

Appendix 4

Cosford Assessment

Part 1: Settlement Context

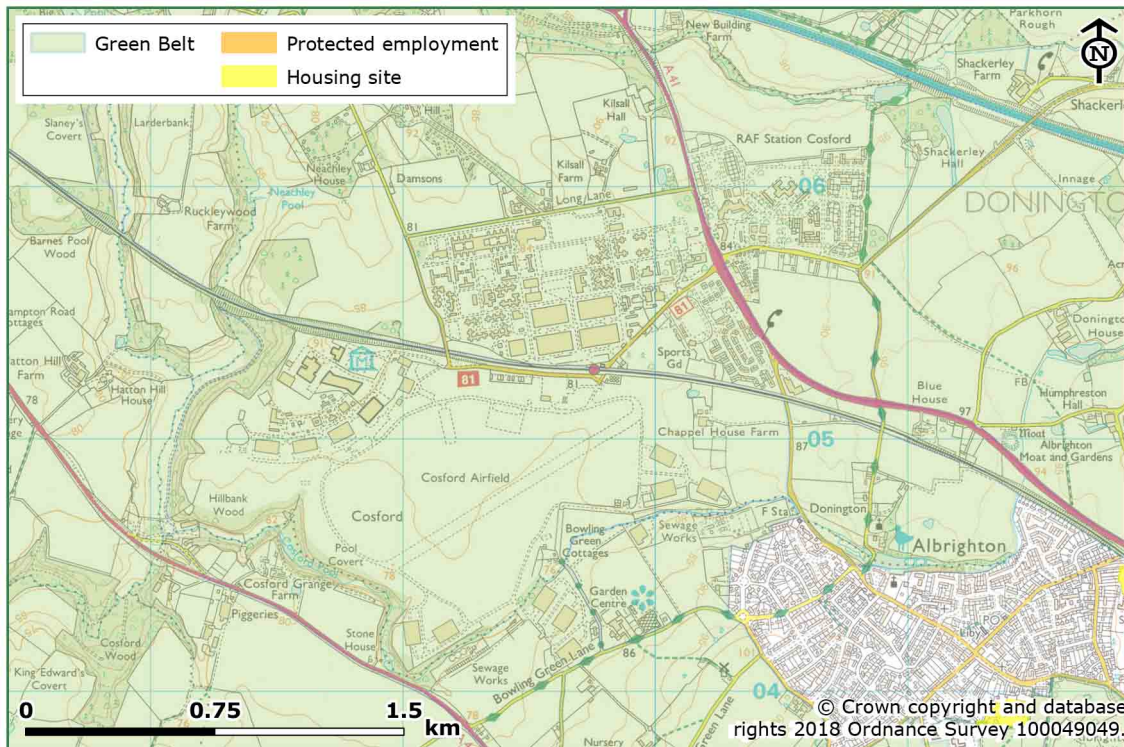


Figure A4.1: Settlement Context

Cosford is a village and RAF base and airfield located wholly in Green Belt just to the north west of Albrighton, between Albrighton and Shifnal. RAF Cosford opened in 1938 as a joint aircraft maintenance, storage and technical training unit and remains primarily a training unit to present day. The site also houses the renowned Cosford Air Museum and hosts the Cosford Air Show.

The built form of the settlement is primarily focused around the RAF base and the majority of the development that has occurred in recent times has been associated with its operation, staff housing and supporting infrastructure. RAF Cosford is recognised as a major developed site within the Green Belt in the adopted Shropshire Local Plan.

In addition to the buildings directly associated with the operation of RAF Cosford, there are more than 400 dwellings accommodating more than 1,700 people, many of which are military personnel. Cosford also offers a wide range of services and facilities to support its community, which has led to its identification as a proposed Community Hub and Strategic Site within the Local Plan Review.

Cosford has also been identified as a strategic site within the Local Plan Review, due to its importance to the RAF, who identify it as a "major part of the Defence College of Technical Training (DCTT). It is at the centre of the RAF's mission to deliver flexible, affordable, modern and effective technical training that meets the needs of the UK's Armed Forces now and into the future"¹. The Council hope its identification as a strategic site will support the future operation of the RAF camp. Cosford is also strategically located on the M54 corridor and benefits from the presence of high-tech engineering on the camp and within its supply chain; with further potential to expand on this existing offer.

¹ RAF, (2018), <https://www.raf.mod.uk/our-organisation/stations/raf-cosford/>

The Preferred Scale and Distribution of Development consultation document (2017) has proposed an urban focus for development up to 2036. However recognising the importance of maintaining the sustainability of rural settlements, 27.5% of development is proposed to take place within sustainable rural settlements, identified as proposed Community Hubs, such as Cosford.

Whilst the Preferred Scale and Distribution of Development consultation document (2017) did not provide development guidelines for proposed Community Hubs, it did indicate that proposed Community Hubs would be provided with a development guideline, boundary and potentially site allocations.

There is currently no land safeguarded for future development in and around Cosford and relatively limited opportunities for infill development. As such the Local Plan Review may need to consider provision of land for future expansion of the settlement/camp.

The proximity and inter-relationship between Cosford and Albrighton, the latter being a key centre, also needs to be taken into account when considering future development needs and the Green Belt Study in this area. It is notable that a number of the identified parcels in Cosford directly adjoin those parcels assessed to the north and west of Albrighton.

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

The map and aerial show the location and extent of all the parcels around Cosford that were considered in the Stage 1 Green Belt Assessment (2017) (outlined as purple and blue on Figures A4.2 and A4.3). The parcels outlined in purple are those around Cosford 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.

