

**Albrighton, Donington with Boscobel and  
Boningale Parish Councils**

# **Albrighton Neighbourhood Plan 'Light'**



**June 2013**



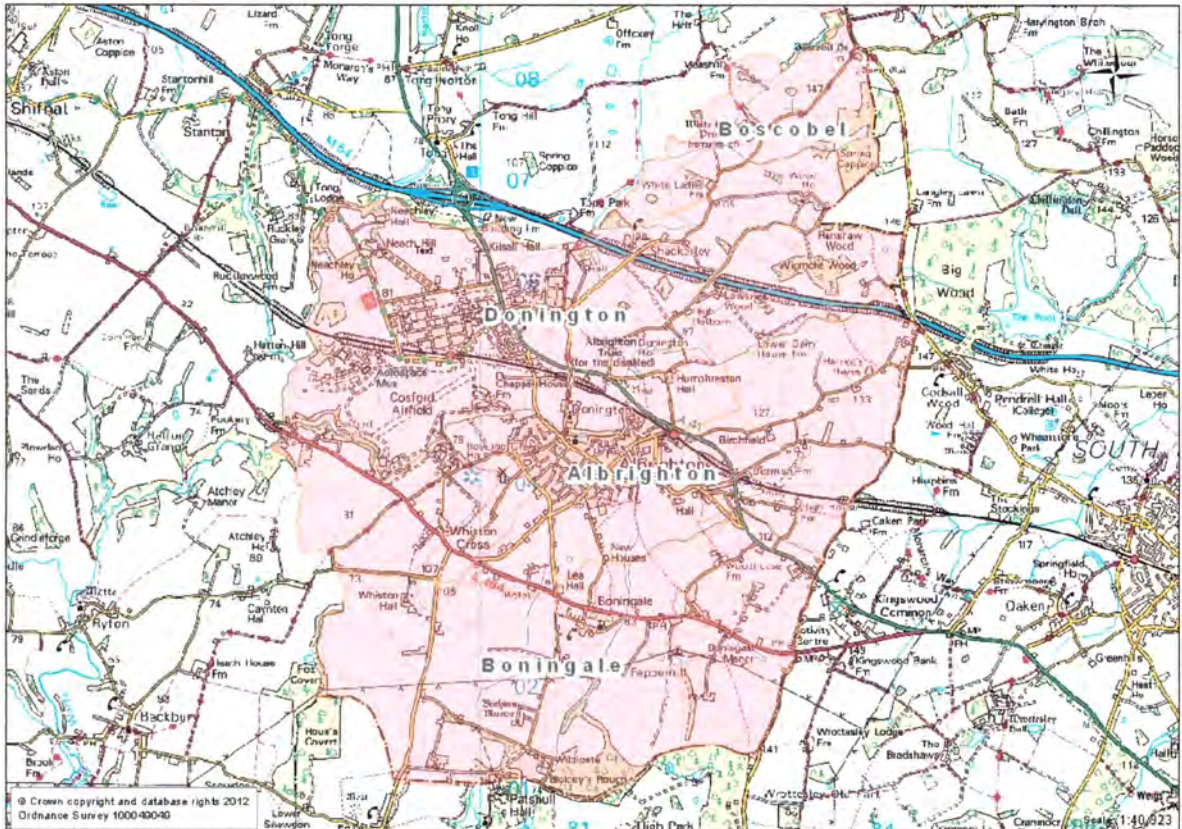
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# 1 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 The area covered by this Neighbourhood Plan 'Light' is shown below. It is important to note that this covers the parishes of Albrighton, Donington with Boscobel and Boningale jointly. When the Plan makes reference to 'Albrighton' this is intended to represent all three parishes which make up the area and is used for the sake of brevity only.



Source: Shropshire Council

## Relationship between the Neighbourhood Plan Light and the SAMDev

- 1.2 The Shropshire Site Allocations and Development Management (SAMDev) Plan sets out proposals for the use of land and policies to guide future development in order to help to deliver the vision and objectives of the Core Strategy for the period up to 2026. The SAMDev moves forward from the policies of the Shropshire Core Strategy and its targets to set out its commitment to enabling the delivery of the intended scale of development, identifying the further supply required for the key areas of housing and employment land.
- 1.3 The SAMDev also expands the role of the individual settlement policy sections included in the Core Strategy in terms of determining scale and distribution of development, and links to policies which, for housing and employment land respectively, set out the approach to supply/delivery and development management.
- 1.4 Albrighton is one of the areas which has its own settlement policy section in the SAMDev. This sets out the amount of additional development planned to 2026, any site allocations and development boundaries and other key development guidelines. The settlement policy is



ultimately informed by this Neighbourhood Plan 'Light' for Albrighton. The Neighbourhood Plan Light provides the detail that, along with the Core Strategy and the SAMDev, informs future development in Albrighton. The three documents should therefore be read in conjunction with one another as collectively they represent the development plan for determining planning applications.

- 1.5 Separate to this is the Albrighton Place Plan which can be updated annually. This summarises the infrastructure and investment requirements needed to deliver the community vision and aspirations for Albrighton. As such, it is very much informed by this Neighbourhood Plan Light.
- 1.6 It is important to make clear that the Albrighton Neighbourhood Plan Light does not represent a Neighbourhood Development Plan under the provisions of the Localism Act. It is the relationship with the SAMDev as explained above which affords the Neighbourhood Plan Light its role in forming part of the statutory development plan.

### **Statement of Community Involvement**

- 1.7 The Neighbourhood Plan Light has been shaped by the views of the community. In gathering the views of the community and ensuring that they are able to engage with the process of plan preparation, the following activities have been undertaken:
  - September 2012 - an initial public meeting to inform the community about the Neighbourhood Plan Light and how they could get involved in the process.
  - October 2012 – the launch of the Neighbourhood Plan Light survey, distributed to every household in the plan area.
  - October 2012 – the launch of a bespoke survey for young people to provide their views.
  - January 2013 – two workshops to consider the emerging issues and seek views from the community on how they would wish to address these issues. This was informed by the results of the surveys which elicited nearly 1,500 responses.
  - May 2013 – a public meeting to present the draft Neighbourhood Plan Light and seeks the views of the community on its contents.

## 2 LOCAL CONTEXT

### History of Albrighton

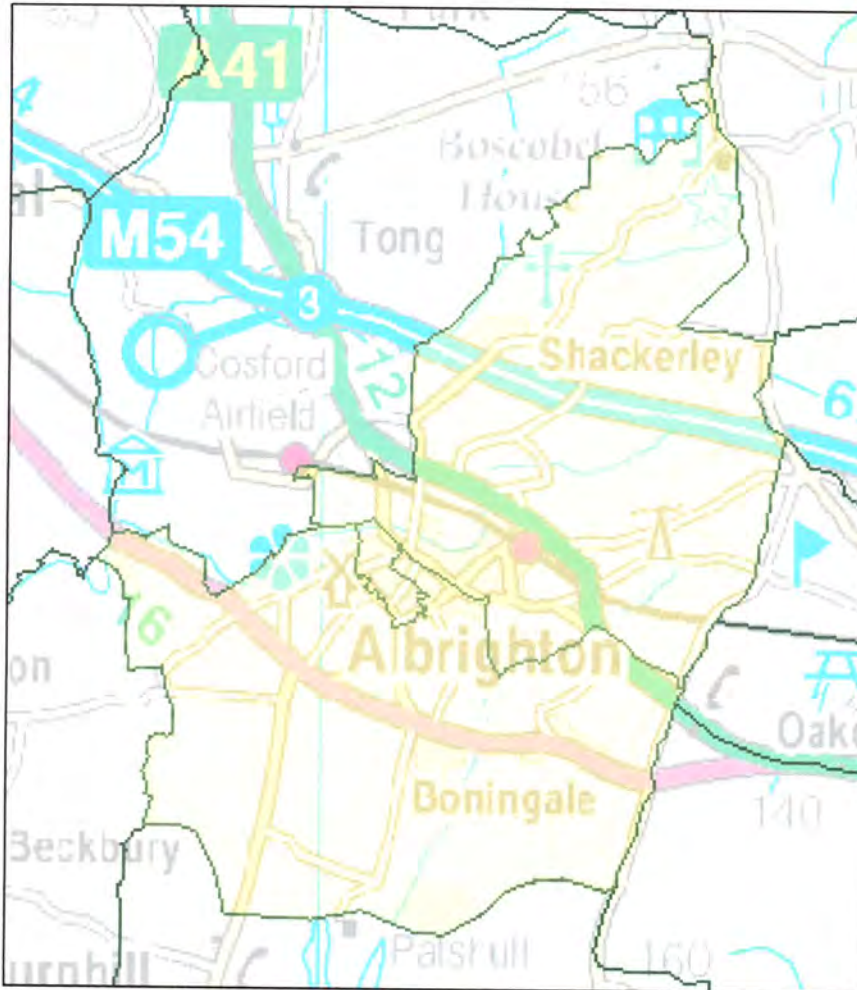
- 2.1 Albrighton has a rich history which has been reflected in the way it has developed and in some of its buildings. The origins of Albrighton can be traced back to the end of the 6th century. The name derives from the Anglo-Saxon meaning the farm or settlement of Aethelbeorht. The present church of St. Mary Magdalene was completed in 1181 and is in the Early English and Decorated styles.
- 2.2 Apart from being a centre for markets and fairs for the surrounding agricultural area since the 14th century, Albrighton had a number of local industries before the coming of the railway in 1849. In the early 1600s there had been a thriving button-making industry, in the 18th century it was clock-making and by the 19th century, brickmaking. However, Albrighton's main industry was predominately agriculture. The focus of the parish remained the church of St. Mary Magdalene; the area around it is now part of a separate Donington and Albrighton Conservation Area.
- 2.3 RAF Cosford opened in 1938 as a joint aircraft maintenance, storage and technical training unit. It has remained mainly a training unit to this day. The Fulton Mess barrack block was constructed just before World War Two as the largest single building barrack block in the UK. It is now used for technical training. Significant numbers of RAF personnel working at RAF Cosford choose to live in Albrighton.
- 2.4 In more recent times, two major events have shaped Albrighton's modern development. Both occurred in the 1960s; the first was the building of the A41 Albrighton bypass which moved traffic away from the local roads of Albrighton.
- 2.5 The second event was the significant expansion of the north of the village. Major housing development served to significantly increase the population and to fundamentally change Albrighton. The population today, including RAF Cosford, is in excess of 8,000 people.

