persons (2018 population base). – Provision for Children and Teenagers: 0 spaces in total. Analysis shows that none of the allocation within 800m of such provision. ■ Given that the proposed allocation focusses on a former military base with no previous civilian population, the lack of accessible space is not surprising. See the Open Space Assessment appended to the GI Strategy Report for more details. <p>Noise Pollution</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ There is significant noise pollution from the M54. Road noise of 55dB Lden3 or more over 24 hours affects the northern half of the study are, including parts of the strategic site itself.
<p>Key Theme 6: Climate Change</p> 	<p>Tree cover</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Tree cover within the study area is predominantly located in the north and west. The National Forest Inventory identifies that there are both broadleaved and coniferous, with broadleaved woodland dominating in riparian environments. ■ The Shropshire urban tree mapping shows that there are some urban trees within the study area, located in the south within Albrighton. <p>Flooding Climate Change Allowance</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Modelling suggests that taking account climate change, flooding will bypass current flood zone 3 levels in over 50% of cases, however these risk zones are still fairly localised to the water courses and do not include any of the land within the strategic site of RAF Cosford itself.

Green Infrastructure Opportunities



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CB.KC.EB.Chamberlain_K LUC 10924-02_003_RAFCosford 27/07/2020 Source: OS, LUC

Key Green Infrastructure Opportunities

Theme	Green Infrastructure Opportunities
<p>Key Theme 1: Biodiversity and Geology</p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Ancient woodland immediately south of the M54 should be maintained and new road to development at the proposed allocation should not break this canopy. ■ Introduction of strategic tree planting and woodland creation south and east of the settlement, for example along the edge of the proposed allocation will bolster the environmental corridors in this section of the study area. ■ The traditional orchard priority habitat within the proposed allocation should be retained and be included within the new open space provision associated with the development. ■ Habitat connectivity along the brook to the north of the proposed allocation should be strengthened to link the semi-improved grassland in the east to the riparian deciduous woodland, creating a habitat mosaic along the river corridor. ■ A habitat management plan for the River Worfe should include enhancement of habitats suitable for White-claw crayfish and take into account threats from the invasive American Signal Crayfish. ■ Vegetation alongside the trainline, which is currently defined as an environmental corridor, should be maintained and enhanced, in particular where it cuts across the proposed development.
<p>Key Theme 2: Landscape, Heritage and Culture</p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Development should ensure that any veteran trees, a characteristic of the Sandstone Estatelands are retained and new tree planting should take place to ensure a new generation of trees and reinforce the parkland landscapes. ■ Trees along the southern edge of the development will provide a visual buffer towards the settlement of Albrighton and prevent the settlements merging. ■ Fulton Block, the Grade II listed building within the proposed allocation, should be retained and development close to this should be designed to complement the listed building.
<p>Key Theme 3: Water Resources</p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Open space within the proposed allocation should provide opportunities for water attenuation including through rain gardens, ponds and ditches. This will slow the flow of water within the development which could risk the western edge of the proposed allocation. ■ Management plans for the River Worfe should allow for monitoring of the nearby watercourses to ensure development and increased human activity does not lead to increased water quality issues within the waterways, this could include riverfly monitoring with local volunteers. There is limited opportunity for this to be influenced as it is not under LPA ownership but opportunities should be explored where possible.

<p>Key Theme 4: Active Travel, Access and Recreation</p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Donington Introduce a public right of way from the west of the proposed allocation to link to the wider countryside, including exploration of a public right of way along the River Worfe and footpaths across the A464 to link to the existing PRow in the western most part of the study area. ■ Improve wayfinding and interpretation along the Monarch Way and provide footpath links from the new developments, including towards Donington Pool LNR ■ Improved maintenance of paths and additional visitor facilities including litter bins and benches at Donington Pool LNR is recommended to accommodate additional residents and development within this allocation and the neighbouring Albrighton allocations. ■ Maintain the cycle link between Shifnal and Albrighton by retaining and improving the National Cycle Route and Shropshire Cycle Route running through the proposed allocation during development and linking new properties and employment developments to this link. ■ Ensure provision for cycle parking is included within the development. ■ Provision of open space included within the proposed allocation should include a range of open space typologies, and facilities for children and teenagers. ■ Signed and promoted shared space foot and cycle links should be established to the nearby settlements of Shifnal and Albrighton to encourage active travel.
<p>Key Theme 5: Health and Wellbeing</p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Development within the proposed allocation should ensure that all residences are no more than 1km from accessible natural green space. ■ Development within the northern parts of the allocation should include linear belts of dense vegetation to reduce the perception of noise pollution from the M54 and increased planting should take place along the A41 which goes through the eastern half of the proposed allocation. ■ The creation of active travel links to Albrighton should take in properties in the west of the settlement which have the highest health deprivation. ■ Provision for allotments could occur close to the existing traditional orchard priority habitat to promote this land use and encourage food growing and healthy eating within the new settlement.
<p>Key Theme 6: Climate Change</p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Enhancements of riparian tree cover will ensure shading along the waterways ■ Urban trees should be introduced within the development to provide shading, these should be predominantly climate resilient species.

Summary of key opportunities						
Tree planting along the southern border of the proposed allocation to increase habitat connectivity south of the settlement and provide a visual buffer between the new development and Albrighton.	✓	✓				✓
Green space provision within the new development should include spaces for water attenuation, outdoor sports provision in the west, allotments in the east and ensure that all properties are no more than 1km from an access point to this open space.	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓
Management plans for the River Worfe to focus on protecting White-claw crayfish and monitoring of water quality.	✓		✓			✓
Enhancement of riverside habitats, including tree planting of climate-resilient species and creation of habitat mosaics to adjoin to semi-natural grassland in the north east.	✓			✓		✓
Active travel links should be established to the nearby settlements of Shifnal and Albrighton to encourage active travel, with links to Albrighton taking in the western edge of the settlement which has higher health deprivation levels. These routes should also promote access to existing facilities including Donington and Albrighton LNR and Albrighton Moat and Gardens				✓	✓	✓
Masterplanning of the new development should ensure that active travel routes are accommodated at key location including crossing the rail line and A road within the proposed allocation and balance this with minimising the breaks in canopy for vegetated edges which provide habitat corridors.	✓			✓	✓	✓
Wayfinding and interpretation along the Monarch Way can be improved, particularly highlighting the historical importance of the route.		✓		✓	✓	