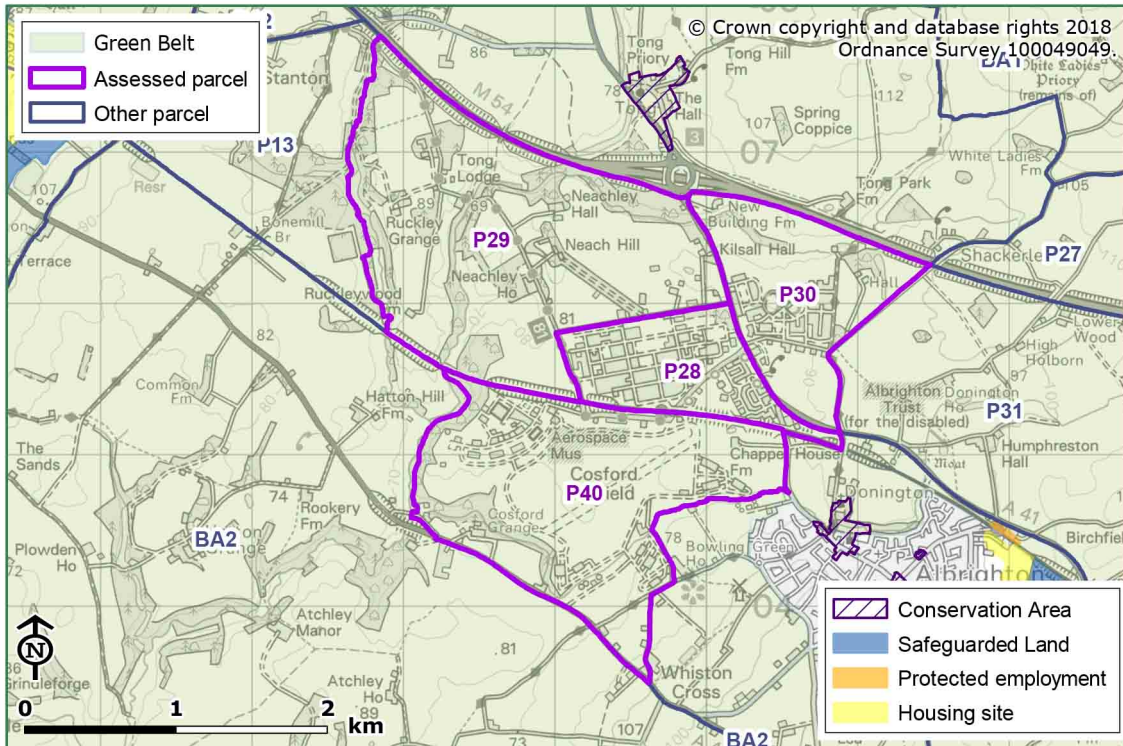


Figure A4.2: Green Belt Parcels Surrounding Cosford

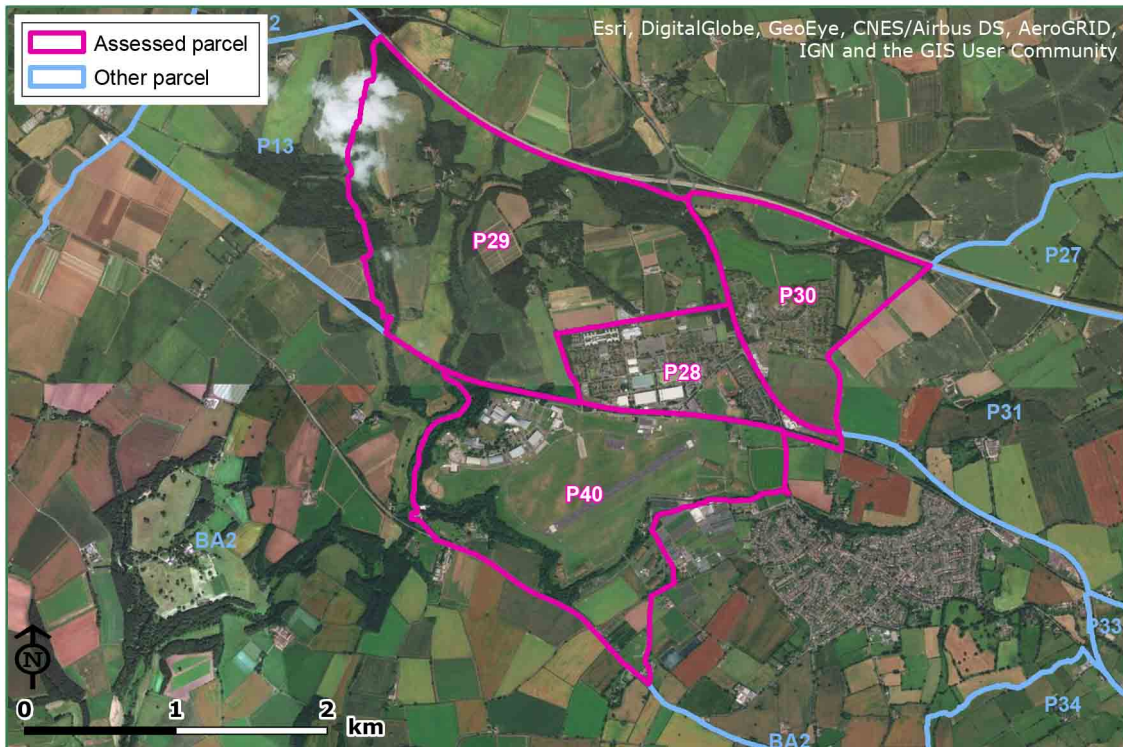


Figure A4.3: Aerial View of Green Belt Parcels Surrounding Cosford

Parcel P28

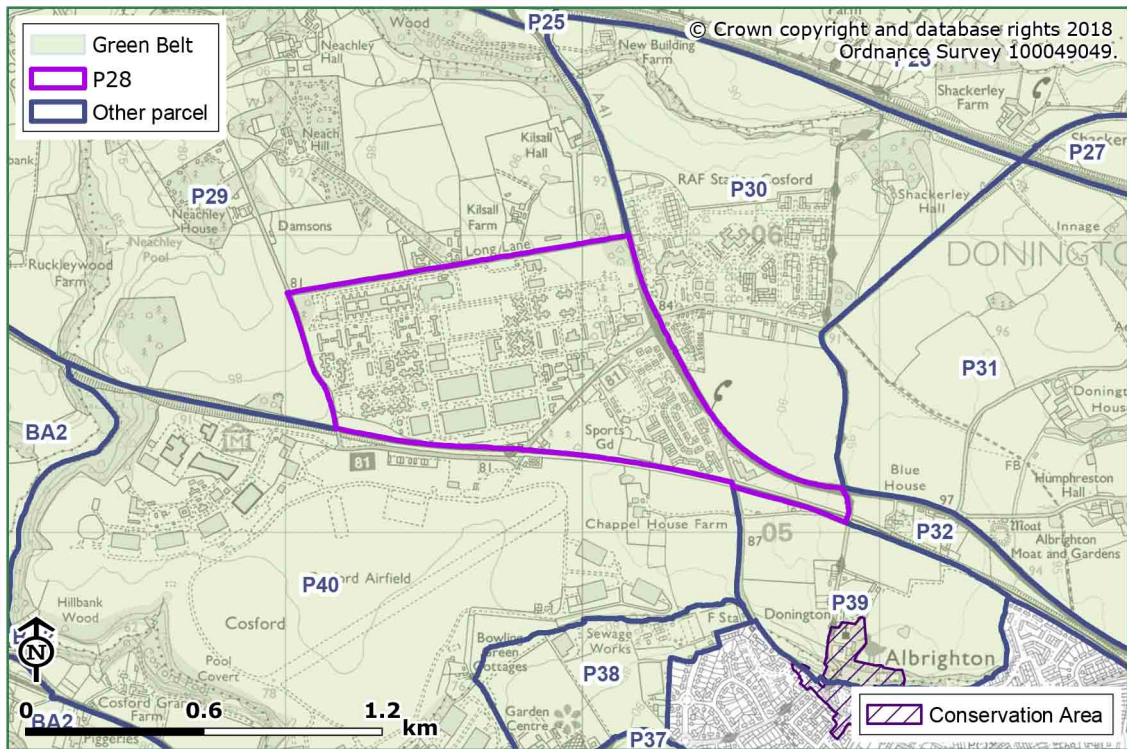


Figure A4.4: Parcel P28



Figure A4.5: Extensive development within parcel P28 and the railway line defining the southern boundary of the parcel

Relationship to settlement/countryside

Parcel P28 consists almost entirely of development within RAF Cosford and contains no agricultural land. The parcel comprises a large part of the settlement/base of Cosford and does not form part of the wider countryside. It lies to the North of and is separated from Albrighton village by the railway line.

The conclusions on the contribution of parcel P28 to the Green Belt purposes and the harm of releasing it from the Green Belt 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

The parcel is located between the settlements of Albrighton (approx. 500m south) and Shifnal (approx. 3.7km northwest). The parcel is almost fully developed containing numerous buildings of the large RAF Cosford Military Base. This development has already led 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 is considered to be playing a weak role in preventing the merging of Shifnal and Albrighton as the site is already developed.

