RUSHMOOR BOROUGH COUNCIL

CABINET

at the Council Offices, Farnborough on
Tuesday, 5th July, 2022 at 7.00 pm

To:

Cllr D.E. Clifford, Leader of the Council
Cllr M.L. Sheehan, Deputy Leader and Operational Services Portfolio Holder
Cllr M.J. Tennant, Deputy Leader and Major Projects and Property Portfolio Holder

Cllr J.B. Canty, Customer Experience, Digital and Transformation Portfolio Holder
Cllr Sue Carter, Democracy, Strategy and Partnerships Portfolio Holder
Cllr A.R. Newell, Planning and Economy Portfolio Holder
Cllr P.G. Taylor, Corporate Services Portfolio Holder

Enquiries regarding this agenda should be referred to Chris Todd, Democracy and Community, on 01252 398825 or e-mail: chris.todd@rushmoor.gov.uk

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A G E N D A

1. **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST** –

   Under the Council's Code of Conduct for Councillors, all Members are required to disclose relevant Interests in any matter to be considered at the meeting. Where the matter directly relates to a Member's Disclosable Pecuniary Interests or Other Registrable Interest, that Member must not participate in any discussion or vote on the matter and must not remain in the room unless they have been granted a dispensation (see note below). If the matter directly relates to 'Non-Registrable Interests', the Member's participation in the meeting will depend on the nature of the matter and whether it directly relates or affects their financial interest or well-being or that of a relative, friend or close associate, applying the tests set out in the Code.

NOTE:
On 27th May, 2021, the Council's Corporate Governance, Audit and Standards Committee granted dispensations to Members appointed by the Council to the Board of the Rushmoor Development Partnership and as Directors of Rushmoor Homes Limited.

2. **MINUTES** – (Pages 1 - 6)

    To confirm the Minutes of the meeting held on ?th ?, 2022 (copy attached).

3. **DRAFT OUTTURN 2021/22 - UPDATE** – (Pages 7 - 14)
    (Cllr Paul Taylor, Corporate Services Portfolio Holder)

    To consider Report No. FIN2221 (copy attached), which sets out an update on the progress made since the draft outturn report was presented in April, 2022.

4. **2022-23 HIGH-RISK BUDGETS, FINANCIAL REPORTING PLAN AND BUDGET MONITORING PROCESS** – (Pages 15 - 24)
    (Cllr Paul Taylor, Corporate Services Portfolio Holder)

    To consider Report No. FIN2223 (copy attached), which sets out an assessment of the Council's high-risk budgets and outlines the high level plan for financial reporting and the budget monitoring process for the year.

5. **A GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE STRATEGY FOR RUSHMOOR** – (Pages 25 - 206)
    (Cllr Adrian Newell, Planning and Economy Portfolio Holder)

    To consider Report No. EPSH2218 (copy attached), which sets out a proposed Green Infrastructure Strategy.

6. **FARNBOROUGH TOWN CENTRE STRATEGY** – (Pages 207 - 294)
    (Cllr Martin Tennant, Major Projects and Property Portfolio Holder)

    To consider Report No. REG2204 (copy attached), which sets out a proposed Farnborough Town Centre Strategy.

7. **RUSHMOOR BOROUGH COUNCIL AND HART DISTRICT COUNCIL WORKING TOGETHER** – (Pages 295 - 352)
    (Cllr David Clifford, Leader of the Council)

    To consider Report No. LDR2201 (copy attached), which sets out proposals for Rushmoor Borough Council and Hart District Council to work more closely together.

8. **UK SHARED PROSPERITY FUND (UKSPF) INVESTMENT PLAN AND LEVELLING UP FUND APPLICATION** – (Pages 353 - 360)
    (Cllr David Clifford, Leader of the Council)

    To consider Report No. ACE2204 (copy attached), which provides an update on the development of an Investment Plan in relation to the UK Shared Prosperity Fund (UKSPF) and sets out details of a bid to the Government's Levelling Up Fund.

9. **EXCLUSION OF THE PUBLIC** –

To consider resolving:

That, subject to the public interest test, the public be excluded from this meeting during the discussion of the undermentioned item to avoid the disclosure of exempt information within the paragraphs of Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act, 1972 indicated against such item:

Item No.	Schedule 12A Para. No.	Category
10	3	Information relating to financial or business affairs

10. **PROPERTY ACQUISITION FARNBOROUGH TOWN CENTRE** – (Pages 361 - 380)
(Cllr Martin Tennant, Major Projects and Property Portfolio Holder)

To consider Exempt Report No. REG2205 (copy attached), which sets out a proposal for the Council to undertake due diligence with a view to acquiring a premises in Farnborough town centre.

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CABINET

Meeting held on Tuesday, 7th June, 2022 at the Council Offices, Farnborough at 7.00 pm.

Voting Members

Cllr D.E. Clifford, Leader of the Council
Cllr M.L. Sheehan, Deputy Leader and Operational Services Portfolio Holder
Cllr M.J. Tennant, Deputy Leader and Major Projects and Property Portfolio Holder

Cllr J.B. Canty, Customer Experience, Digital and Transformation Portfolio Holder
Cllr Sue Carter, Democracy, Strategy and Partnerships Portfolio Holder
Cllr A.R. Newell, Planning and Economy Portfolio Holder
Cllr P.G. Taylor, Corporate Services Portfolio Holder

The Cabinet considered the following matters at the above-mentioned meeting. All executive decisions of the Cabinet shall become effective, subject to the call-in procedure, from **20th June**.

86. **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST** –

Having regard to the Council's Code of Conduct for Councillors, no declarations of interest were made.

87. **MINUTES** –

The Minutes of the meeting of the Cabinet held on 26th April, 2022 were confirmed and signed by the Chairman.

88. **COUNCIL BUSINESS PLAN AND RISK REGISTER QUARTERLY UPDATE AND END OF YEAR 2021/22** –
(Cllr Sue Carter, Democracy, Strategy and Partnerships Portfolio Holder)

The Cabinet received Report No. ACE2203, which set out progress in delivering the Council Business Plan projects during the fourth quarter of 2021/22 and included an end of year report. Members were informed that progress against eighteen key projects was included in the Report, along with the Council's business performance monitoring information and the Council's Corporate Risk Register. It was reported that, at the end of the fourth quarter, 71% of live projects were on track, with the remainder showing an amber status.

The Cabinet NOTED the progress made towards delivering the Council Business Plan, as set out in Report No. ACE2203.

89. **INTRODUCTION OF A PUBLIC SPACE PROTECTION ORDER IN ALDERSHOT TOWN CENTRE** –
(Cllr Maurice Sheehan, Operational Services Portfolio holder)

The Cabinet considered Report No. OS2207, which proposed the adoption of a Public Spaces Protection Order (PSPO) for Aldershot town centre, following a period

of public consultation. Members were informed that the purpose of the Order was to assist in managing ongoing antisocial behaviour related to the consumption of alcohol in a public space and other associated behaviours, including public urination and defecation.

The Cabinet was strongly supportive of this approach, which would enable swift action to be taken to deal with the identified antisocial behaviour in Aldershot town centre, for the benefit of local residents and businesses and visitors to the town. In response to a question, it was confirmed that there was a process in place to vary the Order, if required, in the future.

The Cabinet RESOLVED that

(i)   the implementation of a Public Space Protection Order and proposed conditions in Aldershot town centre, as set out in Report No. OS2207, be approved; and

(ii)   the issuing of a £100 fixed penalty notice for a breach of the PSPO be approved, with an early payment discount of £25.

90.   **REPORT OF URGENCY DECISION - UNION YARD - EXTENSION OF TIME CLAIM** –
(Cllr Martin Tennant, Major Projects and Property Portfolio Holder)

The Cabinet received Report No. ED2203 and a Record of Executive Decision, which set out an urgent decision made on 31st May, 2022 by the Executive Director to agree a commercial settlement with the Council's Union Yard contractor, Hill Partnerships Limited, in relation to an Extension of Time (EOT) claim. The claim had been made in relation to delays caused by the repairs to the party wall at Nos. 35-39 High Street, Aldershot, which had been considered by the Cabinet at its meetings in December, 2021 and March, 2022. Members were informed that the cost of the commercial settlement was £783,000. It was explained that this action had minimised the risk of further delays and potential costs and financial loss due to the late delivery of the student accommodation, which was scheduled for handover in July, 2024.

The Cabinet RESOLVED that the action taken, as set out in the Record of Executive Decision dated 31st May, 2022, be noted and endorsed.

91.   **APPOINTMENTS TO CABINET WORKING GROUPS** –

The Cabinet RESOLVED that

(i)   the following appointments be made to groups for the 2022/23 Municipal Year, subject to each group reviewing its Terms of Reference at its first meeting of the municipal year:

Budget Strategy Working Group

Corporate Services Portfolio Holder -	Cllr P.G. Taylor
Chairman of Corporate Governance, Audit and Standards Committee -	Cllr P.J. Cullum
Chairman/Vice-Chairman of Policy and Project Advisory Board -	Cllr Jessica Auton
Conservative Group (2) -	Cllrs A.H. Gani and S. Trussler
Labour Group (2) -	Cllrs Gaynor Austin and K. Dibble
Liberal Democrat Group (1) -	Cllr C.W. Card

Climate Change Working Group

Climate Change Cabinet Champion -	Cllr S.J. Masterson
Deputy Leaders of the Council (2) -	Cllrs M.L. Sheehan and M.J. Tennant
Chairman/Vice-Chairman of Policy and Project Advisory Board -	Cllr Jessica Auton
Conservative Group (1) -	Cllr P.I.C. Crerar
Labour Group (2) -	Cllrs Jules Crossley and M.J. Roberts
Liberal Democrat Group (1) -	Cllr C.W. Card

Member Development Group

Democracy, Strategy and Partnerships Portfolio Holder -	Cllr Sue Carter
Additional Cabinet Member (1) -	Cllr P.G. Taylor
Conservative Group (2) -	Cllrs Jessica Auton and Calum Stewart
Labour Group (2) -	Cllrs Nadia Martin and Sophie Porter
Liberal Democrat Group (1) –	Cllr T.W. Mitchell

Strategic Housing and Local Plan Working Group

Planning and Economy Portfolio Holder -	Cllr A.R. Newell
Chairman of Development Management Committee -	Cllr C.J. Stewart
Chairman/Vice-Chairman of Policy and Project Advisory Board -	Cllr P.I.C. Crerar
Conservative Group (1) -	Cllr Peace Essien Igodifo
Labour Group (2) -	Cllrs Sophie Porter and M.J. Roberts
Liberal Democrat Group (1) -	Cllr C.W. Card

Waste and Recycling Options Working Group

Operational Services Portfolio Holder -	Cllr M.L. Sheehan
Chairman of Policy and Project Advisory Board -	Cllr Marina Munro
Conservative Group (2) -	Cllrs P.J. Cullum and S.J. Masterson
Labour Group (2) -	Cllrs Gaynor Austin and Sophie Porter
Liberal Democrat Group (1) -	Cllr C.W. Card

Union Yard Project Board

Major Projects and Property Portfolio Holder -	Cllr M.J. Tennant
Corporate Services Portfolio Holder -	Cllr P.G. Taylor
Labour Group Leader -	Cllr Christine Guinness

(ii)   the Head of Democracy and Community, in consultation with the Leader of the Council, be authorised to make appointments to these groups during the 2022/23 municipal year, in order to fill vacancies.

The Meeting closed at 7.27 pm.

CLLR D.E. CLIFFORD, LEADER OF THE COUNCIL

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CABINET 05 JULY 2022	COUNCILLOR PAUL TAYLOR CORPORATE SERVICES PORTFOLIO HOLDER REPORT NO. FIN2221
KEY DECISION: ~~YES~~/NO	

DRAFT OUTTURN 2021/22 – UPDATE

SUMMARY:

This report provides an update to Cabinet on the progress that has been made since the Draft Outturn Report was presented in April 2022. Whilst year-end closing work continues, carry forward requests have now been finalised by service managers and Finance, and are presented here for review and approval by Cabinet.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

CABINET is recommended to:

i   Note the progress update on the draft outturn position for 2021/22 since the FIN2220 report to Cabinet on 26th April 2022.

ii   Approve the carry forward requests submitted by Heads of Service as detailed in Section 4.

iii   Approve the establishment of an earmarked reserve of £27,500 to support the Joint Working proposal funded from the anticipated beneficial outturn position, as set out in paragraph 2.5 of the report

iv   Approve the variation to the scope of the Southwood Country Park capital scheme to include provision for a crossing on Ively Road and s106-funded Children's Play Area, as set out in paragraph 3.2 of the report.

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1   INTRODUCTION

1.1   Closing the accounts for the year remains a work in progress currently as expected from the closing timetable. The necessary accruals have been completed between Finance and Service managers allowing for carry forward requests to be submitted to Finance for Executive Leadership Team (ELT) review (as detailed in Section 4).

1.2 Section 2 below provides a high-level update on the revenue cost of services and Section 3 outlines what will be reported on as part of the Final Outturn report in September 2022.

2 REVENUE BUDGET – FORECAST OUTTURN – Cost of Services

2.1 The original net General Fund Revenue budget for 2021/22 was approved by Council at their meeting in February 2021 of £12.869m, and additional changes made to the budget by Council in February 2022, were reported on in the April 2022 Q3 anticipated draft outturn report.

2.2 The latest budget remains £13.36m and whilst no further changes are expected as a result of the closing process any that become necessary will be reported to Cabinet in the final outturn report in September 2022.

2.3 Prior to consideration of provisional carry forwards the forecast for the General Fund was a net favourable variation of £0.642m as at Q3 Draft Outturn report). This assumed that net carry forwards of £0.250m were put forward by Heads of Service and approved by Cabinet which reduced the variation to £0.392m (or 2.93%).

2.4 The main variations on the revenue budget, and corporate income and expenditure, will be reported to Cabinet with the final outturn report when the closing timetable and final adjustments and accruals have been completed. There remain a number of complex accounting and funding transactions to review and apply to the 2021/22 revenue budget including the final position on retained Business Rates, revenue impact of Capital Financing entries and other adjustments as part of proper accounting practice.

2.5 It is proposed that an earmarked reserve of £27,500 is established from the 2021/22 outturn position to provide one-off funding for the Joint Working with Hart, as set out in Report LDR2201.

3. FINAL OUTTURN UPDATES

3.1 Areas that were in the draft outturn report and that will be included in the final outturn report to Cabinet in September 2022 when year-end is complete are:

- Commercial Property Portfolio 2021/22 closing update.

- Treasury Management position for the year on investment income and borrowing.
- Any final changes to income from Government Funding, Council Tax and Business Rates.
- Reserves movements and balances – except for the carry forward requests detailed in Section 4 where these have an impact on reserves. The final outturn report will cover both these and any other transfers to and from reserves that are beyond the scope of this report as work continues on these within the closing timetable.
- Risks and uncertainties are included in the other report alongside this FIN2223 with focus on high-risk budgets and pressures as the Council goes into 2022/22 financial year.

3.2 Council approved a capital budget of £0.901m for the Southwood Country Park Visitor Centre and Café at their meeting on 02 December 2021. Significant progress has been made on the construction of the new facility and it is forecast that this will be delivered below the budgeted level.

3.3 The Council has been in discussion with Hampshire County Council around a crossing on Ively Road to provide safer access to the Country Park. It is estimated that the cost of an uncontrolled crossing next to the Visitor Centre and Café would be in the region of £50k. It is proposed to provide the funding for the crossing as part of the approved £0.901m capital budget given the forecast underspend position. Therefore, Cabinet are asked to approve the repurposing of the capital budget to include the crossing on Ively Road.

3.4 Members will also be aware of the Children's Play Area that will be situated within the Southwood Country Park footprint. The design and specification of the play area has been finalised and a competitive tender process was completed earlier in the year with a local supplier (Fawns) appointed as the winning bidder.

3.5 s106 funding of £175k has been identified to fund the project. At the time of writing, the cost of the play area including contingency for site abnormals and works associated with DDA compliance is £210k leaving a potential shortfall in funding of £35k..

3.6 Whilst the specification of the play area could be reviewed to reduce the cost to ensure it can be delivered within the available funding, this is likely to lead to a delay in the provision of the facility.

3.7   Therefore, given the prominence of Southwood Country Park it is recommended that the Play Area scheme is funded from s106 with any shortfall financed from capital receipts or other capital resources.

4.   CARRY FORWARD REQUESTS

4.1   As part of the closing process, Heads of Service have submitted carry forward requests for budget to be carried forward from 2021/22 into 2022/23. In total, 20 of these were completed and submitted to Finance for review and presentation to ELT for consideration.

4.2   Appendix 1 shows the carry forward requests received that ELT agreed to be proposed to Cabinet for approval.

4.3   These are being presented to Cabinet for approval now in line with the draft outturn report and in order that service managers' budgets can be amended for 2022/23 and activity undertaken in line with the carry forward requests. To wait until the final outturn report can be ready to present to Cabinet would mean that the Council would already be half-way through the financial year which would make difficult for managers to deliver on the activities related to these carry forwards that were not fully possible in 2021/22 for a variety of good reasons.

4.4   Cabinet's approval is sought for the carry forwards to be made into 2022-23. The total value of carry forward requests shown in Appendix 1 is £0.857m with £0.424m funded from earmarked reserves and £0.432m being carried forward from the 2021/22 General Fund revenue budget.

5   LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

5.1   No additional legal implications arise from this report.

6.   FINANCE AND RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

6.1   The finance and resource implications are set out within this report. Any additional financial implications will be addressed through the normal Council procedures and processes, including with final outturn report in September 2022.

6.2   The Council needs to continue to carefully consider the financial impact of spending decisions, to ensure that unnecessary expenditure is avoided and that

capital financing for the multi-year capital programme is affordable in the short, medium, and long term.

7.   CONCLUSIONS

7.1   There will always be variances reported in-year against budgets due to the Council adapting its priorities to manage inevitable changes in demand pressures and having a flexible approach to changing circumstances. The Council will need to ensure budgets are monitored closely over the coming months and focus on high-risk income and expenditure service areas. Future updates to Cabinet must set out the management action that is available to address any adverse variation and any other action that can be taken to mitigate the impact on the Council's wider financial position.

7.2   It is important that the Council considers an appropriate range of options to ensure any shortfall is managed. Any utilisation of reserves in 2021/22 will need to be addressed in the budget strategy to ensure balances and reserves remain adequate.

7.3   The forecast variation of £0.392m will be funded from reserves in the short term. The Council is committed to several significant projects such as Union Yard Regeneration scheme and needs to ensure the financial and resource impacts are identified, monitored, and reported to members. It is important that the Council considers an appropriate range of options to ensure any shortfall is managed. Any utilisation of reserves in 2021/22 and 2022/23 will need to be addressed in the Budget Strategy for 2023/24 to ensure balances and reserves remain adequate.

7.4   Over the MTFS period, reduced levels of Council Tax and Business Rates income may put additional pressure on the Council's financial position. The achievement of the Savings Plan is integral to the MTFS forecast and will need to be reviewed in terms of savings profile and whether the savings can be delivered in the current economic climate. It is likely that further savings will be required over the MTFS period to balance the budget.

BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS:
None

CONTACT DETAILS:
Report Author/Head of Service: David Stanley – Executive Head of Finance
david.stanley@rushmoor.gov.uk 01252 398440

				Appendix 1 - Carry Forward Requests for 2021/22 Budgets to be spent in 2022/23		
Requested by	**Reference**	**Ledger Code**	**Request Amount**	**Reason**	**Funded from Reserve?**	**Recommended Amount**
David Phillips	CFR001	255130594	£53,757	Crematorium Feasibility Study - further activity required to define and agree preferred build options with comprehensive financial data.	No	**£10,000**
James Knight	CFR002	224610114	£75,000	CCTV decommissioning and mobilisation costs re transfer to Runnymeade.	No	**£75,000**
Alex Sheill	CFR003	330430582	£78,800	ICT Cloud Telephony - Implementation and ongoing software licensing and maintenance (project was delyaed in 21/22 in favour of other ICE Programme and CREP work).	No	**£78,800**
Andrew Colver	CFR004	250830495	£14,250	Military Covenant (External Funding) - to support and delivery a repair café in Aldershot.	Yes - held in 9351	**£14,250**
Nigel Swan	CFR005	330430586	£49,241	DLUHC Cyber Security Grant - can only be used on cybersecurity due to nature of the grant.	Yes - held in 9351	**£49,241**
Tim Mills	CFR006	240130061	£38,000	Rushmoor Homes Project Cost - consultancy fees for temporary accommodation project.	No	**£38,000**
Andrew Colver	CFR007	251330996	£109,130	Control Outbreak Funding - to support the management control and restoration from the pandemic.	Yes - held in 9351	**£109,130**
Andrew Colver	CFR008	251350959	£25,700	LRC Covid Response Funding - residue from the allocated resources from HCC.	Yes - held in 9351	**£25,700**
Ruth Whaymand	CFR009	255440228	£112,500	Food Waste/Recycling - £87k for additional loaders, £8.5k additional caddies, £8.8k additional liners, £8.2k vehicle wraps.	No	**£112,500**
Andrew Colver	CFR010	250850956	£69,500	CIC/Covid 19 Food Partnership - ringfenced government resources for providing essential support to local communities (delay in formal setting up of partnership).	Yes - held in 9351	**£69,500**
Andrew Colver	CFR011	251350012	£32,340	Direct Grants to Community Organisations.	No	**£32,340**
Tim Mills	NEW01	123010026	£20,000	168 High Street, Guildford (Highpoint Building) - refurbishment and repairs works were delayed due to COVID (C/F will be part funding outstanding commitments).	No	**£20,000**
Rachel Fussey/Tim Mills	NEW02	121330581	£13,100	Concerto Property Management System - Consultancy fees to support the implementation of the system (part of an overarching 3 years PO commitment).	No	**£13,100**
Tim Mills	NEW03	110030911	£36,800	Aldershot Regen - Digital Games Hub - delay to the start-up of the project.	No	**£36,800**
Suzannah Helicar	NEW04	240230416	£25,000	Homelessness Software Upgrade.	Yes - Homelessness Prevention Monies Earmarked Reserve	**£25,000**
Lee McQuade	NEW05	254330970	£15,900	"The 5th Sector Ltd" project - delay in receipt and payment of final invoice.	Yes - £12.9k Arts Council Grant Earmarked Reserve. £3k Arts Council Grant due in 22/23	**£15,900**
Tim Mills	NEW05	254330970	£15,900		No - Match Funding from the Arts' Council Grant	**£15,900**
Andrew Colver	TTR001	130330904	£20,800	Additional Safety provision - Elections Costs - allocation from central government for health and safety arrangements at elections during and following the pandemic.	Yes - Grant income will cover the c	**£20,800**
Andrew Colver	TTR005	132830578	£88,440	Climate Change Reserves.	Yes	**£88,440**
Andrew Colver	TTR006	250830578	£6,111	Contribution towards a CCG Director Post - started later than expected.	Yes - Deprivation Earmarked Reserve - 9471	**£6,111**

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CABINET
05 JULY 2022

KEY DECISION: ~~YES~~/NO

COUNCILLOR PAUL TAYLOR
CORPORATE SERVICES PORTFOLIO HOLDER
REPORT NO. FIN2223

2022-23 HIGH-RISK BUDGETS, FINANCIAL REPORTING PLAN

AND BUDGET MONITORING PROCESS

SUMMARY:

This report contains an assessment of the Council's high-risk budgets, outlines the high-level plan for financial reporting to Cabinet for the year and the budget monitoring process to be followed as part of the Finance Improvement Plan.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

CABINET is recommended to:

i.   Note the high-risk budgets and pressures as reviewed and agreed by the Executive Leadership Team (as detailed in Section 2).

ii.   Note and approve the high-level financial reporting timetable for completion and presentation to Cabinet for 2022-23 (as detailed in Section 3).

iii.   Note and approve the budget monitoring process with early service management action to ensure timely completion and to enable robust forecasting for presentation to Cabinet on 2022-23 revenue and capital budget monitoring reports (as detailed in Section 4).

1   INTRODUCTION

1.1   As part of the Finance Improvement Plan this report sets out for Cabinet the intended budget monitoring process for 2022-23 that will be undertaken, with Heads of Service and their management teams leading and owning the forecasts for the budgets they are responsible for.

1.2   Heads of Service, cost centre managers and the Finance Team will continue to work collaboratively, with Finance increasingly adopting a finance business partnering approach to support, advise, and provide a 'check and challenge'

service managers to validate forecast assumptions and to enable managers to deliver the Council's services within the approved budget.

1.3 The high-risk budgets have been identified and discussed by ELT and CMT and a rolling record will be maintained of these throughout the year. The known pressures and estimated risks will be updated as additional information becomes available and will be expanded as necessary to include new pressures and risks as there are identified.

2 HIGH-RISK BUDGET ASSESSMENT AND PRESSURES

2.1 The high-risk budgets and known pressures record has been updated from 2021-22 following on from the latest information obtained through the draft outturn and closing processes. The updated and current position for new and existing risks and pressures going into 2022-23 are:

2.1.1 **£0.500m to £0.750m risk Interest Payable Risk** – there is a risk that Treasury Management Interest Payable costs result in higher debts costs than the MTFS projection due to:

- Up to £0.750m potential risk due to movement in both short-term and long-term interest rates since the MTFS forecast in January 2022. This assumes that the Council takes out an additional £35m of borrowing as per Capital Programme with a mix of short-term and long-term rates.

- The MTFS assumed short-term rates of around 0.75% to 0.80% and PWLB at around 2.10%. However, since then the Bank of England base rate increases mean that current rates are around 1.80% for short-term rates (lending from other Local Authorities) and 3.50% for PWLB. PWLB rates continue to change and as at the final report are moving towards 4% level of long-term borrowing following Bank of England latest base rate increase on 10th June 2022 to 1.25%.

- With the increased interest rates the Council will need to ensure adequate mitigation is in place. The cost of borrowing is above the estimates included in the MTFS and as rates are likely to continue to fluctuate, the timing a scale of any further borrowing must be reviewed. Mitigation is likely to be looking at the availability of alternative funding sources (Capital Receipts), borrowing is delayed/revised, or through the review of longer-term investments and other assets that the Council holds. Treasury Management investment

income may improve (although this is unlikely to have a material impact) and will therefore become a pressure within the year to fund.

2.1.2 **Annual pay award risk** – there is very real risk that the Pay Award is above the MTFS budgeted level of 2%, which will place additional pressure on the General Fund. The Unions have advised Local Government employers that a pay award in-line with the current inflation rate is being sought.

- Every 1% increase in the Pay Award over the budgeted increase of 2% will increase costs by £138k (based on an annual salary budget of £13.8m). The 2022/23 increase will increase the base salary costs, which in turn will be carried through and compounded into subsequent years.

- Management actions to mitigate the in-year and future years impact include vacancy management; to reduce Head Count; to reduce the use of Agency Staff and Consultants; and/or to stop other discretionary expenditure.

2.1.3 **Up to £0.250m Crematorium income risk –** there is risk that the Crematorium is unable to mitigate the impact of reduced income from local competition within its market. Service management is seeking to address this including engaging with local funeral directors to maintain and increase income. However, the budgeted income trend continues and there are currently no firm short-term measures to mitigate the estimated £250k income risk.

2.1.4 **Energy cost pressures £0.100m to £0.250m –** there is an ongoing risk due to rising energy prices. The MTFS budget included an assumption for a 30% to 40% increase on Energy costs during year. However, the increase in the cost floor for April 2022 was already above this MTFS assumption and with a further increase expected in October 2022. This is highly likely to result in a significant pressure within the 2022-23 financial year, which will need to be adjusted in the MTFS energy cost estimates for future years.

2.1.5 **Levelling-up Fund (LUF) Bid costs pressure of £50k –** Grant Thornton (GT) have been commissioned to inform the Council's LUF Bid with 50k expenditure approved. Currently there is no funding for this but has been approved as the GT work will help the Council to construct a bid to the LUF that is more likely to achieve success in the bidding process and to bring in additional DLUHC funding.

2.2　In addition to the above, there are several areas where a reasonable risk or pressure estimate could not be established. These include:

- **Inflationary risk** – There is likely to significant inflationary pressure on costs with CPI currently at 9.1% and likely to increase further with the Bank of England estimating CPI to be 11% by end of October 2022. This inflationary pressure on expenditure applies to both capital and revenue expenditure and cannot be mitigated.

- **Property Income risk** – there is an ongoing risk of further deterioration of commercial property income, which is an inherent risk with holding a property portfolio, although with an increased risk due to the current wider economic climate. Overall, the portfolio is reasonably stable and will continue to be reported on via the Property Investment Advisory Group.

2.3　The above risks and pressures will be kept under review by Heads of Service and reported on throughout the year. Budget monitoring reports, as detailed in Section 3, will report quarterly to Cabinet with updates on the current risks and pressures as at the time of reporting.

3 FINANCIAL REPORTING TO CABINET PLAN FOR 2022-23

3.1 The financial reporting plan for the year is show below for the Cabinet meetings that the reports are planned to be presented at. This covers the full financial cycle from Period 1 Budget monitoring for 2022-23, through to the final outturn report for 2022-23.

3.2 Planning for financial reporting to Cabinet provides a clear timetable for all involved in the process with deadlines set for each stage, which will ensure that reports can be completed in suitable time for the agenda dispatch.

Cabinet Item	Agenda dispatch	Cabinet Date
P1 Budget Monitoring 2022/23 - Revenue and Capital	Fri, 29/07/2022	Tue, 09/08/2022
Regeneration and Capital Projects Investment Strategy (K)	Fri, 29/07/2022	Tue, 09/08/2022
Final Outturn Report for 2021/22 Financial Year	Fri, 02/09/2022	Tue, 13/09/2022
2023/24 Budget Strategy and MTFS update	Fri, 30/09/2022	Tue, 11/10/2022
P2 Budget Monitoring 2022/23 - Revenue and Capital	Fri, 04/11/2022	Tue, 15/11/2022
Council Tax Support Scheme (may need to be earlier)	Fri, 02/12/2022	Tue, 13/12/2022
Budget Strategy Working Group recommendations to Cabinet	Fri, 06/01/2023	Tue, 17/01/2023
2023/24 Revenue Budget, Capital Programme, MTFS & Council Tax	Fri, 27/01/2023	Tue, 07/02/2023
P3 Budget Monitoring 2022/23 - Revenue and Capital	Fri, 03/03/2023	Tue, 14/03/2023
P4 Budget Monitoring and Draft Outturn Report for 2022/23	Fri, 23/06/2023	Tue, 04/07/2023
Final Outturn Report for 2022/23 Financial Year	Fri, 01/09/2023	Tue, 12/09/2023

3.3 The timetable has been worked back further from here to ensure that the draft reports can be published internally for review at both the Cabinet Reports Meeting and Cabinet Reports briefing prior to the information being finalised and made part of the public record when the Cabinet Agenda and papers are published (see Appendix 1).

4   BUDGET MONITORING 2022-23

4.1   Budget monitoring reports to Cabinet will continue to be quarterly for 2022-23 as per the reporting timetable detailed in Section 3. Finance, Heads of Service, and budget holders across the Council will work together collaboratively throughout the budget monitoring process to complete the detailed reporting that sits which underpins the final, summarised report that is presented to Cabinet.

4.2   The core principles that the new budget monitoring process will follow include the following:

4.2.1   **Heads of Service and cost centre managers (CCMs) will review their budgets prior to the financial system close date for the quarter.** This will be via self-service use of Integra reports that cost centre managers have access to and which provide the key information that budget holders require to review their actual expenditure and income to date, to compare this to the budget and to arrive at a forecast for the year. Finance will provide training and support where cost centre managers require this to be able to run their cost centre reports on Integra, and to complete their forecasts.

4.2.2   **It is imperative that CCM as budget holders complete their forecasts in a timely manner and have these available to submit to finance when the Council-wide corporate report is run for each quarterly budget monitoring report.** CCMs should be prepared to give a full account for the management of their budgets and will be expected to provide narratives to their Head of Service and Finance for any material variances that are 20k more or less than the approved budget. This will be applied at both cost centre level as well as at individual cost centre and account code combination level.

4.2.3   All of the above is necessary for a quality report to be built upon reliable data and with sufficient time for Finance to sense-check and challenge, where necessary, the service forecasts (rather than doing the Finance completing forecasts for cost centre managers).

4.3   There will be no supplementary estimates process this year as this is a time consuming, low value adding and not part of a best practice finance approach. Instead, **any changes to budgets that are identified throughout the year will be routinely addressed through the budget monitoring**

process on a quarterly basis and with explicit Cabinet approval sought for any requested budget changes within the year.

5   CONCLUSIONS

5.1   This report highlights some of the financial risks that are expected to materialise in the coming months and Members will continue to be updated on these throughout the year.

BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS:
None

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FINANCIAL REPORTING TO CABINET PLAN FOR 2022-23

Cabinet Item	Draft report to CT (by 5pm)	Cabinet Reports Meeting (at 1pm)	Cabinet Reports Briefing (at 7pm)	Finalised report to CT (by 5pm)	Agenda dispatch	Cabinet Date
P1 Budget Monitoring 2022/23 - Revenue and Capital	Thu, 21/07/2022	Mon, 25/07/2022	Tue, 26/07/2022	Thu, 28/07/2022	Fri, 29/07/2022	Tue, 09/08/2022
Regeneration and Capital Projects Investment Strategy (K)	Thu, 21/07/2022	Mon, 25/07/2022	Tue, 26/07/2022	Thu, 28/07/2022	Fri, 29/07/2022	Tue, 09/08/2022
Final Outturn Report for 2021/22 Financial Year	Thu, 25/08/2022	Tue, 30/08/2022	Tue, 30/08/2022	Thu, 01/09/2022	Fri, 02/09/2022	Tue, 13/09/2022
2023/24 Budget Strategy and MTFS update	Thu, 22/09/2022	Mon, 26/09/2022	Tue, 27/09/2022	Thu, 29/09/2022	Fri, 30/09/2022	Tue, 11/10/2022
P2 Budget Monitoring 2022/23 - Revenue and Capital	Thu, 27/10/2022	Mon, 31/10/2022	Tue, 01/11/2022	Thu, 03/11/2022	Fri, 04/11/2022	Tue, 15/11/2022
Council Tax Support Scheme (may need to be earlier)	Thu, 24/11/2022	Mon, 28/11/2022	Tue, 29/11/2022	Thu, 01/12/2022	Fri, 02/12/2022	Tue, 13/12/2022
Budget Strategy Working Group recommendations to Cabinet	Tue, 03/01/2023	Wed, 04/01/2023	Wed, 04/01/2023	Thu, 05/01/2023	Fri, 06/01/2023	Tue, 17/01/2023
2023/24 Revenue Budget, Capital Programme, MTFS & Council Tax	Thu, 19/01/2023	Mon, 23/01/2023	Tue, 24/01/2023	Thu, 26/01/2023	Fri, 27/01/2023	Tue, 07/02/2023
P3 - Budget Monitoring 2022/23 - Revenue and Capital	Thu, 23/02/2023	Mon, 27/02/2023	Tue, 28/02/2023	Thu, 02/03/2023	Fri, 03/03/2023	Tue, 14/03/2023
P4 Draft Outturn Report for 2022/23	Thu, 15/06/2023	Mon, 19/06/2023	Tue, 20/06/2023	Thu, 22/06/2023	Fri, 23/06/2023	Tue, 04/07/2023
Final Outturn Report for 2022/23 Financial Year	Thu, 24/08/2023	Mon, 28/08/2023	Tue, 29/08/2023	Thu, 31/08/2023	Fri, 01/09/2023	Tue, 12/09/2023

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CABINET

COUNCILLOR ADRIAN NEWELL
PLANNING AND ECONOMY
PORTFOLIO HOLDER
5th JULY 2022

REPORT NO. EPSH2218

KEY DECISION? NO

A GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE STRATEGY FOR RUSHMOOR

SUMMARY AND RECOMMENDATIONS:

This report seeks Cabinet's approval to adopt the Rushmoor Green Infrastructure Strategy. The strategy identifies the valuable Green Infrastructure in and around the borough, seeks to protect, harness and sustain the benefits it provides, and identifies opportunities to enhance what we have.   The strategy was the subject of public consultation and been revised to take account of relevant comments received.

1.   INTRODUCTION

1.1.   The Rushmoor Local Plan (2019) commits the council to prepare a Green Infrastructure Strategy that shows how the council will improve the quality of the borough's green infrastructure network and where developers might also fund improvements to it.

1.2.   This report seeks Cabinet's approval to adopt the Rushmoor Green Infrastructure Strategy (Appendix 1). The report sets out what the strategy aims to achieve, how it will influence decisions that the council makes and outlines how the draft strategy has been amended following a period of public consultation.

2.   BACKGROUND

What is Green Infrastructure?

2.1   The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) defines "green infrastructure" as:

> "a network of multi-functional green and blue spaces and other natural features, urban and rural, which is capable of delivering a wide range of environmental, economic, health and wellbeing benefits for nature, climate, local and wider communities and prosperity".

2.2   For Rushmoor, this means our parks, playing fields, allotments and cemeteries, protected natural areas such as the Thames Basin Heath Special Protection Area, our trees, cycle routes, public footpaths and the

water courses that run through the borough such as the Basingstoke Canal. These spaces are important not only for their natural beauty and environmental value but for the health and other quality of life benefits they provide to local people.

2.3   Councils must set out in their Local Plans how they will conserve and enhance their green infrastructure.   This Green Infrastructure Strategy represents this council's response to this obligation.

Policy Context

2.4   The Council gave a commitment in the Local Plan (adopted in 2019) to prepare a Green infrastructure Strategy. This would show where the green infrastructure is located, how it should be protected and, where suitable, require developers to contribute towards its improvement. The Council Plan 2022 to 2025 also commits us to produce this strategy as part of our corporate priority to promote "vibrant and distinctive town centres".

2.5   The strategy is also informed by other local, county wide and national policies, legislation and guidance, one of the most significant of which is the Environment Act 2021 which came into law in November 2021. This will present new opportunities and responsibilities for the council.   When secondary legislation is passed over the coming year, it will:
   • require all development (planning applications) to deliver "biodiversity net gain" (this means that development will be required to leave the natural environment in a better state than it was beforehand);
   • promote improved natural habitats by establishing a national Nature Recovery Network, delivered locally through landscape scale Local Nature Recovery Strategies (LNRS) which are likely to require us to work with other public, private and voluntary to map and agree priorities for nature recovery;
   • impose a new duty on us to co-operate with Natural England in the preparation and implementation of Species Conservation and Protected Sites Strategies;
   • require public authorities to demonstrate how they are working towards enhancing biodiversity; and
   • establish Conservation Covenants – voluntary legally binding land management agreements for long-term biodiversity enhancements.

2.6   It is therefore especially appropriate that the council prepare its Green Infrastructure Strategy now.

3   **DETAILS OF THE PROPOSAL**

General

3.1   The strategy: provides a comprehensive review of the green infrastructure we have in and around the borough; identifies its strengths and weaknesses, as well as the opportunities and threats it faces. It then identifies 12 projects the council will work on over the next ten years to enhance it.

3.2 Seven of these projects are boroughwide where we will work with others to research and identify new ways of identifying and/ or enhancing our green infrastructure. These are:

- PP1 - An interactive Green Infrastructure Map that will be available online for the public to view;
- PP2 – A Development Management Green Infrastructure Toolkit – for use by planners and developers submitting planning applications that will identify green infrastructure and potential opportunities for developers to fund it;
- PP3 – A Biodiversity Net Gain Off-site Compensation Scoping Project – anticipating the introduction of secondary legislation in the Environment Act, this project will identify if there is land within Rushmoor that could achieve biodiversity net gain for the long term and identify how we might collaborate with our local authority neighbours in situations where biodiversity net gain has to be delivered outside of Rushmoor;
- PP4 - Access to the Outdoors Information Project – encouraging more people to use our green infrastructure;
- PP5 - Connecting Rushmoor's Ecological Network – we will work with the county council to review the 2015 Ecological Network Map and opportunities that could form part of a future Local Nature Recovery Strategy (LNRS);
- PP6 - Review of Available Suitable Alternative Natural Greenspaces (SANG) Sites - we will work with our neighbouring local authorities and Natural England to see if there are other SANG sites that could be provided to offset new residential development and thereby protect the Thames Basin Heath; and
- PP7 - Carbon Reduction through Tree Planting Feasibility Project – to assess the types of trees that would be desirable in Rushmoor to help deliver new woodlands. London local planning authorities are already having to require major new developments to secure "carbon capture" including through tree planting. We will look at what these authorities are doing to respond to this new planning challenge.

3.3 The strategy also has five geographical projects. These are:

- GP1 - Southwood and Cove Brook Floodplain Enhancement Project;
- GP2 - Blackwater Valley Enhancement Project;
- GP3 - Enhancing the Basingstoke Canal Project;
- GP4 - Cove Brook Greenway Project; and
- GP5 - Southwood/Bramshot SANG Network Project.

Alternative Options

3.4   There are two options to consider. These are: "do nothing" or "do it faster".

3.5   The "do nothing" option would mean not publishing a Green Infrastructure Strategy and to deal with planning proposals from developers where we would want to secure green infrastructure on a case-by-case basis judged against the adopted Local Plan policy. However, this could leave the council in a weak position when negotiating with developers to fund green infrastructure offsite. Moreover, it will not prepare us for when secondary legislation associated with the Biodiversity Act 2021 is implemented.

3.6   Some consultees have asked us to deliver this faster. We think a ten year plan represents a balanced approach to delivering these projects having regard to current staffing and other resources. Some projects will be dependent on gaining external funding and there is also a need to wait for the secondary legislation following the enactment of the Biodiversity Act 2021 that will establish new best practice for the various initiatives it will put into law.

Consultation

3.7   A presentation on the draft vision and objectives and emerging findings was given to members of the Strategic Housing and Local Plans Group (SHLPG) on 13 September 2021. A more detailed presentation was provided at an All Member Briefing on 23 November 2021. The feedback received during this briefing was incorporated into a working draft of the Green Infrastructure Strategy, which was presented to members of the SHLPG on 7 December 2021.

3.8   The draft Green Infrastructure Strategy was then the subject of a six-week public consultation running from 10 February to 24 March 2022.

3.9   This consultation comprised: a mailout to all groups on the Local Plan consultation database; a newsletter to all residents who had asked to be kept informed; publicity on social media (council website, council's Facebook account) and an online questionnaire survey which 220 respondents partially or wholly completed.

3.10   We received written submissions from Natural England; the Hampshire & Isle of Wight Fire and Rescue Service; Hampshire's Countryside Service and Public Health teams; Eggars Hill Tennis Club; Surrey Heath and Waverley Borough Councils; Cove Book Greenway Group; the Basingstoke Canal Society; the Woodland Trust; and five local residents. These submissions were generally supportive. Some consultees have suggested detailed ideas which can be considered for incorporation within individual projects as they are rolled out.   Other ideas, for example, addressing physical barriers to enable people to gain access to green infrastructure - such as the A325 Farnborough Road or the M3 – are best delivered in other strategies such as the forthcoming county council Local Cycling and

Walking Infrastructure Plan and an Area Transport Strategy which the county council is proposing as part of the next Local Transport Plan.

3.11 The Basingstoke Canal Society invited us to correct factual points within the strategy (for example, the Canal and River Trust does not own the infrastructure) and confirms it is doing its own water sampling research. We have updated the strategy in this respect. They also raise a number of detailed ideas which will be followed up when delivering individual projects in the strategy.

3.12 The online questionnaire survey (see Appendix 2) invited members of the public to state if they agreed with our vision and the detailed infrastructure assets and strengths/ weaknesses/ opportunities and threats they face. It is fair to say that survey respondents who completed some or all of the questions online were overwhelmingly supportive of the strategy and between 83% and 89% of survey respondents who completed the survey supported us.

3.13 However, it is worth reporting the views of those who did not support the various initiatives as well as the detailed written submissions suggesting revisions to the strategy, the main points of which are summarised below.

Format and timescale
- Document too long. Not enough time to respond to the consultation.
- Timescale – 2032 is too late. We are losing green space already.
- Too aspirational; actions speak louder than words; load of rubbish/ gimmick/ waste of time; council should be concentrating on more pressing matters.
- Should not refer to partners – this means private companies making money at the cost of us.
- Strategy does not identify most deprived areas of the borough.

Remit of the strategy
- Should say it will protect ecosystems.
- Should address ways of addressing negative aspects locally (aircraft activity/ noise, pollution, industry).
- Should cover improved access to green infrastructure for disabled people.
- Should cover privately owned green infrastructure too, other small spaces and roadside areas that could be used as nature reserves.
- Should contain a "Protection Guarantee" to restrict growth. No more housing.
- Planners should be trained in ecology matters.
- Should increase funding for conservation groups.
- Should do more to stop fly tipping in green areas.
- Rowhill Nature reserve should be specifically covered in a number of projects.

- Should state that Cove Green and green area in Farnborough town Centre have public access. Town centre green space has been sacrificed to development.
- Only covers the assets that Hampshire County Council want to.

Project ideas
- Basingstoke Canal a big issue – needs more money.
- More space should be set aside with no public access.
- More fruit trees in parks. More allotments. More wildflowers. No mention of unmowed verges.
- Ivy Fields (North Town) could benefit from a playground.
- Strategy proposes health benefits of access to green infrastructure but the council has closed Southwood Golf Course.
- More car parking spaces for parks to help access to them.
- Need to balance pedestrian and cycle access to green infrastructure.
- Should identify more buildings as locally listed.
- More access to open air swimming or keep the Lido open for longer hours.
- Demolish some buildings in Aldershot town centre to make green spaces/ community assets.
- Make sure the common has better site management
- More access to MoD land.
- More CCTV to prevent crime/ anti social behaviour.
- More care needs to be taken with hedgerow management.

3.14 Noting a number of concerns about the length and aspirational nature of the strategy, we will publish a one page summary of the document online if the Cabinet approves the strategy. All submissions have been carefully reviewed, including those that suggest alternative ideas, but it is considered that many of them are matters for the individual projects or are not directly relevant to this strategy.

4 **IMPLICATIONS** (of proposed course of action)

Risks

4.1 None.

Legal Implications

4.2 None.

Financial and Resource Implications

4.3 This adoption of this strategy does not have any additional workload consequences for the council. The activities the council will undertake will be covered from within existing staffing resources although it may be necessary to fund some consultancy or research that could be covered by s106 funds the council receives for providing and managing Suitable Alternative Natural Greenspaces (SANGs) in the borough.

4.4   The council will use this strategy and the evidence base behind it to bid for external resources and/ or secure developer contributions where appropriate.

Equalities Impact Implications

4.5   None directly arise from the adoption of the strategy. One of the messages from the online survey was the need to provide more park benches so that elderly and disabled people can enjoy parks better. The individual projects will consider and address this as appropriate.

    Other

4.6   None.

5   CONCLUSIONS

5.1   The Green Infrastructure Strategy is evidence-based and shows how we will deliver commitments both in our Local Plan and in the Council's Plan 2022 to 2025.

5.2   It has been the subject of extensive internal and external consultation and revised in light of the feedback received where appropriate.

BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS:
Appendix 1 – A Green Infrastructure Strategy for Rushmoor
Appendix 2 – Online survey questionnaire

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Rushmoor Local Plan

A Green Infrastructure Strategy for Rushmoor

June 2022

RUSHMOOR
BOROUGH COUNCIL

Foreword

<FOREWORD TO BE ADDED PRIOR TO ADOPTION>

Contents

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Executive Summary

1. Rushmoor is a relatively small and densely populated Borough, which is mostly urban in character, but which benefits from a network of valuable green infrastructure, including large areas of open space subject to international and national nature designations, a network of locally designated spaces of value for nature, valuable linear features such as the Basingstoke Canal, River Blackwater and Cove Brook and a number of other green spaces, which are well used and highly valued by local residents.

2. The Covid-19 pandemic and a number of other health challenges experienced by the population, has highlighted the importance of access to green space. There is recognition across the health sector that outdoor activity in natural spaces can be an alternative or positive complement to other treatments. Alongside this, there is now a greater recognition of the urgent need to reverse the decline in biodiversity and a push towards the recovery of our natural environment, in part to enable it to adapt and mitigate the impacts of climate change. In 2019, the Council declared a Climate Emergency, and in doing so, pledged to make the council carbon neutral, and Aldershot and Farnborough greener and more sustainable.

3. Green infrastructure planning is about creating, sustaining and managing the natural environment in ways that deliver services essential to improve quality of life. It enables people to be active and to utilise natural spaces. It provides the natural infrastructure essential to help people live happier, healthier and more sustainable lives and makes our green spaces more accessible to people and wildlife.

4. This Strategy will identify the valuable Green Infrastructure in and around the Borough, seek to protect, harness and sustain the benefits it provides, and identify opportunities to enhance what we have. The Rushmoor Local Plan (2019) commits the Council to producing a Green Infrastructure Strategy. The strategy and evidence within this document will inform spatial planning and development management decisions in Rushmoor.

5. There have been five stages to preparing the Strategy:
   - Stage 1 - Understanding what we have within and surrounding the Borough;
   - Stage 2 - Analysis of Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats (SWOT) by area;
   - Stage 3 - Review of Green Infrastructure assets by theme;
   - Stage 4 - Understanding how all assets form part of a Green Infrastructure Network; and
   - Stage 5 - Identifying priorities and projects

6. Stage 3 involved the grouping of assets under a number of themes to understand how different elements of green infrastructure function and offer different benefits across the area. The following themes have been identified:
   - Landscape and Heritage
   - Biodiversity
   - Water
   - Recreation and Open Space
   - Access to the Outdoors and Connections

7. The Strategy includes a vision and objectives which sets out what we aim to achieve, recognising that good infrastructure is not an end, but an enabler of better social, economic and environmental outcomes.

6

Vision

By 2032 the Council and its partners will have worked with the local community to achieve a high quality, connected and multi-functional green and blue infrastructure network that extends across the Borough, which is sustainable and provides benefits for people, place and nature.

Objectives

People	Health and Wellbeing	Provide green infrastructure facilities to encourage, promote and enable healthy lifestyles	
	Connectivity	Improve the connectivity of green infrastructure for people and provide active access to the outdoors	
	Inclusivity	Enable the increased use of green infrastructure across all user groups, social groups and abilities	
Place	Quality and Character	Deliver green infrastructure which protects and enhances the quality and character of the local environment.	
Nature	Improved Function	Enhance existing green infrastructure to function better for wildlife, supporting healthy and more diverse ecosystems.	
	New Habitats and Linkages	Protect and enhance biodiversity by creating new habitats and linkages, improving connectivity and reducing habitat fragmentation.	
Sustainability	Climate Change Resilience	Deliver green infrastructure which helps mitigate, and can adapt to, the existing and future effects of climate change.	
	Long Term Sustainability	Working with partners to build and secure funding, effective governance and stewardship for new and existing green infrastructure to ensure its long-term sustainability and, where possible, to incorporate opportunities to educate and inspire people to care for the natural environment.	

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8. A range of national, regional and local policies, legislation and guidance will inform our approach to Green Infrastructure within Rushmoor. The preparation of the Green Infrastructure Strategy has coincided with the enactment of the Environment Act 2021. This builds on the government's 25-Year Environment Plan and includes a number of new requirements that will be relevant during the delivery of this Strategy and will be taken into account during the preparation of a subsequent Green Infrastructure Delivery Plan.

9. In addition, the Strategy has been informed by a range of existing strategies and evidence, including those prepared within Rushmoor, in adjoining authorities and across the county of Hampshire. Alongside the assessment undertaken when preparing the Strategy, these have led to the identification of potential priorities and projects and opportunities for partnership working.

10. As noted above, the Strategy has identified the range of existing valuable Green Infrastructure assets that can be found across the Borough. These are summarised in the diagram below:

Biodiversity
Internationally & nationally important designations
38 SINCs and 2 RVEIs
21% woodland cover
Linear features of value

Landscape & Heritage
Four Character Areas
Military & Aerospace Heritage
Registered Parks & Gardens
Designated Important Open Areas

Recreation and Open Space
Parks and gardens
Playing fields and recreation grounds
Allotments
School grounds
SANG

Water
Basingstoke Canal
River Blackwater
Tributaries (incl. Cove Brook) and wet grassland in River Blackwater headwaters
Waterbodies (incl. lakes)

Rushmoor GI Network

Access & Connections
Network of PRoW & informal routes
Access to surrounding countryside
Valuable green corridors

11. The assessment of the existing Green Infrastructure network and other relevant strategies and evidence has identified a number of key issues to be addressed, including:

- The need to continue to explore opportunities for the delivery of Suitable Alternative Natural Greenspace (SANG)

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- The need to mitigate and adapt to the potential impacts of climate change and to align with and support Rushmoor's Climate Change Action Plan and emerging Climate Change Strategy.

- The need to consider the emerging requirements of the Environment Act 2021.

- The need to protect the existing Green Infrastructure network.

- The need to ensure that biodiversity enhancements have regard to the River Blackwater Biodiversity Opportunity Area and the contiguous nature of Thames Basin Heaths and Thames Basin Lowlands across the Surrey/Hampshire borders, to ensure ecological connectivity and function across boundaries.

- Scope to improve and promote the walking and cycling network in partnership with Hampshire County Council.

- Scope to increase physical activity and overall improvement to the health and wellbeing of the local population.

- The need to improve the state of the natural environment, including improvements to air quality, tackling noise issues and enhancing biodiversity across the Borough.

- The need to protect, enhance and reflect local character.

- The need to improve ecological connectivity across the Borough, reduce isolation and address the vulnerability of our biodiversity to pressure from climate change and land use.

- The need to improve access and reduce the impact of physical or perceived barriers to sustainable movement across the Borough.

- The need to ensure the long-term sustainability of green infrastructure assets and take into account maintenance and management.

- Scope to inspire and educate people to value and care for their local Green Infrastructure Network.

12. To address these issues, the Council has identified the following broad priorities. Delivering projects focussed around these priorities will enable the Council to achieve the Vision and Objectives of this Strategy.

Broad Priorities

⇨ Increase opportunities for people to connect with nature.

⇨ Identify opportunities and prioritise locations for enhancing biodiversity.

⇨ Identify opportunities to improve wildlife corridors and connections between the Borough's ecological assets.

⇨ Identify need and prioritise locations for new trees, hedgerows and woodland.

⇨ Deliver green infrastructure that protects and enhances important views and local landscape character.

> ⇨ Review maintenance and management policies for open space.
>
> ⇨ Protect the existing Green Infrastructure network, including Important Open Area and Green Corridors designated in the Local Plan.
>
> ⇨ Identify opportunities to remove barriers to sustainable movement and improve access to existing open spaces.
>
> ⇨ Promote appropriate Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems (SuDS) and identify opportunities for natural flood alleviation measures.
>
> ⇨ Increase usage of green travel corridors.
>
> ⇨ Identify opportunities to deliver Green Infrastructure enhancements that will improve the state of the natural environment, including air quality and noise issues.
>
> ⇨ Identify how new developments can connect to and enhance the existing Green Infrastructure network.
>
> ⇨ Identify opportunities to deliver new Suitable Alternative Natural Greenspace (SANG,) improve connections between existing SANG and continue to explore creative ways to extend the SANG concept to address the land constraints within Rushmoor
>
> ⇨ Work with partners to improve and enhance the Green Infrastructure network within and beyond the Borough, with a focus on those areas where this will address existing deficiencies and/or provide benefits for deprived areas and for disadvantaged groups.
>
> ⇨ Work with partners to deliver actions arising from other Strategies which will support the vision and objectives of the Green Infrastructure Strategy.

13. In order to deliver these broad priorities and the vision and objectives, a number of strategic projects have been identified. There are two types of emerging project: (i) process projects and (ii) geographical projects.

Important: Please note that these projects have been identified as having potential, but this does not represent a commitment to delivery or assume that partnership working has been agreed. Following the adoption of the Green Infrastructure Strategy, potential projects will be tested for their feasibility and costed through the preparation of a Green Infrastructure Delivery Plan.

14. The Council will continue to work with partners to deliver the priorities and seek to deliver the emerging strategic projects identified in this Strategy. As noted above, this will be progressed further through a Green Infrastructure Delivery Plan. As part of the preparation of this Plan each project will be considered in more detail, including:

- Establishing the landowners, managers and/or potential delivery partners.

- Understanding and maximising the multiple benefits of the project.

- Identify potential funding sources.

- Scoping and understand how the project will be delivered.

- Prepare concept plans and/or detailed project objectives.

Emerging Process Projects

Emerging Process Projects include those that will provide information, advice and guidance, to assist in enhancing green infrastructure or increasing the usage of our existing network. This also includes projects which will scope the potential for the delivery of 'on-the-ground' enhancements and may lead to the identification of further geographical projects. The following projects have been identified in this Green Infrastructure Strategy:

- PP1 - An interactive Green Infrastructure Map
- PP2 – A Development Management Green Infrastructure Toolkit
- PP3 – A Biodiversity Net Gain Off-site Compensation Scoping Project
- PP4 - Access to the Outdoors Information Project
- PP5 - Connecting Rushmoor's Ecological Network
- PP6 - Review of Available SANG Sites
- PP7 - Carbon Reduction through Tree Planting Feasibility Project

Emerging Geographical Projects

Emerging Geographical Projects include projects which are under way or have been identified as having potential, and relate to a specific area and/or green infrastructure asset. The following projects have been identified in this reen Infrastructure Strategy:

- GP1 - Southwood and Cove Brook Floodplain Enhancement Project (underway)
- GP2 - Blackwater Valley Enhancement Project
- GP3 - Enhancing the Basingstoke Canal Project
- GP4 - Cove Brook Greenway Project
- GP5 - Southwood/Bramshot SANG Network Project

15.   This Strategy and the Green Infrastructure Delivery Plan will provide the supporting framework to pursue funding sources external to the Council. Consideration of potential mechanisms for income generation will be needed to support project funding.

1.   Introduction

Introduction to the Strategy

1.1   The Rushmoor Local Plan (2019) commits the Council to producing a Green Infrastructure Strategy that will identify opportunities to improve the quality of the green infrastructure network. The strategy and evidence within this document will inform spatial planning and development management in Rushmoor by identifying ways in which existing green infrastructure (GI) can be protected and enhanced.

1.2   The value to, and importance of, open space has increased since the beginning of the Covid pandemic. A report commissioned by the National Trust[1] showed that nearly two-thirds of people have appreciated local green spaces more due to Covid-19. In the local area, the most recent Residents' Survey undertaken in Rushmoor also demonstrated the value attached to parks, woodlands, open spaces and playgrounds, with 97% of respondents considering Council services relating to these spaces being very or fairly important.

Definition of Green Infrastructure

1.3   The term "green infrastructure" describes the networks of natural spaces and corridors across a given area. Green infrastructure is defined in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) (July 2021) as:

"A network of multi-functional green and blue spaces and other natural features, urban and rural, which is capable of delivering a wide range of environmental, economic, health and wellbeing benefits for nature, climate, local and wider communities and prosperity."

1.4   Green infrastructure takes many different forms. It can be delivered on different scales and fulfil many functions. It offers ways to protect and enhance ecological networks, address climate change, build economic success, manage flood risk and improve health and well-being. It provides alternative active access options and quality green spaces for exercise and socialising. It should help to enhance landscape character and local distinctiveness and provide attractive and appealing places to live and work.

1.5   Green infrastructure planning is about creating, sustaining and managing the natural environment in ways that deliver services essential to improved quality of life. It enables people to be active and to utilise natural spaces. It provides the natural infrastructure essential to help people live happier, healthier and more sustainable lives and makes our urban and rural landscapes more accessible to people and wildlife.

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[1] Vivid Economics and Barton Willmore (June 2020) Levelling Up and Building Back Better Through Urban Green Infrastructure: An Investment Options Appraisal.

What can Green Infrastructure include?

1.6   The National Planning Practice Guidance (NPPG)[2] notes:

> *"Green infrastructure can embrace a range of spaces and assets that provide environmental and wider benefits. It can, for example, include parks, playing fields, other areas of open space, woodland, allotments, private gardens, sustainable drainage features, green roofs and walls, street trees and 'blue infrastructure' such as streams, ponds, canals and other water bodies."*

1.7   Green Infrastructure can be of various sizes and can be in any condition, it can be public land or in private ownership. It also provides economic and social benefits.   The following table outlines the Green Infrastructure 'Assets' which will be included in this Strategy.

Green Infrastructure Assets	
Historic Parks and Gardens	Open access land
Protected Nature Areas	Parks and open spaces
Natural Habitats	Playing fields and recreation grounds
Trees and Woodland	Public Rights of Way, footpaths and cycleways
Gardens	Cemeteries
Water courses and water bodies	Allotments and orchards

Benefits of Green Infrastructure

1.8   Green infrastructure is a natural capital asset that provides multiple benefits, at a range of scales.   Natural capital assessment is a structured way to evaluate quantitatively the value of nature's assets to people.   This value can comprise resources with a market value (such as timber or fresh water) but also resources without a clear market value (such as outdoor recreation).   Following a natural capital approach to evaluating the benefits of green infrastructure can ensure that nature is viewed positively as an asset that can support a range of social and economic outcomes.   Adopting this approach provides a robust evidence base to identify green infrastructure opportunities and will support better decision making both within this Strategy and subsequent Green Infrastructure Delivery Plans.

1.9   The services that human communities obtain from the functioning of the natural environment, may be described as 'ecosystem services'.   Identifying relevant ecosystem services can help inform a natural capital approach to assessment.   Ecosystem services that green infrastructure can deliver to local communities is well documented and includes opportunities to:

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[2] Natural environment - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)

- support healthy lifestyles and thriving communities
- provide active access to outdoor recreation
- provide settings for outdoor education
- enhance landscape character and cultural heritage
- enhance biodiversity and wildlife corridors
- support healthy soil, water and ecosystems
- provide climate change solutions
- manage of flood risk
- invigorate the local economy
- enhance a positive sense of place

1.10   The recently launched Natural England Green Infrastructure Framework[3] identifies that a number of health challenges being experienced across the population, alongside those arising from the Covid-19 pandemic, including diabetes, obesity, dementia and mental health issues. There is recognition across the health sector that outdoor activity in nature rich spaces can be an alternative or positive complement to other treatments. The GI Framework identifies that in a number of studies, access to green space has been associated with improved relaxation, increased functioning of the immune system and better sleep patterns.

1.11   Research undertaken by Natural England on the impact of COVID-19 on engagement with green and natural spaces[4] generated some interesting findings in relation to how people were using green infrastructure during the pandemic, including:

- an increasing connection made between gardens and mental health;
- the key role of urban green space/parks in keeping people connected to the outdoors;
- the main reasons for spending time in parks/green spaces was to get fresh air, for physical health, exercise and for mental health and well-being;
- increasing prominence of social activities and mental health benefits derived from spending time with others in green spaces;
- mental health and wellbeing became a more important reason to visit blue spaces; and
- poor physical health or illness was a barrier for about one in ten survey respondents to spending time outdoors.

Aim of the Strategy

1.12   The overall aim of the Strategy is to:

- Identify existing Green Infrastructure assets and networks within and beyond the borough boundary;
- Identify areas where there are deficits in Green Infrastructure / opportunities to provide an improved / enhanced GI Network; and

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[3] https://designatedsites.naturalengland.org.uk/GreenInfrastructure/Home.aspx
[4] Natural England (September 2021) Impact of COVID-19 on engagement with green and natural spaces.

- Identify potential Green Infrastructure projects that could be progressed by the Council and its partners. Following the adoption of this Strategy, the Council will produce a Green Infrastructure Delivery Plan to provide further detail on the feasibility, costing and funding of identified projects.

1.13 This Strategy supports the delivery of the Rushmoor Local Plan (2019). Both the Strategy and subsequent Green Infrastructure Delivery Plan will be used to inform GI enhancements and guide the outcome of planning applications.

Purpose of the Strategy

1.14 The purpose of the Green Infrastructure Strategy:

- To provide a Green Infrastructure Vision for the Borough;
- Define what is meant by Green Infrastructure and provide a concise summary of the policy and legislative context;
- Identify existing green infrastructure assets and networks within the boundary of the borough and beyond, having regards to the Government's 25 Year Environment Plan landscape scale ambitions for National and Local Nature Recovery Networks;
- Identify areas where there are shortages in Green Infrastructure, as well as opportunity areas where Green Infrastructure can be provided or improved in order to enhance the Network;
- Identify opportunities for new or enhanced sites and/or projects, which can deliver one or more of the following:
  - Multifunctional green infrastructure
  - Climate change resilience through mitigation and adaptation
  - Off-site biodiversity net gain provision in line with future legislative requirements
  - Suitable Alternative Natural Greenspace (SANG);
- Support the range of ecosystem services that natural green spaces provide, valued in accordance with the broad principles of a natural capital approach; and.
- Provide evidence to support funding bids.

1.15 Following the adoption of the Green Infrastructure Strategy, potential projects which have been identified by the Strategy will be tested for their feasibility and costed through a Green Infrastructure Delivery Plan.

Approach to the Strategy

1.16 There have been five main stages to preparing the Strategy:

Stage 1 - Understanding what we have within and surrounding the Borough

A map-based assessment of the existing assets was undertaken to develop an initial understanding of the existing Green Infrastructure Network.

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Stage 2 - Analysis of Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats (SWOT) by area

To supplement the map-based assessment, a more detailed review of the Borough was undertaken in the form of a SWOT (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats) analysis of each area which included a number of site visits.

This assessment was supplemented by a review of other relevant strategies and evidence that related to Green Infrastructure in and around the Borough. The combination of the map-based assessment, SWOT analysis and review enabled the identification of geographical strengths or weaknesses in the network, and common issues across the Borough.

Stage 3 - Review assets by theme

Alongside the analysis of how the network currently functions by area, assets were grouped by theme (or layers) to analyse how the different elements of green infrastructure functions offer different benefits across the area. For example, examining the network of nature designations, habitats and natural/semi-natural greenspaces in order to analyse how our existing network functions for wildlife.

The following themes have been identified:

- Landscape and Heritage
- Biodiversity
- Water
- Recreation and Open Space
- Access to the Outdoors and Connections.

The assessment findings presented in Chapter 5 structured by theme. However, it is important to note that these groupings are not mutually exclusive, and some assets may sit within multiple themes.

Stage 4 - Understanding how all assets form part of a Green Infrastructure Network

The assessment findings by area and theme were reviewed to build a picture of how assets function as a wider Green Infrastructure Network. This is important in order to fully understand the value and multiple functions of our existing green infrastructure and to identify key gaps and deficiencies.

Stage 5 - Identifying priorities and projects

The outcome of stages 1-4 enabled the identification of a list of broad priorities and potential projects to deliver them.

2. Vision and Objectives

2.1   The vision and objectives set out what this strategy aims to achieve, recognising that good infrastructure is not an end, but an enabler of better social, economic and environmental outcomes. There is potential to deliver green infrastructure through a wide range of activities including new provision within developments, effective land management and maintenance of existing areas and assets, utilising natural flood management techniques and coordinating with other projects to deliver multiple benefits. A more joined-up approach with partners and local communities will enable prudent use of limited resources to secure the greatest gains for both the environment and the sustainable economy.

2.2   During the preparation of this Green Infrastructure Strategy, Natural England launched the first stage of a national Green Infrastructure Framework[5]. This included the publication of 15 Green Infrastructure Principles which underpin the Framework and are intended to provide a baseline for different organisations to develop stronger green infrastructure policy and delivery. Under each principle, the Framework suggests what should be achieved through the delivery of GI at local level. This is summarised in Appendix 1. Where possible, this guidance has been used to inform the vision, objectives, priorities and projects identified in this Strategy. The emerging Green Infrastructure Framework will be used to inform the Green Infrastructure Delivery Plan and taken into account as part of the Rushmoor Local Plan Review, which is anticipated to commence in 2022.

Vision Statement

> By 2032 the Council and its partners will have worked with the local community to achieve a high quality, connected and multi-functional green and blue infrastructure network that extends across the Borough, which is sustainable and provides benefits for people, place and nature.

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[5] https://designatedsites.naturalengland.org.uk/GreenInfrastructure/Home.aspx

Objectives

People	Health and Wellbeing	Provide green infrastructure facilities to encourage, promote and enable healthy lifestyles	
	Connectivity	Improve the connectivity of green infrastructure for people and provide active access to the outdoors	
	Inclusivity	Enable the increased use of green infrastructure across all user groups, social groups and abilities	
Place	Quality and Character	Deliver green infrastructure which protects and enhances the quality and character of the local environment.	
Nature	Improved Function	Enhance existing green infrastructure to function better for wildlife, supporting healthy and more diverse ecosystems.	
	New Habitats and Linkages	Protect and enhance biodiversity by creating new habitats and linkages, improving connectivity and reducing habitat fragmentation.	
Sustainability	Climate Change Resilience	Deliver green infrastructure which helps mitigate, and can adapt to, the existing and future effects of climate change.	
	Long Term Sustainability	Working with partners to build and secure funding, effective governance and stewardship for new and existing green infrastructure to ensure its long-term sustainability and, where possible, to incorporate opportunities to educate and inspire people to care for the natural environment.	