### Socio-economic profile

- 2.6 The profile of Albrighton is largely based on the 2011 Census information. The data collected is at lower super output area, which means that RAF Cosford has been excluded. However, the area is largely albeit not entirely contiguous with the boundaries of the three parishes. The map below shows the area.



**Figure 2.1: Area for socio-economic analysis**

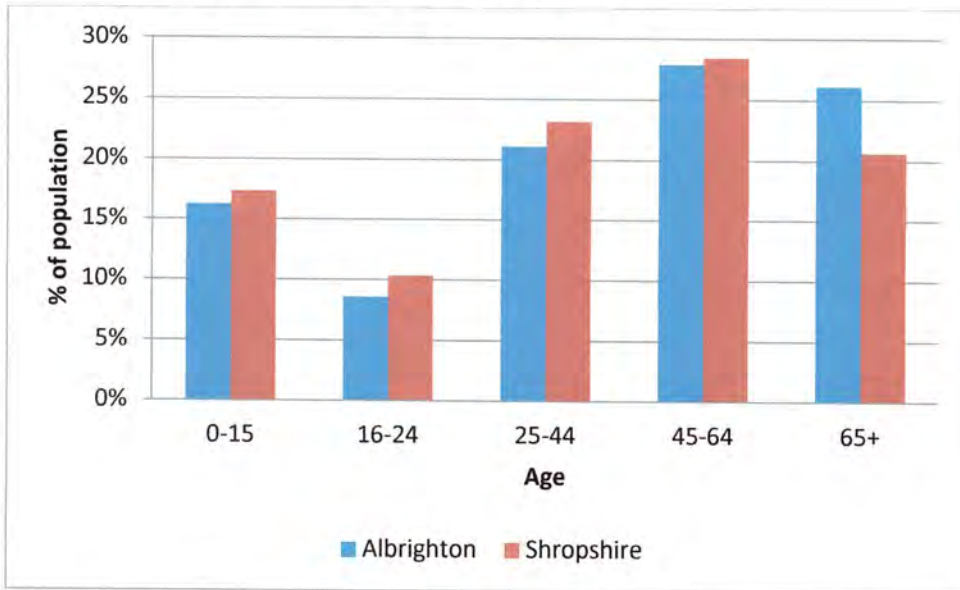


Source: Office for National Statistics

### **Population**

- 2.7 The size of the population is 5,131 people. This is an increase of 194 people (3.9%) since 2001. By contrast, the population of Shropshire grew by 8.1%.
- 2.8 The profile of the population is shown in Figure 2.2. It is noticeable how much higher the proportion of people of retirement age is in Albrighton compared to Shropshire. Equally, Albrighton has a lower proportion of under-25s than Shropshire. Indeed, the ratio of people of retirement age (65+) to young people (under 25) is 1.05 in Albrighton whereas it is only 0.75 in Shropshire.

**Figure 2.2: Age profile of the population, 2011**

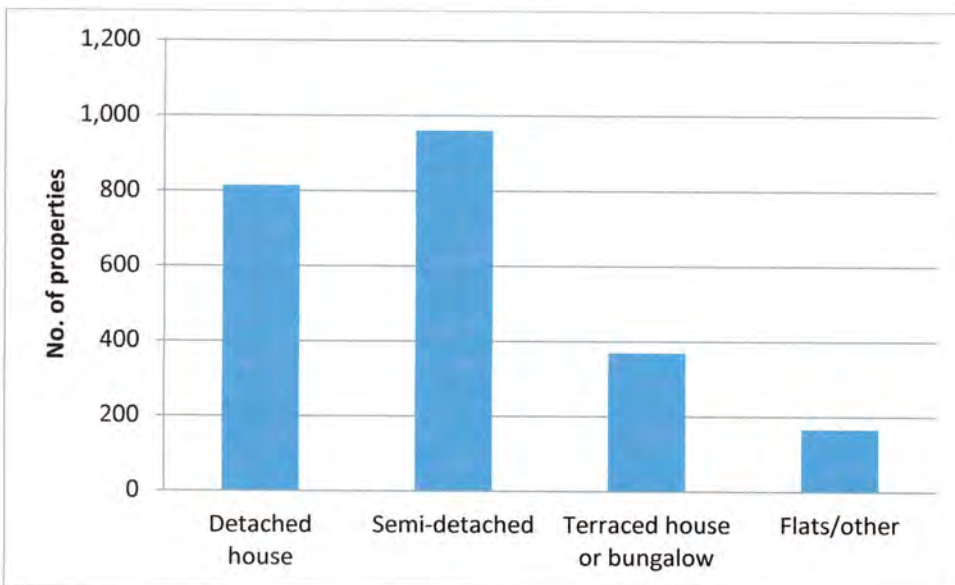


Source: 2011 Census

### Dwellings and households

- 2.9 In 2011 there were 2,311 dwellings in Albrighton, housing 2,239 households (i.e. there are a small number of empty properties or second homes).
- 2.10 Figure 2.3 shows that the predominant property types are detached and semi-detached properties. The proportion of terraced and flatted properties (23%) is noticeably lower than across Shropshire (27%). This suggests a lower stock of smaller properties.

**Figure 2.3: Profile of properties in Albrighton**



Source: 2011 Census

- 2.11 However, when looking at the statistics on the number of persons in each household, it is noticeable that the pattern in Albrighton is almost identical to that of Shropshire as a whole. So

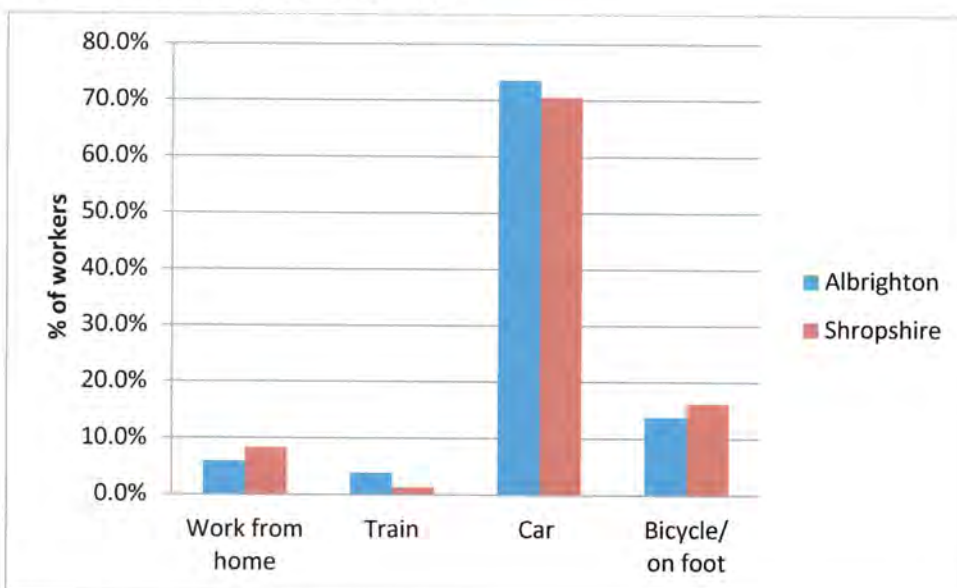


whilst the household sizes are almost the same, the stock of smaller properties is much lower in Albrighton. This suggests that potentially there are more smaller households living in larger properties in Albrighton, although whether they would wish to move to a smaller property is another matter.