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

Weak

There has already been extensive urban encroachment within the parcel due to the development at RAF Cosford. This includes houses, floodlit sports pitches, large areas of hard standing and large hanger buildings. This development is a historical legacy which is washed over by the Green Belt. The parcel makes a weak contribution to preventing encroachment of the countryside.

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

No Contribution

Digital analysis, based on bare earth height data, indicates that this parcel is theoretically visible from the historic settlement areas located within Shifnal, and Albrighton/Donington. In practice, there is little intervisibility between this parcel and these historic settlement areas. This parcel is almost entirely developed and does not play a role in the immediate or wider setting of these the historic settlements.

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 parcel does not lie adjacent to any existing areas inset into the Green Belt. The railway along the southern boundary of the parcel would constitute a strong boundary. Other boundaries include the A41 and the smaller roads of Long Lane and Neachley Lane. These roads would form a clearly defined and readily recognisable new Green Belt boundary.

Harm to Green Belt Resulting from Release

This parcel is fully developed containing buildings and infrastructure associated with RAF Cosford. Releasing this parcel would not weaken the role that neighbouring areas of land are playing as Green Belt or impact on the integrity of the wider Green Belt in this area due to the level of existing development within the parcel. Releasing parcel P28 from the Green Belt would lead to a **Low** level of harm to the Green Belt in this local area.

Parcel P29

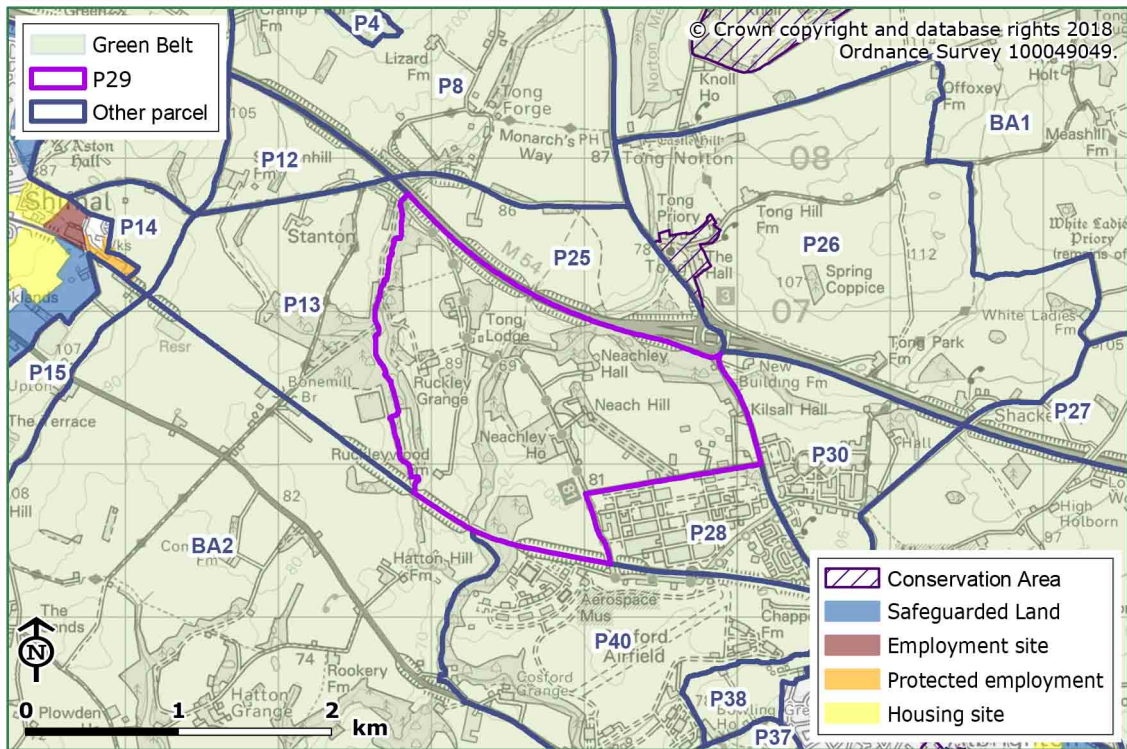


Figure A4.6: Parcel P29



Figure A4.7: Rolling countryside within Parcel P29, view west from Neachley Lane

Relationship to settlement/countryside

Parcel P29 is separated from neighbouring agricultural land to the north by the M54 motorway corridor which provides a degree of severance between the parcel and the wider countryside to the north. The parcel is separated from agricultural land to the east by a small water course lined with trees and pockets of woodland, these provide a limited degree of separation with the parcel forming part of an open area of countryside set between Cosford and Shifnal. It lies to the north west of Albrighton separated by the railway line and other intervening parcels (P28 & P40) and does not directly adjoin any parcels being assessed around Albrighton.

The conclusions on the contribution of parcel P29 to the Green Belt purposes and the harm of releasing it from the Green Belt 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

Moderate

The parcel forms part of the gap between the settlements of Albrighton (approx. 1.3km south-east) and Shifnal (approx. 1.8km northwest). The intervening development of RAF Cosford is also located between the parcel and Albrighton. Any new development that took place within the parcel, and subsequent loss of openness, could lead to the perception that the westward growth of Cosford is narrowing the gap between Albrighton and Shifnal.

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

Moderate

This parcel contains the historic large houses of Ruckley Grange, Tong Lodge and Neachley Hall, as well as a number of isolated farms and dwellings. This development is in keeping with the countryside. The M54 runs along the northern boundary and is largely screened by large road embankments, cuttings and vegetation, which limits the sense of encroachment. Large buildings that are part of RAF Cosford and the RAF museum, located within neighbouring parcels, are visible from parts of the parcel. This causes a sense of encroachment, however this is limited and localised to southern areas of the parcel. The remaining areas are open, display the characteristics of the countryside and make a strong contribution to Purpose 3. Overall due to the urbanising elements of RAF Cosford within some sections of the parcel, the Green Belt is judged to play a moderate role in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment, although it is acknowledged that some areas play a strong role.

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 located within Shifnal, and Albrighton/Donington. In practice, there is little intervisibility between this parcel and these historic settlement areas. The openness of elevated land within this parcel is not considered to form part of the immediate setting of these settlements, however it does make a limited contribution to their wider rural setting.

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 parcel does not lie adjacent to any areas currently inset into the Green Belt. The M54 motorway that defines the northern boundary and the railway line defining the southern boundary of the parcel would form strong Green Belt boundaries. The western boundary of the parcel is defined by the small water course of Ruckley Pool, which is lined with a dense belt of mature woodland. The eastern boundary of parcel P29 is defined by the A41 and partly by RAF Cosford. These eastern and western boundaries are readily recognisable and clearly defined physical features.

Harm to Green Belt Resulting from Release

This parcel contains a limited amount of urban development and forms part of an area of open countryside set between Cosford/Albrighton and Shifnal. Releasing this relatively large parcel from the Green Belt would constitute significant encroachment on the countryside. However, there is a degree of separation between parcel P29 and the wider countryside to the north due to the presence of the M54 motorway corridor and to the south and south east, the parcel is contained by RAF Cosford. There is also a wide band of woodland at Ruckley that would limit encroachment on the wider countryside to the west. Parcel P29 does however form part of the settlement gap between Cosford/Albrighton and Shifnal. Its release would reduce the perception of separation between Shifnal and Cosford/Albrighton with regard to Purpose 2. It is considered that overall the release of parcel P29 from the Green Belt would lead to a **Moderate-High** level of harm to the Green Belt within this local area, with potentially higher levels of harm in the western areas of the parcel.