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3. Review of Relevant Policies, Strategies and Evidence

3.1 The first part of this chapter outlines the key national, regional and local policies and legislation and guidance that will inform our approach to Green Infrastructure within Rushmoor.

3.2 The second part provides a summary of the review undertaken of a broad range of evidence and strategies that has informed this strategy, including those prepared within Rushmoor, in adjoining authorities and across the county of Hampshire. A list of evidence and strategies included in the review and a summary of the issues and opportunities identified are set out below. A more detailed review of the evidence and strategies is set out in Appendix 2. Where relevant more detail on the evidence is provided under the relevant theme in Chapter 5.

National Legislation, Policy and Guidance

25 Year Environment Plan

3.3 The government has published a 25 Year Environment Plan, that provides support for 'net environmental gain' in development, habitat creation, multi-functional SuDS requirements, and natural spaces close to where people live and work.

Environment Act 2021

3.4 The Environment Act builds upon the 25-year environment plan and places it on a statutory footing. The Act was granted Royal Assent in November 2021 and so is now statute. The Government is now drafting the secondary legislation and guidance that will deliver the key objectives of the Act which are as follows:

- that built development takes place in a way that protects and enhances nature to help to deliver a minimum 10% net gain in biological diversity (biodiversity) and achieve thriving natural spaces for local communities.
- Improved protection for natural habitats by establishing a national Nature Recovery Network, delivered locally through landscape scale Local Nature Recovery Strategies (LNRS). These strategies will have a strong focus on partnership working to deliver Local Nature Recovery Strategies, helping public, private and voluntary sectors map and agree priorities for nature recovery. At the time of writing, the Government is developing policy and guidance relating to LNRS. Therefore, there is currently a lack of detail on what information LNRS will need to include or how they will be agreed and delivered. It is expected that there will be significant overlaps between this Strategy and any emerging LNRS. Both strategies will therefore need to be flexible and ensure that proposed delivery projects deliver on the priorities of both.
- A new duty on local planning authorities to co-operate with Natural England in the preparation and implementation of Species Conservation and Protected Sites Strategies. These strategies will provide a strategic approach to protecting and restoring species and habitats, and feed into the LNRS.

- Reports from public authorities which demonstrate how they are working to achieve commitments towards enhanced biodiversity.
- The introduction of Conservation Covenants – voluntary legally binding land management agreements which deliver long-term biodiversity enhancements.

Agriculture Act 2020

3.5   The Agriculture Act provides the legislative basis for an Environmental Land Management Scheme that aims to reward farmers and land managers with public money for "public goods", such as better air and water quality, thriving wildlife, soil health, or measures to reduce flooding and tackle the effects of climate change.   The Agriculture Act therefore has a close correlation with the Environment Act including Local Nature Recovery scheme payments for actions that support local nature recovery and meet environmental priorities.

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)

3.6   The National Planning Policy Framework states that:

"Planning policies and decisions should aim to achieve healthy, inclusive and safe places which …. enable and support healthy lifestyles, especially where this would address identified local health and well-being needs – for example through the provision of safe and accessible green infrastructure, sports facilities … food, allotments and layouts that encourage walking and cycling." (paragraph 92).

3.7   It goes on to say that:

"New development should be planned for in ways that... avoid increased vulnerability to the range of impacts arising from climate change. When new development is brought forward in areas which are vulnerable, care should be taken to ensure that risks can be managed through suitable adaptation measures, including through the planning of green infrastructure…" (paragraph 154)

3.8   Paragraph 174 states that planning policies and decisions should contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment by *"...recognising the wider benefits from natural capital and ecosystem services…"* and *"…minimising impacts on and providing net gains for biodiversity, including by establishing coherent ecological networks that are more resilient to current and future pressures…'.*

3.9   It sets out that plans should:

'…take a strategic approach to maintaining and enhancing networks of habitat and green infrastructure; and plan for the enhancement of natural capital at a catchment or landscape scale across local authority boundaries' (paragraph 175) and

"…identify, map and safeguard components of local wildlife-rich habitats and wider ecological networks…including wildlife corridors and stepping stones that connect them" (paragraph 179).

Natural Capital Approach Guidance

3.10   A natural capital approach to policy and decision making considers the value of the natural environment as an asset for people and the economy.   The approach builds on and

develops existing technical studies to provide a quantified and accessible methodology to measure the value of the natural environment. It is a relatively new methodology encouraged but not mandated by the Government.   Natural capital approaches can be used at a range of spatial scales, tailored to the needs of the user and the availability of supporting evidence.   Where sufficient evidence is available, the approach can be used to calculate natural capital accounts assigning monetary values to the various ecosystem services identified.

3.11   This strategy aims to provide an overview of existing natural capital within Rushmoor borough at a strategic level – how much, how good and where this capital is located.   A Natural Capital approach will inform the Green Infrastructure Delivery Plan that will be developed following the adoption of this Strategy.   Further detail on the feasibility, costing and funding of identified projects will be informed by a natural capital accounting approach where evidence allows.

Natural England Green Infrastructure Framework

3.12   During the preparation of this Strategy, Natural England launched the first stage of a national Green Infrastructure Framework, a commitment made in the Government's 25 Year Environment Plan. The GI Framework is designed to help local planning authorities and developers meet requirements in the National Planning Policy Framework to consider green infrastructure in local plans and as part of new development.

3.13   The full Framework is due to be launched this autumn will incorporate the following:

- GI Principles
- GI Standards
- GI Mapping
- GI Design Guide
- GI Case Studies

3.14   In advance of this, Natural England published the Green Infrastructure Principles (as referred to in Chapter 2 and summarised in Appendix 1) and a Green Infrastructure Mapping Database. The latter has been used to supplement the evidence collated for this Strategy. The emerging Green Infrastructure Framework will be used to inform the Green Infrastructure Delivery Plan and taken into account as part of the Rushmoor Local Plan Review.

Regional Policy and Guidance

South East Plan

3.15   Rushmoor Borough Council is part of a wider group of 11 local authorities affected by the Thames Basin Heaths Special Protection Area (TBH SPA). The TBH SPA comprises a network of heathland sites that provide habitat for important ground-nesting bird species, the nightjar, Dartford warbler and woodlark. It was designated as SPA in March 2005 and is protected from adverse effects by the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (as amended) (the 'Habitats Regulations').

3.16   It is recognised that recreational disturbance can affect SPA bird populations, particularly through impacts leading to reduction in breeding success through nest abandonment and increased predation of eggs or young. The majority of visitors who participate in recreation on the TBH SPA come from within 5km, therefore development giving rise to net increases in population in this area could particularly lead to increased visitor pressure and disturbance. The approach to avoidance and mitigation was originally set out within the South East Plan Policy NRM6. Although the majority of the South East Plan was revoked in March 2013, Policy NRM6 (Thames Basin Heaths Special Protection Area (SPA)) was retained.

TBH SPA Delivery Framework 2009

3.17   The approach to mitigation set out in South East Plan Policy NRM6 is further detailed in the Thames Basin Heaths Special Protection Area Delivery Framework (2009). This was endorsed by the Thames Basin Heaths Joint Strategic Partnership Board (JSPB) in 2011 and informs the approach followed by local authorities affected by the SPA.

3.18   Within 400m of the SPA the impact of new residential development is considered likely to be such that it is not possible to conclude no adverse effect on the SPA regardless of mitigation. On this basis, there is a presumption against development within this zone.

3.19   The Delivery Framework provides a recommended approach to the provision of measures in respect of sites between 400m and 5km from the SPA to avoid an in-combination likely significant effect and/or adverse effects on the integrity of the SPA. The strategy advocates the provision of Suitable Alternative Natural Greenspace (SANG) to attract visitors away from the SPA to less sensitive natural areas, and Strategic Access Management and Monitoring (SAMM) measures, including funding for a team of rangers to educate users of the SPA, and the public in general, regarding the need to control dogs and avoid disturbing the nesting birds.

Guidelines for the creation of Suitable Accessible Natural Greenspace (SANG) (Updated 2021)

3.20   Natural England have created SANG guidelines which describe features which have been found to draw visitors to the SPA and which should be replicated in SANG. It provides guidelines on:

- the type of site which should be identified as a SANG.
- measures which can be taken to enhance sites so that they may be used as SANG.

3.21   The updated guidelines take into account the findings of the Hart, Rushmoor and Surrey Heath SPA Mitigation Project (see Appendix 2 for more information).

South East Green Infrastructure Framework

3.22   The South East Infrastructure Framework (2009) was developed in partnership between regional government and non-government organisations based in the South East. This document sets out the policy context, identifies resources needed to deliver high quality GI and offers guidance on how GI could be delivered effectively through the Local Plan process. This includes the establishing of an evidence base from policy development and delivery.

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Local Policy

3.23   The Rushmoor Local Plan contains a chapter on the Natural Environment. The policies of most relevant to this document are detailed below:

Policy NE1 – Thames Basin Heaths Special Protection Area

3.24   The policy states that new development which is likely to have a significant effect on the ecological integrity of the Thames Basin Heaths Special Protection Area (SPA), including all new net dwellings, will be required to demonstrate that adequate measures are in place to avoid or mitigate any potential adverse effects. The mechanism for delivering this policy is the Council's Thames Basin Heaths Special Protection Area Avoidance and Mitigation Strategy (2021 or as amended).

3.25   The purpose of SANG is to divert recreational demand away from the Thames Basin Heath Special Protection Area (SPA) to public open spaces that meet a number of specific criteria. Due to the predominantly urban nature of the borough, the majority of developments rely on opportunities to contribute financially to the provision and maintenance of 'strategic' (off site) SANG.

3.26   SANGS make a valuable contribution towards the Borough's Green Infrastructure Network. More information on SANGs in and around the Borough is set out in Chapter 5.

Policy NE2 – Green Infrastructure

3.27   In the Rushmoor Local Plan (2019), the Council commit to preparing a Green Infrastructure Strategy and to work in partnership with developers, landowners, Hampshire County Council and other organisations in order to identify and implement opportunities to improve the quality of the green infrastructure network in the borough (Para 12.14). Paragraph 12.15 goes on to state that:

"Where suitable, development proposals will be expected to contribute towards the improvement and enhancement of green infrastructure in accordance with the Green Infrastructure Strategy and associated standards (including those set out under Policy DE6 (Open Space, Sport and Recreation)."

3.28   The Policy itself requires that development:

"1. Does not result in a loss, fragmentation, or significant impact upon the function of the green infrastructure network;

2. Provides green infrastructure within the development site or, where this is not feasible, makes appropriate contributions towards other strategic enhancement, restoration and creation projects where the proposal will result in additional pressure on the green infrastructure network;

3. Maximises opportunities for improvement to the green infrastructure network, including restoration of fragmented parts of the network."

Policy NE4 – Biodiversity

3.29   The policy states that:

"Development proposals should seek to secure opportunities to enhance biodiversity and include proportionate measures to contribute, where possible, to a net gain in biodiversity, through creation, restoration, enhancements and management of habitats and features, including measures that help to link key habitats."

3.30   Whilst the preference is for biodiversity enhancement to occur within development sites, this Strategy and the subsequent Green Infrastructure Delivery Plan will seek to identify potential projects that could deliver off site biodiversity enhancements to ensure there is no net loss of biodiversity as a result of development.

3.31   Interim Guidance and/or a Supplementary Planning Document is planned to provide further guidance on Policy NE4 and the new requirements of the Environment Act 2021.

Rushmoor Strategies and Evidence

3.32   The following project reports, strategies and evidence prepared by or for Rushmoor, formed part of the review (more detail is provided in Appendix 2):

- Hart, Rushmoor and Surrey Heath Special Protection Area Mitigation Project
- Rushmoor Local Plan Designation Review
- Rushmoor Landscape Character Assessment 2017
- Rushmoor Open Space, Sport and Recreation Study 2014
- Rushmoor Playing Pitch Strategy 2014-2020
- Rushmoor Climate Change Action Plan 2020-2030
- Rushmoor Biodiversity Action Plan (2016-2021)
- Wellesley Green Infrastructure Strategy

Summary of Issues and Opportunities Identified through the review of Rushmoor Evidence and Strategies

⇨ Opportunities for Suitable Alternative Natural Greenspace (SANG), including SANG networks, linear SANG and/or smaller SANG identified through the HRSH SPA Mitigation Project and supported by Natural England's updated guidelines

⇨ Recommendation that a comprehensive review of available sites is undertaken to explore opportunities for SANG, including the opportunities for SANG networks, linear SANG and/or smaller SANG (potential project)

⇨ A need to ensure the Strategy supports the Important Open Area and Green Corridor designations in the Rushmoor Local Plan

⇨ Opportunities to enhance Rushmoor's existing network of open spaces, based on the identified deficiencies identified in the Rushmoor Open Space, Sport and Recreation Study 2014 (where the findings are still considered relevant)

⇨ Opportunities to identify where there can be an increase in access to existing open spaces (e.g. school playing pitches)

⇨ A need for the Strategy to align with and support Rushmoor's Climate Change Action Plan and emerging Climate Change Strategy.

⇨ Opportunities to deliver or support any actions identified in the Rushmoor Biodiversity Action Plan

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Adjoining Authority Evidence and Strategies

3.33   The following project reports, strategies and evidence prepared by or for adjoining Local Authorities, formed part of the review (more detail is provided in Appendix 2):

- Surrey Natural Capital Investment Strategy
- Surrey Country Council Rights of Way Improvement Plan (2014)
- Surrey Biodiversity Opportunity Areas
- Hart Green Infrastructure Strategy 2017
- Hart Green Grid
- Guildford Infrastructure Delivery Plan 2017
- Guildford Assessment of Sites of Amenity Value 2017
- Guildford Open Space Sports and Recreation Assessment (2017)
- Surrey Heath Infrastructure Needs Assessment 2017 (informed by the Open Space Assessment 2016)
- Surrey Heath SANG Strategy 2020
- Farnham Potential New SANG Assessment (AECOM) 2015

Summary of Issues and Opportunities Identified through the review of adjoining authority evidence and strategies

⇨   Opportunity for partnership working to improve rights of way and connections between Rushmoor and adjoining Surrey authorities, including improvements to important linear routes such as the Basingstoke Canal.

⇨   Need to ensure biodiversity opportunities within Rushmoor have regard to the River Blackwater Biodiversity Opportunity Area and the contiguous nature of Thames Basin Heaths and Thames Basin Lowlands across the Surrey/Hampshire borders to ensure ecological connectivity and function cross boundary.

⇨   Potential for partnership working to deliver projects which align with the Hart Green Infrastructure Strategy and the emerging Hart Green Grid, including connecting and protecting the Blackwater Valley, enhancing the Basingstoke Canal, connecting valuable ecological features and opportunities to improve walking and cycling connections between the two authority areas.

⇨   Working with adjoining authorities to identify and deliver new SANG or to improve connections between existing and potential SANG sites.

Other Relevant Evidence and Strategies

3.34   The following project reports, strategies and evidence prepared by other organisations, which are considered relevant to Rushmoor, formed part of the review (more detail is provided in Appendix 2):
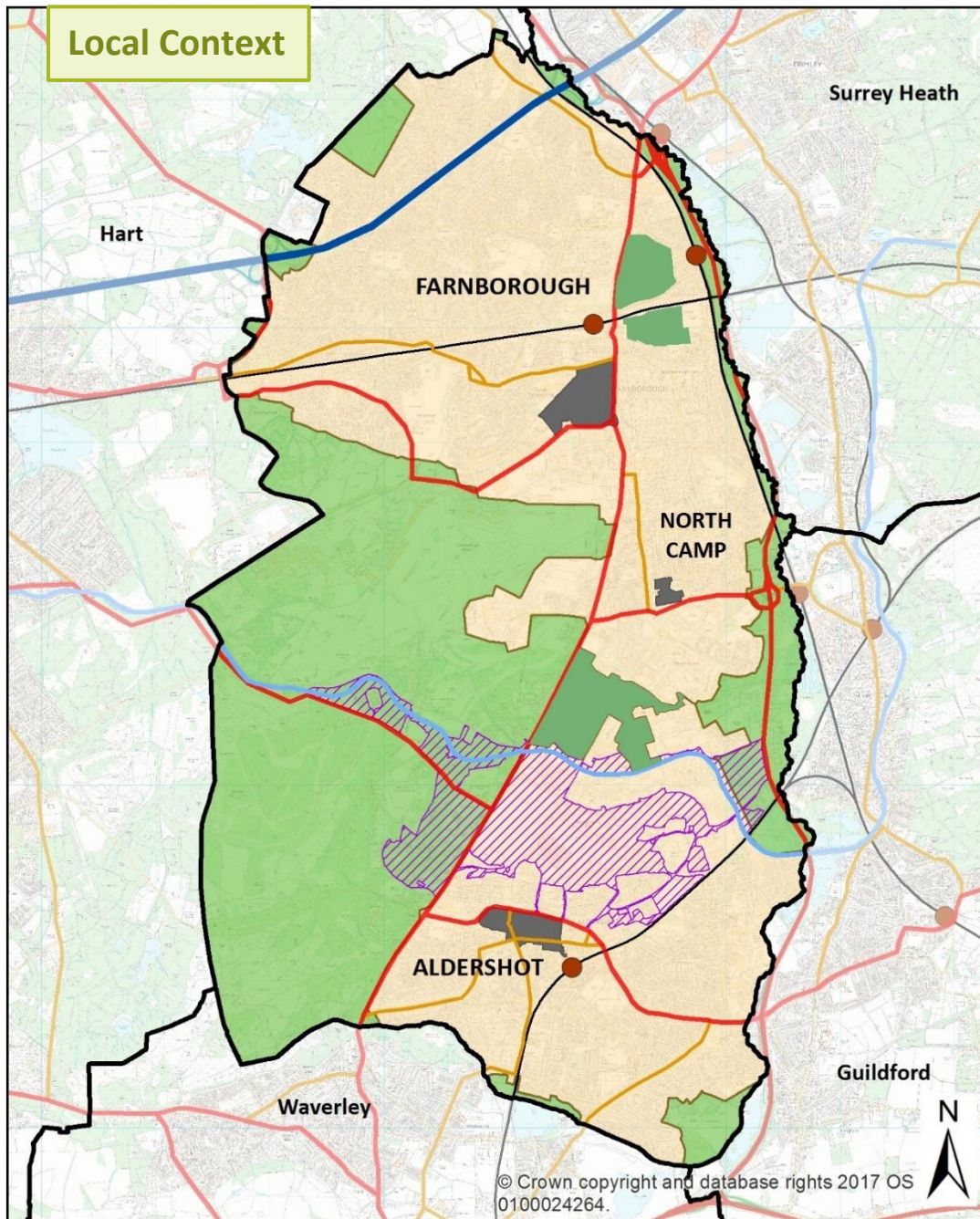
- Hampshire Strategic Infrastructure Statement (HSIS) (April 2019)
- Hampshire Cycling Strategy 2015
- Hampshire Walking Strategy 2016

- Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan (LCWIP – final draft in 2022)
- Local Transport Plan and Rushmoor Transport Statement
- Aldershot Town Access Plan (2012)
- Farnborough Town Access Plan (2011)
- Hampshire Healthy Weight Strategy 2015-19
- Hampshire Physical Activity Strategy 2018-21
- State of Hampshire's Natural Environment (2020)
- Hampshire County Council Climate Change Strategy 2020-2025
- Hampshire Biodiversity Opportunity Areas
- Hampshire Tree Strategy 2020
- Hampshire Ecological Network Map (March 2020)
- Basingstoke Canal Conservation Management Plan 2018-2028
- Local Flood and Water Management Strategy
- Hampshire Countryside Access Plan 2015-2025
- Local Nature Partnership

Summary of Issues and Opportunities Identified through the review of other relevant evidence and strategies
⇨ Opportunities to work in partnership with Hampshire County Council (HCC) to improve and promote the walking and cycling network across the Borough, particularly as the Rushmoor Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan is developed.
⇨ Need to identify barriers and opportunities to improve walking and cycling linkages.
⇨ Need to identify opportunities to develop new and improved walking and cycling routes in the areas of greatest need.
⇨ Opportunities to provide and promote accessible outdoor spaces to enable an increase in physical activity and overall improvement to health and wellbeing of the local population.
⇨ Opportunities to use green infrastructure to improve the state of the natural environment, including through improvements to air quality, tackling noise issues and enhancing biodiversity across the Borough.
⇨ Opportunity to work in partnership with HCC to achieve its tree planting targets.
⇨ Opportunity to work in partnership with Hampshire Biodiversity Information Centre (HBIC) to review the potential of the network opportunities identified through the Ecological Network Map.
⇨ Promotion of Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS) and innovative flood alleviation measures.

4. Local Context

Local Context

Surrey Heath

Hart

FARNBOROUGH

NORTH CAMP

ALDERSHOT

Waverley

Guildford

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—— Rushmoor Boundary	▓ Town/District Centres	—— A Roads
▢ Defined Urban Area	▨ Wellesley	—— B Roads
▢ Countryside	—— Canal and Watercourses	● Railway Station
▢ Important Open Areas	—— M3 Motorway	—— Railway Line

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Please Note: Important Open Areas are designated under Policy NE2 of the Rushmoor Local Plan to recognise their value as large open spaces within the urban area, which contribute to local character. Not all of the Important Open Areas are publicly accessible.

People

4.1　The total population of Rushmoor is 94,400 (ONS 2020-mid year estimate) and the Borough has a population density of 24 people per hectare (2011 census), this is compared to 3.6 people per hectare in Hampshire, and reflects the urban nature of the Borough.[6]

4.2　The age profile shows that the Borough has a younger population than both Hampshire and England. 65.6% of Rushmoor's population is under 50, compared to 57.2% in Hampshire and 62.3% in England.

4.3　Rushmoor has the same proportion of White: English/Welsh/Scottish/Northern Irish/British residents (80.5%) as the national average. However, since 2001, the Rushmoor population has become more ethnically diverse. This is partly due to an increase in Nepali residents in the area. The Nepali community has a particularly strong presence in Rushmoor through the Gurkha military service connection with Aldershot Garrison. Following a 2008 High Court ruling, the Government gave Gurkhas who retired before 1997 and their dependant families, the right to settle in the UK.

4.4　Based on the latest version of the Indices of Multiple Deprivation published in 2019, Rushmoor has three small areas of multiple deprivation (Lower-layer Super Output Area (LSOA)) that are in the 20% most deprived in the country. These areas are:

- Part of Cherrywood ward
- Part of Aldershot Park ward
- Part of Wellington ward

4.5　In addition, 11 LSOAs are in the 40% most deprived in the country. Recent analysis published by Natural England has examined the relationship between areas of multiple deprivation and access to natural greenspace. More information on this is provided in Chapter 5 (Open Space and Recreation Theme).

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[6] Recently published analysis published by Natural England has compared population density with access to natural greenspace (more information on this is provided in Chapter 5, Open Space and Recreation Theme).

Indices of Multiple Deprivation Decile

Surrey Heath

Hart

Rushmoor

Guildford

Waverley

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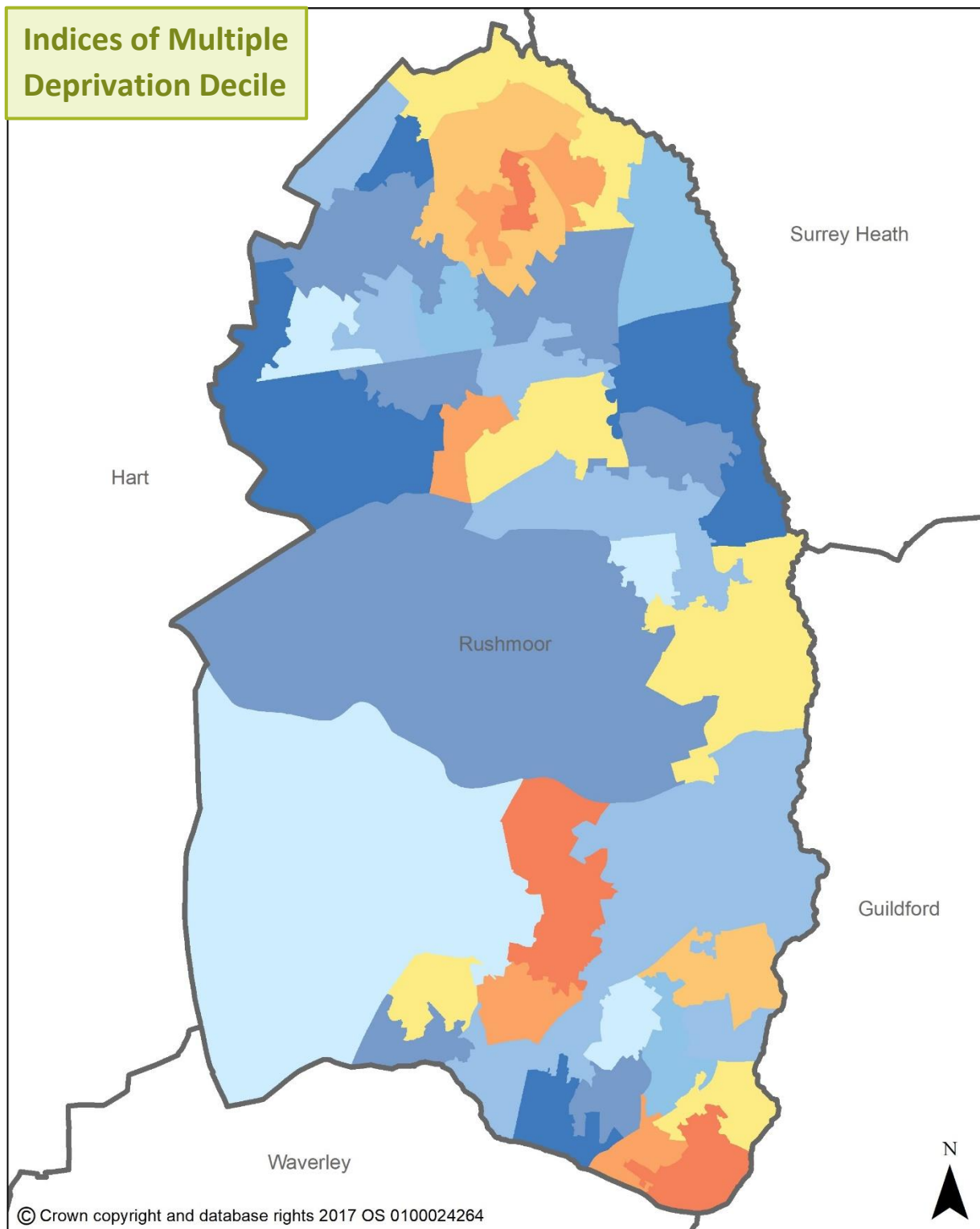
Index of Multiple Deprivation (IMD) Decile

1	3	5	7	9
2	4	6	8	10
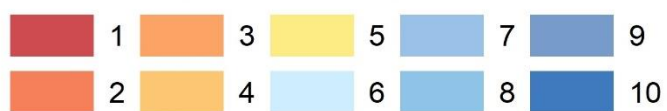
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4.6   The Rushmoor Health and Wellbeing Partnership aims to improve health outcomes and reduce health inequalities within Rushmoor. Informed by the latest data and findings from Public Health England and the Hampshire Health and Well-Being Board, its priorities are focused around the issues of mental health, obesity and falls. According to the Hampshire Health and Well-Being Board, psychiatric disorders were the main disabling condition for which people in Rushmoor received the Personal Independence Payment in January 2015.

4.7   The latest health profile for Rushmoor was published by Public Heath England in 2019. It notes that life expectancy for men and women is similar to the national average, but that it is 8.7 years lower for men and 6.7 years lower for women in the most deprived areas of Rushmoor compared to the least deprived areas. The health profile in comparison to England is mixed. Rates of hospital stays for self-harm, estimated levels of excess weight in adults (aged 18+), rates of new sexually transmitted infections and new cases of tuberculosis are all worse than average. However, estimated diabetes diagnoses (aged 17+), hospital admission rates for alcohol-related conditions and the percentage of smoking during pregnancy are all below average.

4.8   As part of recently published data, Natural England have classified LSOAs based on the proportion of residents with long-term health problems and disabilities which limit activities. This identifies areas to the south of Aldershot, the Farnborough Park area and north of Farnborough (west of Fernhill School) as having a high proportion. In addition, the Natural England GI Mapping classifies the LSOAs using the Small Area Mental Health Indicator (2017), which combines the data on mental health from multiple sources. This identifies areas to the south of Aldershot and the area around Cherrywood Road as having the highest rates.
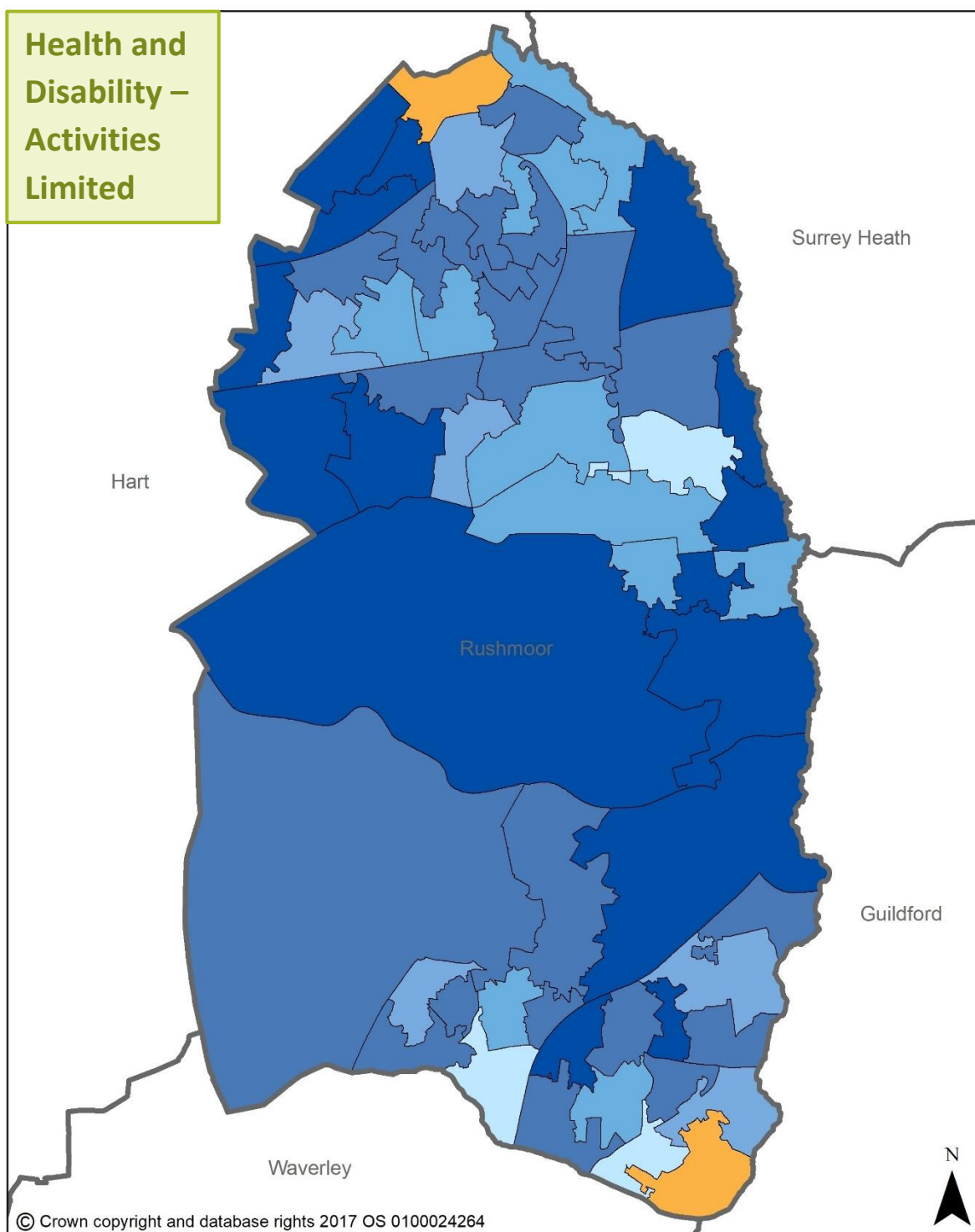
Health and Disability – Activities Limited
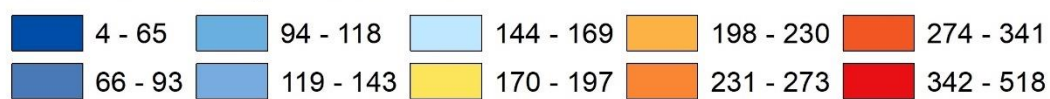
Surrey Heath

Hart

Rushmoor

Guildford

Waverley

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Health and Disability - Activities Limited a Lot

4 - 65	94 - 118	144 - 169	198 - 230	274 - 341
66 - 93	119 - 143	170 - 197	231 - 273	342 - 518

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Small Area Mental Health Index

Surrey Heath

Hart

Rushmoor

Guildford

Waverley

N

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Small Area Mental Heath Index (SAMHI)

