

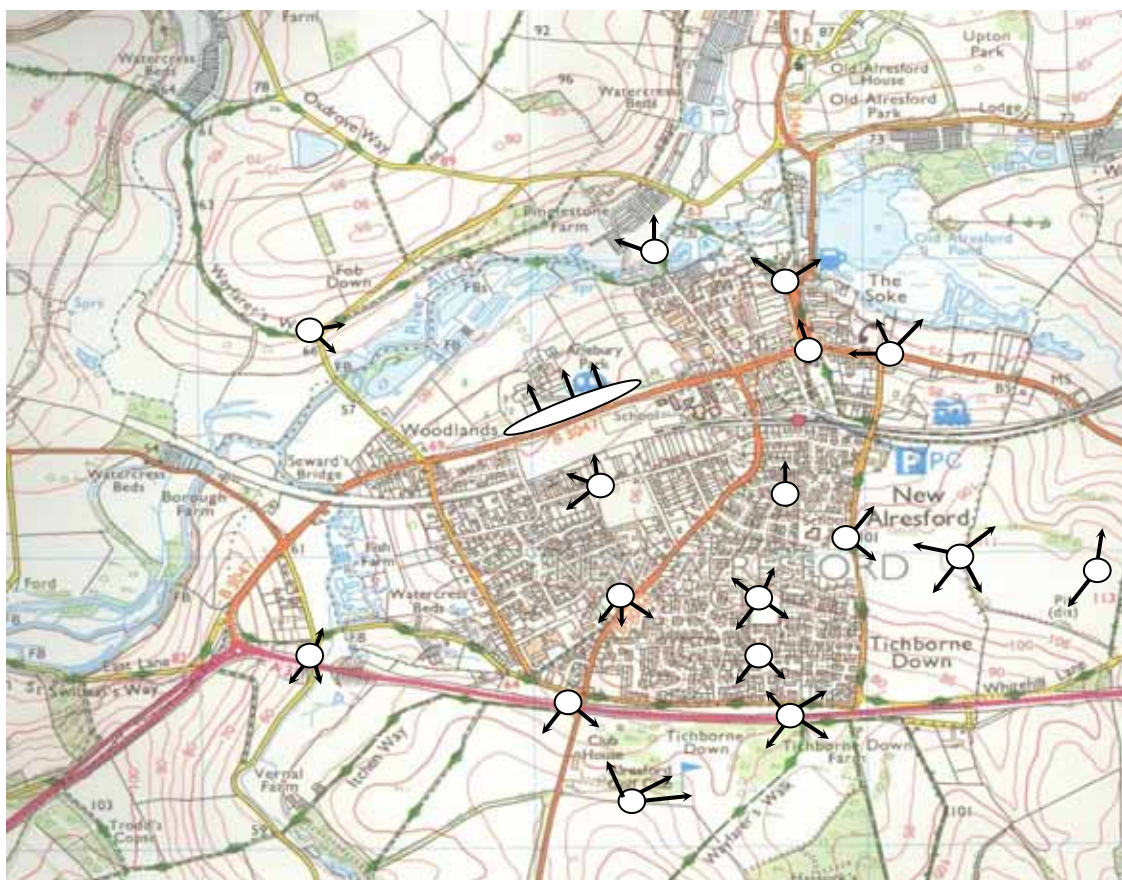
Section 3 Landscape, Land Use, Spaces, and the Environment

3.1 Landscape

Gentle chalk downs and woodland dotted on clay caps surround the Alresford Marsh area with clear chalk springs to the north and the planted trees in the town define the country market town character of the town and its landscape. The town is built to one side of the floodplain and boreholes that feed the watercress beds and provide some of the best watercress in the country as well as trout fishing. The Arle joins the River Itchen (which is designated a Site of Special Scientific Interest and a Special Area of Conservation and also lies within the town's outer boundary) has prolonged periods of low flow (May to October) in the Tichbourne Mill area, and the Cheriton Stream. This whole area is renowned for its clear chalk streams, and these host indigenous fresh water crayfish and eels and rely for their survival upon the clear clean chalk stream remaining healthy riverbeds.

The Arlebury Park area is a pre-nineteenth century park from which footpaths give access to the river Alre where people walk their dogs, watch the ducks at play and explore the riverbank.

Beyond, to the northwest is Drove Lane with down land planted with indigenous trees and shrubs to the east and arable land to the west. This linked with the drovers' route out of the town to the east through which travellers have passed since the 7th century. Further westwards is the St Swithun's Way to Avington and Winchester.