Parcel P30

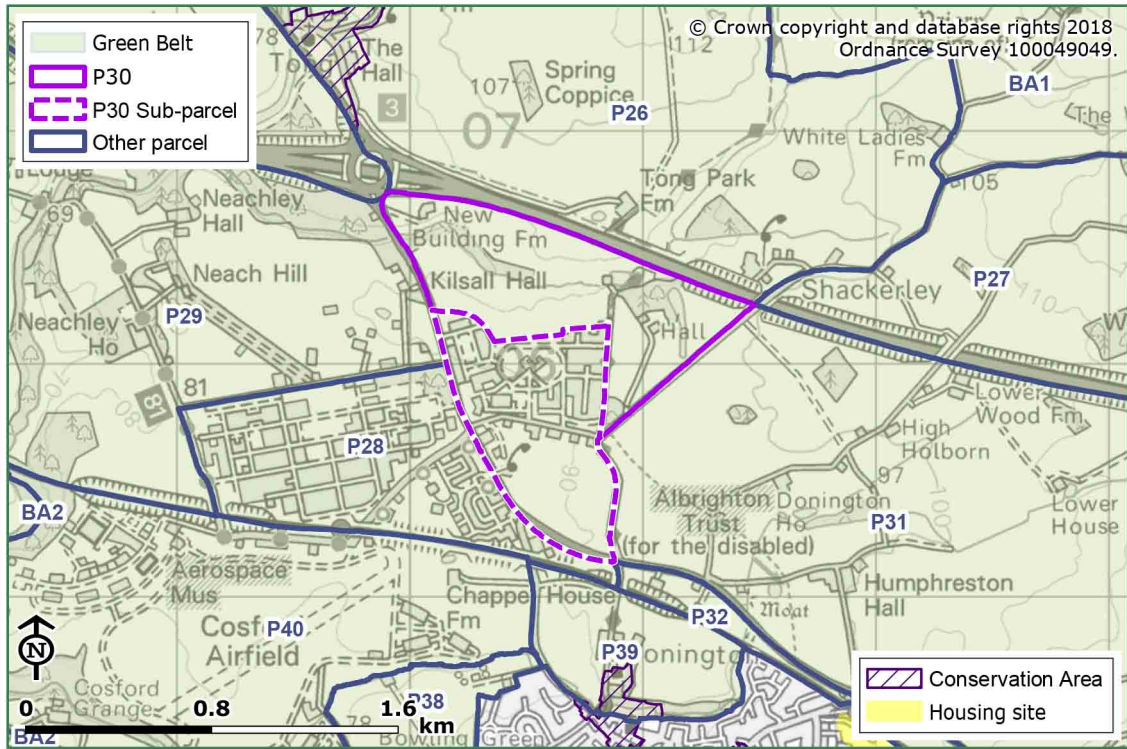


Figure A4.8: Parcel P30



Figure A4.9: Arable field in the far south of parcel P30 (Sub-parcel P30) with RAF Cosford seen in the distance.

Relationship to settlement/countryside

Parcel P30 lies to the north of Albrighton separated by the A41, railway line and intervening parcel P28 and does not directly adjoin any parcels being assessed around Albrighton. Parcel P30 is separated from the neighbouring agricultural land to the north by the M54 motorway corridor, which provides a degree of severance between the parcel and the wider countryside to the north. An area of arable land in the north of the parcel is undeveloped and displays the characteristics of the open countryside. However, this land is contained by the motorway, the A41 and development associated with RAF Cosford which leads to a level of disconnect between it and the wider countryside to the east. Shackerley Lane separates the single arable field in the south of the parcel and the garden grounds of Shackerley Hall in the northeast from the countryside to the east and provides a limited degree of separation. The garden grounds of Shackerley Hall are more closely associated with the countryside to the east than the settlement of Cosford. The single arable field in the south of the parcel is enclosed by development on three sides which has led to a sense of urban encroachment and this field has a closer association with the built up area than the countryside.

The conclusions on the contribution of parcel P30 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 P30 (delineated on Figure A4.8 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

Moderate

The parcel is located approximately 600m to the north of Albrighton. The parcel lies within the gap between the settlements of Albrighton and Shifnal (approx. 4.0km northwest). A good proportion of the west of the parcel is developed, containing numerous buildings of the large RAF Cosford Military Base, a retirement village, a cluster of dwellings, a petrol station, and a caravan outlet. This development has led to a perception of narrowing the gap between Shifnal and Albrighton, when travelling along the A41. However, the remaining open areas of the parcel, particularly in the northwest, do play a limited role in preventing further merging or erosion of the visual and physical gap between these two settlements. Therefore, any loss of openness would be perceived as reducing the gap between settlements.

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

Moderate

There has already been a level of urban encroachment within the parcel due to the development linked to RAF Cosford, as well as a retirement Park Home site, a cluster of dwellings, a petrol station, a supermarket and a caravan outlet. The remaining open areas of the parcel have characteristics of the countryside, comprising arable land, woodland, and the large gardens of Shackerley Hall. Overall the parcel is considered to be making a moderate contribution to preventing encroachment of the countryside within the parcel.

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

No Contribution

Digital analysis, based on bare earth height data, indicates that this parcel is theoretically visible from the historic settlement areas located within Shifnal, Albrighton/Donington. In practice, there is little intervisibility between this parcel and these historic settlement 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 parcel does not lie adjacent to any areas currently inset into the Green Belt. The M54 motorway that defines the northern boundary of the parcel would form a readily recognisable and strong new Green Belt boundary. The western boundary of parcel P30 is defined by the A41 and the eastern boundary is defined by Shackerley Lane. All are readily recognisable features.

Harm to Green Belt Resulting from Release

This parcel contains a block of development containing buildings and infrastructure associated with RAF Cosford. The remaining areas of the parcel are open and comprise agricultural land and the garden grounds of Shackerley Hall. Releasing the entire parcel from the Green Belt would lead to a degree of encroachment on the open countryside to the east and would weaken the role this land is playing as Green Belt with regard to Purpose 3. However there is a degree of severance between the parcel and the wider countryside to the north due to the M54 motorway corridor. Due to the level of existing development within the parcel and its containment by the M54 to the north and by RAF Cosford to the south east, it is considered that the release of parcel P30 from the Green Belt as a whole would lead to a **Moderate** level of harm to the Green Belt within this local area.

A Sub-parcel has been identified within Parcel P30 that would lead to a lower level of overall harm to the Green Belt if it was to be released. Sub-parcel P30 comprises the block of development within the centre of the parcel, containing buildings and infrastructure associated with RAF Cosford, as well as a single arable field forming the southern extent of parcel P30. The north of the Sub-parcel is almost fully developed, therefore its release from the Green Belt would not significantly alter the existing level of encroachment on neighbouring areas of open land. The arable field in the south is enclosed by development on three sides and does not have a strong relationship with the wider countryside. The release of this field from the Green Belt would not significantly weaken the role neighbouring areas of countryside are playing as Green Belt in regard to Purpose 3. The release of Sub-parcel P30 from the Green Belt would lead to a **Low-Moderate** level of harm to the Green Belt in this local area.