1	3	5	7	9
2	4	6	8	10

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32
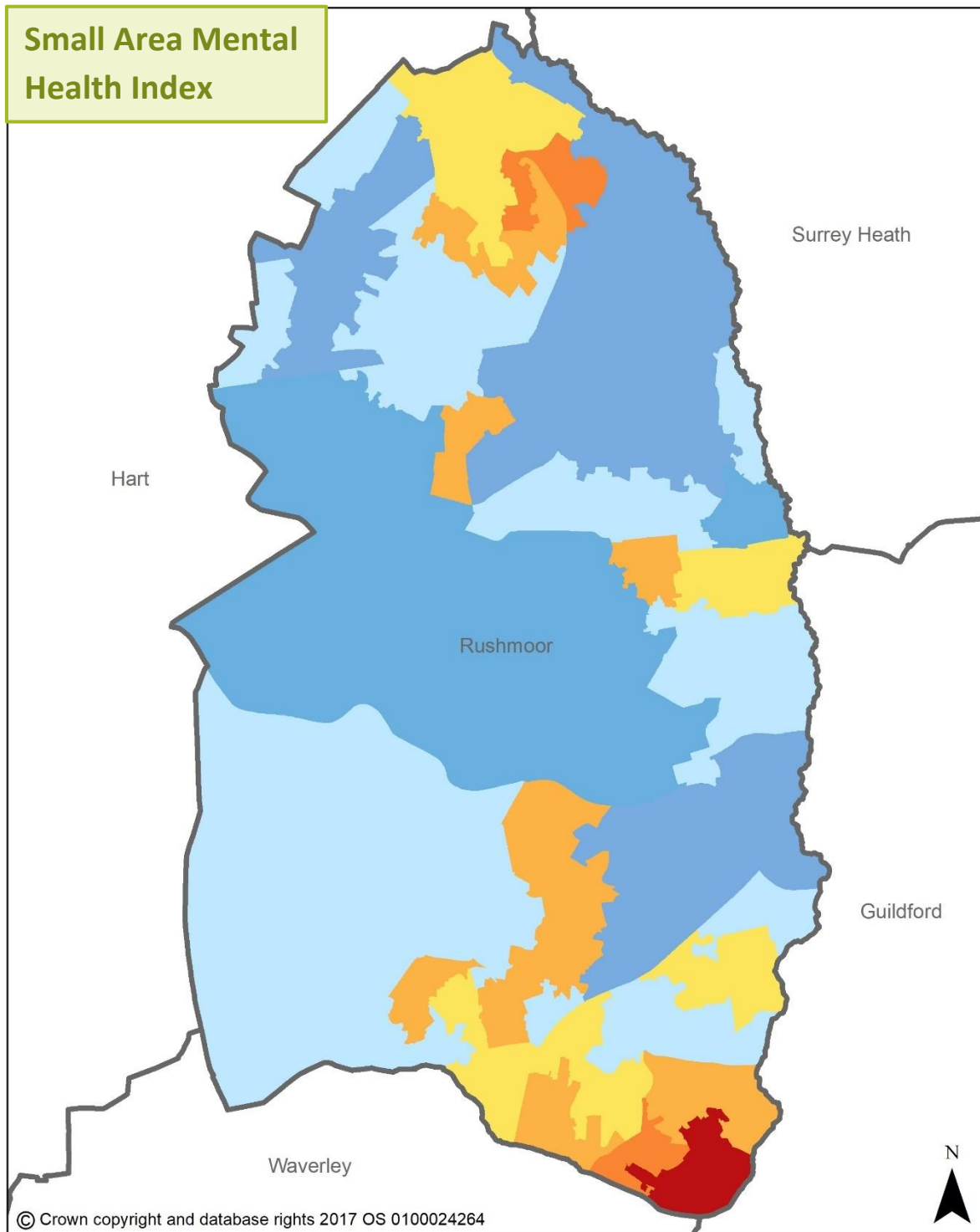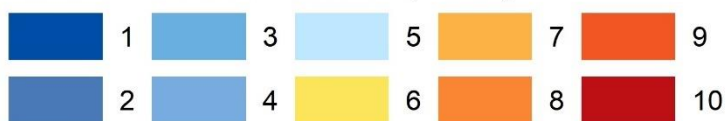
4.9   Natural England Green Infrastructure mapping gives an indication of the extent of private gardens across the Borough and identifies that the following areas have more limited access to gardens:

- Totland and Prospect Estate area
- Pinewood Park and area north west of Sandy Lane
- Residential area north of Invincible Road Industrial Estate and west of Cody Road
- Southern parts of North Camp
- Large parts of Aldershot, including the town centre and southern parts of Aldershot (south west of Aldershot Park)
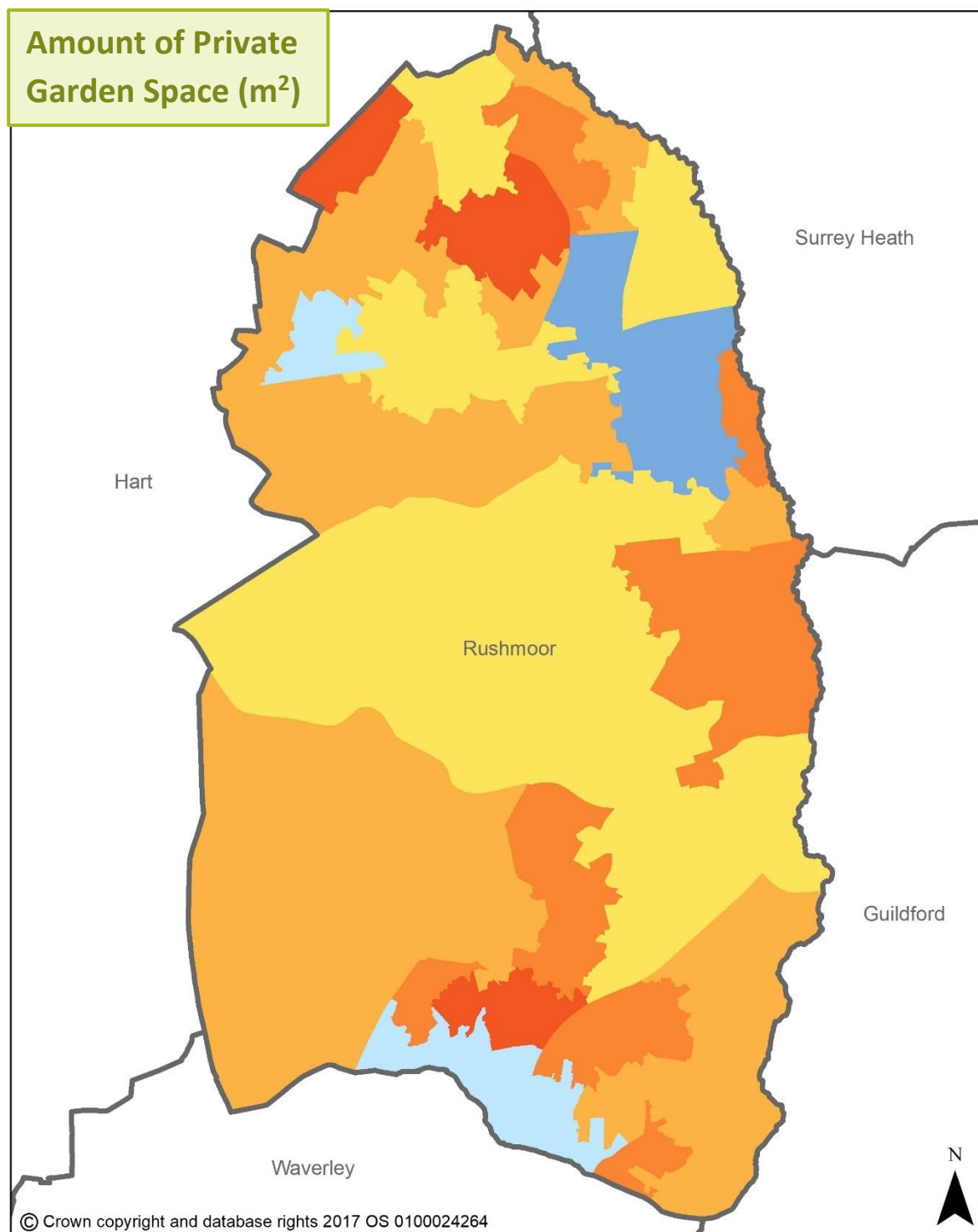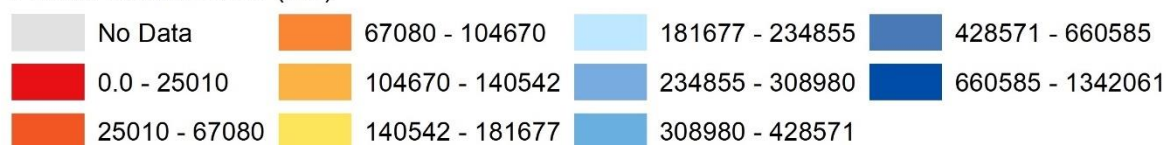
Amount of Private Garden Space (m²)

Surrey Heath

Hart

Rushmoor

Guildford

Waverley

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N

Private Garden Area (m2)

No Data	67080 - 104670	181677 - 234855	428571 - 660585
0.0 - 25010	104670 - 140542	234855 - 308980	660585 - 1342061
25010 - 67080	140542 - 181677	308980 - 428571	

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Place

4.10   The Borough of Rushmoor lies approximately 30 miles south-west of London in north-east Hampshire adjacent to the Surrey and Berkshire borders. It is a relatively small (3,905 hectares), highly urbanised and densely populated Borough, with a comparatively well-defined built-up area made up of two major settlements whose boundaries adjoin one another. Aldershot is in the south of the Borough and Farnborough in the north.

4.11   The northern and eastern parts of the Borough are mainly urban in character. The Borough is bounded in the east by a combination of the Blackwater Valley Relief Road and the River Blackwater. In general, land in the west of the Borough has an international, national or local nature conservation designation, is Ministry of Defence (MoD) training land or is part of Farnborough Airport.

4.12   Aldershot Garrison lies to the north of Aldershot Town Centre and is known as the 'home of the British Army'. The Garrison comprises around 11,500 people, including resident troops, soldiers in transit on courses, civil servants, contractors and dependents.

4.13   Farnborough is known internationally for British aerospace research, and Farnborough Airport, the UK's first airfield, celebrated 100 years of continuous operation in 2008. The Airport lies to the south of Farnborough and was originally a military airfield. Having been declared surplus to requirements in 1994, it was developed into a business aviation centre and is now the UK's only dedicated business airport. It is also home to the biennial Farnborough International Airshow.

4.14   The Rushmoor Local Plan 2019 includes a spatial strategy which directs new development to within the defined urban areas and includes a number of site allocations, including development at Wellesley, Blandford House and Malta Barracks and a number of allocated sites within Aldershot and Farnborough, which are being re-developed as part of the programme of regeneration of the two town centres.

Nature

4.15   Before 1850, the majority of the Borough was heathland common, which would traditionally have been farmed or grazed. Some of this heathland is part of the Thames Basin Heaths Special Protection Area (SPA) network of sites across Hampshire, Surrey and Berkshire. This land receives a high level of legal protection because of the importance of the habitat for populations of three rare ground nesting birds, the Woodlark, Nightjar and Dartford Warbler.

4.16   The Borough also contains areas designated as Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI), protected by law because of their ecological importance at a National level. These include all the heathland also designated as Thames Basin Heaths SPA, but also the Basingstoke Canal SSSI and Foxlease and Ancells Meadows SSSI. Of the eleven SSSI units in the Borough, two are identified as being in unfavourable condition and in decline.

4.17   Habitats and species identified as being of County ecological importance are protected through their formal selection as Sites of Importance for Nature Conservation (SINC). Rushmoor Borough has 43 SINCs selected for a range of habitats and species including acidic grassland, woodland, heathland. The wetlands associated with river headwaters, river

valleys and their floodplains are of particular importance within Rushmoor Borough as linear wildlife Corridors.   Cove Brook, the Basingstoke Canal and the River Blackwater valley are the most extensive examples. Much of the natural habitat within Rushmoor has also been mapped by England's statutory conservation body Natural England, as Habitat of Principal Importance for the purpose of conserving biodiversity.

4.18   In total, 948 hectares of land in the Borough is designated for its nature conservation value. Although not formally protected, urban infrastructure such as allotments, playing fields and gardens, can also provide important green infrastructure.   These areas provide foraging and resting habitat for a range of familiar native species including garden birds, badgers, reptiles and hedgehogs. The Rushmoor Biodiversity Action Plan (2016-2021) identified that almost a third of urban land use in the Borough is private garden. The linear urban features provided by railway lines, road corridors, verges and street trees also provide connectivity between woodland pockets and other habitats. This underlines the importance of sensitive management of our urban infrastructure to ensure reduced habitat fragmentation and the adverse impact this has on the populations of our iconic native species.

5. Green Infrastructure by Theme

Landscape and Heritage

Introduction

5.1   Well designed and managed green infrastructure assets, which complement landscape character and heritage and engage local communities, can enhance local sense of place and foster community spirit. The value of well-managed, protected and appreciated natural and built heritage to both our quality of life and to the economy is well established. Green infrastructure can contribute to maintaining and enhancing the value of our local landscape and built heritage through protection of settings and promotion of access where appropriate.

5.2   Landscape character assessment (LCA) is the process of identifying and describing variation in character of the landscape. LCA documents identify and explain the unique combination of elements and features that make landscapes distinctive by mapping and describing character types and areas.

5.3   Landscape Character Areas are geographically unique areas where a combination of factors such as topography, vegetation pattern, land use and cultural associations combine to create an area with a distinct, recognisable character. The way that they integrate differs from one place to another leading to classification of the landscape into generic 'landscape types' such as: 'open downland' and 'open heath' and locally specific landscape character areas.

5.4   These assessments also demonstrate the different ways in which a landscape is perceived, experienced and valued by people. Landscape Character Areas are an essential baseline for making decisions about change, whether as a result of land management or development. They assist in understanding distinctive elements of the landscapes, the forces for change affecting them and how they contribute to a sense of place.

5.5   Landscape Character Areas and administrative boundaries rarely coincide. This means that certain areas (e.g. the Heathland and Forest) extend beyond the Borough boundary and demonstrates how the Rushmoor landscape fits into its wider context.

Assets within and around the Borough

5.6   Hampshire County Council produced the "The Hampshire Landscape'' (1993) which provided a county level assessment and divided the Borough (excluding the urban area) into three landscape types based mainly on soil and visual characteristics. These were:

- River Valley Heathland
- Forest Pasture
- Woodland: Heath associated

5.7   A Borough wide assessment was undertaken by RPS Watson (1994), which was used to confirm details such as the boundary between the built-up area and important open spaces. This study identified that the three landscape types identified in the "The Hampshire Landscape' (1993) could be sub-divided into twenty-four-character areas.

37

5.8 Hampshire County Council produced an Integrated Character Assessment (2012) which was an update to Integrated Character Assessment (2010). Rushmoor is covered by the landscape character area known as <u>North East Hampshire Plantations and Heath</u> , whose landscape character is primarily determined by the presence of sandy soils on locally elevated, gravelly geology. The Hampshire Integrated Character Assessment (2012) identifies that the composition of Rushmoor is:

Heath and Forest Enclosed
This is a well wooded landscape which supports a range of woodland types. There are improved grasslands and some arable land associated with this landscape, these tend to exist as isolated patches, rather than continuously.
Lowland Mosaic Heath Associated
Arable land and grassland improved for agriculture tends not to be species rich but can still support a range of species. Unimproved grassland is an increasingly scarce habitat but there is a strong resource of unimproved or semi-improved grassland within this landscape character type. There are also patches of marshy grassland, often associated with springs.
River Valley Floor
This character type is the landscape associated with a river. It has a strong grassland character, and is often rich in aquatic flora and fauna, wetland habitats, occasional ponds and some woodland.

5.9 A Landscape Assessment for Rushmoor was prepared in 1997 and subsequent updates published in 2009 and 2017. The Landscape Assessment Update 2009 and 2017 Update Note identifies 30 different landscape character areas across the Borough, and for each area a summary of issues and a landscape strategy is provided. Many of these issues are relevant to the Green Infrastructure Strategy and will be incorporated into the priorities and projects identified. The Assessment also identifies locally important views and areas of high value which are considered at risk from inappropriate development, neglect and/or changes in land use.

Rushmoor Landscape Character Areas (2017)

FARNBOROUGH

NORTH CAMP

ALDERSHOT

Surrey Heath

Guildford

Waverley

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39
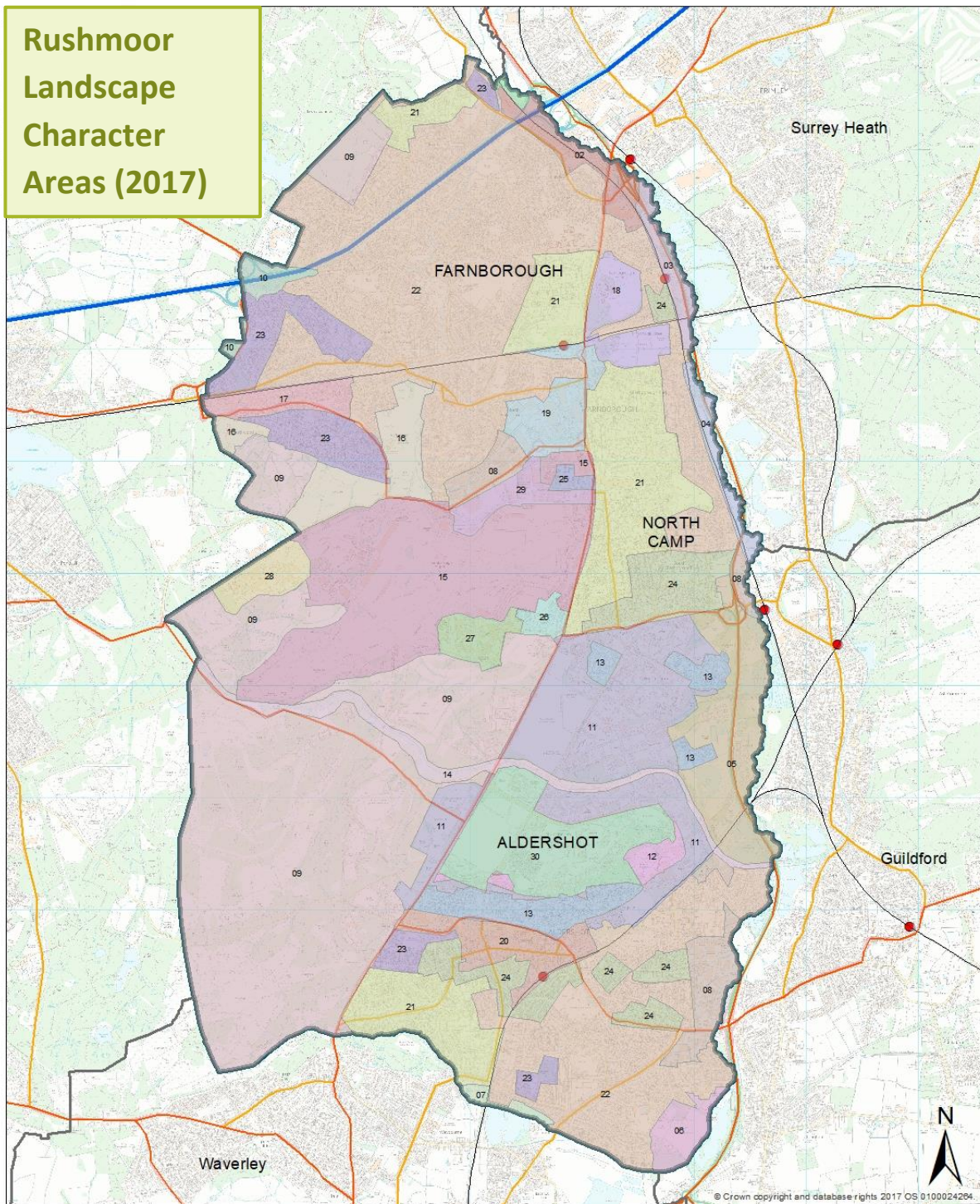
—— Rushmoor Boundary	13. Military Town - Married Quarters
• Rail_Station	14. Basingstoke Canal
—— Rail_Line	15. Airport and Exhibition Centre
—— B_Road	16. Southwood Amenity Open Space
—— A_Road	17. Commercial/Business Park
—— Motorways	18. Farnborough Green
01. Blackwater Valley - Hawley	19. Farnborough Town Centre
02. Blackwater Valley - Frimley Interchange	20. Aldershot Town Centre
03. Blackwater Valley - Farnborough North	21. Urban Residential Type A
04. Blackwater Valley - Farnborough South	22. Urban Residential Type B
05. Blackwater Valley - Hollybush Lane	23. Urban Residential Type C
06. Blackwater Valley - Aldershot Park	24. Urban Residential Type D
07. Blackwater Valley - Aldershot South	25. Farnborough Central
08. Industrial	26. Queens Gate
09. Heathland and Forest	27. Farnborough Aerospace Centre
10. Pasture and Woodland	28. Cody Technology Park
11. Military Town	29. Farnborough Business Park
12. Military Town - Wooded Ridge	30. Urban Residential - Mixed newer

5.10 The Borough's historic and cultural assets create Rushmoor's unique sense of place. Rushmoor has a distinctive local character that relates to the Borough's history and how and when the settlements of Aldershot, Farnborough and North Camp developed. The Borough encompasses significant amounts of military land, woodland and green open space. The development of the area has been affected by its location in the north east of Hampshire, close to the Surrey border, with Farnham to the south-west and Guildford to the south-east. To the east of the Borough are the Surrey Downs while wood and heath-covered hills stretch west towards Basingstoke.

5.11 The historic identity of the area is traditionally attributed to three significant characteristics of the area:

- Military – Aldershot has been the 'Home of the British Army' since the 1850s which is inextricably linked to the development of the town and the surrounding residential areas
- Aviation – Farnborough is known as the 'birthplace of aviation' since the airfield was established in 1905, the first operational airfield in the UK
- Napoleon – the burial place of Napoleon III of France and his son in St Michael's Abbey, Farnborough

40

5.12   Six heritage trails have been created across Aldershot[7]. The heritage trails tell the story of Aldershot from a small village back in 1850, and how it became the home of the British army, to its current status today. The trail information tells stories of people, places, events and buildings throughout the town.

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[7] https://www.rushmoor.gov.uk/heritagetrails

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Rushmoor Historic and Cultural Assets

Surrey Heath

FARNBOROUGH

NORTH CAMP

Guildford

ALDERSHOT

Waverley

N

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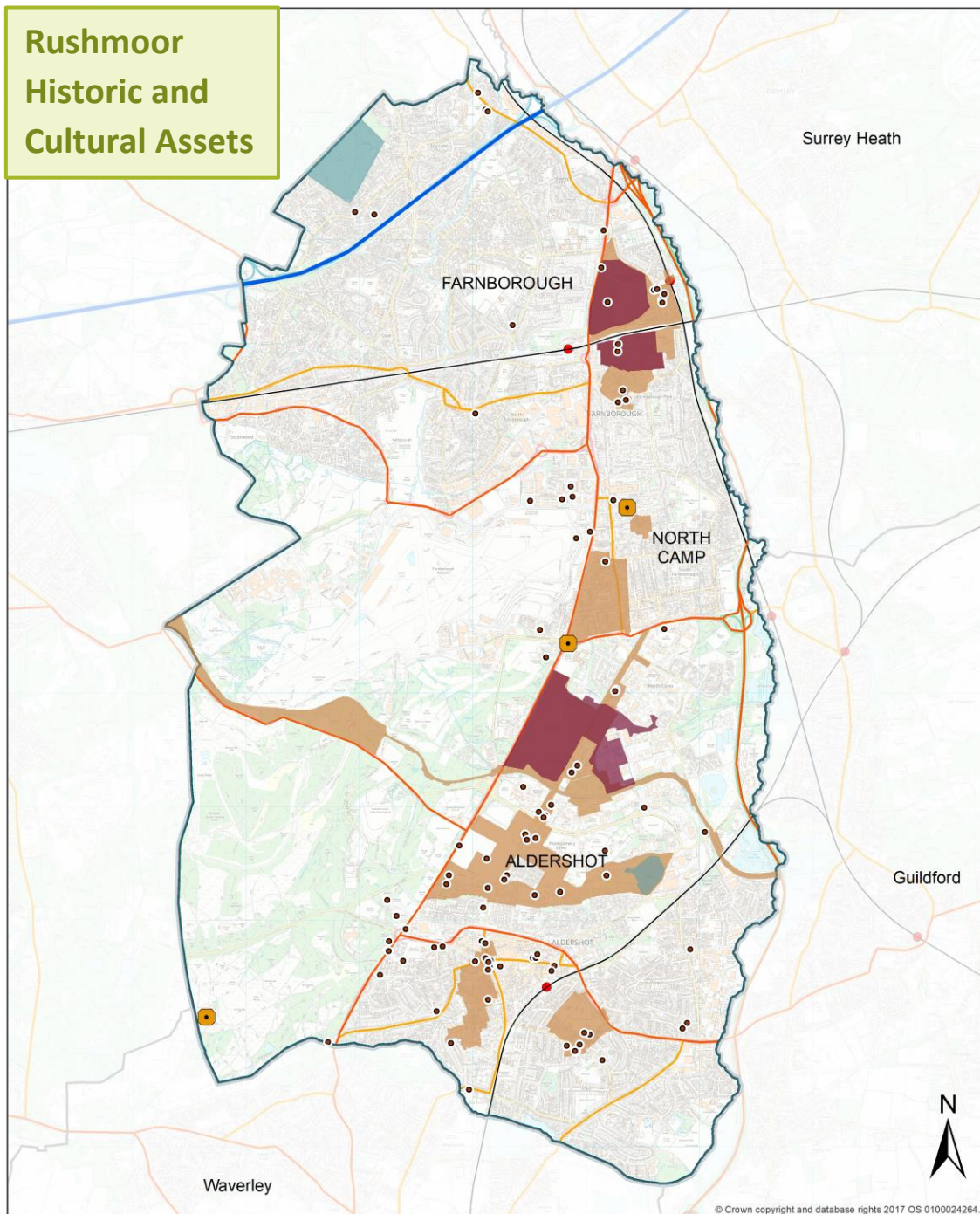
Schedule Ancient Monuments

Listed Buildings

Important Open Areas

Historic Parks and Gardens

Conservation Areas

Please Note: Important Open Areas are designated under Policy NE2 of the Rushmoor Local Plan to recognise their value as large open spaces within the urban area, which contribute to local character. Not all of the Important Open Areas are publicly accessible.

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Strengths and Opportunities

⇨ Opportunities to enhance or restore historic links between and improve access to heritage assets

⇨ Opportunities to enhance the setting of heritage assets

⇨ Opportunities to restore historic landscape features (e.g. the restoration of hedgerows as part of Southwood and Cove Brook Floodplain Enhancement Project)

Weaknesses and Threats

⇨ Need to reflect local character

⇨ Hedgerow removal

⇨ Potential for fragmentation of existing green spaces

Biodiversity

Introduction

5.13 Green infrastructure provides a key mechanism to help the government achieve its objective of moving from a net loss of biodiversity to net gain. Well planned green infrastructure provides critical opportunities to help protect and enhance biodiversity and to help deliver robust ecological networks. Within new development, provision can protect key features, provide new biodiverse areas of benefit to both people and wildlife, and make important new connections for wildlife. A green infrastructure approach to the management and development of public open space can provide mechanisms to enhance biodiversity, to enhance ecological networks and provide better opportunities for people to enjoy and get access to nature.

5.14 Trees and woodlands are essential components of green infrastructure because of their unique ability to deliver a wide range of benefits for the community, wildlife and the local economy and to link a variety of services which green infrastructure provides. Trees reduce the effects of air pollution and storm water runoff and reduce energy consumption through moderation of the local climate. Trees and woodlands create potential for employment, encourage inward investment, attract visitors and add value to property. Trees also support healthy lifestyles by improving areas for recreation, cycle routes and footpaths, The "urban forest" including woodlands and trees in streets, parks, private and public gardens, plays an important role in creating sustainable communities by providing numerous aesthetic, social, health and biodiversity benefits.

5.15 The Woodland Trust's Emergency Tree Plan for the UK (2020) explains how trees help cities cope with climate change by providing shade, reducing air and ground temperatures, improving air quality by absorbing pollutants and helping to mitigate surface water flooding. It notes that the cooling shade of trees and water saved the UK £248 million by maintaining productivity and lowering air conditioning costs on hot days in 2017.

5.16 The Government has long identified the need to ensure our natural green spaces are 'bigger, better and joined' ('Making Space for Nature' review, September 2010).   It is therefore essential to ensure that land outside formally protected areas is connected and provides ecological value.

Assets within and around the Borough

National Character Areas

5.17 In 2014, Natural England produced a series of National Character Area profiles which divide England into distinct areas following the natural lines of landscape rather than administrative boundaries.   The National Character Areas (NCAs) take into account underlying factors such as geology, soils, topography, biodiversity and habitats, and social / cultural and economic elements.

5.18 The NCA profiles offer suggestions where action can best be targeted to conserve and enhance the natural environment in these areas.

44

5.19 Rushmoor Borough is almost entirely located within NCA Profile 129 'Thames Basin Heaths' which stretches from Weybridge in Surrey to the countryside around Newbury in Berkshire. The NCA identifies key characteristics as:

- Geology comprising sands and gravels of the London Basin, London Clay flooring the river valleys and areas of chalk further west.
- Primary habitat types – conifers and large plantations on former heathland. Mosaics of heathland, grassland with scrub and secondary woodland. Heather, gorse, oak and beech are common here. Much of the heathland habitat within the NCA area benefits from the highest level of statutory protection for its internationally rare habitats and three ground nest bird species.
- Acid soils resulting in limited farming suitability and alternative land.
- Uses including military training areas, forestry and golf courses.
- The Blackwater Valley is flagged as a distinct area due to its heavy urbanisation and transport links of M3 and M25.

5.20 The Thames Basin Heath NCA profile identifies the following environmental opportunities as relevant to Rushmoor Borough:

- Manage and create woodlands and highway verges to intercept run-off and filter pollutants.
- Within the heavily developed floodplains of the Blackwater Valley, adapt the urban environment to manage floodwaters, and restore and enhance modified watercourses.
- Management of woodlands to enhance biodiversity, manage for timber and other ecosystem services such as soil and water conservation.
- Provide good quality green infrastructure (incorporating commons, woodlands and restored gravel pits) to seek benefits for public engagement, wildlife, water quality, flood amelioration and climate regulation.
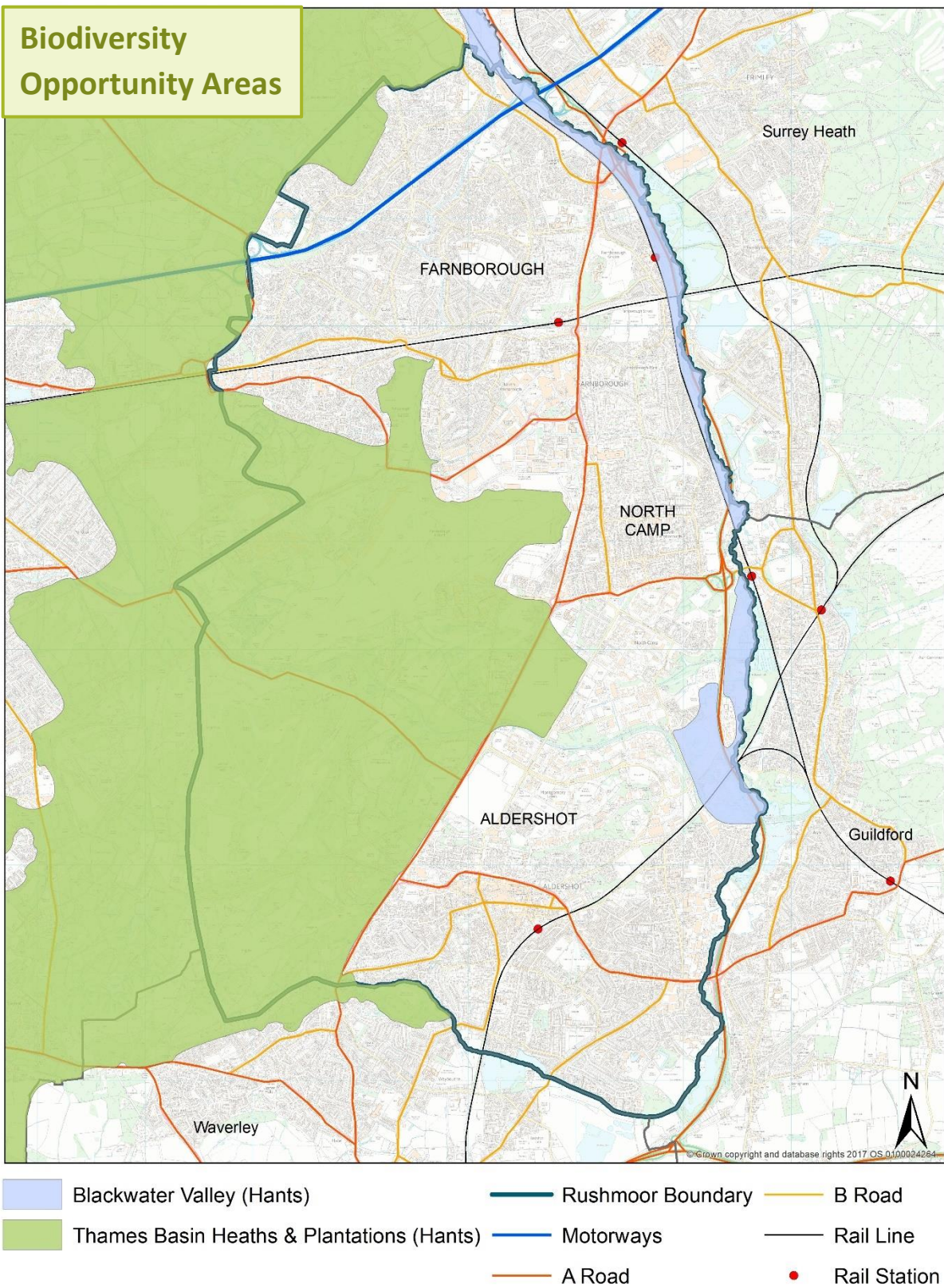
5.21 The southern areas of Aldershot fall within and adjacent to National Character Area 114 'Thames Basin Lowlands' which is a low lying plain within the London Basin stretching from South Norwood in the East to Hale on the Surrey/Hampshire border in the west.

5.22 The NCA identifies key characteristics as:

- Geology largely London Clay and river gravels forming gently undulating valleys with broad flat valley plains.
- Modified and straightened rivers marked by riparian woodlands and meadows in places.
- Land use primarily farmland, woodland and commons, increasing fragmented by urban development and numerous major road / rail networks.

5.23 The Thames Basin Lowlands NCA profile identifies the following environmental opportunities as relevant to Rushmoor Borough:

- Conserve and enhance the semi-natural vegetation and farmed landscape to reduce fragmentation and enhance ecological connectivity.

- Promote sustainable urban development including a well-connected network of green infrastructure and enhanced public green spaces for recreational opportunities.