### Economic activity

- 2.12 Of the resident population aged 16 to 74, a total of 69.5% were economically active (i.e. in employment, self-employed, unemployed or a full-time student). This is broadly comparable to the Shropshire economic activity rate of 71%.
- 2.13 Unemployment is generally low, with 106 people unemployed as at March 2011. Of these, 33 people are long term unemployed (not having worked for at least two years) and 32 people are aged between 16 and 24.
- 2.14 Figure 2.4 shows some of the main modes of travel to work. The pattern suggests that most people leave Albrighton to work and do so mainly by car – and this is a higher proportion than for Shropshire as a whole. There are comparatively fewer people in Albrighton compared to Shropshire who work from home and fewer that travel to work either by bicycle or on foot.
- 2.15 The presence of the train station however is a major boost to more sustainable forms of transport, with a much higher proportion of people travelling to work by train than in Shropshire as a whole. It is desirable to increase this proportion in conformity with Shropshire development policy but increased parking near to the station is a necessary prerequisite.

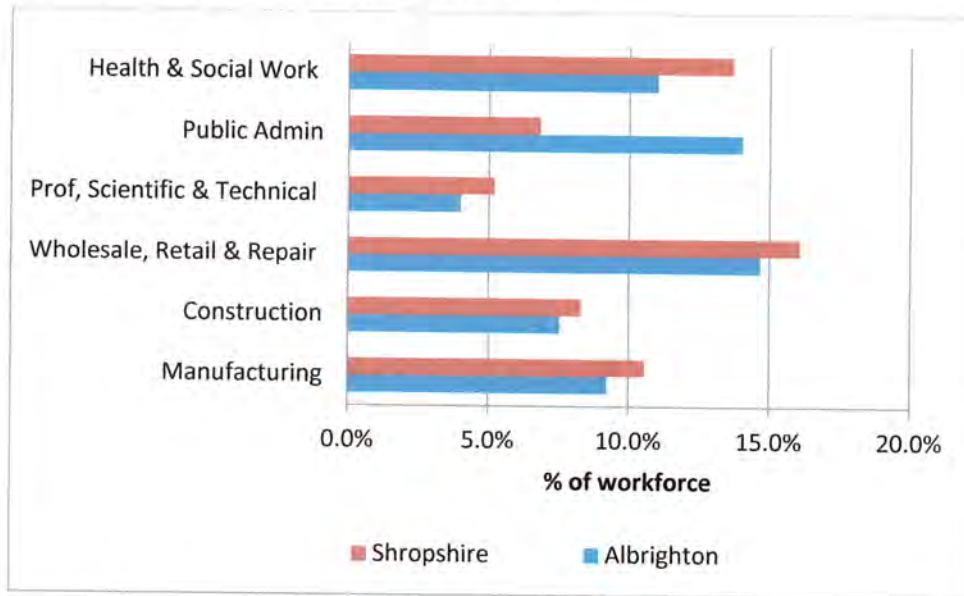
**Figure 2.4: Mode of travel to work**



Source: 2011 Census

### Workforce profile

- 2.16 Figure 2.5 shows the main sectors of employment where there are significant differences between Albrighton and Shropshire. Albrighton has a lower proportion of people working in most of the principal sectors that make up the modern economy, including health and social work, professional and scientific, retail, construction and manufacturing.

**Figure 2.5: Significant employment sectors**

Source: 2011 Census

- 2.17 However, where it makes up for this gap is in public administration activities. This sector employs nearly 15% of the Albrighton workforce compared to less than 7% of the workforce across Shropshire. It is likely that the presence of RAF Cosford and the Defence College of Aeronautical Engineering (DCAE) is a major factor contributing towards this.
- 2.18 When looking at the level of qualifications that the resident population aged 16 and over has achieved, the only noticeable difference between Albrighton and Shropshire is that Albrighton has a higher proportion of people with the highest level of qualifications. A total of 29.1% of the population are educated broadly to degree level, compared to just 27.5% across Shropshire.

### Summary

- 2.19 The socio-economic picture of Albrighton is of a reasonably affluent village with a population that works largely in strong employment sectors, albeit that many of these jobs are not local. The housing position is a challenging one with a lack of smaller properties that are needed to address the changing needs of the population.
- 2.20 The presence of RAF Cosford exerts a significant influence over many aspects of life in Albrighton. Decisions made by the Ministry of Defence regarding the future of RAF Cosford will therefore have a fundamental impact on the future of Albrighton. Depending on what that decision is, it could have major implications for the land use planning needs of Albrighton and therefore it may be necessary to review the Neighbourhood Plan Light and associated Shropshire Council Development Plan Documents.



### 3 VISION AND OBJECTIVES FOR ALBRIGHTON

#### Challenges for Albrighton

- 3.1 The Neighbourhood Plan Light seeks to address, as far as is possible, the challenges that face the community of Albrighton. In summary these challenges are:
- **Demography** - an ageing population and low proportions of young people.
  - **Geography** – the wish to retain Albrighton as a village with its village ambiance and in particular to retain its important assets such as the village green and conservation areas.
  - **Ability to grow** – given the presence of the Green Belt and balancing growth with retaining Albrighton’s function as a village.
  - **Village hinterland** – ensuring that the needs of the residents outside Albrighton village, particularly in Donington with Boscobel and Boningale parishes, are met.
  - **Housing stock** – a lack of smaller properties, particularly at more affordable values.
  - **Affordable housing** – the need to deliver more affordable housing.
  - **Infrastructure** – the pressure on the existing infrastructure network particularly regarding matters such as parking and flooding, and the need to ensure growth does not worsen this position.
  - **High Street** – the need to protect the vitality and viability of the shops and services in Albrighton village, which are one of the village’s strongest assets, whilst preserving and enhancing its appearance and conservation area which is fundamental to the village ‘feel’.
  - **Employment** – the lack of employment opportunities locally and the changing ways that people work.
  - **RAF Cosford** – the significant impact that this establishment has on life in Albrighton and the associated uncertainty over its future.

#### Vision for Albrighton

- 3.2 The Shropshire Core Strategy identifies Albrighton as a key service centre which will have development to meet local needs, respecting its location in the Green Belt. Some of the development to meet the needs of returning military personnel will be accommodated if required.
- 3.3 The work with the community has enabled a more particular vision to be articulated for Albrighton:

**Albrighton shall retain its community function as a village serving a wider hinterland, whilst also recognising the need to embrace change in order to continue to prosper. Albrighton’s future will continue to balance changing needs for housing, employment and leisure with the importance of protecting its most important assets and having regard to current infrastructure deficiencies. The future of RAF Cosford is expected to be fundamental in shaping Albrighton’s future**

## Objectives of the Neighbourhood Plan Light

- 3.4 The objectives of the Neighbourhood Plan 'Light' as identified through engagement with the community are as follows:
- **Objective One:** To retain Albrighton as a vibrant village serving its wider catchment area, whilst ensuring that development reflects its character and appearance.
  - **Objective Two:** To address local housing needs in terms of tenure, mix and size.
  - **Objective Three:** To retain and enhance the vitality and viability of the shops and services that provide for the needs of the community.
  - **Objective Four:** To address parking issues at the station and at other pinchpoints in the village centre.
  - **Objective Five:** For growth to facilitate the provision and maintenance of infrastructure needs that will benefit the community.
  - **Objective Six:** To ensure that the critical infrastructure needed to support growth is able to grow itself in order to provide for the community's needs.
  - **Objective Seven:** To protect and enhance the quality of the physical and natural environment.
  - **Objective Eight:** To build on opportunities for local employment growth.