Parcel P40

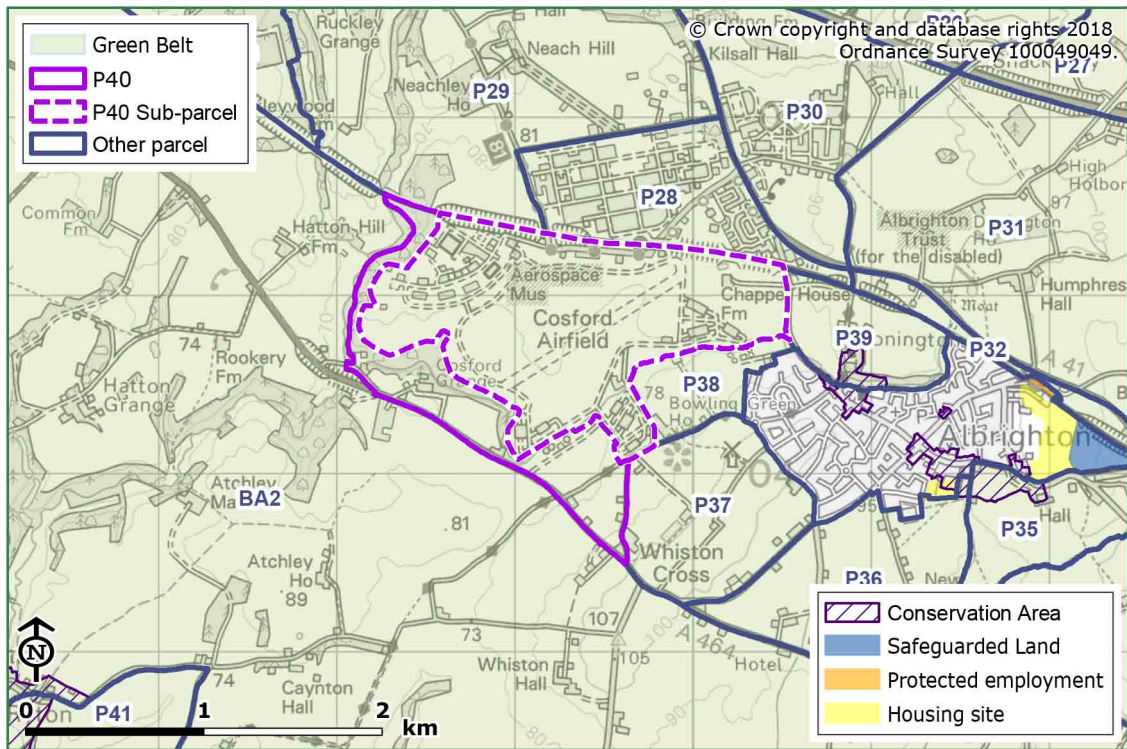


Figure A4.10: Parcel P40



Figure A4.11: Cosford Airfield with the belt of mature woodland along Cosford Pool watercourse seen in the distance.

Relationship to settlement/countryside

The majority of the land within Parcel P40 comprises the airfield of RAF Cosford and associated large buildings, hangars and large areas of hard standing, and are strongly associated with the settlement of Cosford. The south and western extent of the parcel comprises a collection of agricultural fields and Cosford Grange Farm, and is separated from the airfield by a dense belt of mature woodland that follows the Cosford Pool watercourse. This area of the parcel displays rural characteristics and is more closely associated with the wider countryside to the south than RAF Cosford. It should be noted that Parcel P40 lies to the north of Albrighton directly adjoining parcel P38 which is a parcel being assessed around Albrighton (See **Appendix 1**).

The conclusions on the contribution of parcel P40 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 P40 (delineated on Figure A4.10 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

Moderate

The parcel forms part of the gap between the settlements of Albrighton (approx. 100m east) and Shifnal (approx. 2.8km northwest). RAF Cosford, located within the parcel and to the north of the parcel, lies between the two settlements and already adds 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 does however play some role in preventing the merging or erosion of the visual or physical gap between settlements. Loss of openness would be perceived as reducing the gap between settlements.

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

Weak

There has already been extensive urban encroachment into the parcel due to the on-going development at RAF Cosford. This includes large buildings, hangars and large areas of hard standing in the northwest and north of the parcel. In addition to this, there are grass covered bunkers located to the east and southeast of the parcel and a runway located across the centre of the parcel. This development is a historical anomaly which is washed over by the Green Belt. In addition to this, the A464 borders the parcel to the southeast and the railway line borders the parcel to the north, both of which could also cause a sense of encroachment within the parcel. The Green Belt plays a weak role in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment, albeit it is acknowledged that the south and western extent of the parcel which includes agricultural fields bordered by belts of woodland does play a stronger role in relation to Purpose 3.

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 some limited intervisibility between the flat land within this parcel and the Donington Conservation Area. The Parcel contains a relatively high amount of development, including RAF Cosford, and has very little rural character; therefore it does not make a strong contribution to the rural setting, an important characteristic of these historic settlements.

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 parcel does not lie adjacent to any areas currently inset into the Green Belt. The railway line along the northern boundary of the parcel would form a strong new Green Belt boundary. . The western boundary of the parcel is defined by the small water course of Cosford Pool which is lined with a dense belt of mature woodland. This boundary feature has a degree of permanency and is readily recognisable. The southern boundary of the parcel is defined by the A464, Kennel Lane, Old Worcester Road, and a small water course, and part of the eastern boundary is defined by Newport Road.

Harm to Green Belt Resulting from Release

The majority of Parcel P40 contains extensive development associated with RAF Cosford, including a large airfield. The southern and western extents of the parcel contain a collection of agricultural fields and Cosford Grange Farm, which are separated from the RAF Cosford by a dense belt of mature woodland following the Cosford Pool watercourse. This area of parcel P40 displays rural characteristics and is more closely associated with the wider countryside to the south than the settlement of Cosford. Releasing the entire area of parcel P40 from the Green Belt would lead to a level of encroachment on neighbouring areas of countryside to the south and would weaken the role these areas are playing as Green Belt with regard to Purpose 3. Releasing parcel P40 from the Green Belt would lead to a **Moderate-High** level of harm to the Green Belt in this local area.

A sub-parcel has been identified within Parcel P40 that would lead to a lower level of overall harm to the Green Belt if it was to be released. Sub-parcel P40 comprises the airfield and associated built development within RAF Cosford. The airfield is separated from agricultural land to the south and west by a dense belt of mature woodland and does not have a strong relationship to the wider countryside. Although developed, the airfield comprises a large area of open green space. Therefore, any extensive new built development occurring on the airfield is likely to be visible from certain areas of agricultural land that surrounds Albrighton and could lead to an increased sense of urban encroachment e.g. within P37. However, the release of Cosford Airfield from the Green Belt would be unlikely to significantly weaken the role these neighbouring areas of land are playing with regard to Purpose 3. and would lead to a **Low-Moderate** level of harm to the Green Belt in this local area.

Its release would leave P38 to the south east further contained by development to the north but the harm of releasing P38 has been assessed separately in **Appendix 1** as of Low-Moderate harm to the Green Belt.

Conclusion

Figure A4.12 below shows the level of harm associated with the release of parcels/sub-parcels considered within the assessment around Cosford.