National Character Areas

Hart

Surrey Heath

FARNBOROUGH

NORTH CAMP

ALDERSHOT

Guildford

Waverley

N

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	North Downs		Rushmoor Boundary		B_Road
	Thames Basin Heaths	●	Rail_Station		A_Road
	Thames Basin Lowlands		Rail_Line		Motorways
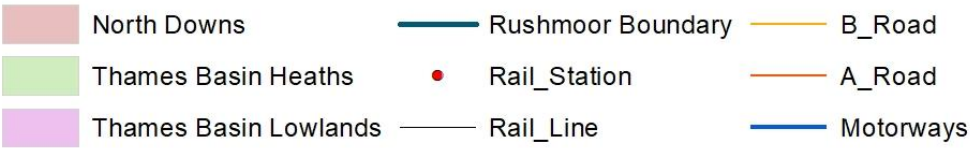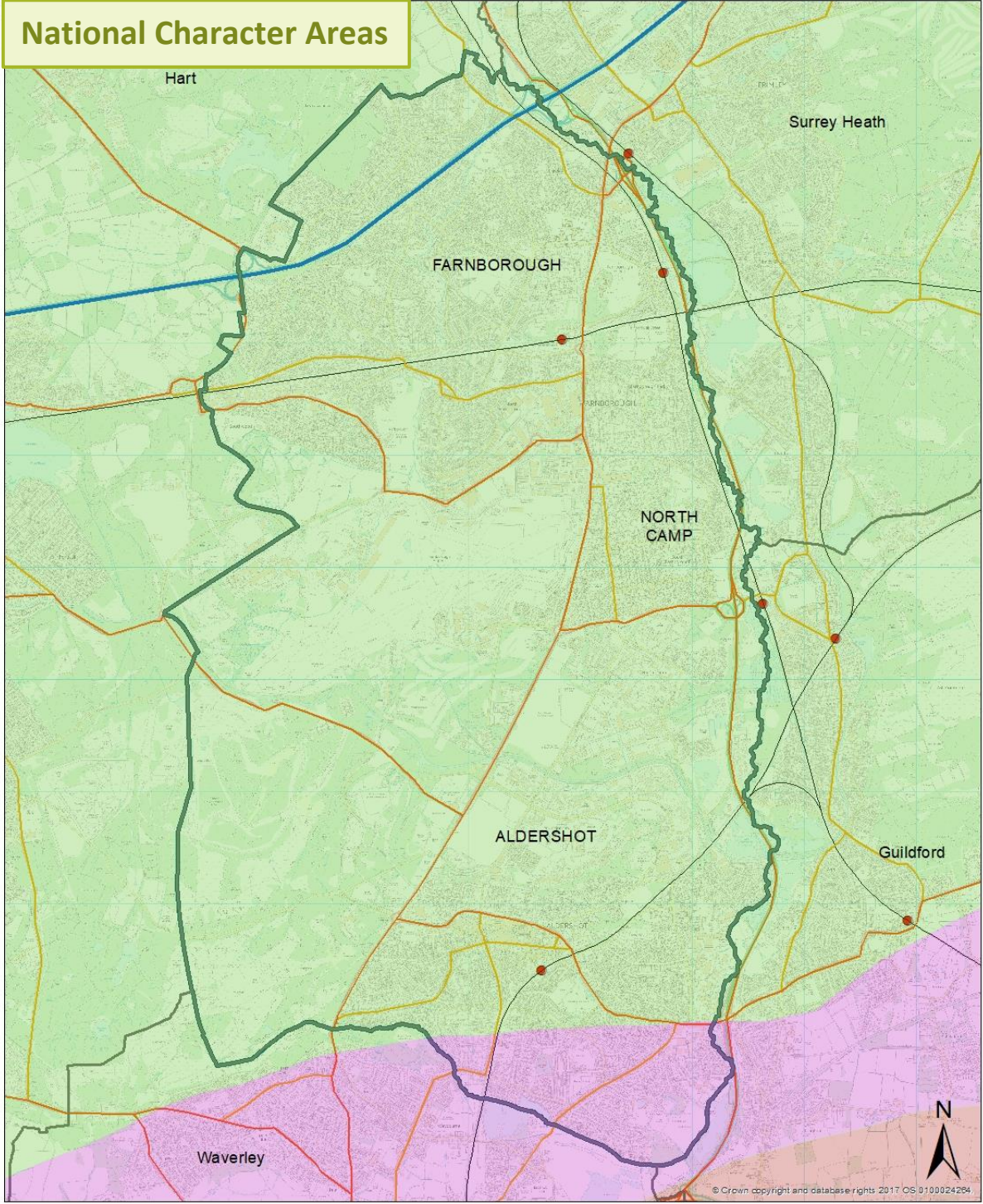
Biodiversity Opportunity Areas

5.24   Biodiversity Opportunity Areas present a local, targeted approach to conserving biodiversity in Hampshire. Opportunities for habitat restoration and creation are identified where such actions would have the greatest positive impacts for wildlife.   This is not a statutory designation and does not imply a constraint to development.   Each Biodiversity Opportunity is mapped and has an individual Statement which identifies landscape type, underlying geology, habitats and species of importance.   The Statement makes BOA specific recommendations.

5.25   Two BOA statements are relevant to Rushmoor Borough – Blackwater Valley (Hants) (Ref: BOA13) and Thames Basin Heaths and Plantations (Ref: BOA37).

5.26   The Blackwater Valley BOA statement highlights the importance of the River Blackwater and its tributaries for instream aquatic species and floodplain grassland habitats.   The network of lakes associated with gravel extractions and the diverse range of bird species found in these wetlands, are referenced.   Opportunities for biodiversity restoration or enhancements within the Blackwater Valley BOA are identified as wetland habitats features (Floodplain grazing marsh; wet woodland; Purple moor grass and rush pastures; lowland meadows; reed beds and enhancement of gravel pits for biodiversity following mineral extraction).

5.27   The Thames Basin Heaths and Plantations BOA statement highlights the importance of the Thames Basin Heaths Special Protection Area (SPA) and the internationally rare and protected habitats and species present. Opportunities for biodiversity restoration and enhancements within the Thames Basin Heaths and Plantations BOA are restoration of heath and related habitats (lowland dry acid grassland; lowland heath; purple moor grass and rush pastures; lowland meadows).

Biodiversity Opportunity Areas

Legend:

- Blackwater Valley (Hants)
- Thames Basin Heaths & Plantations (Hants)
- Rushmoor Boundary
- Motorways
- A Road
- B Road
- Rail Line
- Rail Station

Statutorily Protected Habitats

5.28   Rushmoor Borough Council benefits from some significantly large areas of publicly accessible open green space of high ecological value.   The Borough includes land that is legally protected for rare habitats of national and international importance for wildlife including areas of Thames Basin Heaths Special Protection Area (SPA) and four Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI).   In total, 474 hectares of land within Rushmoor Borough Council are statutorily protected for nature conservation.

5.29   The five Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) within the Borough area:

- Bourley and Long Valley SSSI
- Castle Bottom to Yateley and Hawley Meadows SSSI
- Eelmoor Marsh SSSI
- Foxlease and Ancells Meadows SSSI
- Basingstoke Canal SSSI

5.30   Bourley and Long Valley SSSI in the south west of the Borough, is also part of Thames Basin Heaths SPA.   This site hosts extensive woods and heaths which connect into Hart Borough and include the very popular and heavily used Caesar's Camp.   Aldershot built up area has relatively low levels of publicly accessible green space and the presence of this open space resource on the periphery of the town is an important green infrastructure resource.   The high level of statutory protection will help ensure that it remains as green space.   However, the high recreational use of the site puts pressure on the sensitive ecology present, requiring a balance to be struck between public access and protection.   Natural England have assessed the condition status of this SSSI as being 'unfavourable – recovering'.

5.31   In the north west of the Borough is another large area of Thames Basin Heaths SPA woods and heath – Castle Bottom to Yateley and Hawley Meadows SSSI.   As within Bourley and Long Valley SSSI, these woods and heaths connect into a wider network within Hart Borough and provide the opportunities for public access within the risks that access to the sensitive ecology of the area.   Natural England have assessed the condition status of this SSSI as meeting 'favourable' or unfavourable – recovering' status over 96% of the site, but that nearly 4% continues to remain unfavourable or is actively declining in ecological quality.

5.32   Eelmoor Marsh Site of (SSSI) is located to the west of Farnborough Airport.   This site is designated for its rare wet heath, valley fen and bog habitats.   The bog habitats contain deep peat, which is an important carbon sink, while the marshy nature of the site is important for regulating water levels, helping to reduce flooding risk.   The site supports a species rich heath grassland including carnivorous plants and orchids.   The fauna supported by these rare habitats is diverse including nationally rare invertebrates, reptiles and birds. Eelmoor Marsh is in private ownership and has no public access. The lack of public access removes recreational visitor pressure from the site which benefits the sensitive ecology of the site. It has been assessed by Natural England as being in 'favourable' condition.

5.33   Foxlease and Ancells Meadows SSSI is a fragmented site of which only one compartment is within Rushmoor Borough, to the west of Farnborough near the M3 4a junction.   The rest of the SSSI extends west into Hart District.   The SSSI is designated for it's mosaic of acid grassland, wet heath and mire plant communities, hosting an impressive and important
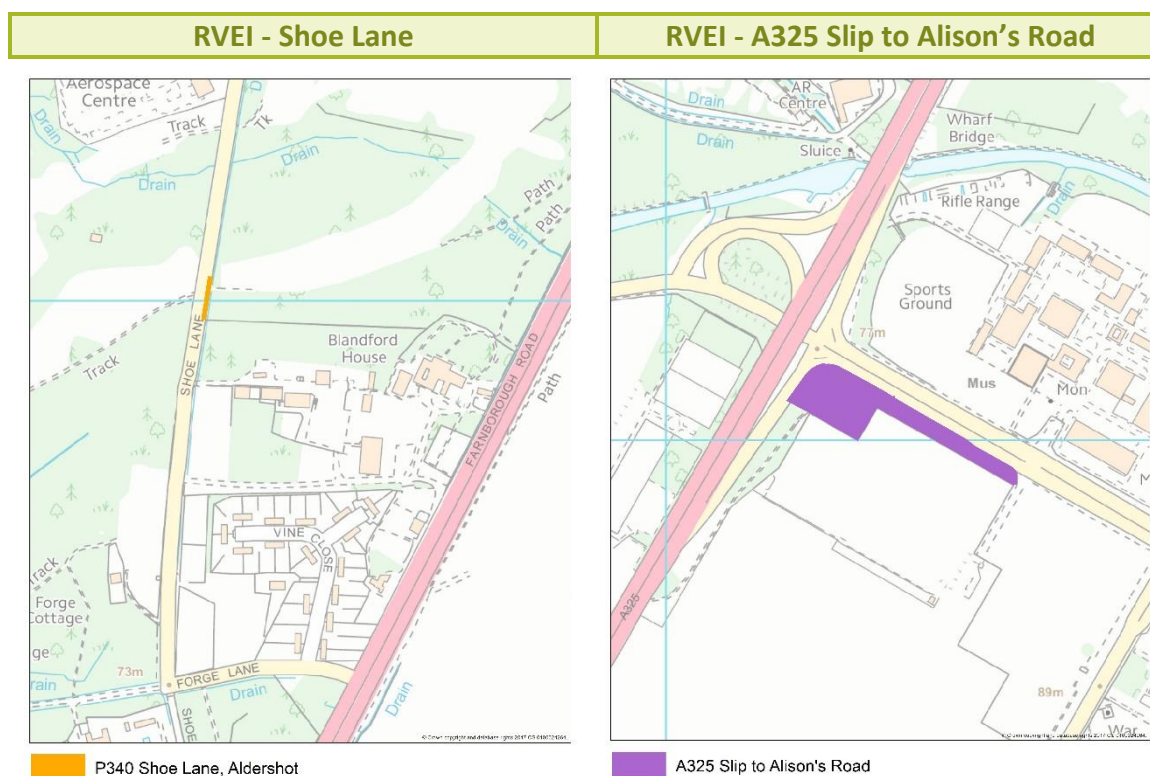
diversity of wetland grassland species.   Natural England have assessed the condition status of this SSSI as being in 'unfavourable – recovering' status over 95% of the site. Nearly 5% continues to decline in ecological quality.

5.34   From Basingstoke, the Basingstoke Canal passes through Rushmoor Borough bisecting Farnborough and Aldershot until it connects with the Wey Navigation at Byfleet in Surrey. Two sections of the Canal have been designated as SSSI, including the entirety of the Canal which passes through Rushmoor Borough.   The Canal itself, as well as its associated flushes and heathland, is nationally important for its aquatic plants and invertebrates.

5.35   The Canal is unique in that the water chemistry changes along its length from calcareous spring water in the west to slightly acidic conditions in the west.   As a result of this, the Basingstoke Canal is identified as the most botanically species-rich aquatic system in England.   The associated invertebrate fauna is equally rich with dragonflies and damsel flies being particularly noteworthy.   This SSSI is particularly vulnerable to loss of ecological quality.   Natural England have assessed the condition status of this SSSI as being in 'favourable' or 'unfavourable – recovering' status for only 27% of its length with 27% identified as declining in ecological quality.   The remaining length is identified as being in 'unfavourable – no change' condition.   Most of the Canal within Rushmoor Borough is identified as being in 'unfavourable – declining' condition, due to adverse impacts of elevated organic matter due to heavy tree shading, and the surrounding urban environment on water quality.   Pollutants within surface water run-off, such as elevated levels of silt, also reduce water quality which in turn reduces aquatic flora and fauna for which the SSSI is designated.

5.36   Rowhill Copse Local Nature Reserve, owned by Rushmoor Borough Council, is on the southern edge of Aldershot but is primarily within Surrey.   Its status as a Local Nature Reserve is a statutory designation which reflects its importance as a public open space resource for the local community.   Rowhill Copse was also selected as a Suitable Alternative Natural Greenspace (SANG) in 2012.   The site is mostly deciduous woodland actively managed for coppice, with areas of meadow, heathland, ponds and the headwaters of the River Blackwater.   The peat rich mire of the River Blackwater headwaters are particularly botanically interesting.   The woodland has been identified as 'Ancient' by Natural England indicating that this site has been continuously wooded for at least 400 years.   Ancient woodlands are defined within national planning policy as being 'irreplaceable habitats' which reinforces their ecological and landscape importance.   The diverse range of habitats present at Rowhill Copse support a wide range of protected species including amphibians, reptiles, badgers and five species of bats.

Non-statutory Protected Sites

5.37   The Borough has an extensive network of sites which are important at a County level for their ecology value.   Rushmoor has 38 Sites of Importance for Nature Conservation (SINCs), formally selected by panel for their important habitats and species.   SINCs are protected by planning policy, but their selection does not imply legal protection.   In total Rushmoor Borough has 448 hectares of land identified as SINC.   Much of the SINC is in private land ownership, some are owned and managed by the MOD and some are managed directly by Rushmoor Borough Council.
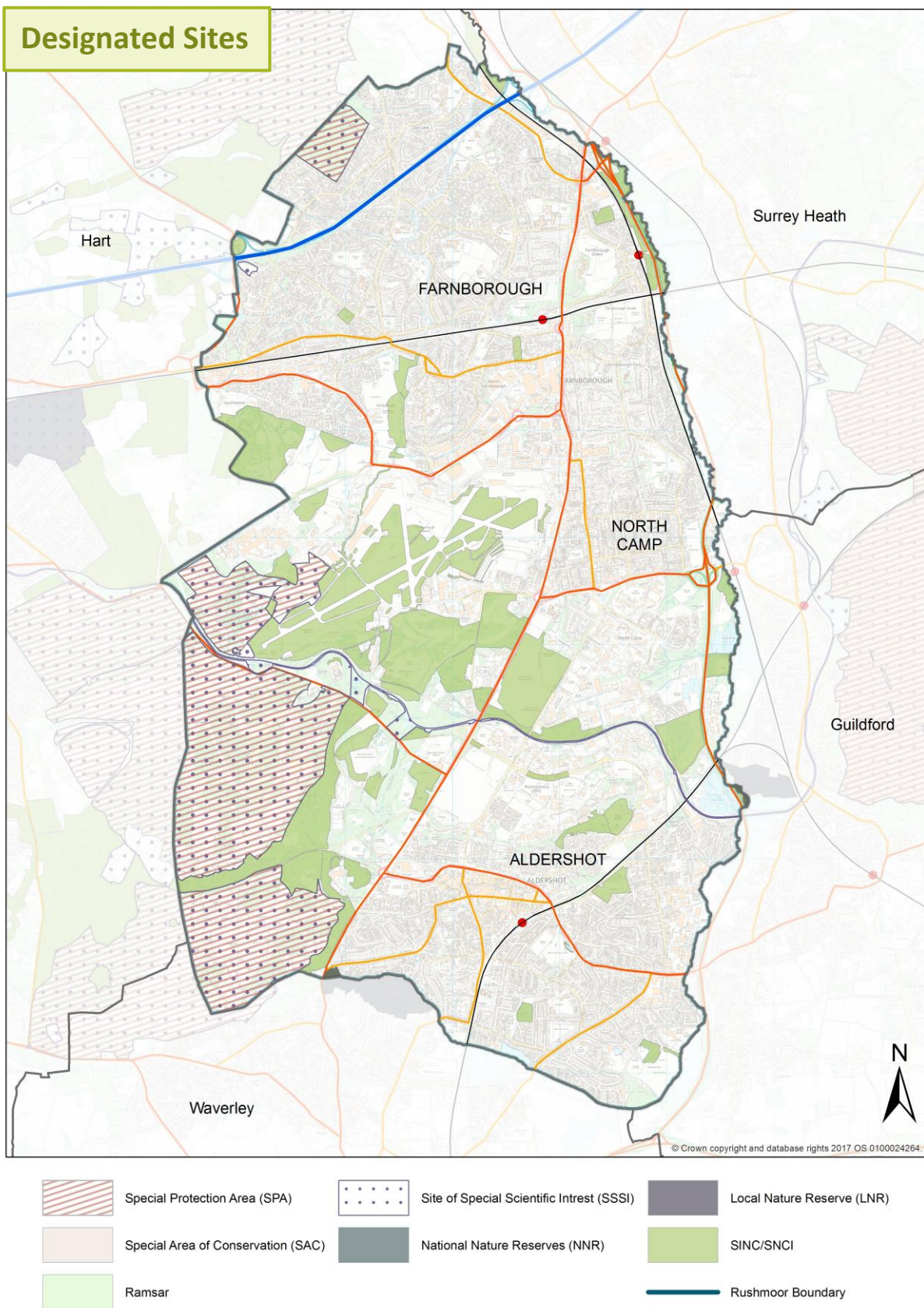
51

5.38   The SINC network covers a wide range of habitat types typical to Rushmoor Borough including grassland, heathland, meadow and woodland.   The SINC provides important green links between statutory sites, helping to maintain wildlife corridors and providing space for a diverse range of habitats and the species they support.   The SINC sites also offer a green buffer between the more sensitive habitats of the statutory sites and more intense urban development.   The greatest concentration of SINC is found across the centre of Rushmoor Borough.   Farnborough Airport is an important component, selected as SINC for its mosaic of grassland /heathland habitats.   The extensive area of the Airport SINC provides significant green infrastructure connectivity between Eelmoor Marsh SSSI in the west through a series of grassland, heathland and woodland SINC sites, north and south of the Basingstoke Canal SSSI, through to the Blackwater Valley in the east of the Borough.

5.39   Rushmoor Borough has two Road Verges of Ecological Importance (RVEI)[8], a Hampshire wide non-statutory wildlife conservation designation designed to identify and appropriately manage wildlife-rich road verges.   Both RVEIs in Rushmoor Borough are owned and managed by the MOD and have been selected for their botanical interest.

RVEI - Shoe Lane	RVEI - A325 Slip to Alison's Road
▬ P340 Shoe Lane, Aldershot	▬ A325 Slip to Alison's Road

5.40   Section 40 of The Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006 places a duty on local authorities to have regard to the conservation of biodiversity when exercising their functions.   Section 41 provides a list of Habitats and Species of Principal Importance for the purpose of conserving biodiversity – habitats and species that are particularly rare or vulnerable within England.   Habitats include ecologically valuable rivers, heaths, woodlands, hedgerows and grassland.   Within Rushmoor Borough 67% of habitats mapped as meeting

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[8] Shoe Lane, Aldershot (east side of Shoe Lane, south-west corner of the Army Golf Course) and A325 Slip to Alison's Road (South side of road on corner with Farnborough Road).

'Habitat of Principle Importance' status are present within protected sites.   However, this leaves 33% of our most valuable habitats unprotected and vulnerable to loss or deterioration.

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Designated Sites

Hart

Surrey Heath

FARNBOROUGH

NORTH CAMP

Guildford

ALDERSHOT

Waverley

N

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Special Protection Area (SPA)	Site of Special Scientific Intrest (SSSI)	Local Nature Reserve (LNR)
Special Area of Conservation (SAC)	National Nature Reserves (NNR)	SINC/SNCI
Ramsar		Rushmoor Boundary

Please Note: Sites of Importance for Nature Conservation (SINC) are referred to as Sites of Nature

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Conservation Importance (SNCIs) in Surrey.

Habitats of Principle Importance and Broad Habitats

Habitats of Principle Importance
- Coastal and Floodplain Grazing Marsh
- Eutrophic Standing Waters
- Lowland Dry Acid Grassland
- Lowland Fens
- Lowland Heathland
- Lowland Meadows
- Lowland Mixed Deciduous Woodland
- Ponds
- Purple Moor Grass and Rush Pastures
- Reedbeds
- Wet Woodland
- Wood-Pasture and Parkland

Broad Habitats
- Acid grassland
- Arable and horticulture
- Bracken
- Broadleaved, mixed, and yew woodland
- Built-up areas and gardens
- Coniferous woodland
- Dwarf shrub heath
- Fen, marsh and swamp
- Improved grassland
- Inland rock
- Littoral Sediment
- Neutral grassland
- Rivers and streams
- Standing open water and canals
- Unidentified habitat
- Unidentified water
- undary and linear features

- Rushmoor Boundary
- Motorways
- A_Road
- B_Road
- Rail_Line
- Rail_Station

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Woodland

5.41 The Government Office for National Statistics has identified 21% of Rushmoor Borough land area as woodland (National Forest Inventory data, 2019).   This compares favourably to the English average of 10% woodland cover.   Rushmoor Borough sits centrally within a geographical area of especially high woodland cover.   All adjoining local authority areas have woodland coverage of at least 28%, with Waverley Borough having the highest proportion of its area covered by woodland in the whole of England, at almost 34%.

5.42 This data identifies the importance of woodland habitats within Rushmoor, but also as a strategic resource providing habitat connectivity and defining the character of our area.

Woodland and Trees

Hart

Surrey Heath

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ALDERSHOT

Guildford

Waverley

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⊙ Dedicated_Trees_And_Shrubs	Ancient Woodland	— B_Road
⋄ Trees	Broadleaved, mixed and yew woodland	— Rail_Line
— Hedgerows	Coniferous woodland	— Rivers
— Urban Hedges	— Rushmoor Boundary	● Rail_Station
⋄ Trees (HCC)	— Motorways	
Tree Group (HCC)	— A_Road	

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Wildlife infrastructure corridors

5.43   Statutory and non-statutory wildlife conservation designations form the core of the green infrastructure network within Rushmoor Borough, providing refugees for the Borough's rarest species and habitats.   As important are the linkages between these sites that allow habitats to thrive and species to move across the Borough.   Connected landscapes provide foraging and commuting routes for animals and colonisation by plant species.   This encourages robust population sizes and genetic variation between populations.   Connected landscapes have increased species diversity and are more resilient to adverse impacts. Fragmentation is damaging and even protected sites will lose much of their ecological value if they become isolated by inhospitable surrounding land-use.   The following linear features within Rushmoor Borough are of particular strategic importance in connecting wildlife corridors:

- Open water, wetland and woodland features of the Blackwater Valley and River Blackwater.
- The tributaries and associated wet grasslands in the River Blackwater headwaters, including the Ively Stream and Cove Brook.
- Wooded scrub of railway corridors.
- Woodland and grassland corridors of the major road networks (M3, A331).

Ecosystem services

5.44   Rushmoor Borough benefits from an extensive and semi-connected network of green spaces, including areas of very high ecological value.   Well managed and connected green spaces offer a range of ecosystem services including -

- Our watercourses and associated wetlands which can filter and reduce pollutants, regulating water quality, enabling them to function appropriately within their natural floodplains regulates water quantity, reducing risk of flooding.

- Management of our woodland and wooded heathlands can produce raw materials in the form of timber.   Trees can influence the availability of water and help regulate air quality, reducing aerial pollutants.   Their shade in our towns can help with urban cooling.   Their growth stores carbon helping to regulate our climate.

- Our wildflower meadows and grassland habitats provide nectar and pollen sources for pollinators, essential for food production and plant diversity.

- Green open spaces provide places for education, relaxation, exercise and recreation. Access to nature is proven to enhance our physical and mental well-being.

Strengths and Opportunities

⇨ Opportunities to improve the wildlife corridors and connections between the Borough's ecological assets.
⇨ Opportunities to deliver biodiversity net gain as part of new development.
⇨ Opportunities for nature recovery identified as part of the Local Nature Recovery Strategy.
⇨ Opportunities to improve the biodiversity potential of Council owned land.

- ⇨ Opportunities to enhance existing ecological assets.
- ⇨ Opportunities to restore native hedgerows (e.g. the restoration of hedgerows as part of Southwood and Cove Brook Floodplain Enhancement Project).
- ⇨ Opportunities to extend woodland cover, where undertaken sensitively, to ensure existing biodiversity and recreational functions are considered.
- ⇨ Catchment flood alleviation through restoration of natural floodplain habitats.
- ⇨ Opportunities to strengthen woodland corridors along the main arterial transport routes to buffer nearby communities from air pollution.
- ⇨ Increase opportunities for people to connect with nature through recreation and volunteering.
- ⇨ Opportunities for improved function of ecological networks and therefore better delivery of ecosystem services that they offer.

Weaknesses and Threats

- ⇨ Development resulting in loss of accessible greenspace.
- ⇨ Use of inappropriate non-native planting schemes.
- ⇨ Use of lighting designs that impact on the dispersal and foraging habits of nocturnal species.
- ⇨ Increased recreational disturbance to the Thames Basin Heaths Special Protection Area (SPA). Recreational access to the SPA and component SSSI sites should be discouraged due to their ecological sensitivity.
- ⇨ Lack of funding facing non-governmental organisations (NGOs) affecting their ability to effectively manage sites to maintain good ecological condition.
- ⇨ Poor or inappropriate management of sites and ensuring appropriate balance between recreation and biodiversity.
- ⇨ Lack of statutory obligations on landowners to sensitively manage their Sites of Importance for Nature Conservation (SINCs) resulting in risk of loss of ecological condition.
- ⇨ Where high quality habitat occurs in small, isolated and vulnerable blocks, this reduces the quality, vitality and robustness of our wildlife, making our biodiversity vulnerable to pressures from climate change and land use change. It also reduces the quality of services (ecosystem services) the natural environment is able to deliver to local communities.
- ⇨ New development puts pressure on sensitive woodland and associated habitats, both directly through decreasing coverage and ecological viability, and indirectly through fragmentation and the potential for increased recreational disturbance.
- ⇨ Risk of spread of invasive species.

Water

Introduction

5.45   The UK is predicted to experience an increase in winter flooding events and summer droughts through climate change. Green infrastructure provides significant opportunities to deliver space for water, and natural options for water resource management.

5.46   Under the Flood and Water Management Act 2010, Hampshire County Council is defined as a lead Local Flood Authority and is required to produce, implement and monitor a strategy for the management of local flood risk. This includes flood risk from surface water, ground water and ordinary watercourses. The Environment Agency is the regulatory authority for main rivers.

5.47   Green infrastructure can contribute to making areas less vulnerable to flood risk whilst ensuring development doesn't increase flood risk to third parties. It can also help to alleviate flood risk by delaying the downstream passage of flood flows, reducing the volume of runoff through attenuation and promoting rainfall infiltration.

5.48   The Environment Agency (in partnership) is responsible for ensuring our main rivers reach good ecological condition through the provisions of the Water Framework Directive (WFD). Green infrastructure can contribute to achievement of WDF objectives and help deliver actions from Catchment Flood Management Plans (CFMP) and River Basin Management Plans (RBMP). The rivers in the Borough sit within the Loddon Catchment.

5.49   The closure of the Southwood Golf Course to create a Suitable Natural Alternative Greenspace (SANG) offered an opportunity to restore habitats and physical processes associated with the Cove Brook corridor and associated floodplain, creating a more resilient ecosystem for the benefit of people and wildlife. The Council has entered partnership with the Environment Agency, to progress a project which will achieve river floodplain and habitat improvements to Southwood Country Park and Cove Brook as part of the Phase 2 development of the Southwood Country Park SANG. The project is known as the Southwood and Cove Brook Floodplain Improvement Project. More details are provided in the project profile in Appendix 3.

Assets within and around the Borough

5.50   The hydrology of Rushmoor is dominated by the Blackwater River and its tributary Cove Brook. The River Blackwater flows eastward along the majority of the southern border before flowing roughly northwards along the entirety of the eastern boundary of the Borough. The majority of the northern half of the Borough drains into the Blackwater River via Cove Brook which flows approximately in a northwards direction to its confluence with the Blackwater River at the very north of Rushmoor. Marrow Brook, Hawley Lake Stream and Ively Brook, all tributaries of Cove Brook, are also designated as Main Rivers.

5.51   Tice's Meadow is a newly developed nature reserve on the site of the former Farnham Quarry, located between Badshot Lea and Tongham in Surrey on the southern outskirts of Aldershot. The habitats on site consist of a mosaic of open water, gravel islands and scrapes, reedbeds, scrub, woodland, ephemeral ponds and wet and dry grassland. Surrey County Council has recently purchased the site, supported by funding from Hampshire County

Council, Guildford Borough Council, Waverley Borough Council, Rushmoor Borough Council and Farnham Town Council. This will ensure that it is protected as an open space for the community.

5.52   In addition to the natural watercourses described above, the Basingstoke Canal also runs across the Borough in a roughly east-west direction. The Environment Agency's Detailed River Network (DRN) indicates that a number of ordinary watercourses in the south-west of Rushmoor drain into the Basingstoke Canal. The canal crosses the A331, in the east of the Borough via an aqueduct.

5.53   Broadly, the south-west of the Borough drains towards the Basingstoke Canal, the north-west of the Borough drains towards Cove Brook. The east of the Borough drains towards the River Blackwater.

5.54   There is network of lakes along the Blackwater Valley to the east of the Borough which we have created by gravel extraction.