## 4 HOUSING

### Context

- 4.1 Albrighton is identified as a Key Centre in the Shropshire Core Strategy and the SAMDev. As such, the Parish Councils recognise that Albrighton is expected to accommodate growth in housing over the plan period.
- 4.2 The population of approximately over 5,000 people excludes the military presence as a result of RAF Cosford's activities. This serves to increase the population to around 8,000 people. As such, RAF Cosford has a major impact on the housing needs of Albrighton and if it were to be vacated by the RAF and then redeveloped, this situation would be exacerbated considerably.
- 4.3 Policy CS3 of the Shropshire Core Strategy states that Albrighton will have development to meet local needs. This is a role that has been endorsed by the community in Albrighton through its engagement in the Neighbourhood Plan Light process and through the earlier representations of the parish councils to Shropshire Council on its emerging plans. In addition the community has given some very clear messages as to the type of future housing needs it feels the Plan should address. These needs can be summarised as:
- Affordable housing
  - Smaller properties, mainly one- and two-bed properties, including properties appropriate for older persons' needs
  - Affordability of market housing, particularly for first-time buyers
- 4.4 The SAMDev provides the base housing position for Albrighton. It identifies the Parish Council aspiration to deliver approximately 200 dwellings over the plan period. However, this Neighbourhood Plan Light seeks to reflect the community's aspirations and therefore revisits the housing requirements in light of other needs.
- 4.5 A small majority of the community that responded to the Albrighton survey (which excluded military personnel and their families) said that growth was needed. Whether people agreed with this or not, a common theme was the importance of keeping Albrighton a village as opposed to it growing into a town. The Plan therefore seeks to achieve that balance.
- 4.6 The Plan covers the period 2006 to 2026. In respect of housing in the planning pipeline, i.e. completed, under construction or with planning permission, the position from the start of the plan period to 1<sup>st</sup> April 2012 was as follows:

**Table 4.1: Housing delivery position, 1<sup>st</sup> April 2012**

Source	Dwellings	Total dwellings
Completions, 2006-2012		28
Dwellings under construction		5
Dwellings with planning permission		96
<i>Land at Shaw Lane</i>	<i>80</i>	
<i>Land off Station Road</i>	<i>9</i>	
<i>Barns at Wildicote, Rushey Lane</i>	<i>5</i>	
<i>18 Cross Road</i>	<i>2</i>	
<b>Total dwellings</b>		<b>129</b>

Source: Shropshire Council



- 4.7 In respect of the outline permission at Shaw Lane, a minimum of 13% of the dwellings (10 dwellings) shall be affordable units. None of the other sites in the planning pipeline are expected to deliver affordable units.

### **Housing need**

- 4.8 It is considered important to ensure that the growth proposed addresses the needs of the community of Albrighton. The Plan focuses firstly on housing needs. Housing needs consists of affordable housing needs and the need for market housing by local people that are unable to access open market housing at current values. It is recognised that any market housing growth cannot be guaranteed for local people and that there is a need to plan for a mix of housing that is deliverable. However, these principles of housing need for local people underpin the objectives of the plan.

### **Affordable housing need**

- 4.9 The most appropriate guide to the amount of affordable housing required at present in Albrighton is provided by the Shropshire Housing Register.
- 4.10 At March 2013 there was a total of 61 applicants that already live in Albrighton and are looking for an affordable property in Albrighton. Of these, the large majority (80%) require a small property – either one or two bedrooms.
- 4.11 Shropshire Council identifies the priority band that each applicant on the Housing Register is in. 'Priority' and 'Gold' are those in greatest need and priority is given to these people when new properties become available. Those in the 'Bronze' band are applicants not deemed to be in any form of housing 'need'. If these applicants are excluded, then there are a total of 42 local applicants with a need for an affordable property in Albrighton, with 33 of these requiring a one- or two-bed property.
- 4.12 As a larger settlement within Shropshire, Albrighton also has a certain level of responsibility to house a proportion of those in housing need that are not currently living in the area. Table 4.2 shows that there are a total of 58 applicants in some form of housing need wishing to live in Albrighton. Although it is not known, commonly this wish to live in an area is because of a local connection – this could be family living in the area or the fact that the person works locally. Whilst it cannot reasonably be expected that Albrighton should accommodate all of these people, an allowance should be made to accommodate some of these needs.
- 4.13 It is important to take into account that the current stock of affordable properties in Albrighton will also provide for the needs of some of these people. Between June 2009 and December 2011, a total of 36 properties came up for re-let in Albrighton. This equates to 1.2 properties per month, so if the same rate was applied over the next five years (60 months), approximately 72 properties could be expected to come available.
- 4.14 In summary, there are 100 applicants who currently wish to live in Albrighton. Some of these come from outside the area, so it may not be appropriate to accommodate them. Over the same period, potentially 70 dwellings may become available for re-let. This suggests that new-build provision for existing needs could total up to 30 dwellings, with the actual figure likely to be lower than this because not all people currently living outside the area should be accommodated.
- 4.15 It is expected therefore that approximately 15 new-build affordable properties are to be required in the next five years in order to address existing needs.



- 4.16 Then it is necessary to take a view on how much additional affordable housing growth should be accommodated for the remainder of the plan period. In the absence of reliable evidence on future needs beyond the five year period, it is considered reasonable to take the five year requirement and roll this forward at the same rate. So if the requirement over the next five years is 15 dwellings, then the requirement over a 15-year period would be 45 dwellings.
- 4.17 Policy CS11 of the Shropshire Core Strategy has a requirement for 33% affordable housing (20% social rented and 13% intermediate tenure) to be delivered. It is important to ensure, with affordable housing being a priority for the Neighbourhood Plan Light, that the appropriate level of market housing is brought forward to ensure delivery.

### **Market housing need**

- 4.18 The evidence from the Albrighton survey and workshops was that the community considers there is a need for a greater number of smaller properties in Albrighton. This is also supported by the Housing Register with those in the 'Bronze' band not considered to be in need but, by virtue of being on the Register, clearly finding it difficult to access housing on the open market. At March 2013, there were up to 50 applicants on the Housing Register that wish to live in Albrighton but have little prospect of securing a social rented or equivalent property.
- 4.19 This is a common trend with, in particular, first-time buyers struggling to access housing at current property prices. In October 2012, the average price of a terraced house in the WV7 postcode area (covering the Albrighton area) was £137,000<sup>1</sup>. Flats were significantly cheaper but the stock of these is low in Albrighton and, as a general trend across the national housing market, such dwellings are relatively less attractive to housebuilders in non-urban locations when compared to houses. Based on a 95% mortgage, a couple would therefore need a combined income of £52,000, or a single person an income of £43,500, to be able to buy a house. Yet in 2010, the average income was just £36,500<sup>2</sup>.
- 4.20 It is difficult to be precise about the extent of 'needs' for market housing. It was certainly felt strongly by the community that the needs of people living locally should be considered as a priority. However, it was equally recognised that Albrighton is an attractive place for people to move to and, provided the village did not change and become a town, then it was reasonable to offer residential opportunities to in-migrants. This was felt to particularly important for young families who would help to address the general ageing of the population.
- 4.21 It is therefore proposed that approximately 200 market dwellings are planned for Albrighton over the plan period. This number of dwellings are in addition to the 45 affordable properties and is of a scale which will enable the required affordable housing to be delivered.
- 4.22 It is important that such levels of growth can be supported by the local infrastructure. One key area is education and specifically the capacity at the existing schools serving Albrighton. According to Edubase, the Department for Education's database of schools, the two primary schools in Albrighton had 76 additional places unfilled as at March 2013. A common standard in planning for education needs is that 21 primary school pupils are generated for every 100 new dwellings. Therefore, the existing schools in Albrighton could accommodate the proposed level of housing. This would also assume that all of this housing would be for families who would be creating the need for additional education provision, which is not the case as some of this housing is expected to be specialist housing for older people.