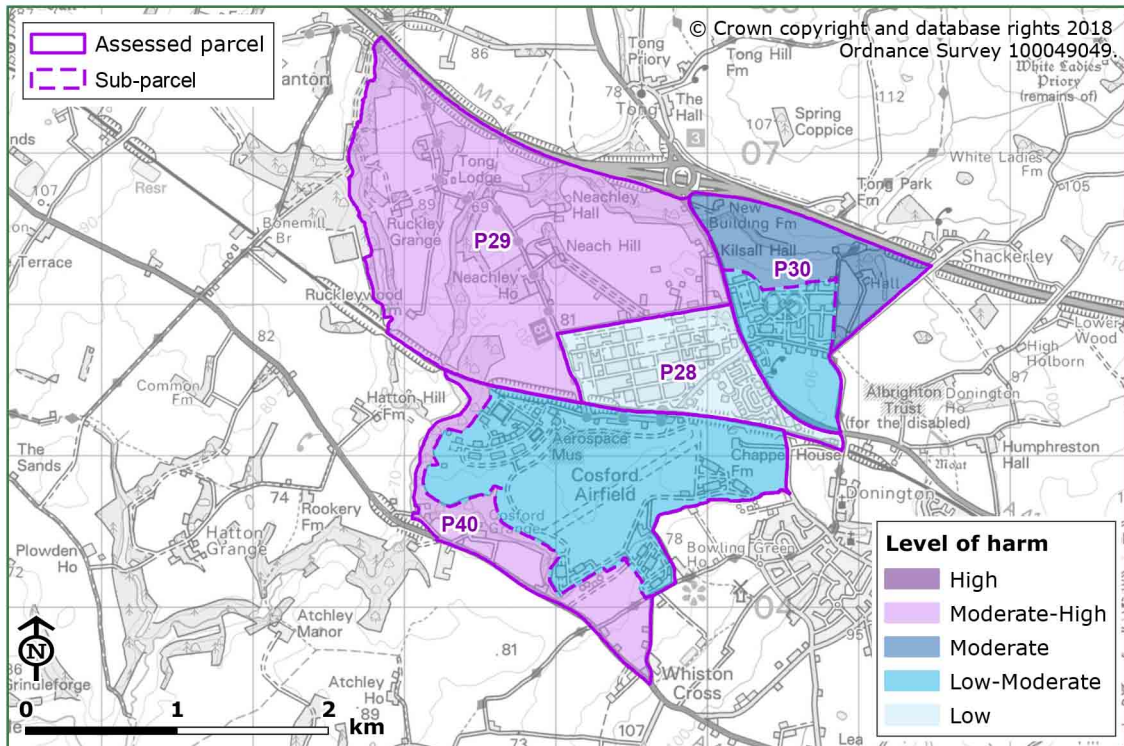


Figure A4.12: Individual Harm from Release of Parcels Surrounding Cosford

The parcel assessment summarised on Figure A4.12 indicates that the release of Green Belt land for development could result in a 'Moderate-High' level of harm to the Green Belt in the north-west, west and south of RAF Cosford. In comparison, releasing the developed parcel P28 could result in a 'Low' level of harm and the release of sub-parcels P30 and P40 could result in a 'Low-Moderate' level of Harm. The release of the northern section of parcel P30 is considered to have a 'Moderate' level of harm to the Green Belt, as whilst it is bounded by the M54 to the north, it is connected to open countryside to the east.

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 distinct Opportunity Areas around Cosford and two sub-opportunity areas. The findings of these assessments are set out below.