5.55   The latest Water Framework Directive reports published by the Environment Agency identify that the:

- River Blackwater (Aldershot to Cove Brook confluence at Hawley) achieved 'moderate' ecological status in 2019, up from 'poor' in 2016 but failed the assessment of chemical status in 2019, a reduction from 'good' in 2016.
- Cove Brook achieved 'poor' ecological status in 2019 an improvement from 'bad' in 2016 and failed the assessment of chemical status in 2019, a reduction from 'good' in 2016.
- Basingstoke Canal achieved moderate ecological status in both 2016 and 2019, but failed the assessment of chemical status in 2019 down from 'good' in 2016..
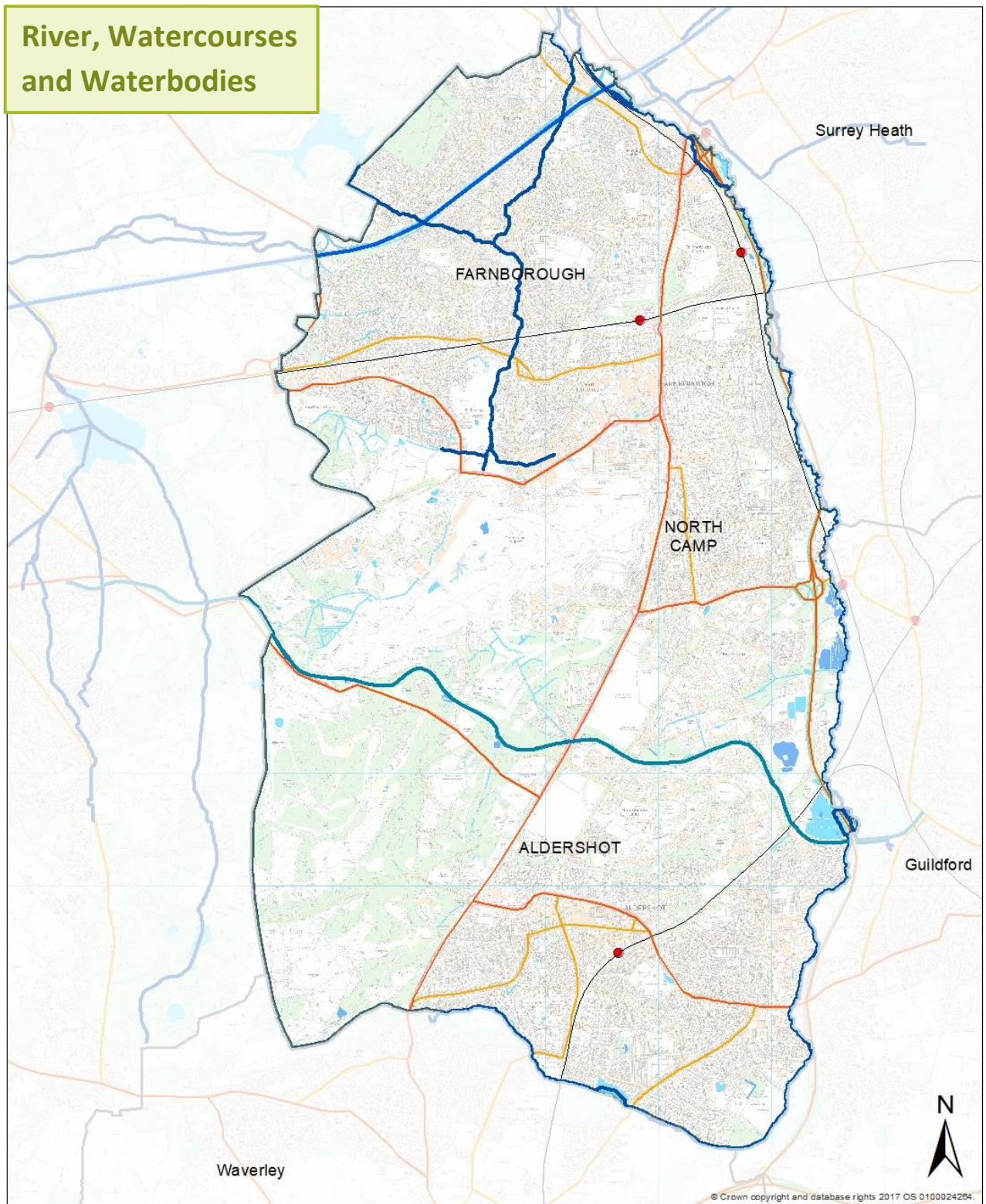
Please note that reductions in chemical status within waterbodies as recorded within 2019 reports is a likely reflection of the inclusion of a new suite of pollutants, testing methodologies and standards since 2016 surveys were completed which resulted in widespread chemical status failure across England.
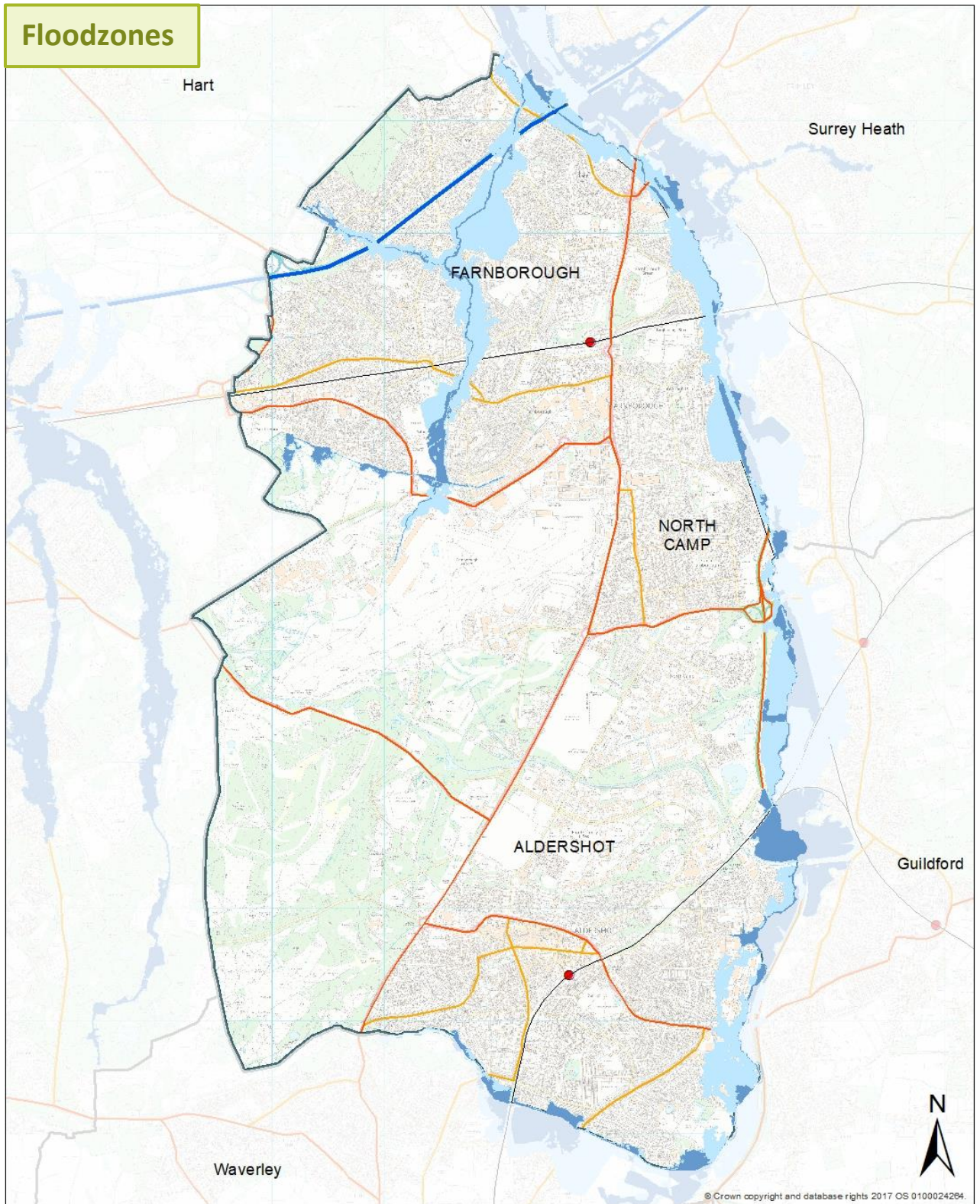
5.56   The Rushmoor Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (2015) identifies that the majority of the Borough is located within Flood Zone 1, with only a very small area located in Flood Zone 2, 3a and 3b (functional floodplain). Future development should therefore be steered towards Flood Zone 1, with only water-compatible and essential infrastructure located in Flood Zone 3b.

5.57   The Rushmoor Borough Council Level 1 Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (2015) considers flood risk from surface water and all other sources. The assessment identifies eleven sites that have a significantly higher 'risk index' of surface water flooding than other parts of the Borough. The Local Plan includes a policy relating to the development in these higher risk areas (Policy NE7) alongside a general policy on Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems (SuDS) (Policy NE8).

5.58   There are many different SuDS features available to suit the constraints of a site. These include green roofs, permeable paving, ponds, wetlands and shallow ditches called swales. The main purpose of sustainable drainage systems is to mimic the natural drainage

conditions of a site before development. This is achieved by capturing water and allowing as much as possible to evaporate or soak into the ground close to where it originated. Surface water is then discharged from a site at a controlled rate that does not increase flood risk.

5.59   An assessment of the suitability of using infiltration SuDS techniques across the Borough was undertaken as part of the Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (2015). It is recognised that infiltration techniques will be inappropriate in certain parts of the Borough because of geological constraints. However, there are notable areas which are considered to be highly compatible with infiltration techniques, and such SuDS solutions will be encouraged in the first instance. In areas where infiltration is considered to be inappropriate, other SuDS techniques (for example, Detention/Attenuation) will be encouraged.

River, Watercourses and Waterbodies

Surrey Heath

FARNBOROUGH

NORTH CAMP

ALDERSHOT

Guildford

Waverley

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N

Basingstoke Canal
Main Rivers
Unidentified water
Rivers and streams
Standing open water

Floodzones

Hart

Surrey Heath

FARNBOROUGH

NORTH CAMP

ALDERSHOT

Guildford

Waverley

N

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Floodzone 3   Floodzone 2

Strengths and Opportunities

⇨ Basingstoke Canal, Blackwater Valley and Cove Brook provide valuable recreational resource. There are opportunities to improve connections with adjoining authorities to enhance these green corridors.

⇨ Southwood and Cove Brook Floodplain Enhancement Project.

⇨ Promotion of access to rivers and the canal.

⇨ River valleys should be protected and managed to promote natural flood alleviation.

⇨ Work with key partners to deliver improvements for the Water Framework directive and to deliver actions from the catchment Flood Management Plans and River Basin Management Plans.

⇨ Opportunities to promote benefits through appropriate SuDS design.

Weaknesses and Threats

⇨ Issues with fluvial and surface water flooding and future impacts of climate change.

⇨ Many culverted and diverted natural watercourses.

⇨ Condition status of the Canal.

⇨ Poor/bad water body status (WFD).

Recreation and Open Space

Introduction

5.60   The strong positive links between our mental and physical health, and levels of contact with natural and green spaces are well documented. Access to green spaces is associated with a decrease in health complaints such as blood pressure and cholesterol, improved mental health and reduced stress levels. People living closer to green spaces are shown to be more physically active and less likely to be overweight or obese. A planned approach to green infrastructure can contribute to the provision of well promoted, high quality, multi-purpose green spaces and increase the benefits that these provide for community health and wellbeing.

5.61   Green infrastructure can provide opportunities to increase the space available to local communities to produce locally grown food, through more effective use of existing green spaces and corridors. In addition to increasing the quantity of food, the involvement in the growing process has wider benefits including opportunities for healthy activity, community involvement, education and socialisation. Connecting local communities with these assets via footpaths and cycleways also encourages further connection with the local natural environment.

5.62   The Council manages a wide range of assets including public open spaces, sports pitches and allotments. Included within this are parks, local nature reserves, recreation grounds and public open spaces, floral displays, allotments, trees, woodland and parks.

5.63   The Council actively encourages the community to make best use of these green spaces. We manage a number of sports pitches with the land beyond the formal pitch and safety margins managed as informal open space which offers opportunities to provide biodiversity enhancements.

5.64   The management of the Council's land estate provides opportunities to deliver green infrastructure benefits through review of management regimes for both formal and informal spaces and sports fields. In the context of pressure on Council resources, opportunities need to be taken to explore alternative models for managing open spaces including increased active involvement of the community where appropriate.

Assets within and around the Borough

Important Note

Reference is made below to the findings of the Rushmoor Open Space, Sport and Recreation Study 2014. However, more up to date information and standards on access to natural space has been published during the preparation of the Strategy. Therefore, this information will need to be considered in more detail to inform the preparation of the Local Plan Review and this can be taken into account as we prepare the Green Infrastructure Delivery Plan and any future updates to the GI Strategy.

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SANG

5.65   The borough contains a number of Suitable Alternative Natural Green Space (SANG) sites that the public can visit and enjoy whilst alleviating stress that can affect the ecosystem of the SPA by interference from the public. Within Rushmoor the following SANGs are in place:

- Wellesley Woodlands (109.7ha)
- Southwood Woodlands (32.5ha)
- Southwood Country Park (57ha)

5.66   In addition, there are a number of SANGs, which are located around the Borough, or partly within the Borough, and are shown on the map below. This includes Rowhill Nature Reserve (24ha) and Hawley Meadows and Blackwater Park (39ha). Planning permission has also been granted for the provision of a new SANG to be located within the Blandford House and Malta Barracks development.
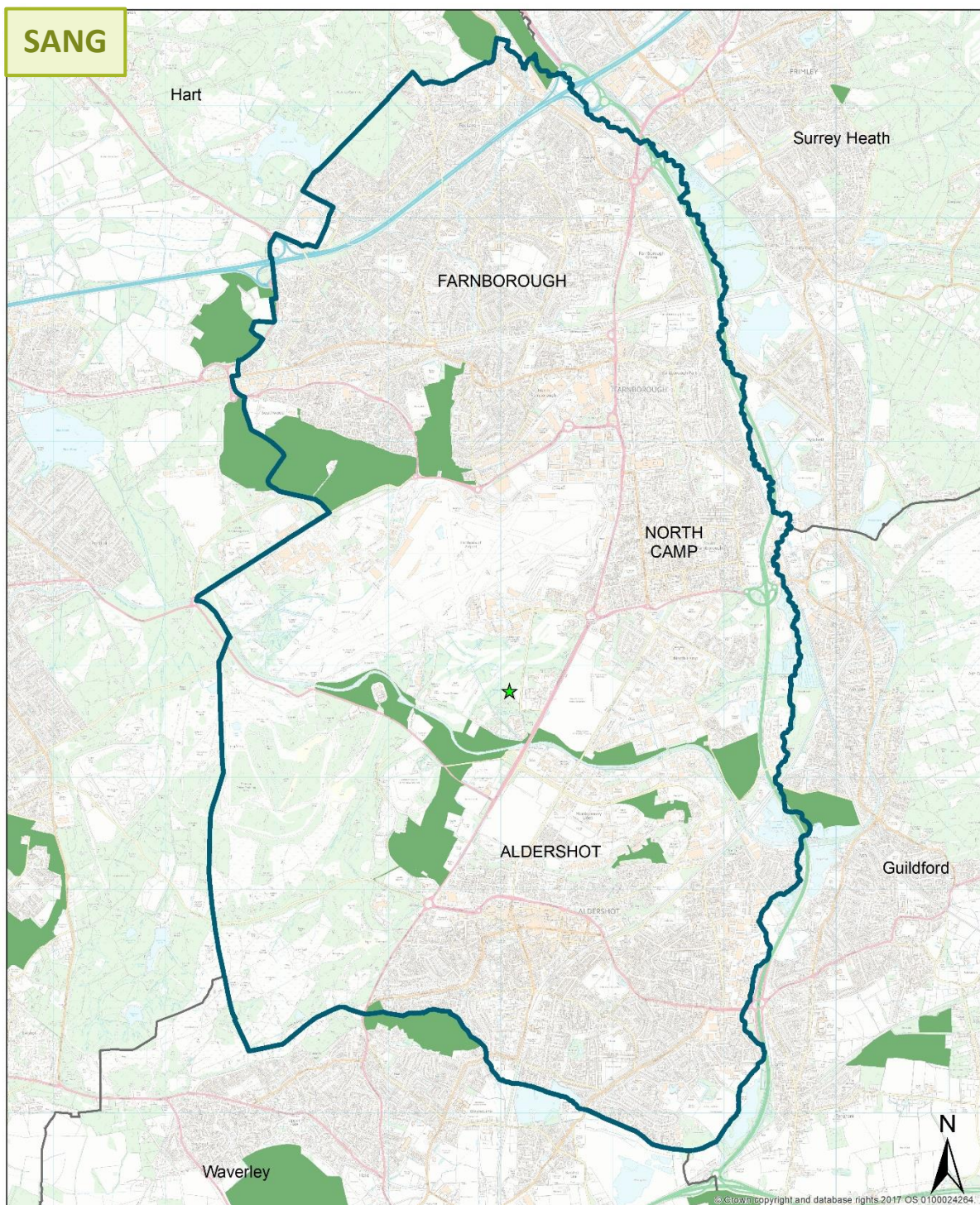
SANG

SANGs

★ Blandford House SANG

Parks and Gardens

5.67   Rushmoor Open Space, Sport and Recreation Study 2014 identifies the following parks and gardens within the Borough:

Borough Scale

- Queens Parade Playing Fields

Local Scale

- Aldershot Park, Aldershot
- King George V Playing Fields, Farnborough
- Manor Park, Aldershot
- Rectory Road Recreation Ground, Farnborough
- Queen Elizabeth Park, Farnborough
- Cove Green Recreation Ground, Farnborough
- Municipal Gardens, Aldershot
- Moor Road Playing Fields, Farnborough
- Southwood Playing Fields, Farnborough
- The Redan Fortification, Aldershot
- Oak Farm Playing Fields, Farnborough
- Kennels Lane Sports Ground, Farnborough
- Abbey Fields, Farnborough (Privately owned and not publicly accessible)
- Dolly's Hill, Aldershot
- Duke of Wellington Open Space, Aldershot

Small Scale

- Queens Road Recreation Ground, Farnborough
- Elles Close, Farnborough
- Ivy Road Recreation Ground, Aldershot
- Prince Charles Crescent Recreation Ground, Farnborough
- Aspen Grove Park, Aldershot
- Osborne Road Recreation Ground, Farnborough
- Elles Pond Park, Farnborough
- Prince's Gardens, Aldershot
- Pinewood Park, Farnborough
- Redan Gardens, Aldershot
- Highclere Road, Aldershot
- Farnborough Gate Recreation Ground, Farnborough
- All Saints Crescent Recreation Ground, Farnborough

5.68   The Rushmoor Open Space, Sport and Recreation Study 2014 notes the following:

- Queens Parade Recreation Ground is the only Borough scale park and garden in Rushmoor and at the time of assessment it was considered to be below standard in value and quality. This was primarily due to the site being used by the MOD for

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formal recreational activities and, as a result there was a lack of facilities/suitability of site for general use by the public.

- The majority of Rushmoor is within the catchment area is of a local park or garden. It recognises the importance of local parks and gardens increased due to the limited provision of larger scale Borough and Regional parks and gardens. The study notes the range of facilities provided on these sites and how they often host local events and activities.

- Only some parts of the Borough are within the 400m catchment area for small local parks and gardens. Areas outside of these catchments include[9]:
  - o Cove
  - o Parts of West Heath (west of Fernhill Lane)
  - o South West of Farnborough Town Centre (around Elles Road)
  - o South of Aldershot (along the Surrey border)

- The majority of the above sites are owned and maintained by Rushmoor Borough Council. However, there are a number of playing fields and recreation grounds that are owned and managed by the Ministry of Defence, such as Queens Parade Playing Fields.

5.69   In summary, at the time of assessment, the Open Space Study identified a deficiency in the quantity of parks and gardens in Farnborough (at 1.02ha per 1,000 population compared to standard of 1.56) and found that Aldershot exceeded the quantity standard with 2.37ha per 1,000 population. As noted above more up to date information and standards on access to natural space has been published during the preparation of the Strategy. Therefore, these findings will need to be reviewed in more detail to inform the preparation of the Local Plan Review, and this can be taken into account as we prepare the Green Infrastructure Delivery Plan and any future updates to the Green Infrastructure Strategy.

5.70   The study did note the limited provision of Regional and Borough Scale parks which increases the importance of local and small-scale parks and gardens. It also noted that at the time of the study, the parks and gardens offer limited diversity of landscape features and are dominated by amenity grassland interspersed with mature trees. Therefore, an opportunity to improve the nature conservation value of these sites was identified.

Natural and Semi-Natural Greenspaces

5.71   The Rushmoor Open Space, Sport and Recreation Study 2014 identifies the following natural and semi-natural greenspaces in Rushmoor:

Regional Scale

- Southwood Woodland, Farnborough
- Rowhill Nature Reserve, Aldershot
- Bourley and Long Valley, Aldershot
- Hawley Common, Farnborough

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[9] The area forming part of the Wellesley development fell outside of the catchment, but it was noted that planned provision would rectify this.

- Eelmoor Training Area, Aldershot
- Claycart Bottom/Rushmoor Hill, Aldershot

<div style="background-color: #dce67a">Borough Scale</div>

- Southwood Playing Fields, Farnborough
- Hill and Lake, Aldershot
- Ramillies Park, Aldershot

<div style="background-color: #dce67a">Local Scale</div>

- Spring Lakes, Aldershot
- Brickfields Country Park, Aldershot
- Woodlands Walk (Old Boots), Aldershot
- Aldershot Stubbs/Hollybush Lane, Aldershot
- Skirmishing Hill - Eastern Edge, Aldershot
- Claycart Hill Open Space, Aldershot
- Peaked Hill, Aldershot
- Dukes Park, Aldershot
- Prince's Avenue Wood, Aldershot
- Minley Road Open Space, Farnborough

<div style="background-color: #dce67a">Small Scale</div>

- Bramshot Lane, Farnborough
- Sandy Lane, Farnborough
- Chestnut Tree Woods, Farnborough
- Hawley Meadow, Farnborough
- Minley Road Amenity Lane, Farnborough

5.72   The Rushmoor Open Space, Sport and Recreation Study 2014 notes the following:

- The majority of the Borough is within the 5km of a Regional Scale site owned by Rushmoor Borough Council. At the time of assessment, it also noted that Southwood Woodland and Rowhill Nature Reserve achieved the required benchmarks for quality and value and that this reflects the importance of these sites as SANG.

- The whole of the Borough is within the 4km catchment of Borough scale sites.

- Highways and railway lines within Rushmoor restrict accessibility to local natural and semi-natural green space.

- The north-eastern part of the Farnborough sits outside the catchment area of all Local scale sites, which is partly due to the presence of the M3 corridor and the railway line.

- The majority of Aldershot is within the catchment area of a local natural and semi-natural green space.

- Much of the borough is outside the catchment area of small local natural and semi-natural green spaces.

5.73   In summary, at the time of assessment, the Open Space Study identified a deficiency in the quantity of publicly accessible natural and semi-natural green space within Farnborough (at 1.50ha per 1,000 population compared to standard of 10.45ha) and that Aldershot exceeded the quantity standard with 23.76ha per 1,000 population. However, as noted above more up to date information and standards on access to natural space has been published during the preparation of the Strategy. Therefore, these findings will need to be reviewed in more detail to inform the preparation of the Local Plan Review and this can be taken into account as we prepare the Green Infrastructure Delivery Plan and any future updates to the GI Strategy.

5.74   The study noted that South Farnborough and North Camp are only within the required accessibility standard of sites owned by the MOD. The study suggests that accessibility to these sites could be improved through strengthening routes to the adjacent Blackwater Valley where accessibility is impeded by the A331 Blackwater Valley Road and Railway line.

5.75   There are large areas of natural and semi-natural greenspace within the Borough owned by the MOD, but many of these sites are within the Thames Basin Heaths Special Protection Area and, therefore, it is inappropriate to promote recreational use of these sites.

5.76   The study recommended that smaller areas of natural and semi-natural open spaces within the borough should be conserved and enhanced to promote greater use and ensuring accessible footpaths are provided and signposted to link with the surrounding area. It also recommended that efforts should be made to link the ecological connectivity of sites through diversifying the management of roadside verges and green corridors.

Amenity Green Space

5.77   The Rushmoor Open Space, Sport and Recreation Study 2014 identifies the following amenity green spaces in Rushmoor:

- Keith Lucas Road Amenity & Play Area, Farnborough
- Southwood Village - Amenity Land, Farnborough
- Pyestock Crescent, Farnborough
- Napier Gardens, Aldershot
- Nightingale Close, Farnborough
- Manor House Estate, Farnborough
- The Grove, Aldershot
- Ethy Copse/Howard Drive, Farnborough
- Herbs End, Farnborough
- Southwood Village Green, Summit Avenue, Farnborough
- The Mounts, Farnborough
- Denmark Square, Aldershot
- Churchill Crescent, Farnborough
- Ramilies Park, Aldershot

5.78   The Open Space study notes that the majority of residents are within the 400m catchment area of amenity green spaces or parks and gardens. However, it identifies some areas that fall outside of the catchment, including parts of Cove, north Farnborough, eastern and southern parts of Aldershot and large parts of North Camp

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5.79   In summary, at the time of assessment, the Open Space Study identified a number of key findings and issues associated with the provision of amenity green spaces in the Borough, including:

- These spaces contribute to the Borough's built environment providing opportunities for informal recreation and providing valuable separation
- The value of these spaces could be enhanced by diversifying management operations to create a broader range of wildlife habitats and creating opportunities for play through the installation of natural play features.
- There is potential to enhance amenity green spaces by increasing facilities in areas where there is a deficiency in local or small parks and gardens (e.g. eastern sections of Farnborough and North Town in Aldershot)
- Amenity green space in the north east of Aldershot Town Centre could be enhanced.

5.80   The Council will need to review and consider how it best delivers on this advice in the context of , including exploring creative ways of ensuring that other built development enables greater enhancement of this limited space.

Cemeteries and churchyards

5.81   The Rushmoor Open Space, Sport and Recreation Study 2014 identifies the following cemeteries and churchyards:

- Aldershot Crematorium, Aldershot
- Ship Lane Cemetery, Farnborough
- Redan Road Cemetery, Aldershot
- St John's Churchyard, Farnborough
- Victoria Road Cemetery, Farnborough
- Military Cemetery, Aldershot

5.82   The Study notes that cemeteries and churchyards contribute to the open space network providing opportunities for quiet contemplation and biodiversity. It suggests that the future use of these open spaces could be enhanced to help resolve areas deficient in other types of open space.

Allotments

5.83   There are 11 allotment sites in Rushmoor, including:
- Cove Green, Farnborough
- Church Road Allotments, Aldershot
- Cherrywood Road, Farnborough
- Ratcliff Road, Farnborough
- Prospect Road, Farnborough
- Brookhouse Road, Farnborough
- Jubilee Allotment Gardens, Farnborough
- Fernhill Road, Farnborough
- Alexandra Road, Aldershot
- Park Road, Farnborough
- Birchett Road, Farnborough

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5.84   The Rushmoor Open Space, Sport and Recreation Study 2014 notes that there are areas outside of the 800m catchment, including eastern and western parts of Farnborough and northern parts of Aldershot. There are currently no allotment sites within North Camp. In summary, at the time of assessment, the Open Space Study identified a number of key findings and issues associated with the provision of allotments in the Borough, including:

- A general deficiency with a considerable number of people on the waiting list.
- Potential for improved management to release plots no longer being used, decreasing the size of plots and providing new sites.
- An audit of sites identified a number of potential improvements (e.g. increased facilities, improvements to security and cycle parking).

5.85   Eighty allotment plots will be provided as part of the Wellesley development.

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Open Space

Hart

Surrey Heath

FARNBOROUGH

NORTH CAMP

Guildford

ALDERSHOT

Waverley

N

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	Parks and Gardens		Amenity Green Space
	Natural and Semi Natural Greenspace		Cemeteries
	Playing Fields and Recreation Grounds		Allotments
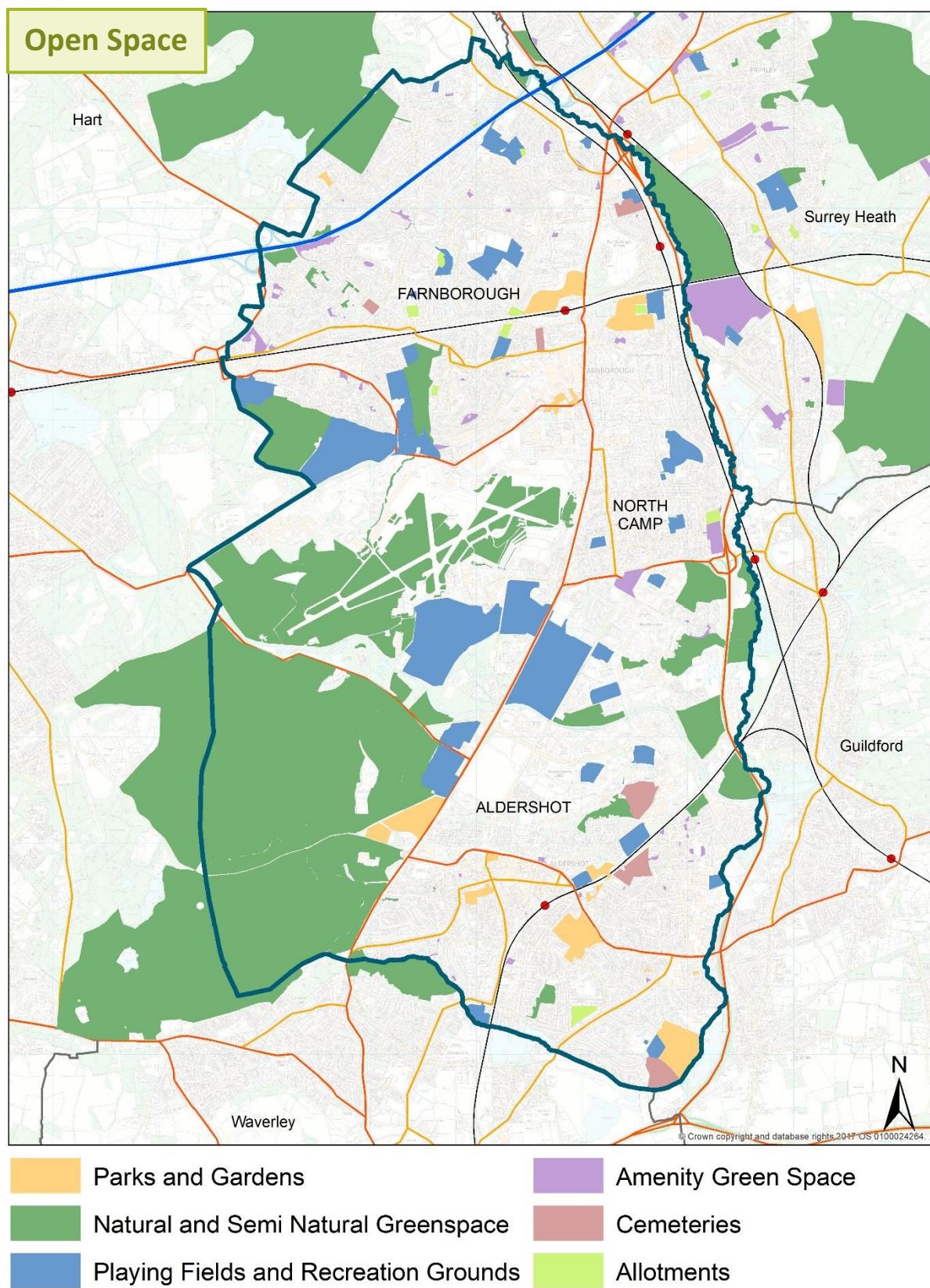
Green Corridors

5.86 The Rushmoor Open Space, Sport and Recreation Study 2014 identifies the following green corridors:

- Basingstoke Canal, Farnborough
- Cove Brook Greenway, Farnborough
- Blackwater Walk, Aldershot
- Westfield Estate, Farnborough
- Green Way Canal Embankment, Aldershot
- South of Ively Road, Farnborough
- Sandy Lane, Farnborough
- Grange Estate, Grange Road, Farnborough

5.87 The Study assessed the value and quality of these corridors and at the time of assessment, concluded that Basingstoke Canal, Cove Brook Greenway, Blackwater Walk and Westfield Estate all achieved the benchmarks for value and quality. The remaining green corridors fell below the standards, either on value or quality or on both.

5.88 The study concluded that these spaces make a significant contribution to the Borough's Green Infrastructure Network as accessible paths, valuable wildlife habitats and key features of Rushmoor's heritage. The stakeholder and public consultation exercises conducted identified that access to open spaces in the Borough is fragmented by industry and transport infrastructure, with limited connectivity between Blackwater Valley, Cove Brook Greenway and Aldershot town centre. The study suggests that opportunities should therefore be sought to enhance existing green corridors and where possible create new routes linking with the wider open space network.

School Grounds

5.89 There are 36 publicly owned schools and 2 independent schools within the borough that provide recreational space for their pupils and in most cases playing fields. Access to most schools and their grounds is restricted, although some schools enable the use of their facilities outside school hours to third parties.

Updated Access to Natural Greenspace Standards (ANGSt)

5.90 Natural England have recently published mapping data using updated ANGSt standards. This identifies the following buffers:

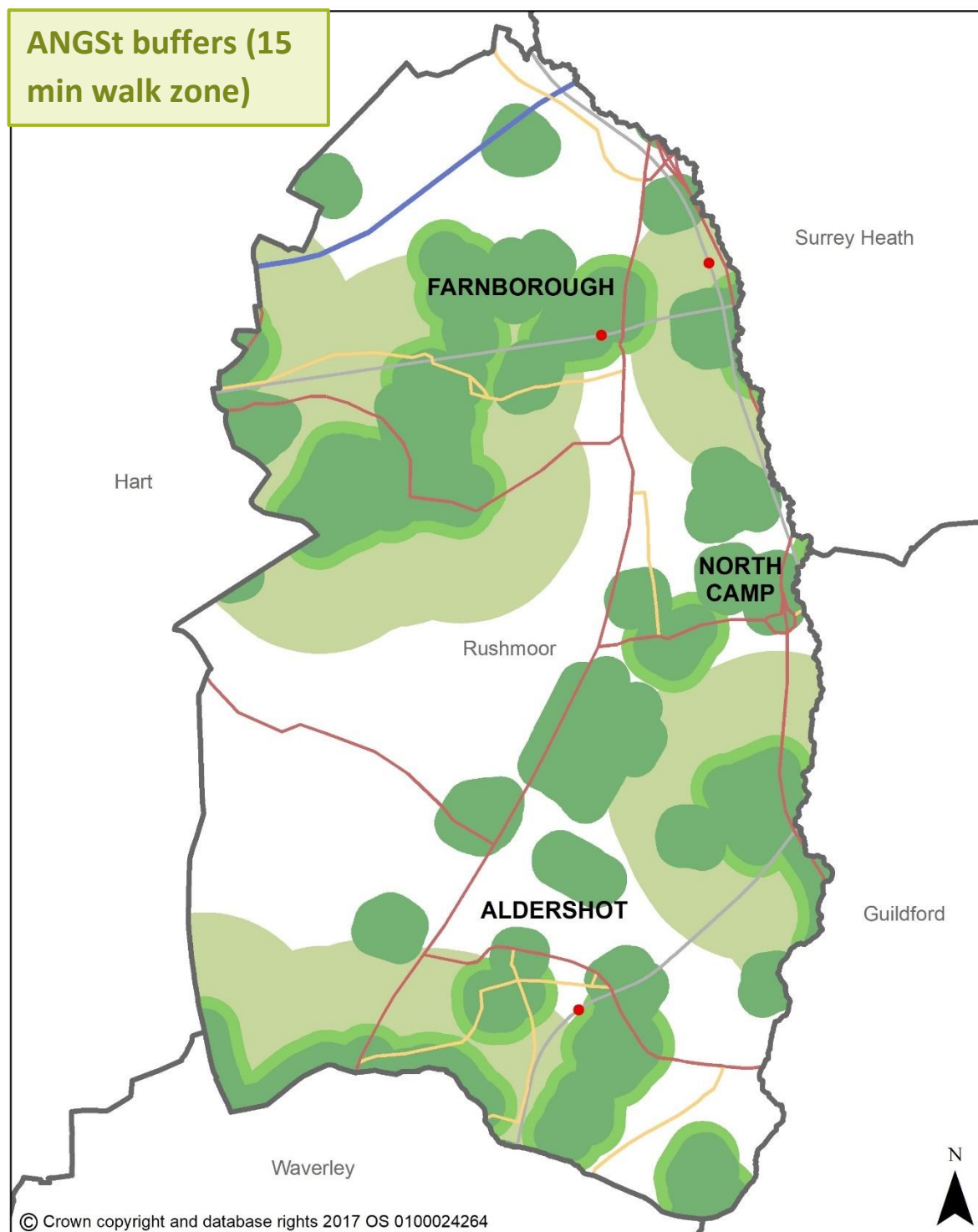|	
Doorstep Green Space	at least 0.5ha within 200m from home
Local Natural Green Space	at least 2ha within 300m from home
Neighbourhood Natural Green Space	at least 10ha within 1km from home
Wider Neighbourhood Natural Green Space	at least 20 ha within 2 km from home
District Natural Green Space	at least 100 ha within 5 km
Sub-Regional	at least 500 ha within 10 km

5.91   Natural England have focussed on the three most local ANGSt buffers to form a composite picture of access to different sizes of green space within a '15-minute walk zone'. Nationally they have identified that:

- Two in three people (65%) live within at least one of the three local ANGSt buffers and have access to different sizes of green space within a '15-minute walk zone'
- In the 200 most disadvantaged urban Lower Super Output Areas (those with the lowest levels of accessible green space combined with the highest levels of deprivation), 3% of people have access to green space within a '15-minute walk zone'

5.92   In Rushmoor, the following areas are shown as outside this '15-minute walk zone':

- The majority of north Farnborough
- Parts of Farnborough Town Centre
- Northern parts of North Camp
- Parts of Aldershot (around North Lane)

5.93   It is useful to compare this to the information presented in Chapter 4 regarding access to private gardens. For example, this demonstrates that parts of Farnborough have both limited access to private gardens and are beyond the '15 minute walk zone' to local green spaces, whereas the northern parts of North Camp identified as being beyond this zone have better access to private gardens.