Map 3.1 Important Views in and across New Alresford

The Upper Itchen Valley where the river Alre and the Bourne meet to form the Itchen to the west and is described in the Winchester District Landscape Assessment.

Tichborne Down sweeps round to the South, beyond is the A31 by-pass, the Golf Club with its rolling hillside grassy slopes, the downs, copses and woodland areas. To the east are arable fields that rise over Sunhill (Map 3.1), with its' views of the town from the peak of the hill, and then stretch along the old drovers route eastwards to Cheriton Cross affording magnificent views of the town.

The golf club is just outside Alresford and is a major recreational amenity for people in the town. The nearby rambling open countryside where people walk with their families and dogs, and its parkland trees and footpaths, swings round to encompass the settlement area's eastern boundary at Sun Lane.

3.2 Land Use

3.2.1 Non Residential

The land to the north of the settlement comprises the spacious *Mid-Hampshire Downs used for agriculture, or forestry (Winchester District Landscape Character Assessment and The Hampshire Landscape – A Strategy for the Future, HCC 2000). As set out below:

- Farmland 84.5%
(10% grazed – not normally sheep. 74.5% Arable, Cereals and seeds).
- Woodland 14% (majority on wetland area)
- Wetlands 1%
- Recreation 0.5%

These woodlands, hedges, fences and pathways abound with a very wide range of wildlife. A variety of birds also enjoy the Alresford Pond and nearby river area as their home, for example, swans, ducks, herons, geese and many others.



Millennium Walk (Ladywell Lane)

New Alresford depends for its survival on its peaceful yet colourful and spaciouly displayed centre, its beautiful landscape, as well as its well-stocked riverside setting, to attract both tourists and people who will cherish it as a place to live and preserve.

3.3 Spaces

3.3.1 Allotments

Alresford has a popular fully subscribed allotment site to the south west of the town.

3.3.2 Recreation



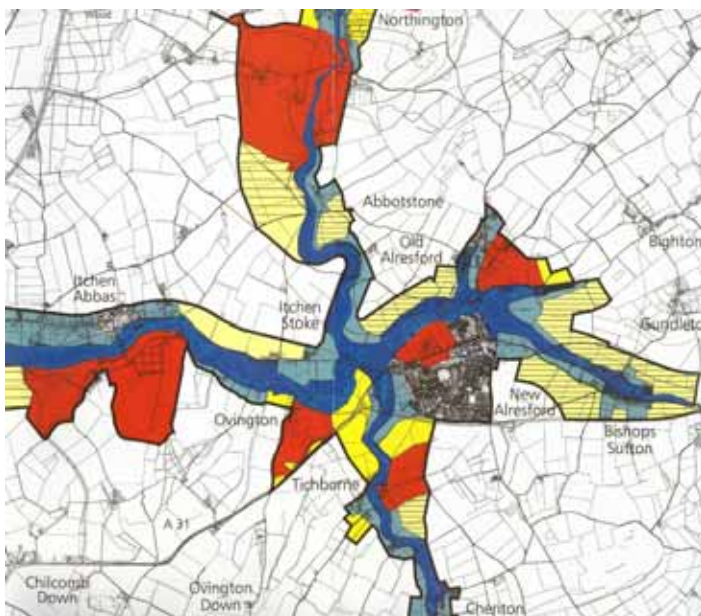
Stratton Bates Recreation Ground

People reported in the questionnaire their primary enjoyment is the peaceful setting, wildlife and woodlands, for example the scene of the downs from their gardens, a recreation ground, or when going to the shops, and then cycling and walking.

Most people were worried about the loss of open spaces, and that high-density homes will not have the garden size for free play.

The recreation grounds and many of the open space areas are in spots that afford good views of the surrounding countryside, for example, Sunhill Recreation Ground has wide sweeping views of the downs to the south and a fenced play area. People were worried about the loss of this landscape as a result of infill development taking away the views through to the downs surrounding the town. Arlebury Park and Stratton Bates Recreation Ground also have facilities for young children and football. Arlebury Park also has a skateboard park and a social club.

Rugby is played at a pitch in neighbouring Bighton.



MAP 3.2 Landscape Types



3.3.3 Informal Spaces

The Informal open spaces have hedgerows and copses hawthorn, longhorn, willow, birch, beech, chestnut and horse chestnut, elm and oak, many of these have preservation orders.. Details of these and their locations are below.