<sup>1</sup> Source: [www.home.co.uk](http://www.home.co.uk)

<sup>2</sup> Source: Albrighton Place Plan, 2012-13



## Mix and type of housing

### Intermediate tenure housing<sup>3</sup>

- 4.23 The community of Albrighton has expressed considerable concern over the ability of young first-time buyers to access the housing market. As the analysis in the previous section showed, many of these people cannot afford dwellings at market prices and have little prospect of securing social housing through the Housing Register.
- 4.24 Shropshire Core Strategy Policy CS11 requires a proportion of affordable units to be provided as affordable housing, including intermediate tenures. One of the options for this type of provision that the community felt should be considered is a Community Land Trust (CLT).
- 4.25 A CLT is a not for profit, community-based organisation that owns land and property for public benefit. Land is taken out of the market and is only leased or rented, never sold, so that the land value is captured for all time for the benefit of the community. The CLT will retain ownership of the freehold and can if it chooses lease land to families, individuals, housing associations and co-operatives for developing affordable homes, without ever passing the land value on to the leaseholder. When leaseholders sell their home they share with the CLT any increase/decrease in the property's value. The home remains in the ownership of the CLT which can then make it available again as affordable dwelling for subsequent generations.

### Dwelling size

- 4.26 One aspect of the difficulty for first-time buyers in accessing housing in Albrighton raised by the community is the lack of small properties. In particular, the lack of one- and two-bed properties means that properties on the open market are even less affordable to these people because they are mostly larger family properties.
- 4.27 Over the period since January 2007, there have only been two months where there have been more than 25 one- and two-bed properties on the market in the Albrighton area (WV7 postcode) at any one time. Over the past 18 months, the average number of properties on the market has been below 15 dwellings<sup>4</sup>. This presents a considerable challenge to first-time buyers seeking to access the housing market.
- 4.28 It is therefore important that the supply of one-and two-bed properties is increased in Albrighton. To achieve this, all developments of five or more dwellings should provide at least 20% of dwellings as one- or two-bed properties. There should also be a mix of one- and two-bed properties (market and affordable) so where a scheme is of sufficient size to require at least five one-or two-bed properties, then at least 40% of these should be one-bed properties. By way of example, in the case of a 25-unit scheme, the requirement would be to provide five one-or two-bed properties, with at least two of these being one-bed properties.
- 4.29 Such provision will also create housing appropriate for older people looking to downsize. This itself serves to free up existing family housing which many older people, wishing to stay living in their community but lacking a choice of appropriate smaller properties, feel compelled to stay in at present.

<sup>3</sup> **Affordable housing** is defined as social rented, affordable rented and intermediate housing, provided to eligible households whose needs are not met by the market. **Intermediate tenure housing** is homes for sale and rent provided at a cost above social rent, but below market levels subject to the criteria in the Affordable Housing definition above. These can include shared equity (shared ownership and equity loans), other low cost homes for sale and intermediate rent, but not affordable rented housing.

<sup>4</sup> Source: [www.home.co.uk](http://www.home.co.uk)



## **POLICY ALB1: HOUSING REQUIREMENTS**

### **Dwelling numbers**

Up to 250 net additional dwellings will be provided in Albrighton over the plan period 2006-2026. These dwellings will principally be delivered on the sites allocated in Policy ALB2.

### **Intermediate tenure housing**

The use of a Community Land Trust (CLT) model will be encouraged to fulfil the part or all of the intermediate tenure requirements of housing schemes, in accordance with Shropshire Core Strategy Policy CS11.

### **Housing mix**

All housing proposals of five or more units will be expected to deliver at least 20% of these units as one- and two-bed properties.

To reflect the need for a mix of one- and two-bed properties, all schemes which are required to deliver at least five one- and two-bed properties should provide a minimum of 40% of these units as one-bed properties.

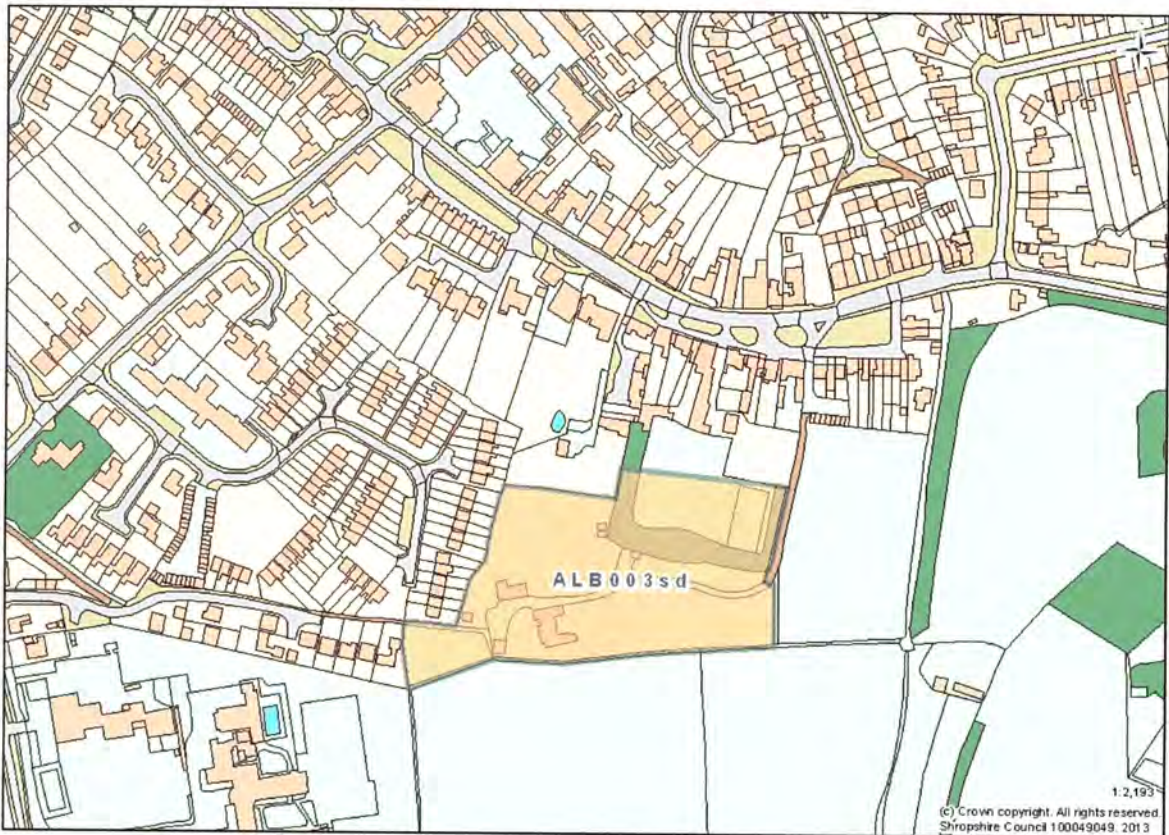
4.30 This addresses objectives One and Two of the Neighbourhood Plan Light.

### **Housing allocations**

4.31 Through the Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (SHLAA) process, two sites have been identified as being suitable for allocation in the Neighbourhood Plan Light. These are:

- Land at Whiteacres
- Further land east of Shaw Lane

### Land at Whiteacres

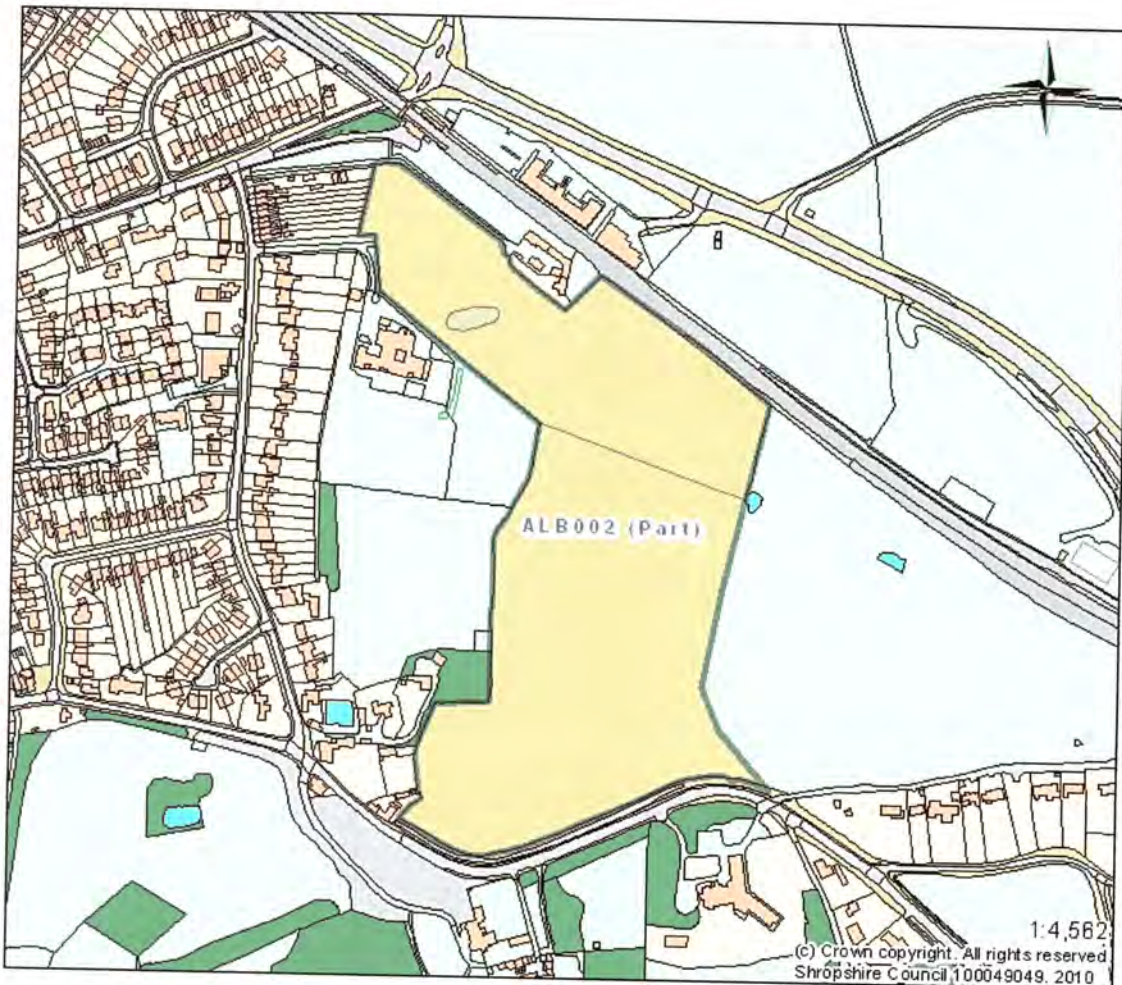


Source: Shropshire Council

- 4.32 This site is located close to the centre of the village and its services. Given this, it is considered to represent the best opportunity to provide housing appropriate for the needs of older people. The other proposed allocation to the east of Shaw Lane is further from the shops and services in Albrighton village so is less appropriate to address the needs of many older people who need to access these shops and services on foot.
- 4.33 Therefore, it is proposed that the site is allocated for a housing scheme which is capable of addressing the needs of older people.
- 4.34 The site is approximately 1.5 hectares in size. It is considered that the scale of housing is most appropriately addressed through any planning application, reflecting issues such as access.



### Land east of Shaw Lane



Source: Shropshire Council

- 4.35 Currently a parcel of this land has the benefit of planning permission for 80 dwellings (application reference: BR/APP/OUT/08/0907).
- 4.36 This adjacent parcel of land is under the same ownership so would benefit from a comprehensive approach. In order to reflect the opportunities that this land creates to address community needs, a more comprehensive approach is required for a larger parcel of this land over the lifetime of the plan.
- 4.37 The benefits that a larger scale of development of this land can realise are significant. In particular, the land can enable more parking to be provided to serve the railway station. This has two benefits; firstly it addresses parking shortages at the station and secondly, in doing so, it will free up more parking spaces in the village which are currently used by commuters unable to park at the station. This will help to provide more parking for those using the shops and services in the High Street.
- 4.38 By opening up access to the white land in the north western quadrant, this also opens up the possibility of drop-off parking for the school which will help to alleviate congestion along Shaw Lane.
- 4.39 A more comprehensive development of part of the white land could also enable the provision of the leisure facilities identified in Policy ALB4. Whilst this may not come as part of development of



this allocation, it would increase the prospect that land is made available to deliver these facilities. The detail of this would have to be subject to the masterplanning process for the site.

- 4.40 In terms of the housing provided, a major allocation of this type provides the opportunity to address the fundamental needs raised by the community in consultation. Specifically this relates to realising a significant number of smaller market properties and also to provide more innovative, flexible provision of affordable housing, particularly intermediate housing. This may be through the provision of a Community Land Trust, as identified in Policy ALB1, whereby the local community can shape and provide for the needs of those that find it difficult to access housing on the open market.
- 4.41 In order to reflect a more comprehensive approach there are two important issues. The first is the need to facilitate the potential for an alternative access along Kingswood Road to that which currently has the benefit of planning permission. This facilitates a more long-term, integrated solution to the whole site which may include a larger quantum of development. The second issue is that there must be scope for the existing planning permission to be varied in order to reflect the larger, more comprehensive approach. This is a matter for the development management process but it is an important principle that will ultimately drive a successful development and ensure the collective benefits to the community are realised.
- 4.42 The development would provide between 170 and 180 dwellings in total. The figure will depend on whether any site which currently has the benefit of planning permission for residential development is used as part of a comprehensive scheme and therefore the units that this site would have provided to the planning pipeline will be lost.

## **POLICY ALB2: SITE ALLOCATIONS**

### **ALB2a - Land at Whiteacres**

The land at Whiteacres is allocated for small scale residential development. These dwellings shall be in the form of a housing scheme appropriate for people of retirement age.

Any proposals should be subject to the development enhancing the adjoining conservation area and its setting.

### **ALB2b - Land east of Shaw Lane**

Land east of Shaw Lane is allocated for residential development of up to 180 dwellings. In establishing the framework for a comprehensive approach to land east of Shaw Lane, any development will be expected to provide or enable the following:

- The provision of additional parking adjacent to Albrighton railway station in order to serve the parking needs of rail passengers using the station.
- The provision of affordable housing with particular emphasis on intermediate affordable housing for local needs, assisting any innovative forms of community-led provision as appropriate.
- Provision or reservation of land to deliver the leisure facilities identified in Policy ALB4.

- 4.43 This addresses objectives One and Two of the Neighbourhood Plan Light.



## 5 INFRASTRUCTURE

- 5.1 There are certain key pieces of infrastructure which the community feel should be addressed, whether in terms of their protection and enhancement or by increasing their capacity.

### Medical facilities

- 5.2 The current general practitioner (GP) surgery located on Shaw Lane in Albrighton was identified as an issue by many in the community that use it. Specifically, there is limited parking available on site for patients, so parking occurs on the street. The surgery is located near to St Mary's Primary School and particularly at school pick-up time in the afternoon, there is considerable congestion and increased difficulty with parking.
- 5.3 The proposed levels of growth will mean further patients using the surgery and these additional patients will therefore continue to exacerbate the parking and congestion problems. It is not possible to expand the existing site so one solution would be to provide an alternative site should the surgery deem such a move appropriate. Such a site must be well located to serve the majority of the population of Albrighton.
- 5.4 Favourable consideration will therefore be given to the provision of a replacement GP surgery on the edge of Albrighton as an exception to normal Green Belt policies, in order to provide for the community's needs and improve social sustainability of Albrighton.
- 5.5 In order to make the provision of a new surgery deliverable, the site of the existing surgery would have to be redeveloped in order to provide an appropriate return. That is most likely to only be capable of being achieved through redevelopment for residential uses. The existing surgery site is considered appropriate for residential development and any application for such uses would be viewed favourably, subject to other relevant planning policies.

#### **POLICY ALB3: PROVISION FOR A REPLACEMENT GP SURGERY**

Favourable consideration will be given to the provision of a replacement GP surgery on the edge of Albrighton as an exception to normal Green Belt policies, in order to provide for the community's needs and improve social sustainability of Albrighton.

If the owners of the GP surgery wish to move to the new location, then there will be a presumption in favour of the redevelopment of the site of the existing surgery in Shaw Lane for residential uses. This will be subject to the other policies in this plan and in the SAMDev Development Management Policies DPD.

- 5.6 This addresses objectives Five and Six of the Neighbourhood Plan Light.



## Leisure facilities

- 5.7 The community survey and workshops revealed that there would be demand for the following infrastructure items:
- Leisure centre/sports hall – minimum four badminton court size, ideally able to incorporate meeting space for youth groups and nursery provision
  - Adult football pitch
  - Local Equipped Areas for Play (LEAPs) / Neighbourhood Equipped Areas for Play (NEAPs)
  - Youth facilities, specifically youth shelters and a Multi-Use Games Area (MUGA)
  - Enhancement and maintenance of the Albrighton and Donington Nature Reserve
- 5.8 The location of any of the new facilities is not fixed but is most appropriate to be delivered as part of larger developments, in this case the land east of Shaw Lane (Policy ALB2b).
- 5.9 It is recognised that these community facilities will be challenging to fund. Certainly developer contributions secured through the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) will be unlikely to fund all these needs. It will be necessary to prioritise these needs through the annual Albrighton Place Plan review process.