ANGSt buffers (15 min walk zone)

FARNBOROUGH

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NORTH CAMP

Rushmoor

ALDERSHOT

Guildford

Waverley

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ANGSt Buffers (15 minute zone)

Doorstep (0.5ha within 200m)

Local (2ha within 300m)

Neighbourhood (10ha within 1km)

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5.94   The NE GI Mapping also analyses ANGSt standards compared with Indices of Multiple Deprivation and population density. This identifies areas which are more deprived or more densely populated and have poorer access to natural greenspace. In the maps presented below, areas are classified using the following categories:

- Category L1 – represents the least favourable category of very low ANGSt buffer coverage and high level of deprivation/population density.
- Category H3 – represents the most favourable category with relatively high ANGSt buffer coverage and low level of deprivation/population density.

L1	M1	H1
L2	M2	H2
L3	M3	H3

5.95   In Rushmoor, those areas identified as being in the least favourable position in relation to being more deprived, and having limited access to greenspace (including Doorstep, Local Natural and Neighbourhood Natural Green Spaces) are:
- Northern parts of Farnborough
- Western part of Farnborough (between Minley Road and Fleet Road)
- Areas north and South of Ash Road in Aldershot
- Northern parts of North Camp
- Parts of the area being redeveloped at Wellesley

5.96   In Rushmoor, those areas identified as being the least favourable position in relation to being more densely populated and having limited access to greenspace (including Doorstep, Local Natural and Neighbourhood Natural Green Spaces) are:
- Northern parts of Farnborough
- Western part of Farnborough (between Minley Road and Fleet Road)
- Northern parts of North Camp and parts of South Farnborough
- Areas north and south of Ash Road in Aldershot
- Areas either side of North Lane, Aldershot
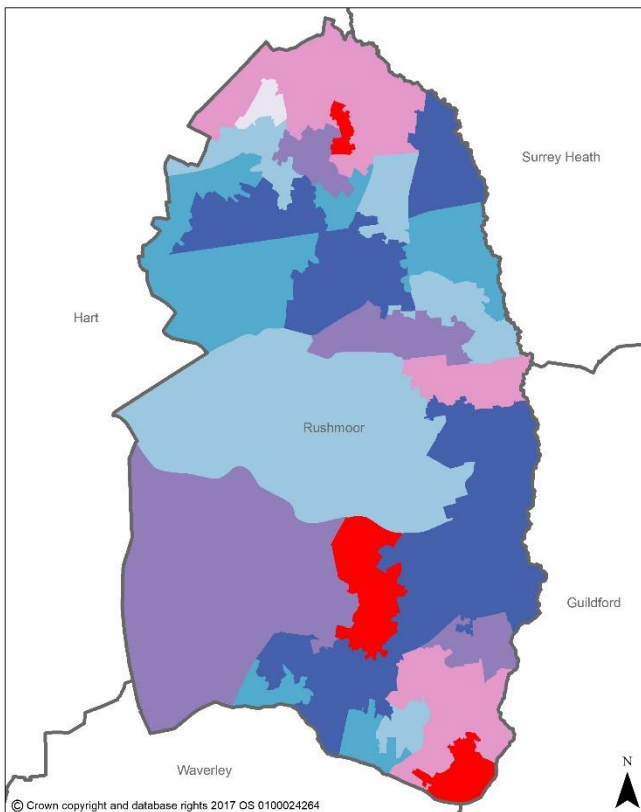- Parts of the area being redeveloped at Wellesley

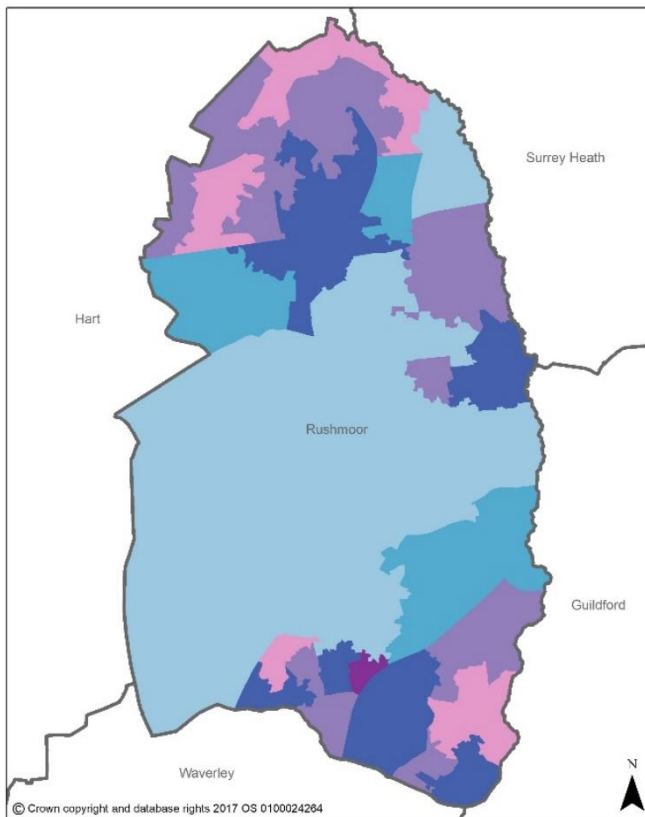**Doorstep Coverage and IMD decile**
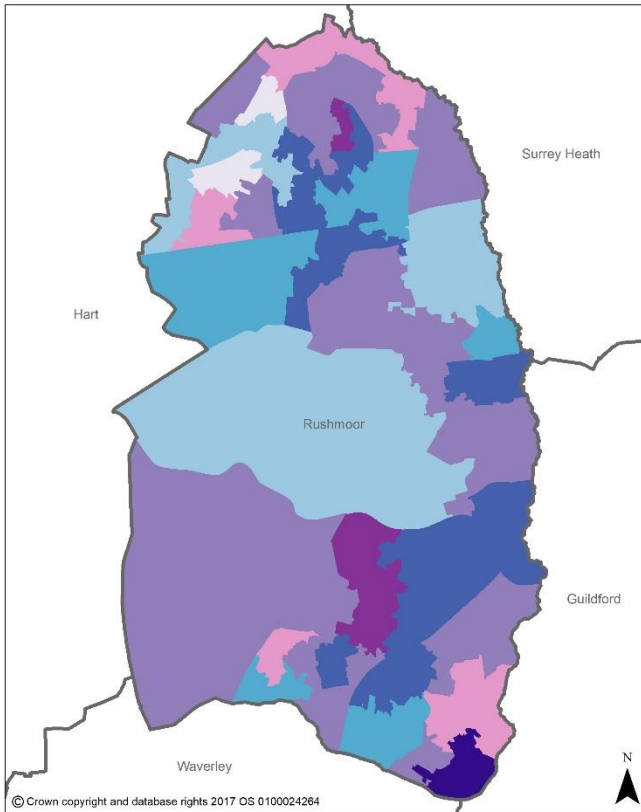
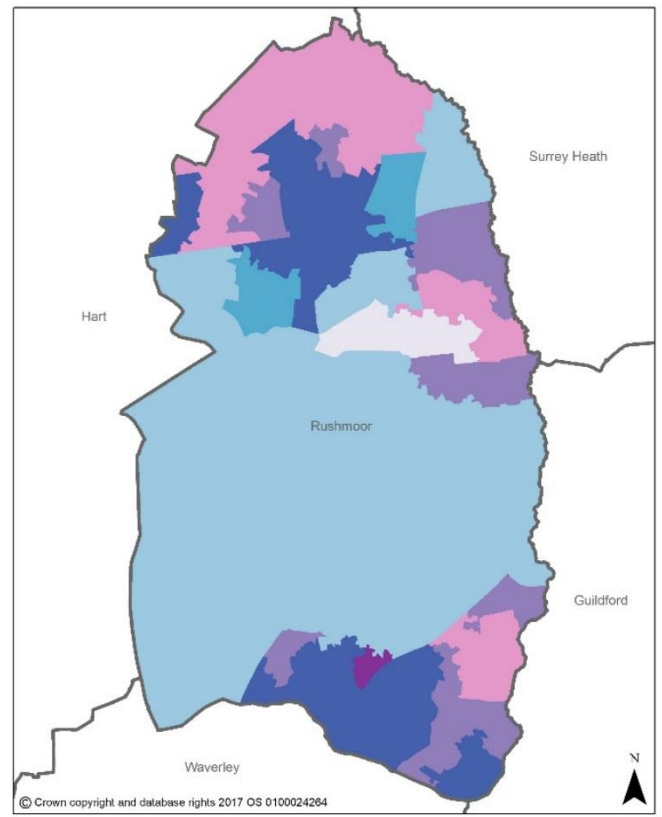**Local Coverage and IMD decile**
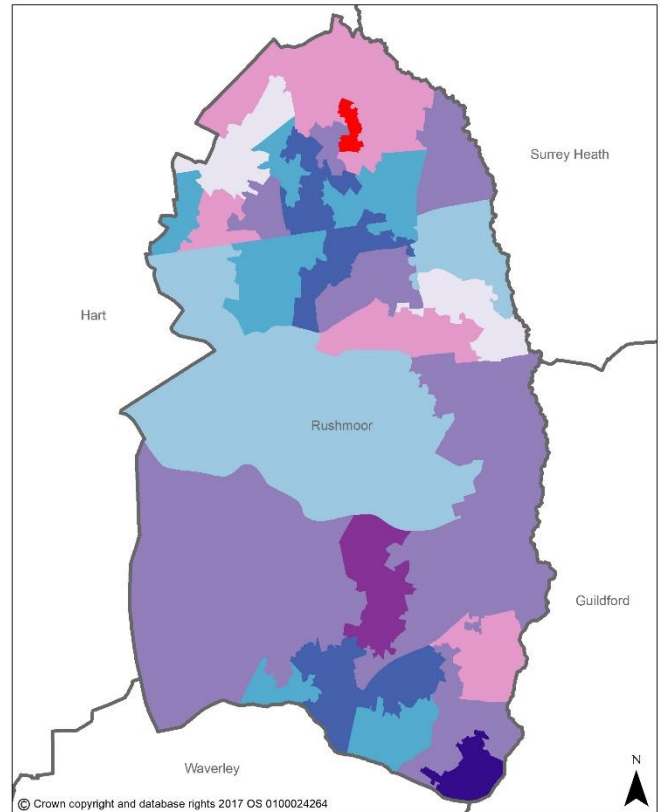
Neighbourhood Coverage and IMD decile

	1-2	L1	M1	H1
IMD Decile	**3-8**	L2	M2	H2
	9-10	L3	M3	H3

| 0-5% | 5-50% | 50-100% |

Percentage ANGSt buffer coverage

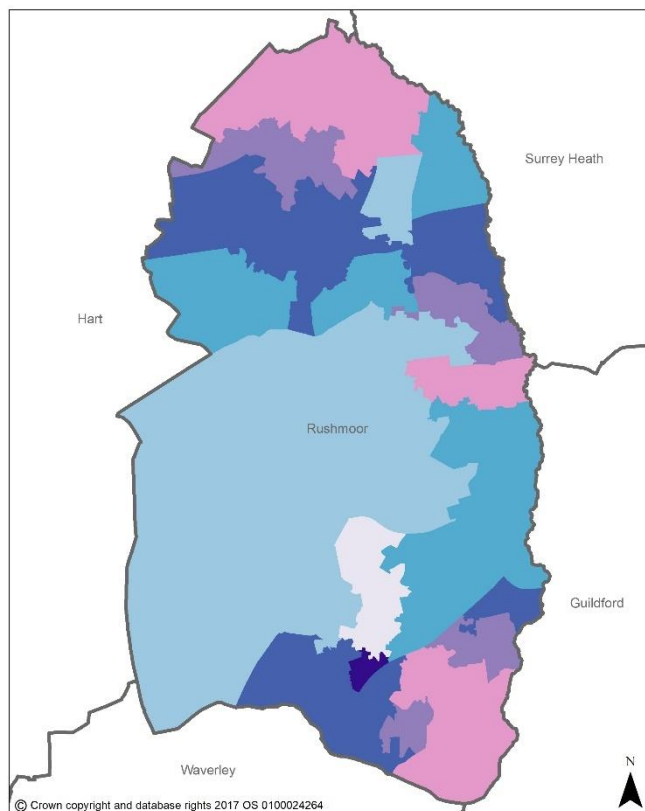*Contains public sector information licensed under the Open Government Licence v3.0*

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Doorstep Coverage & Population Density

Local Coverage & Population Density

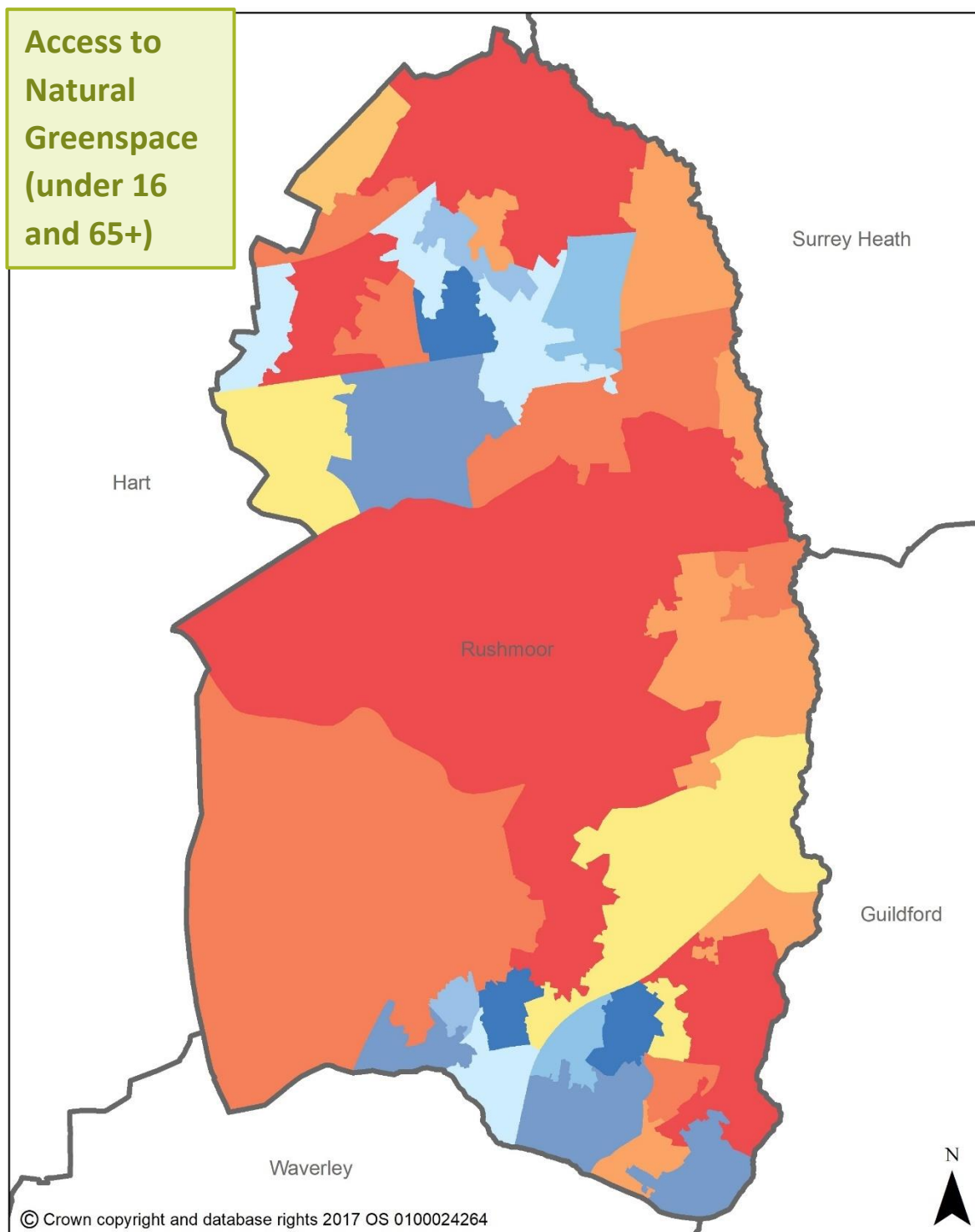## Neighbourhood Coverage & Population Density

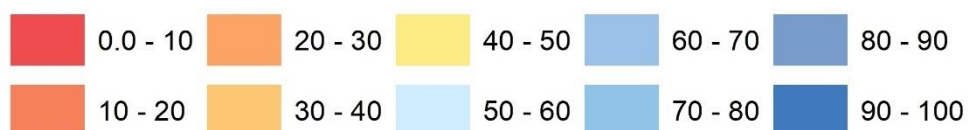| Population Density (population per Km²)	10,000+	L1	M1	H1
	2,500-10,000	L2	M2	H2
	0-2,500	L3	M3	H3
		0-5%	5-50%	50-100%

Percentage ANGSt buffer coverage

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5.98   The NE GI Mapping includes data on access to nature close to home for the under 16 and over 65 age groups. This identifies the percentage of the population in these age groups that live within 300m of a natural green space. In Rushmoor, large areas of the Borough are identified as being within areas where less than 50% of the population in these age groups live within 300m of a natural green space. The areas where less than 10% of the population in these age groups live within 300m of a natural green space are:

- Northern parts of Farnborough
- Western part of Farnborough (between Minley Road and Fleet Road)
- Northern parts of North Camp and parts of South Farnborough
- Parts of area being redeveloped at Wellesley
- Parts of Aldershot Town Centre
- Areas north and south of Ash Road in Aldershot
- Areas either side of North Lane, Aldershot

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Access to Natural Greenspace (under 16 and 65+)

Surrey Heath

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Rushmoor

Guildford

Waverley

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Percentage of people aged under 16 and 65+ that live within 300m of a natural greenspace

■ 0.0 - 10	■ 20 - 30	■ 40 - 50	■ 60 - 70	■ 80 - 90
■ 10 - 20	■ 30 - 40	■ 50 - 60	■ 70 - 80	■ 90 - 100

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Strengths and Opportunities

⇨ Diverse range of public open spaces within the management or ownership of the council, including nature reserves, recreation grounds and green spaces.

⇨ Sizable areas of open space within the ownership of the Ministry of Defence that are accessible to the public, including Queens Parade Playing Fields and Ramillies Park

⇨ A number of SANGS in and around the Borough which provide a diverse recreational resource for residents.

⇨ Opportunities to create new or improved open spaces or allow access to more open space, through development in the borough, specifically those that deliver public open spaces or additional SANG.

⇨ Opportunities to connect existing SANG to create a wider network with other sites in and around Rushmoor

⇨ Opportunities to enhance biodiversity of open spaces, specifically beyond the formal pitch and safety margins of sports pitches that are managed as informal open space

Weaknesses and Threats

⇨ Some localised areas of open space deficiency, including areas which are outside of the '15-minute walk zone' of a green space

⇨ Indications of potential open space deficiencies, which are linked to more deprived areas and areas with a higher population density

⇨ Accessibility of open space

⇨ Appropriate balance between enhancing resources for people and wildlife

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Access to the Outdoors and Connections

Introduction

5.99 Access to the outdoors is fundamental to promoting healthier lifestyles. Improving recreational links particularly within urban areas and their surrounding landscapes will encourage greater access to natural spaces, support active lifestyles and address health inequalities.

5.100 The Government's target to reduce carbon emissions by 80% by 2050 can only be achieved if a shift from car use is successful. The coordinated promotion and delivery of attractive walking and cycling options using green infrastructure assets will help to encourage this change locally.

5.101 Cycle England have reported that a 20% increase in cycling by 2015 could save the NHS £52m through reduced obesity, increased physical fitness and lower incidence of respiratory diseases. Encouraging cycling through natural spaces will provide additional mental health benefits.

5.102 This chapter is based on information collected on access across the Borough, supplemented by officer site visits.

Assets within and around the Borough

5.103 The following assets are identified on the maps included in Appendix 4:

Important note: The information presented below and on the maps in Appendix 4 is based on knowledge of access and ownership collated at the time of assessment and does not indicate a legal right to access over land.

Public Rights of Way

5.104 A public right of way is a highway which can be used by anybody at any time to make a bona fide journey, taking a reasonable rest along the way. The classification of a right of way is determined by the nature of the public rights along them. There are four different types of PRoW:
1. footpaths - for walking, running, mobility scooters or powered wheelchairs.
2. bridleways - for walking, horse riding, bicycles, mobility scooters or powered wheelchairs.
3. restricted byways - for any transport without a motor and mobility scooters or powered wheelchairs.
4. byways open to all traffic - for any kind of transport, including cars (but mainly used by walkers, cyclists and horse riders).

5.105 Natural England Green Infrastructure mapping identifies that the Borough as a whole has a low density of Public Rights of Way. However, as already noted, the Basingstoke Canal path and Blackwater Valley Path are valuable longer access routes across the Borough which connect with adjoining authorities.

Identified access routes

5.106   These routes are informal pathways which have been identified by officers through map-based assessments and/or site visits. They include paths which provide important linkages but are not designated as public rights of way, and pathways through open spaces.

5.107   When combined with the PRoW networks these access routes provide a useful network of connections across the Borough which can be used to by pedestrians and cyclists.

Green spaces with Public Access

5.108   The maps below and shown in Appendix 4 identify the open/green spaces that are publicly accessible (note that these have already been identified in this Strategy under other themes). There are currently no known restrictions to access on these pieces of land.

Green spaces with No Access – Airport Land

5.109   The maps below and shown in Appendix 4 identify the open/green spaces which are within the Farnborough Airport boundary and where no public access is allowed.

Green spaces with No Access – MOD

5.110   The maps below and shown in Appendix 4 identify the open/green spaces which are within the ownership of the Ministry of Defence and where there is no known public access allowed.

Green spaces with Identified Restricted Access

5.111   The maps below and shown in Appendix 4 identify the open/green spaces where officers have identified that there is restricted public access. There are a number of open/green spaces which have restricted access across the Borough. This includes school playing fields.

5.112   The MOD owns land within the SPA. There are different types of restriction[10] within these areas, depending on how they are used by the MOD and the risk to the public; some areas always have public access whereas others have none. The types of restriction that exist in these areas are as follows (and as marked on Ordnance Survey maps):

- Danger Area: areas in which life-threatening activity takes place, such as the use of live ammunition. No public access is allowed while red flags are up flying, or red lights are on. If there are public rights of way (PROW) across a danger area, the MOD uses byelaws[11] to close the paths temporarily. Firing and closure times are published online[12].
- 'Dry Training' areas (shown as 'Managed Access' on OS maps): access is normally allowed to these areas when it is not being actively used for military training. Red flags are not used at these sites, but the MOD uses byelaws (indicated with warning and byelaw signs) to manage access.

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[10] Ramblers guidance on walking on military sites: https://www.ramblers.org.uk/advice/safety/walking-on-military-sites.aspx
[11] MOD byelaws: https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/byelaws-south-east
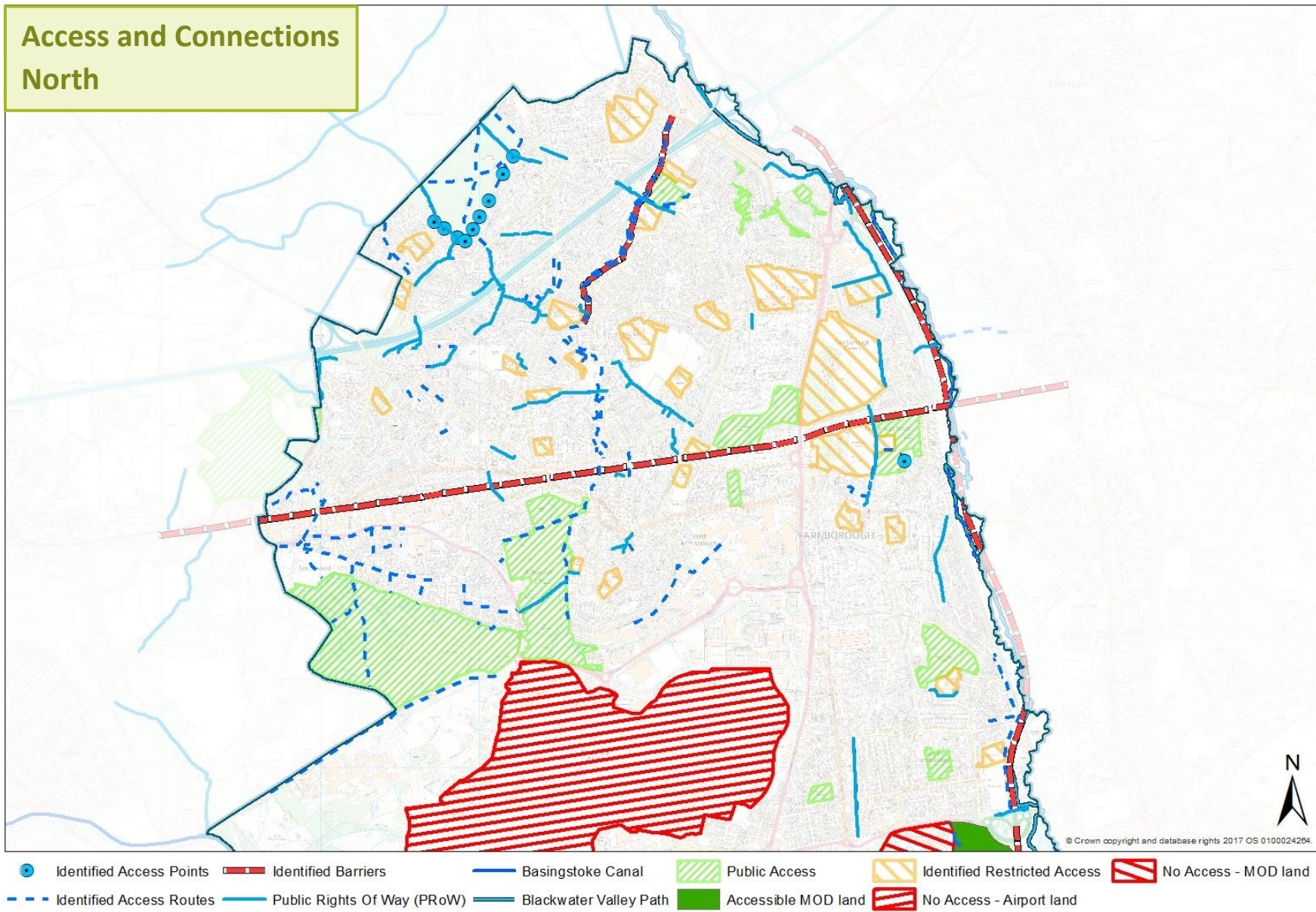[12] MOD firing and closure times: https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/south-east-training-estate-firing-times
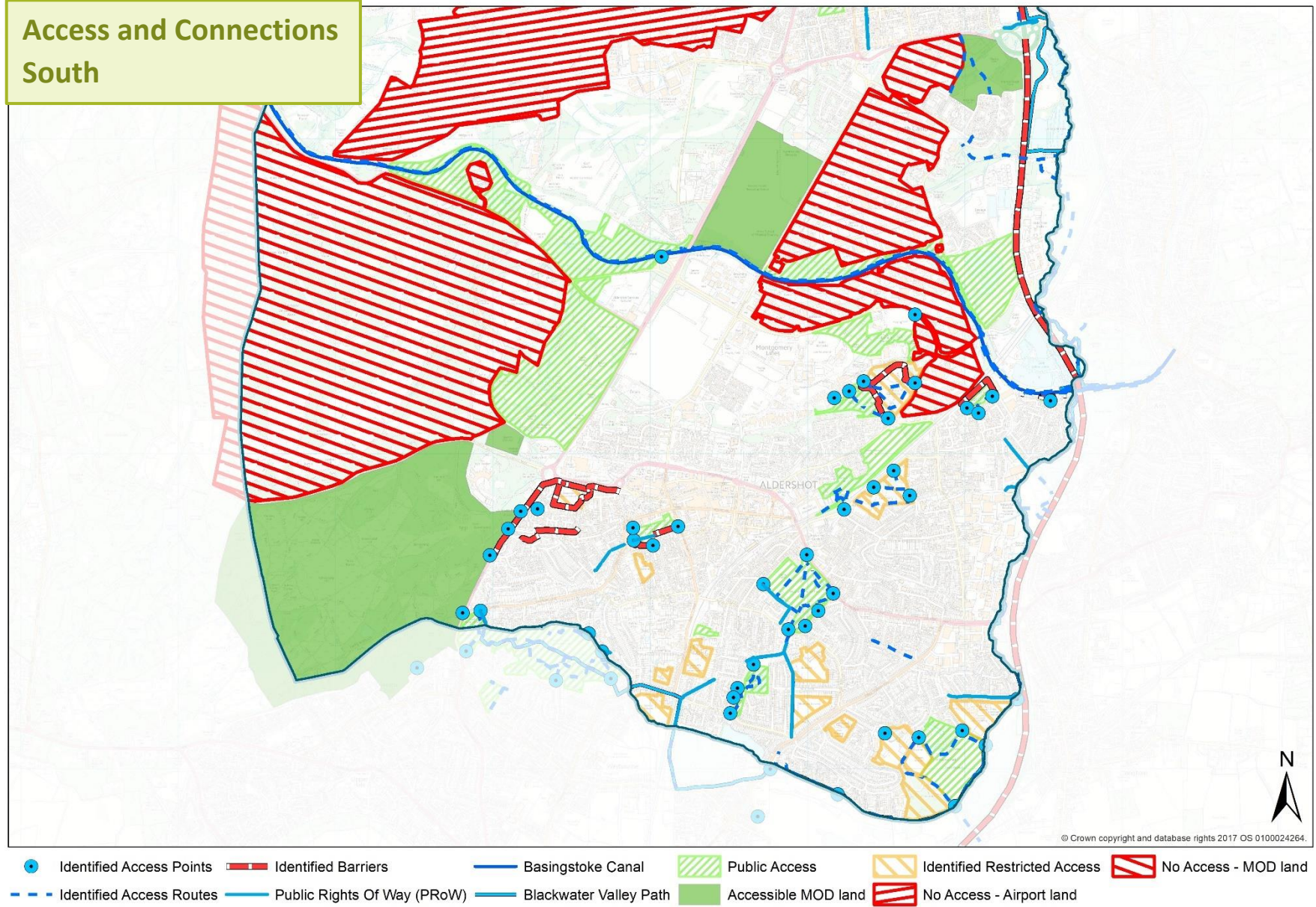
Identified Barriers

5.113   The maps below and shown in Appendix 4 identify where there are physical or perceived barriers to movement, which may prevent or discourage people from walking and cycling across the Borough. For example, we have identified where there are no opportunities to pass under the M3 or cross rivers. This gives an indication of where these barriers may be fragmenting the network and identifies where there might be opportunities to improve connections and remove physical or perceived barriers to movement.

5.114   The following significant barriers have been identified:
- M3 – whilst there are pathways which cross the M3, this presents a significant barrier in the north of the Borough and some of the underpasses (for example along the Cove Brook) may be unattractive for users.
- A331 – whilst there are pathways which cross the A331, this presents a significant barrier along the eastern boundary of the Borough. However, the Blackwater Valley path provides a valuable long-distance off-road route for pedestrians and cyclists which runs alongside the A331 and connects with access routes and bridges over the A331.
- Waterloo to Weymouth railway line - whilst there are pathways which cross the railway line, this presents a significant barrier between the northern part of Farnborough and Town Centre. However, there are opportunities for pedestrians and cyclists to cross the railway line using off-road routes (e.g. pedestrian route from Highgate Lane through to Rectory Road, West Heath Road to Holly Road, Fleet Road to Southwood Road and Trunk Road to Summit Avenue)

Access and Connections North

Legend:

- ● Identified Access Points
- ▬ Identified Barriers
- ▬ Basingstoke Canal
- ▨ Public Access
- ▨ Identified Restricted Access
- ▨ No Access - MOD land
- ┄ Identified Access Routes
- ▬ Public Rights Of Way (PRoW)
- ▬ Blackwater Valley Path
- ■ Accessible MOD land
- ▨ No Access - Airport land

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Access and Connections South

Identified Access Points
Identified Access Routes
Identified Barriers
Public Rights Of Way (PRoW)
Basingstoke Canal
Blackwater Valley Path
Public Access
Accessible MOD land
Identified Restricted Access
No Access - MOD land
No Access - Airport land

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Strengths and Opportunities

⇨ Relatively compact Borough with good opportunities to walk/cycle.

⇨ Existing longer routes available, for example via the Basingstoke Canal and Blackwater River. Potential to improve connections with adjoining authorities and open space beyond the boundary.

⇨ Opportunities to promote and improve access to the large areas of countryside surrounding the Borough, whilst acknowledging those areas which are internationally protected and vulnerable to recreational impact.

⇨ Opportunities to improve access and reduce the impact of barriers across the Borough.

⇨ Opportunities to better provide access for all

⇨ Opportunities to better promote the network of Rushmoor's greenspaces and the informal connections between them (for example, through the creation of an interactive map)

⇨ Opportunities to improve GI connections to key destinations, such as schools, railways stations and town centres.

⇨ Opportunities to improve signage and information to inform residents of walking and cycling routes to key locations (e.g. schools, town centres and railway stations)

Weaknesses and Threats

⇨ PRoW network is fragmented and the Borough as a whole has a low density of PRoW.

⇨ There are a number of barriers (i.e. railway lines, M3, A331) which sever ecological networks and act as barriers to accessing open space.

⇨ Some access routes, including PRoW may not attractive to users

⇨ Some open spaces and walking/cycling routes are in close proximity to busy roads, which could discourage local people from adopting healthy transport options, such as cycling and walking.

6.   Priorities and Emerging Strategic Projects

6.1   Assessment of the existing Green Infrastructure network and SWOT analysis undertaken under each theme (see Chapter 5) has identified the following broad priorities. Delivering projects focussed around these priorities will enable the Council to deliver the Vision and Objectives for this Strategy.

Broad Priorities

⇨ Increase opportunities for people to connect with nature.

⇨ Identify opportunities and prioritise locations for enhancing biodiversity.