Opportunity Area Co-1

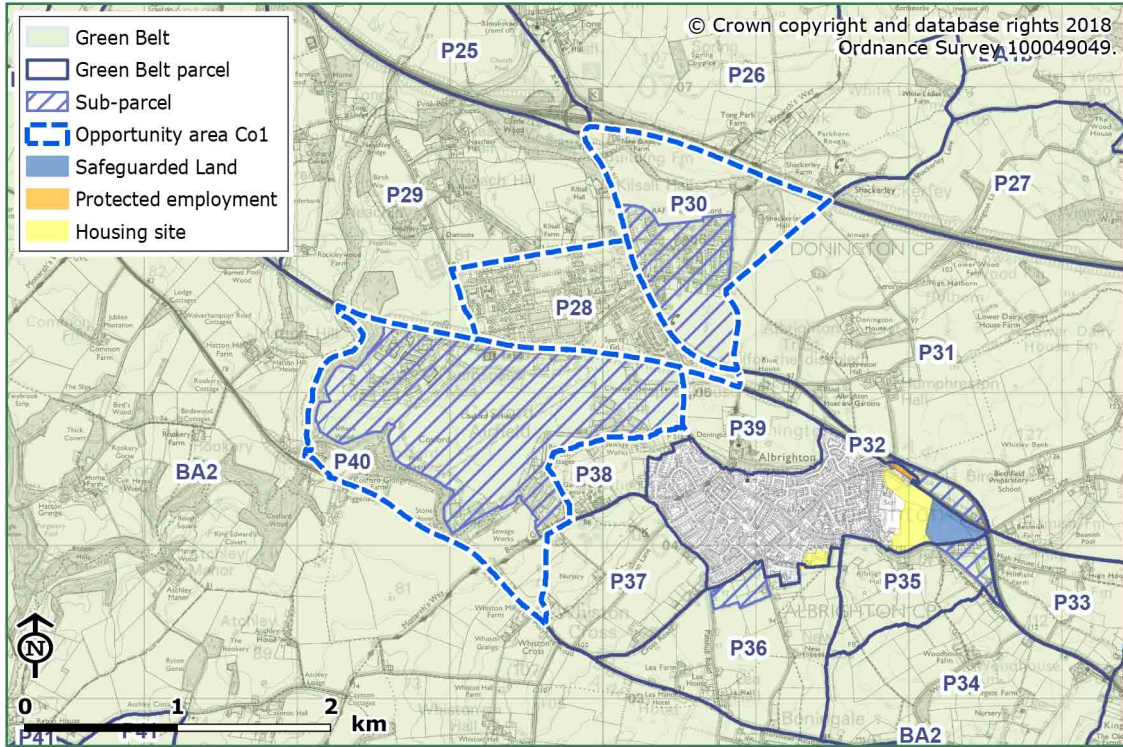


Figure A4.13: Opportunity Area Co-1

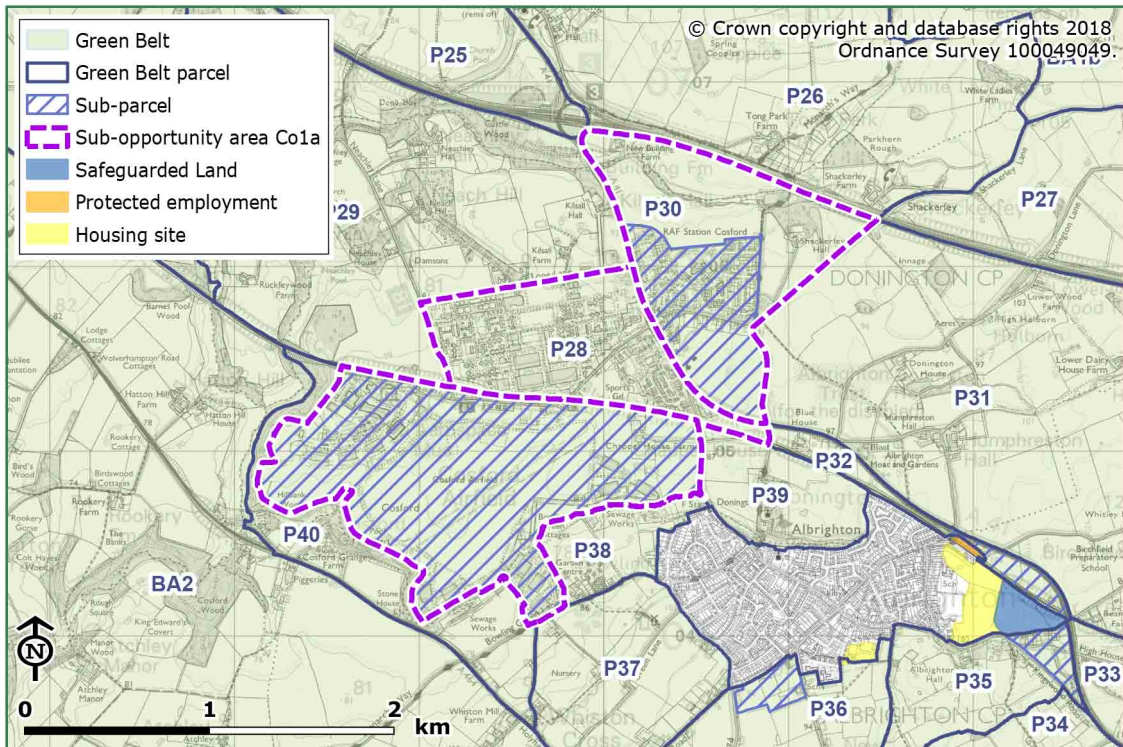


Figure A4.14: Sub-opportunity Area Co-1a

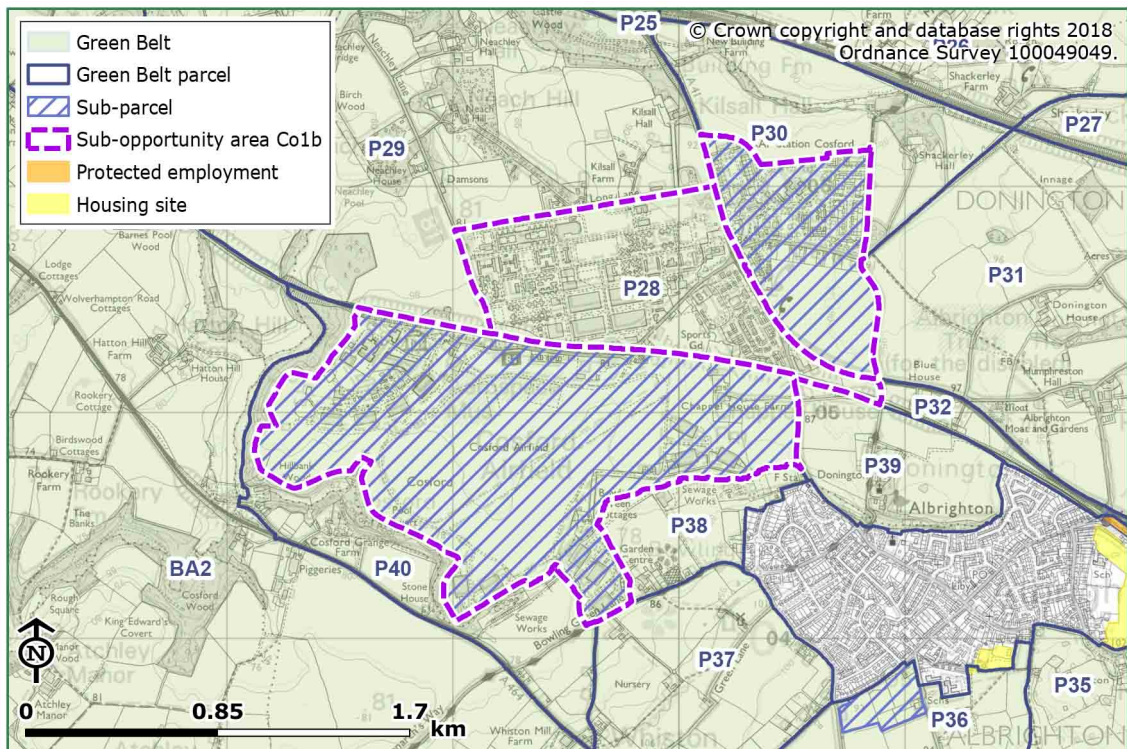


Figure A4.15: Sub-opportunity Area Co-1b

Description of Opportunity Area Co 1

Opportunity Area Co-1 comprises the entire areas of parcels P28, P30 and P40 to identify a potential direction for growth to the north east and south west boundary of Cosford.

Sub-opportunity Area Co-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 Co-1a comprises the release of Parcel P28, P30 and Sub-parcel P40.

Sub-opportunity Area Co-1b

A second sub-opportunity area has been identified that would lead to a lower level of overall harm to the Green Belt. Sub-opportunity Area Co-1b comprises the release of Parcel P28, Sub-parcel P30 and Sub-parcel P40.

NB Sub-opportunity Area Co-1a is the same as Sub-opportunity Area J3-1a (see **Appendix 5**) and Sub-opportunity Area Co-1b is the same as Sub-opportunity Area J3-1b (See **Appendix 5**). This allows these areas to be considered both in relation to Green Belt release focused on: a) Cosford as an existing settlement, military base and developed area; and/or b) Junction 3.

Summary of Assessment of Harm for Individual Parcels

The individual release of entire parcel P40 would have a **Moderate-High** level of harm to the Green Belt. The individual release of the entire parcel P30 would have a **Moderate** level of harm to the Green Belt. The individual release of parcel P28 would have a **Low** level of harm to the Green Belt.

Assessment of Harm for sub-parcels

The release of Sub-parcel P40 or P30 would have a **Low-Moderate** level of harm to the Green Belt.

Assessment of harm

Removal of Opportunity Area Co-1

The removal of Co-1 would result in development being sited along the western and eastern extents of parcel P40, which would lead to a level of encroachment on neighbouring areas of open countryside and weakening the role this land is playing as Green Belt under Purpose 3. Releasing Opportunity Area Co-1 would also lead to a loss of open agricultural land that displays the characteristics of the open countryside in the north of parcel P30 and have some encroachment on the wider countryside to the east of the parcel.

Releasing Opportunity Area Co-1 from the Green Belt would have a **Moderate-High** level of harm to the Green Belt in this local area.

Moderate-High Harm

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

Mitigation Measures

- The belt of mature trees along Cosford Pool water course within parcel P40 should be retained and protected against any construction activity in accordance with best practice. These trees help to define a stronger Green Belt edge.
- Hedgerows and hedgerow trees along either side of Shackerley Lane that defines the eastern boundary of parcel P30 should be retained and enhanced, with any weak points strengthened. Hedgerow trees should also be retained and protected against any new development in accordance with best practice.
- Existing small blocks of woodland, lines of planted trees and hedgerows along the fencing lining parcel P28 should be retained and where relevant enhanced in order to strengthen the Green Belt boundary.
- Hedgerows with trees lining Long Lane and Neachley Lane, which bound parcel P28 should be retained and enhanced, with any weak points strengthened.
- Banks of trees and shrubs along the railway line which defines the northern boundary of parcel P40 should be retained and protected against any construction activity in accordance with best practice.
- The belt of trees in the northern area of parcel P30, trees and woodland within the garden grounds of Shackerley Hall, and banks of trees lining the M54 motorway should be retained and protected against any construction activity in accordance with best practice.