### **POLICY ALB4: LEISURE FACILITIES**

Provision will be made for the following infrastructure needs:

- Leisure centre/sports hall – minimum four badminton court size, ideally able to incorporate meeting space for youth groups and nursery provision
- Adult football pitch
- Local Equipped Areas for Play (LEAPs) / Neighbourhood Equipped Areas for Play (NEAPs)
- Youth shelters and a Multi-Use Games Area (MUGA)

Funding secured from development through the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) will be used to contribute towards funding these projects.

The respective locations for these facilities have not been identified. If sites are to be brought forward for residential development, it will be assessed at the pre-application stage whether there are opportunities to include land and appropriate access for any of these facilities as part of the proposals.

Contributions from CIL will also be used to cover the costs of enhancement and maintenance of the Albrighton and Donington Nature Reserve.

- 5.10 This addresses objective Five of the Neighbourhood Plan Light.

## Other infrastructure issues

- 5.11 There are a few other infrastructure issues which, whilst unable to be directly addressed through policy in the Neighbourhood Plan Light, are important to be acknowledged within the context of proposed future growth. Certainly such infrastructure issues, if funding is required, could



potentially call on contributions secured through the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) mechanism.

- 5.12 The sewage treatment works that serves Albrighton is understood to be close to capacity and would likely be in need of upgrading to accommodate significant growth. It is therefore important that proposals take a long term view in order to ensure that additional capacity can be funded and provided.
- 5.13 Part of the village is in a flood zone. There is known to be flooding at a number of properties close to the Albrighton Brook and it is considered that a solution is required.
- 5.14 The footpath network into the countryside, especially that linking Boningale and Albrighton, is a valuable resource which, where appropriate opportunities arise, should be extended so far as possible to encircle the village.

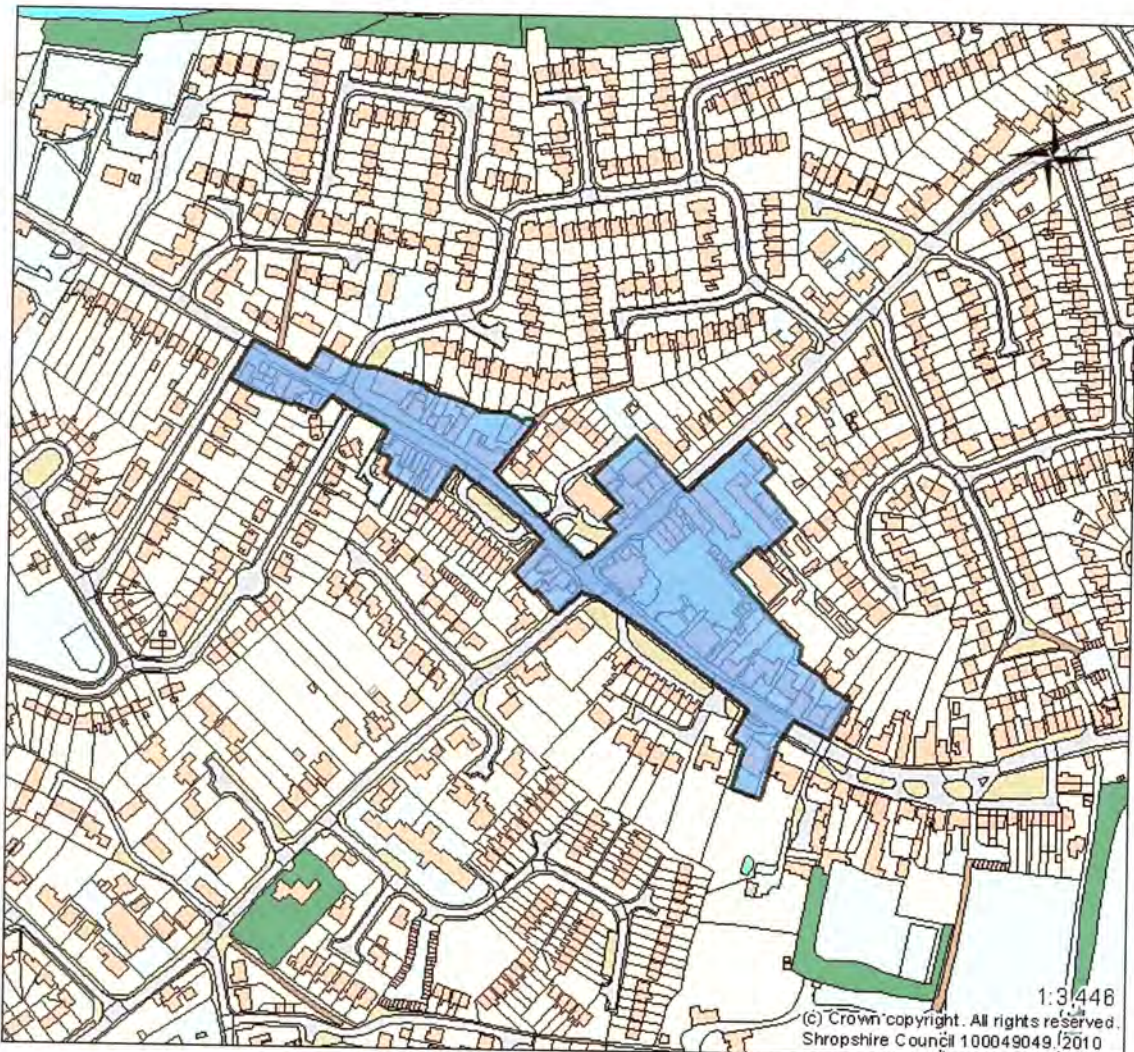
## 6 THE HIGH STREET

- 6.1 The High Street in Albrighton and its role as a retail and service centre was very strongly emphasised by the community. It was considered to be imperative that everything is done to protect the existing shops and services and to ensure that the shopping experience for local residents is as easy as possible.

### Retention of primary shopping area

- 6.2 One of the major concerns to the community is the threat of the loss of its High Street. Whilst the planning system cannot prevent shops from closing, it can ensure that if this happens then they are replaced by new businesses which are appropriate for the retail core of a high street.
- 6.3 Figure 6.1 below shows the primary shopping area of Albrighton. This is the area which should be protected against uses that are inappropriate for a high street.

**Figure 6.1: Proposed primary shopping area**



Source: Shropshire Council



**POLICY ALB5: PROTECTION OF THE PRIMARY SHOPPING AREA**

Albrighton village centre, as defined by the primary shopping area on the proposals map, will be supported by a presumption in favour of retail proposals and a presumption against changes of use away from use classes A1 (shops), A2 (Financial and Professional Services), A3 (Restaurants and Cafes) and A4 (Drinking Establishments).

This reinforces the protection provided by Policy MD10 in the SAMDev Development Management DPD and assists in ensuring that non-Class A uses would not dominate or detract from the core objective of providing retail outlets for the shopper.

- 6.4 This addresses objective Three of the Neighbourhood Plan Light.

**Restricting fast food take-away outlets**

- 6.5 One common issue raised by the community is the proliferation of fast food take-away outlets in Albrighton. At April 2013, out of 53 shopfronts within the primary shopping area, five were occupied by dedicated fast food take-away outlets, representing 9.4% of all shopfronts. In addition, there are several take away services available in restaurants within the primary shopping area.
- 6.6 It is therefore considered necessary to restrict the further expansion of fast food outlets in Albrighton's Primary Shopping Area.

**POLICY ALB6: RESTRICTION OF FAST FOOD TAKE-AWAY OUTLETS**

Within the primary shopping area of Albrighton, proposals for a change of use from Class A1 (shops), A2 (Financial and Professional Services), A3 (Restaurants and Cafes) or A4 (Drinking Establishments) at ground floor level to Class A5 (hot food take-aways) will be strongly resisted where the proportion of units in A5 use exceeds 10% of the total number of units in the primary shopping frontage.

- 6.7 This addresses objective Three of the Neighbourhood Plan Light.