Town Trustees & Partnership: The Town Trustees have a pivotal role in ensuring the trees in The Avenue and the market area of the town are maintained for the benefit of the town. As one enters The Avenue from Winchester Road the character of the town is defined by the well kept limes and flint wall on the northern side of the Avenue, with the glimpses of the downs beyond.

Arlebury Park (pre 19th century) was developed in spacious grounds to the north of the Toll road, with beautiful views of the downs as a backdrop. This and the view down the Avenue were stated in Survey responses as people’s favourite views when out walking.



Tree Preservation Orders

3.4 Environment

3.4.1 Water, Drainage, Air Quality and Noise Pollution

Alresford draws its water locally from the clear naturally clean water, not from reservoirs.

The town has industrial areas near residential estates that previously used underground storage or drainage tanks. The Dean contains oil and grease drainage tanks - one near the old gas works. There have also been problems with the storm drains near the river and there are underground petrol storage tanks at the bottom of West Street.

The two industrial areas are currently active but the plant and equipment is at least fifty years old, and some are noisy and some use strong chemical processes. The latter of which have a detrimental effect on air quality.

The recent increase in the volume of heavy lorry traffic also affects air quality in the town. The town is built on the knoll of a hill and respondents to the survey reported the fumes gather towards the dips at the bottom of West Street and at the bottom of Broad Street and the Soke. Also mentioned in Survey responses were the rise in noise pollution as a result of the massive increase in large lorry traffic and the danger to pedestrians from the way and speed some of these lorries travel at.

3.4.2 Infrastructure

- **Traffic:**

The town's congested roads and approach roads are already very busy and dangerous with diesel lorries travelling at some speed in pedestrian areas in the town centre. A recent survey found a 25% increase in volume in two years.

Traffic calming measures in Jacklyns Lane, with pinch points to assist pedestrian crossing and slow traffic has been implemented. Other roads children cross when walking to school or visiting Stratton Bates Recreation Ground are still congested.

- **Parking**

In the town centre there is one major car park at the station and marked parking bays on some roads. There are no residents parking bays, and both residents and visitors have difficulty parking cars at peak times.



Traffic congestion

3.4.3 Public Transport to and from the Settlement Area

The settlement area has at best, two buses per hour to Winchester (one direct). There is no regular public transport link to a mainline railway station, to local hospitals, or to the places people work and this means every working member in a household needs a car. Similarly, because of the price and inappropriate size of property many commute into Alresford to work. The Cango bus link to the town from outlying areas goes on to Basingstoke Hospital and Alton.

3.5 Guidelines

L1. Views

(WDLPR Ref: DP4, C5 apply)

All the important views shown in Map 3.1 should be protected. These are: Views to the north, which are predominantly grass meadowland and grazed. To the east, arable farming. To the south woodland and copse. (Farmers and landowners are encouraged to continue this form of husbandry, and include the growth of energy crops when appropriate).

L2. Footpaths

(WDLPR Ref: DP4, RT9, T8 apply)

Footpaths and their relationship with boundaries and hedgerows should be kept clear and safe to walk. Views from footpaths should be protected and opportunities be taken to increase the network and provide a continuous walkway along the river safely

L3. Land alongside watercourses and watercourses

(WDLPR Ref: DP4, DP8 apply)

Maintaining and managing the land alongside watercourses protects and enhances the wildlife habitat, assists the groundwater regime and reduces the risk of flooding.

The clear chalk streams should be protected from any effluent that would endanger the life of the streams and the rivers they feed.



River Arle - Fulling Mill

L4. Tree Management

(WDLPR Ref: DP4 applies)

Tree management contributes to the wooded character of area. Some limes may need replacing and this should be planned. The character of the area would be damaged if there were wholesale replacement of the trees.

There is an opportunity for the community to take an active part in tree management through the Town Partnership and working with the Town Council and Town Trustees.

L5. Lorries

(WDLPR Ref: T2, T3 apply)

Signage should be clear and road-calming measures considered to ensure lorries are unable to travel at dangerous speeds within the town envelope.

L6. Air Quality

(WDLPR Ref: DP10 – 12, T2 apply)

Developers of industrial premises and sites should take the delicate balance between the survival of historic buildings and air pollution into account when applying for increased capacity or the movement of sites, and any appropriate existing planning restrictions already in place should be applied to any new commercial development.