Removal of Sub-opportunity Area Co-1a

Sub-opportunity Area Co-1a avoids development taking place along the extreme western and southern extents of parcel P40 but would include all of parcel P30.

Releasing Sub-opportunity Area Co-1a from the Green Belt would have a **Moderate** level of harm on the Green Belt in this local area.

Moderate Harm

Removal of Sub-opportunity Area Co-1b

Sub-opportunity Area Co-1b avoids development taking place along the western and southern extents of parcel P40 and the north-eastern extent of parcel P30. Consequently releasing the Sub-opportunity Area would not lead to a high level of encroachment in neighbouring areas of open countryside and would concentrate development within areas where there is already existing urbanising development.

Releasing Sub-opportunity Area Co-1b from the Green Belt would have a **Low-Moderate** level of harm on the Green Belt in this local area.

Low-Moderate Harm

The following section sets out potential mitigation measures that could be considered to minimise the degree of harm to the Green Belt associated with the release of Co-1a and Co-1b.

Mitigation Measures

- The belt of mature trees along Cosford Pool water course within parcel P40 should be retained and protected against any construction activity in accordance with best practice. These trees help to define a stronger Green Belt edge.
- Hedgerows and hedgerow trees along either side of Shackerley Lane that defines the eastern boundary of Sub-parcel P30 should be retained and enhanced, with any weak points strengthened to minimise the impact of development on the wider Green Belt. Hedgerow trees should also be retained and protected against any new development in accordance with best practice.
- Hedgerows and lines of trees along the northern boundary of Sub-parcel P30 should be retained and where relevant enhanced.
- Existing small blocks of woodland, lines of planted trees and hedgerows along the fencing bordering parcel P28 should be retained and where relevant enhanced in order to create a strong Green Belt boundary.
- Hedgerows with trees lining Long Lane and Neachley Lane, which bound parcel P28 should be retained and enhanced, with any weak points strengthened.
- Banks of trees and shrubs along the railway line which defines the northern boundary of parcel P40 should be retained and protected against any construction activity in accordance with best practice.

Opportunity Area Co-2

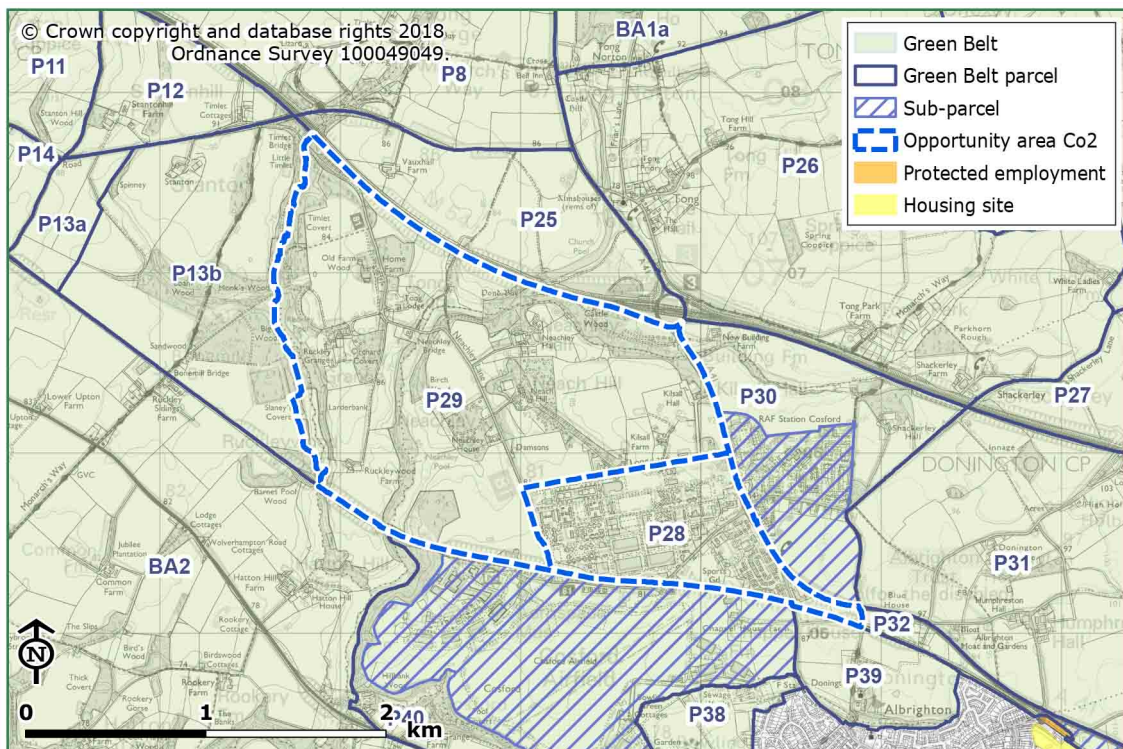


Figure A4.16: Opportunity Area Co-2

Description of Opportunity Area Co-2

Opportunity Area Co-2 comprises the entire area of parcels P28 and P29.

Summary of Assessment of Harm for Individual Parcels

The individual release of parcel P29, would have a **Moderate-High** level of harm to the Green Belt. The individual release of parcel P28, would have a **Low** level of harm to the Green Belt.

Assessment of harm

Removal of Opportunity Area Co-2

Parcel P29 forms part of the open countryside set between Cosford/Albrighton and Shifnal. Releasing Opportunity Area Co-2 from the Green Belt would constitute encroachment on the countryside and weaken the role neighbouring areas of land are playing as Green Belt in regard to Purpose 3. Parcel P29 also forms a substantial part of the settlement gap between Albrighton and Shifnal. Its removal from the Green Belt under Opportunity Area Co-2 would weaken the role of the Green Belt in this local area with regard to Purpose 2.

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

Moderate-High Harm

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

Mitigation Measures

- The belt of mature trees along Ruckley Pool water course within parcel P29 should be retained and protected against any construction activity in accordance with best practice.

- Existing woodland, lines of planted trees and field boundary hedgerows should be retained and where relevant enhanced in order to define a strong Green Belt edge.
- Banks of trees and shrubs along the railway line which defines the southern boundary of parcel P29 should be retained and protected against any construction activity in accordance with best practice.
- Banks of trees lining either side of the M54 motorway should be retained and protected against any construction activity in accordance with best practice. Where appropriate new planting along the motorway should be encouraged.

Part 4: Conclusions

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 one sub-opportunity area around Cosford.

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 A4. 1**.

Table A4.1: Summary Assessment of Harm for Opportunity Areas within Cosford

Opportunity Area Reference	Area (ha)	Rating
Co-1	451.5	Moderate-High
Co-1a	386.8	Moderate
Co-1b	320.5	Low - Moderate
Co-2	403.3	Moderate-High

The consideration of the release of Green Belt land around Cosford, 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. The assessment in this Green Belt Review has shown that up to 320.5ha of land (within opportunity area Co-1b) could be released from the Green Belt for development with a low-moderate level of harm to the Green Belt designation in this local area, albeit much of this area is already developed. 386.8 ha could be released (within opportunity area Co-1a) with a moderate impact on the Green Belt. The release of the remaining opportunity areas around Cosford are considered to have a Moderate-High level of harm the Green Belt designation.

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 releases of land in Cosford. At a strategic level there will be no harm to the role played by the West Midlands Green Belt associated with the release of Co-1a and Co-1b 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.