**Signage and environmental improvements**

- 6.8 The importance of improving the environment of the centre of Albrighton village was raised by many members of the community. One particular issue was the quality of signage of the shops on Albrighton High Street. The signage and illumination of certain existing shopfronts serves to detract from the overall quality of environment. It is therefore important to ensure that new shopfront signage, as far as is possible, conforms to certain requirements.



**POLICY ALB7: SHOPFRONT SIGNAGE WITHIN THE PRIMARY SHOPPING AREA**

Proposals for shopfront signage within the primary shopping area should be in sympathy with the upper storeys of the building and adjoining facades.

The use of traditional materials such as timber with sign-written titles rather than plastic, externally illuminated signs will be required.

Flush-fitted signs (as opposed to those mounted at a 90-degree angle) will be preferred.

- 6.9 Generally, the physical environment of the village centre is seen as an important aspect in Albrighton's tourism role as well as the potential to increase footfall from the community. Improvements to the centre of the village, including improved street furniture and general enhancement of the quality of the environment, will be welcomed. Any infrastructure requiring funding could call on contributions from the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) fund.
- 6.10 This addresses objectives One, Three and Seven of the Neighbourhood Plan Light.



## 7 PARKING AND HIGHWAYS

### Parking

- 7.1 Parking issues are considered to be most acute in several locations:
- at Albrighton railway station
  - in the village centre
  - at the schools and their environs
  - at the GP surgery
- 7.2 Currently the Albrighton railway station car park has limited spaces and is regularly filled by commuters using the train. Indeed, there is evidence that the Crown Public House car park is also used by commuters. As a result, the existing car park has insufficient capacity to provide for the needs of commuters and also for those using the railway station during off-peak hours in the middle of the day.
- 7.3 The use of the Crown car park by commuters also serves to reduce the number of spaces available to those wishing to use the shops on the High Street.
- 7.4 The proposals for further development east of Shaw Lane (Policy ALB2b) are expected to alleviate this problem. By providing additional parking to serve the station, this should address the needs of those wishing to park and use the station. This will also then serve to reduce the number of commuters parking in the Crown car park, so meaning more spaces available to serve shoppers using the High Street.
- 7.5 Given that there are no alternative sites near to the High Street for providing further parking, this is the most reasonable solution. However, any appropriate solutions for the provision of further parking to serve the High Street will be viewed favourably, subject to other relevant planning policies. Two possibilities could be the extension of the existing Crown car park or the provision of echelon parking along Station Road.
- 7.6 The issue of parking at the GP surgery and at St Marys Primary School is addressed by policies ALB3 and ALB2b respectively.

#### **POLICY ALB8: CAR PARKING**

Proposals to provide further off-street car parking for public use close to the High Street will be considered favourably.

This will be subject to the other policies in this plan and in the SAMDev Development Management Policies DPD.

- 7.7 This addresses objective Four of the Neighbourhood Plan Light.

### Highways

- 7.8 Certain parts of the community, including the Civic Society, have raised issues relating to road traffic management. These problems are acknowledged and it will be important that the parish councils work with Shropshire Council to address these issues, as far as is possible.

- 7.9 One particular issue raised was the concern over pedestrian safety of shoppers using Albrighton High Street. Despite being a long, linear High Street, there is not a single pedestrian crossing point. This should be a priority to be delivered, using CIL funds if deemed appropriate.

**POLICY ALB9: PEDESTRIAN CROSSING**

Subject to the requirements of the highways authority, new pedestrian crossings will be sited at appropriate locations along the High Street.

- 7.10 This addresses objective Five of the Neighbourhood Plan Light.
- 7.11 More generally, there are many that consider there to be wider traffic management issues across Albrighton. It will be important to better understand the nature and extent of these issues. It is therefore considered that a technical assessment of these matters should be undertaken by Shropshire Council and actions considered as part of the Albrighton Place Plan and any subsequent review of the Neighbourhood Plan Light.



## 8 LANDSCAPE AND DESIGN

### Landscape and wildlife

- 8.1 Albrighton is set in a pleasant rural landscape that is highly valued by the community. Oak, ash, beech and chestnut trees grow well around the village and lime trees have been added within the village. Hedgerows that are principally made up of blackthorn, hawthorn and hazel often contain mature tree species that include alder and willow. The hedgerows often support elder, bramble, briar and ivy. Many of the fields surrounding the village have been enlarged by the destruction of hedgerows, which has had a considerable negative impact on the landscape.
- 8.2 Small streams and little ponds enhance the landscape and a large pool that lives between Albrighton and Donington churches is one of the most important features of the local environment. This pool is surrounded by the Albrighton and Donington Nature Reserve, which is very well used by the local community.



#### POLICY ALB10: LANDSCAPE AND WILDLIFE

Any new development proposals should demonstrate how they will protect and enhance the appearance of the area of the development and its surroundings. The quality of landscape design will be a significant consideration within the assessment of the merits of any scheme.

Developments are encouraged to preserve and, where possible, extend the network of hedgerows.

Developments are encouraged to plant native species of trees.

Any development that adversely affects the environment of the Village Green area of the High Street or the ponds and streams in Albrighton will be strongly resisted.

- 8.3 This addresses objective Seven of the Neighbourhood Plan Light.

### Design

- 8.4 The main growth of the village over the past century occurred in the 1930s and 1960s, consisting principally of housing development. The core of the old village has a variety of small shops, business and houses in close proximity to one another. The newer parts of the village encircle the old parts. Most of these houses are built on roads with gentle curves or sharper



bends and there are a number of cul-de-sacs or crescents. Although most of the houses are on estates, there are often pleasant mixtures of detached and semi-detached houses and bungalows to be found. There are currently three conservation areas in the village and the potential for others to be designated.



#### **POLICY ALB11: DESIGN**

Development proposals should recognise and respect the distinctive and historic settlement patterns of the area. New buildings should be in keeping with the present pattern of the village.

New streets should not follow straight or grid-iron patterns and should include a variety of housing styles.

Wherever possible, new developments should allow views out of the village to the surrounding countryside.

New developments should include the provision of open spaces that reflect the 'village green' character of the older parts of Albrighton.

Large-scale new developments should seek to include footpaths and cycleways to link with the existing parts of the village.

New buildings should, wherever possible and appropriate, respect and reflect the character of the buildings around them. New buildings should seek to use similar architectural features to nearby older buildings.

8.5 This addresses objectives One and Seven of the Neighbourhood Plan Light.



## 9 EMPLOYMENT

- 9.1 Albrighton has some significant employers within the area, including David Austin Roses. However, overall it is not a primary employment location and many residents commute out of Albrighton to access employment opportunities.
- 9.2 The community survey and workshops were very clear that people do consider the importance of further employment opportunities being provided locally. There are no clear employment drivers but the presence of RAF Cosford and the training and employment provided at the Defence College of Aeronautical Engineering (DCAE), coupled with the new Jaguar/Land Rover facility on the M54, suggest that there is a potential demand for light industrial units.
- 9.3 Set against this is the fact that the economic downturn has meant a small number of existing commercial units are vacant. This is an important consideration because the allocation of significant amounts of new employment space that is not taken up during the plan period would not properly address the objectives of the plan.
- 9.4 This situation would be substantially affected if RAF Cosford were to be closed. If the site became available then it is considered that any redevelopment should provide for predominantly economic uses. This is consistent with Policy MD6 of the SAMDev Development Management DPD.
- 9.5 Overall, it is therefore considered that there is insufficient justification for allocating new land for this plan period. It may be appropriate and necessary to review the plan if a significant proportion of the existing vacant space is occupied and there is then a shortfall in available space for new businesses in Albrighton.
- 9.6 However, in order to reflect a positive approach to long term growth needs (post-2020), the plan considers that future expansion in employment floorspace should be planned. The most appropriate location is potentially to the east of Albrighton village, along the A41. This would form an extension of the existing employment site to the north-east of the railway station, so expanding an existing employment location. This would require revision of the existing green belt boundary which would have to be undertaken by Shropshire Council as part of its Core Strategy review. It is therefore appropriate and necessary to reflect this aspiration in the Neighbourhood Plan Light.

### **POLICY ALB12: EMPLOYMENT-GENERATING USES**

Any development proposals which provide additional employment will be supported, subject to the other policies in this plan and in the SAMDev Development Management Policies DPD.

Provision of additional employment land should be considered as part of any potential review of Green Belt boundaries within Shropshire Council's review of its Core Strategy.

- 9.7 This addresses objective Eight of the Neighbourhood Plan Light.