⇨ Identify opportunities to improve the wildlife corridors and connections between the Borough's ecological assets.

⇨ Identify need, and prioritise locations for new trees, hedgerows and woodland.

⇨ Deliver green infrastructure that protects and enhances important views and local landscape character.

⇨ Review maintenance and management policies for open space.

⇨ Protect the existing Green Infrastructure network, including Important Open Area and Green Corridors designated in the Local Plan.

⇨ Identify opportunities to remove barriers to sustainable movement and improve access to existing open spaces.

⇨ Promote appropriate Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems (SuDS) and identify opportunities for natural flood alleviation measures.

⇨ Increase usage of green travel corridors.

⇨ Identify opportunities to deliver Green Infrastructure enhancements that will improve the state of the natural environment, including air quality and noise issues.

⇨ Identify how new developments can connect to and enhance the existing Green Infrastructure network.

⇨ Identify opportunities to deliver new Suitable Alternative Natural Greenspace (SANG) and improve connections between existing SANG.

⇨ Work with partners to improve and enhance the Green Infrastructure network within and beyond the Borough, with a focus on those areas where this will address existing deficiencies and/or provide benefits for deprived areas and for disadvantaged groups.

⇨ Work with partners to deliver actions arising from other Strategies which will support the vision and objectives of the Green Infrastructure Strategy.

6.2 In order to deliver these broad priorities and the vision and objectives, a number of strategic projects have been identified. These will be considered in more detail as part of the Green Infrastructure Delivery Plan. More details on the projects are set out in the project profiles included under Appendix 3. There are two types of emerging project: process projects and geographical projects.

Important: Please note that these projects have been identified as having potential, but this does not represent a commitment to delivery or assume that partnership working has been agreed. The Green Infrastructure Delivery Plan will assess the feasibility of these projects in more detail.

Emerging Process Projects

6.3   This includes projects that will provide information, advice and guidance to assist in enhancing GI or increasing the usage of our existing network. This also includes projects which will scope the potential for the delivery of 'on-the-ground' enhancements and may lead to the identification of further geographical projects. The following projects have been identified in this Green Infrastructure Strategy:

⇨   PP1 - An interactive Green Infrastructure Map

⇨   PP2 - A Development Management Green Infrastructure Toolkit

⇨   PP3 - A Biodiversity Net Gain Off-site Compensation Scoping Project

⇨   PP4 - Access to the Outdoors Project

⇨   PP5 - Connecting Rushmoor's Ecological Network

⇨   PP6 - Review of Potential SANG Sites

⇨   PP7 - Carbon Reduction through Tree Planting Feasibility Project

Emerging Geographical Projects

6.4   This includes projects which are under way or have been identified as having potential, and relate to a specific area and/or green infrastructure asset. The following projects have been identified in this draft Green Infrastructure Strategy:

⇨   GP1 - Southwood and Cove Brook Floodplain Enhancement Project (under way)

⇨   GP2 - Blackwater Valley Enhancement Project

⇨   GP3 - Enhancing the Basingstoke Canal Project

⇨   GP4 - Cove Brook Greenway Project

⇨   GP5 - Urban Greening/Hedgerow Project

⇨   GP6 - Southwood/Bramshot SANG Network Project

6.5   The geographical distribution of these strategic projects is shown in the map below. However, it should be noted that a number of additional smaller projects are expected to be identified through the Green Infrastructure Delivery Plan.

7.   Implementation and Delivery

Who

7.1   A wide variety of individuals, groups and organisations, in addition to the Council have an important delivery role to play. The Council will continue to work with partners to deliver the priorities and emerging strategic projects identified in this Strategy. This will be progressed further as part of the Green Infrastructure Delivery Plan.

Funding

7.2   The strategy provides the supporting framework to access funding sources external to the Council. Revenue funding is often the most crucial and difficult to secure. Embedding the green infrastructure principles and priorities into plans and strategies will give confidence to funding bodies on the strategic nature of the proposed projects. Consideration of potential mechanisms for income generation will need to be incorporated when project funding is considered. Consideration will also be given to how new development can contribute towards the enhancement and improvement of green infrastructure.

The Green Infrastructure Delivery Plan

7.3   This strategy has identified broad priorities and some emerging/potential projects that could be delivered in order to deliver the vision and objectives. The next stage will be to prepare a Green Infrastructure Delivery Plan. As part of the preparation of this Plan each project will be considered in more detail, including:

- Establishing the landowners, managers and/or potential delivery partners.
- Understanding and maximising the multiple benefits of the project.
- Identifying potential funding sources.
- Scoping and understanding how the project will be delivered.
- Preparing concept plans and/or detailed project objectives.

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Glossary

Biodiversity net gain
Biodiversity net gain is an approach to development and/or land management that leaves nature in a measurably better state. The Environment Act 2021 requires that new development delivers a minimum 10% increase in biodiversity, compared to the level before.

Catchment
An area of land defined by its topographic watershed, including streams, rivers, wetlands and lakes, from which rainfall collects flows into a defined outlet such as a river mouth, estuary, tributary confluence or lake.

Climate change adaptation
The actions taken to manage the unavoidable impacts of climate change. The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change defines Climate change adaptation as the process of adjustment to actual or expected climate and its effects. Adaptation seeks to moderate harm or exploit beneficial opportunities.

Climate change mitigation
Refers to efforts to cut or prevent the emission of greenhouse gases, limiting the magnitude of future warming. It may also encompass attempts to remove greenhouse gases from the atmosphere.

Climate change resilience
Is the ability/capacity of places, communities and individuals to thrive in the face of multiple risks, uncertainty and threats posed by climate change. Climate resilience requires mitigation and adaptation actions that must be combined to tackle the current and future impacts of climate change.

Ecological network
Habitats and species and the way that they interact and connect, often but not always in corridors of linked sites.

Ecosystem Services
Ecosystem services are the benefits to people provided by nature including:

- provisioning services (e.g. food, water, wood, construction materials)
- regulating services (e.g. water quality, flood regulation, erosion protection, carbon storage, noise reduction, air quality regulation, cooling and shading)
- supporting services (e.g. habitats, thriving plants and wildlife, pollination)
- cultural services (e.g. access to nature, sense of place, aesthetic value, recreation and education)

Green infrastructure
A network of multi-functional green and blue spaces and other natural features, urban and rural, which is capable of delivering a wide range of environmental, economic, health and wellbeing

benefits for nature, climate, local and wider communities and prosperity. (National Planning Policy Framework 2021).

Accessible Green Space

Places that are available for the general public to use free of charge and without time restrictions (although some sites may be closed to the public overnight and there may be fees for parking a vehicle). The places are available to all, meaning that every reasonable effort is made to comply with the requirements of the Equality Act 2020.

Accessible Natural Green Space

Green spaces meeting the definitions of accessible green space and natural green space.

Natural Green Space

Places where human control and activities are not intensive so that a feeling of naturalness is allowed to predominate. Natural and semi-natural green space exists as a distinct typology but also as discrete areas within the majority of other green space typologies.

Living network

This term reflects a systemic understanding that networks are the basic pattern of organisation of all living systems. Ecosystems are understood in terms of food webs (i.e. networks of organisms); organisms are networks of cells, organs and organ systems; and cells are networks of molecules. Living networks have shown that their key characteristic is that they are self-generating. The planet as a whole is a living, self-regulating system.

Multifunctionality

The ability to perform more than one function at the same time e.g. for nature, health and wellbeing, climate and prosperous communities. In terms of green infrastructure this can mean providing opportunities for recreation whilst delivering biodiversity, contributing to flood risk management, and reducing urban heat stress through shading and cooler green spaces.

Natural capital

The elements of nature that directly or indirectly produce value for people, including ecosystems, species, freshwater, land, minerals, air and oceans, as well as natural processes and functions. Natural capital assets are stock of nature which provides ecosystem services and benefits to people.

Natural filtration

Water filtration is the process of removing or reducing the concentration of particulate matter, including suspended particles, parasites, bacteria, algae, viruses, and fungi, as well as other undesirable chemical and biological contaminants from water to produce safe and clean water for a specific purpose, such as drinking.

Natural water cycle

Describes the continuous movement of water on, above and below the surface of the earth using natural rather than man made routes and processes.

Nature connections

Describes our sense of relationship with the natural world and our emotional relationship and our sense of place within it. Activities that engage our senses, emotions, compassion, appreciation of

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beauty and that create personal meaning have all been identified as pathways to develop nature connectedness.

Nature Recovery
Halting and reversing the loss of species and habitats; and enhancing sites that are designated for nature conservation and other wildlife-rich places. Newly created and restored wildlife-rich habitats, corridors and stepping-stones will benefit nature recovery by helping wildlife populations to grow and move.

Noise pollution
Harmful or annoying levels of noise. Sound only becomes noise (often defined as "unwanted sound") when it exists in the wrong place or at the wrong time such that it causes or contributes to some harmful or otherwise unwanted effect, like annoyance or sleep disturbance. Unlike many other pollutants, noise pollution depends not just on the physical aspects of the sound itself, but also the human and other species' reaction to it.

Place-making
Place-making is 'the process we use to shape our public spaces and buildings. Rooted in community-based participation, place-making involves planning, design, and management. It brings together diverse people (including professionals, elected officials, local groups, residents, and businesses) to improve a community's cultural, economic, social and environmental situation.' (Historic England, Places Strategy, July 2018).

Stewardship
Taking care of the land

Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS)
Sustainable drainage systems slow the rate of surface water run-off and improve infiltration, by mimicking natural drainage in both rural and urban areas. This reduces the risk of "flash-flooding" which occurs when rainwater rapidly flows into the public sewerage and drainage systems. SuDS use natural features wherever possible.

Urban heat stress
The densely-populated urban landscape of tarmac, brick, metal and dark rooftops soaks up energy from sunlight – reflecting even more light. This leads to an "urban heat island" – where cities experience higher-than-normal heat temperatures, as compared to surrounding areas.

Appendix 1: Summary of Natural England's Green Infrastructure Framework Principles[13]

Principles	Summary	What GI should achieve at the local level
The Benefit Principles: Why Green Infrastructure is Needed		
Nature rich beautiful places	GI supports nature to recover and thrive everywhere, in towns, cities and countryside, conserving and enhancing natural beauty, wildlife and habitats, geology and soils, and our cultural connections with nature.	• Thread biodiversity through the built environment connecting recreational, natural green and blue spaces • Prioritise native species • Be designed to connect people to nature • Contribute to site specific biodiversity net gain requirements
Active and healthy places	Green neighbourhoods, green / blue spaces and green routes support active lifestyles, community cohesion and nature connections that benefit physical and mental health and wellbeing, and quality of life. GI also helps to mitigate health risks such as urban heat stress, noise pollution, flooding and poor air quality.	• Maximise health and wellbeing outcomes particularly in deprived areas and for disadvantaged groups. • Address issues of inequality in access to quality natural green space and routes, using tools such as the Accessible Natural Greenspace Standard (ANGSt). • Be managed to deliver indirect benefits such as urban cooling, noise reduction, flood risk management and air quality improvements which can improve health outcomes.
Thriving and prosperous places	GI helps to create prosperous communities that benefit everyone and adds value by creating high quality environments which are attractive to businesses and investors, create green jobs, support retail and high streets, and to help drive economic growth and regeneration.	• Integrate services such as air quality regulation, flood risk management, noise mitigation, recreation, urban cooling and pollination into development based on local needs • Use early collaboration with adjacent local authorities, other developers, landowners or infrastructure providers to create opportunities for jointly funded GI • Link to skills development, training and jobs by local employers, contractors and training institutions

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[13] https://designatedsites.naturalengland.org.uk/GreenInfrastructure/Home.aspx

Principles	Summary	What GI should achieve at the local level
Understanding and managing water environment	GI reduces flood risk and improves water quality by maintaining the natural water cycle and sustainable drainage at local and catchment scales; and bringing amenity and biodiversity benefits.	• Provide sustainable water management including though sustainable drainage systems (SuDS) • Be adaptable to take account of the impacts of climate change • Reduce site specific flood risks identified in flood risk assessments • Improve water quality and help address existing sources of pollution • Improve natural filtration where this will protect and enhance groundwater supplies • Help connect recreational, natural green and blue spaces and provide opportunities for everyone to safely experience blue space • Use water to enhance public open space for a variety of recreational uses, ensuring potential conflicts are managed • Create and enhance habitats including re-naturalising river corridors and providing riparian buffer zones • Soften estuary edges with coastal habitats that can act as buffers to coastal erosion and tidal flooding • Prioritise native species and ensure biosecurity principles are adhered to avoid spreading non-native invasive species and diseases.
Resilient and climate positive places	GI makes places more resilient and adaptive to climate change and helps to meet zero carbon and air quality targets. GI itself should be designed to adapt to climate change.	• Be audited using local information for instance using local resilience strategies and plans to improve the climate resilience of existing GI • Incorporate adaptive management to ensure GI is planned to provide multi-functional benefits and continues to do so as the climate changes
The Descriptive Principles: What' Good Green Infrastructure (GI) Looks Like		
Multifunctional: GI delivers multiple functions and benefits	GI should deliver a range of functions and benefits for people, nature and places, address specific issues and to meet their needs. Multifunctionality (delivering multiple functions from the same area of GI) is especially important in areas where provision is poor quality or scarce.	• Involving beneficiaries across different user, age and socioeconomic groups • Creating accessible nature rich spaces close to where people live and work • Ensuring spaces are adaptively managed to provide multiple benefits over time • Capturing the multi-functional benefits of green infrastructure using appropriate qualitative and quantitative assessments or tools

Principles	Summary	What GI should achieve at the local level
Varied: GI includes a mix of types and sizes that can provide a range of functions and benefits to address specific issues and needs.	Varied: GI should comprise a variety of types and sizes of green and blue spaces, green routes and environmental features (as part of a network) that can provide a range of different functions, benefits and solutions to address specific issues and needs.	• Thread different types and sizes of spaces through local GI networks • Create a variety of habitats and facilities to supplement larger initiatives • Aim for variation in the density and layout of GI • Be clearly defined in terms of purpose and characteristics
Connected: GI connects as a living network at all scales, connecting provision of GI with those who need its benefits	Connected: GI should function and connect as a living network at all scales (e.g., within sites; and across regions/ at national scale). It should enhance ecological networks and support ecosystems services, connecting provision of GI with those who need its benefits.	• Be informed by mapped information which identifies different existing GI assets, and shows where the assets link together at a local and strategic scale • Be grounded in local information which informs planning and design • Focuses on needs based on addressing deficits in local Green Infrastructure supply • Ensure the functions and services provided by individual projects meet the needs of users, benefits the wider environment, connects to GI networks within the boundary of the project and links with existing and planned GI in the surrounding area
Accessible: GI creates green, liveable places where everyone has access to good quality green and blue spaces routes and features.	GI should create and maintain green liveable places that enable people to experience and connect with nature, and that offer everyone, wherever they live, access to good quality parks, greenspaces, recreational walking and cycling routes that are inclusive, safe, welcoming, well-managed and accessible for all.	• Thread non-motorised access routes through the built environment connecting recreational, natural green and blue spaces • Ensure GI assets such as parks are accessible for all • Maintain and enhance safe routes which can be used by the public for educational access, recreation and travel to work • Provide information at a local level, in different formats which respond to the needs of different users, encourages the use of green and active transport and links to health outcomes. • Seek to provide associated infrastructure such as seating, bike racks, disabled parking etc which supports accessibility • Provide clear guidance on accessibility requirements for new or redeveloped GI
GI should respond to an area's character	GI should respond to an area's character so that it contributes to the conservation, enhancement and/or restoration of landscapes; or, in degraded areas, creates new high-quality landscapes to which local people feel connected	• Use character as a means to perceptually connect the built environment, natural green and blue spaces together • Ensure new individual GI assets such as parks have an identifiable character • Provide information at a local level which promotes local character.

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Principles	Summary	What GI should achieve at the local level
The Process Principles: 'How' To Do Good Green Infrastructure (GI)		
Partnership and vision Partnership working, collaboration and stakeholder engagement; create a vision for GI	Work in partnership, and collaborate with stakeholders from the outset to co-plan, develop and deliver a vision for GI in the area. Engage a diverse and inclusive range of people and organisations including citizens, local authorities, developers, landowners, communities, green space managers, environmental, health, climate, transport and business representatives.	• Place residents and stakeholders at the centre of the planning and design process empowering them to shape their local environment • Take extra steps to be inclusive to make sure no one who wants to, or should be involved, is left out • Ensure that when trade-offs have to be made these are understood, transparent and supported • Manage any risks or uncertainties thoroughly • Promote ongoing investment in relationships to sustain trust and ensure long term positive outcomes • Ensure participants are clear as to what can and cannot be achieved
Evidence	Use evidence, sound science and good land use practices to underpin plans projects, programmes and policies.	• Where local evidence is insufficient to bring clarity, further data should be collected including community GI needs assessments • Evidence should be provided in a format which can easily be understood by local communities
Plan GI strategically to secure GI as a key asset in policies to create and maintain sustainable places	Plan strategically and secure GI as a key asset in local strategy and policy, at all scales. Integrate and mainstream GI into environmental, social, health and economic policy. In order to create and maintain sustainable places for current and future populations and address inequalities in GI provision and its benefits.	*See Framework for more detail*
Design GI to create beautiful, well-designed places	Use an understanding of an area's landscape/townscape and historic character, to create well-designed, beautiful and distinctive places.	*See Framework for more detail*

Principles	Summary	What GI should achieve at the local level
Managed, valued, monitored and evaluated Establish good governance, funding, management, monitoring, and evaluation of GI.	Plan good governance, funding, management, monitoring, and evaluation of green infrastructure as a key asset from the outset and secure it for the long-term. Make the business case for GI. Engage communities in stewardship where appropriate. Celebrate success and raise awareness of GI benefits.	*See Framework for more detail*

Appendix 2: Review of Relevant Evidence and Strategies

This appendix includes a more detailed review of relevant evidence and strategies that has informed this Strategy, including those prepared within Rushmoor, in adjoining authorities and across the county of Hampshire. A summary of the issues and opportunities identified as a result of this review is set out in Chapter 3.

Rushmoor Evidence and Strategies

Hart, Rushmoor and Surrey Heath SPA Mitigation Project

The Hart, Rushmoor and Surrey Heath Councils worked together with Natural England to complete a project reviewing the approach to mitigation within the Thames Basin Heaths. The work analysed eleven potential alternative options when it comes to delivering SPA mitigation. The report concluded that the role and design of SANG could be clarified further.

Natural England make clear in the updated Guidelines for the creation of Suitable Accessible Natural Greenspace (SANG) (page 8) that there remains a hierarchy of SANG provision and states:

> *"Great weight will be given to those SANGS meeting all the existing quality criteria (shown in Appendix 1 of the Guidelines) which should be delivered in the first instance. Only if this is not possible, for clearly established reasons, should the delivery of the options outlined in the section below be considered. If any proposed SANGS do not meet all of the Appendix 1 quality criteria, then these SANGS will continue to be assessed on a case-by-case basis and should be agreed with both the competent authority and Natural England.*

> *The proposal will need to demonstrate equivalent effectiveness of mitigation being provided to ensure a robust, consistent approach continues. Any shortfall in SANG criteria should be offset by other complementary means, such as an elevated provision rate, size or high-quality features."*

The HRSH SPA Mitigation Project report recommends the use of SANG networks, linear orientated sites and small sites of no smaller than two hectares could provide mitigation where traditional SANG is unavailable. Ideally these SANG areas will be linked and/or in proximity to an already established SANG, with an option for them to work alone where equivalent effectiveness can be demonstrated.

The SANG Guidelines (page 9) note that historically Natural England have apportioned significant weight to the requirement for a 2.3 – 2.5km circular walk, which is less likely to be achievable in a small or linear SANG. It clarifies that:

> *"These guidelines do not remove weight from the requirement but do accept that in specific circumstances the walk doesn't have to be included within every single SANG unit. It is however desirable to provide the full Appendix 1 criteria across a local SANG network or on another SANG approximately within 1km to the development"*

SANG Networks

SANG networks could enable sites to be joined together so they perform as a connected network and can incorporate sites which may individually be considered unable to meet the usual criteria of a SANG. The Project found evidence that SANG networks already in place around the TBH SPA are effective and concluded that smaller SANGs particularly would work best as a linked cluster of sites. It was noted that SANG networks would need to be carefully designed to avoid user conflict, particularly where existing sites and smaller linking routes are used. Cross boundary working may be useful to extend networks and share capacity across local authorities.

Linear SANG

Linear SANG would include the creation or enhancement of sites which provided a linear route within them, rather than a circular walk. These could incorporate long-distance pathways and would preferably link to wider routes and/or SANG networks to provide opportunities for a variety of walks. Linear SANG would be wider and provide a more varied experience than a recreational route, for example a site with routes along a river with wider areas opening out next to it, creating an irregular shape and opportunities for dogs to exercise freely off-lead. The evidence collected for the Project found that linear sites were cited as very frequently visited, indicating that people would utilise linear routes where they could be provided or enhanced. However, it concluded that linear SANG would need to be designed to avoid sites being viewed as 'too busy' and avoid user conflict.

Small SANG

The Project noted that small SANGs have potential to principally provide sites close to homes for frequent local visits to meet some recreational demand without the provision of a minimum 2.3km circular walking route within the site, which often dictates the size of a SANG. However, it found that very small (<2ha) SANG are considered unlikely to be capable of delivering features required by the SPA user group and as a result should not normally be considered unless being 'bolted on' to an existing SANG. Small SANG would therefore be defined as SANG 2ha or greater in size, without containing a 2.3km circular walking route.

The Project noted that to provide mitigation for a significant number of dwellings there may need to be many small sites and existing use will need to be considered to establish remaining capacity. However, small sites could be linked together, contributing to SANG networks to provide a variety of walking routes, and circular walks where feasible. The Project recommended that small SANG are utilised within SANG networks where possible and/or with links to connect a variety of routes both within and outside of the site. Where small SANGs are delivered independently their equivalent effectiveness would particularly need to be demonstrated and agreed with the competent authority and Natural England, in accordance with the update SANG Guidelines.

Identifying additional SANG

SANGs are currently identified and delivered in three ways:

- Strategic SANG: Open spaces allocated as SANG, in agreement with Natural England, which are owned/managed by the local authority. Developers pay financial contributions towards enhancement to SANG status and long-term management.
- Bespoke SANG: New open spaces provided mostly by large development and allocated as SANG, in agreement with Natural England. In most cases, the SANG land is transferred to local authority ownership with maintenance sums to fund long term management.

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- Third Party SANG: Open spaces privately provided and owned. They have been approved through planning permission and developers can purchase SANG capacity directly from the owners by private contract in agreement with the local authority. Long term management is sometimes provided by the owner or the land is transferred to local authority ownership, or other bodies, with maintenance sums to fund its long-term management.

This means that SANGs are created through a mixture of enhancing currently accessible sites, bringing new sites into public access, or alongside new developments that have the space and appropriate characteristics for SANG. SANG networks, small or linear SANG would be identified in much the same way.

Appendix 4 of the HRSH SPA Mitigation Project Report identifies a number of potential sites, which were explored as part of the project, and it may be appropriate to investigate these further as part of the GI Strategy, if they are considered to have potential at this time. However, the Project recommended a comprehensive review of available sites in relation to the recommended SANG networks, small and linear SANG was undertaken.

One potential approach noted in the project would be to look strategically at identifying areas of need (i.e. SANG deficiency) as part of green infrastructure work which would seek to identify and build on the mapping of the network of existing SANGs, open spaces and linkages within the three authorities, as well as the areas of deficiency identified from the open space and green and blue infrastructure strategies. It was noted that this would need to take into account potential new strategic housing allocations coming forward through Local Plans, as new areas of need may appear.

Rushmoor Local Plan Designation Review

To inform the preparation of the Local Plan, the Council conducted a review of existing designations which protected Important Open Areas and Green Corridors. As a result of this review, Policy NE2 of the Rushmoor Local Plan 2019 designates the following sites as 'Important Open Areas[14]':

- Farnborough Hill Convent:
- Farnborough; Queen's Parade and MoD playing fields/Mons Hill: Aldershot; and
- St Michael's Abbey: Farnborough.

In recognition of the value of linear routes across the Borough, a number of green corridors are identified on the Local Plan Policies Map including Blackwater Valley, Basingstoke Canal, Cove Brook, rail corridors and major highway corridors. The Council will look to strengthen these corridors, where opportunities arise, for example through the use of Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS) and will resist development which would weaken them.

Rushmoor Landscape Character Assessment

A Landscape Assessment for Rushmoor was prepared in 1997 and subsequent updates published in 2009 and 2017. More information is provided in Chapter x: Landscape and Heritage Theme.

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[14] Important Open Areas are designated under Policy NE2 of the Rushmoor Local Plan to recognise their value as large open spaces within the urban area, which contribute to local character. Not all Important Open Areas are publicly accessible.

Rushmoor Open Space, Sport and Recreation Study 2014

The study reviewed existing open space provision in the Borough and developed a detailed hierarchy as a framework for analysis, developed in reference to the Accessible Natural Greenspace Standard (ANGSt). This was devised by Natural England and the Countryside Council for Wales, and states that:

- No person should live more than 300 m from their nearest area of natural greenspace of at least 2 ha in size
- There should be at least one accessible 20 ha site within 2 km of home
- There should be one accessible 100 ha site within 5 km of home
- There should be one accessible 500 ha site within 10 km of home.

Based on this, the study identified locally derived accessibility standards and areas/sites of deficiencies. The accessibility standard defines the maximum distance that users can be reasonably be expected to travel to each type of open space provision.

Based on these standards, the Study identified where there were surpluses/deficiencies in open space provision and provide an indication of where provision was adequate or required enhancement.

Natural England have recently published mapping data using updated ANGSt standards. This identifies the following buffers:

- Doorstep Green Space - at least 0.5ha within 200m from home
- Local Natural Green Space - at least 2ha within 300m from home
- Neighbourhood Natural Green Space - at least 10ha within 1km from home
- Wider Neighbourhood Natural Green Space - at least 20 ha within 2 km from home
- District Natural Green Space - at least 100 ha within 5 km
- Sub-Regional - at least 500 ha within 10 km

Natural England have focussed on the three most local ANGSt buffers to form a composite picture of access to different sizes of green space within a '15-minute walk zone'. More information on the relevant findings from the Open Space Study and the recently published Natural England data are highlighted in Chapter 5 of this Strategy under the Recreation and Open Space theme.

Rushmoor Playing Pitch Strategy 2014-2020

The Rushmoor Open Space, Sport and Recreation Study 2014 is supported by the Rushmoor Playing Pitch Strategy 2014-2020 (2014), which focuses on a detailed assessment of playing pitch provision within the Borough. The Strategy is focussed on sports facilities and largely falls outside of the remit of this Strategy. However, it does note that although school sites are often available for public use, access to school grass pitches is not widespread in the Borough.

The Council is currently working on updating this Strategy. This is expected to be published in 2022.

Rushmoor Climate Change Action Plan 2020-2030

Rushmoor Borough Council declared a Climate Emergency in 2019, committing to becoming carbon neutral by 2030 across its own estate.   A Climate Change Action Plan was approved in November 2020.   To help develop a quantified and deliverable strategy, Rushmoor Borough Council commissioned The Carbon Trust to produce an Organisation and Borough Carbon Footprint Report,

dated June 2021.   This report presents an updated baseline assessment of operational emissions across the Council for the financial year 2019/2020 and a separate footprint calculation for the entire Rushmoor Borough.   This greater understanding of emissions across the Borough will inform an emerging Climate Change Strategy and ensure that Borough becomes more sustainable by 2030, a key goal of the Council's Climate Change Action Plan.

Rushmoor Biodiversity Action Plan

The Rushmoor Biodiversity Action Plan (2016-2021) set out a framework for a variety of initiatives to protect and improve biodiversity within our Borough.   It also provides the basis for working with key partners, such as the community and voluntary groups, on biodiversity projects.   The Action Plan provides a suite of actions, with specified delivery partners and timeframes.   Actions fall into three broad categories: protecting the existing resource, raising awareness of biodiversity in the community and within the council, and enhancing biodiversity through partnership projects. The specific actions are also linked in the tables to the relevant protected sites and species where relevant.

Wellesley Green Infrastructure Strategy

In 2001, development proposals were announced by the Ministry of Defence (MoD), as part of the Strategic Defence Review, for the large-scale redevelopment of Aldershot Military Town. Through Project Allenby/Connaught, the MoD identified 150 hectares (370 acres) of land to the north of Aldershot Town Centre as surplus to military requirements and available for redevelopment. This area is now known as Wellesley.

In July 2013, a hybrid scheme for development at Wellesley was granted planning permission for 3,850 new homes, retail, community facilities, employment land, SANG provision and open space, recreational facilities and allotments. A Green Infrastructure Strategy was prepared for the area and submitted alongside the planning application.

This Strategy included the provision of the following Green Infrastructure:

- Improved connectivity for pedestrians and cyclists
- Additional sports pitches
- Children's play spaces
- Informal open areas
- SANG (a total area of 110 ha across four parcels of land)
- Sustainable Urban Drainage systems (SuDS)

The Green Infrastructure assets that have been delivered as part of the Wellesley development will be included in this Green Infrastructure Strategy.

Adjoining Authority Evidence and Strategies
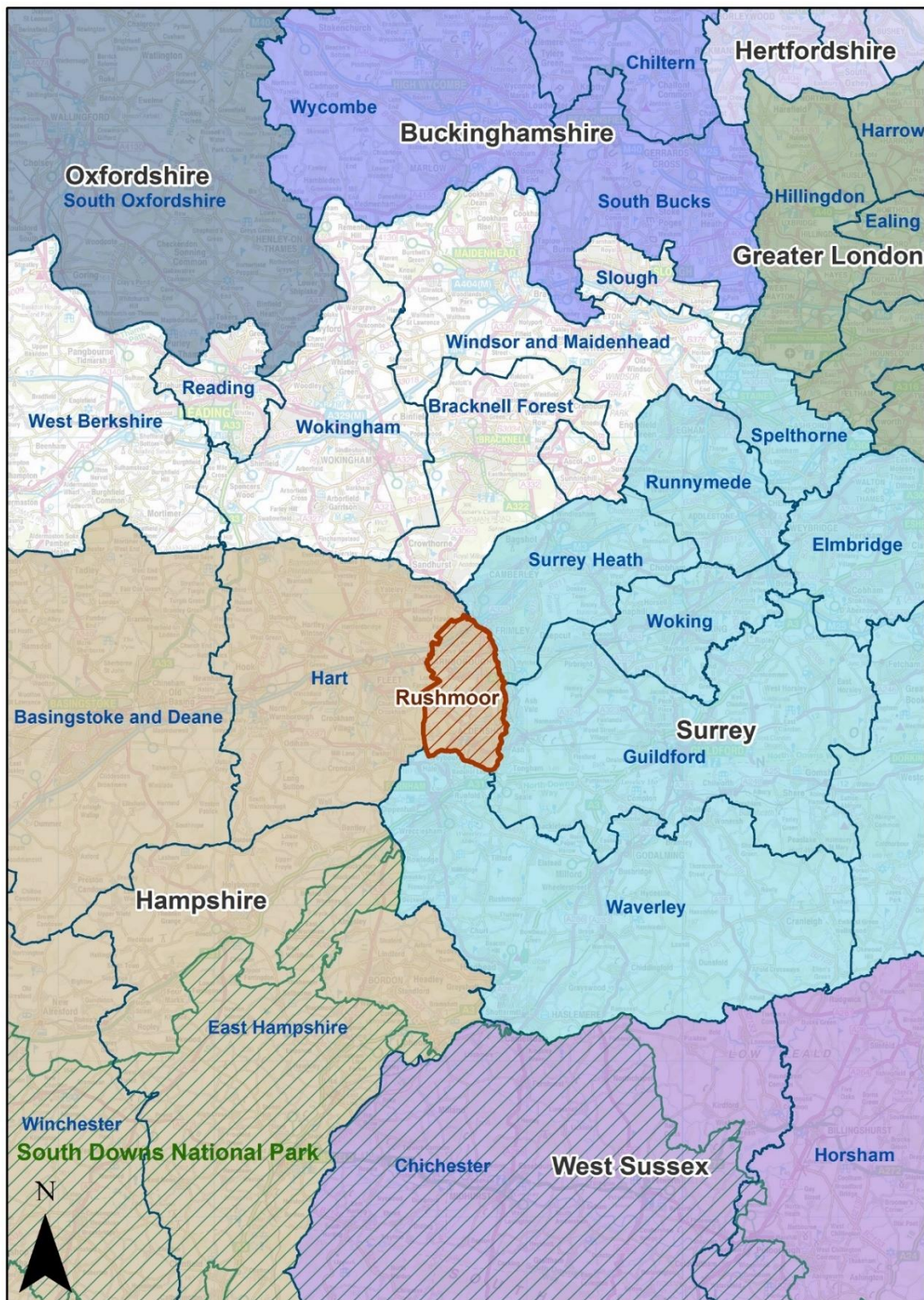
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Surrey Natural Capital Investment Strategy

The Natural Capital Investment Plan (NCIP) for Surrey sets out the broad actions required to achieve and maintain healthy natural assets in Surrey over the next 25 years. It identifies a number of examples and opportunities for natural capital investment, including the Real Hedge Fund, optimising Surrey's Biomass Resources, the River Wey Catchment Plan and North Downs Biodiversity Opportunity Area.

There is not currently a Natural Capital Investment Strategy for Hampshire, but it is understood that the preparation of the Strategy is underway and expected shortly.

Surrey Country Council Rights of Way Improvement Plan (2014)

The overall aim of our rights of way improvement action is to enhance and promote the rights of way network to make it more useful and attractive for everyone.

Five main objectives have been identified:

- to improve accessibility to services, facilities and the wider countryside along rights of way.
- to improve connectivity of rights of way and to reduce severance.
- to improve the quality of the rights of way network.
- to increase recreational enjoyment.
- to secure coordinated implementation of the Rights of Way Improvement Plan within resources available.

Actions identified in the Plan to deliver these objectives which are relevant to the rights of way which link with the network within Rushmoor include:

- The Basingstoke Canal towpath recognised as an important linear multi-user route which could be improved to provide access for all.
- potential for improving strategic sections of the existing public bridleway network to provide high-quality off-road walking and cycling links between employment centres and as safe routes to schools.
- divert existing routes or create new ones to reduce severance or improve connectivity, in areas of highest demand and where there are particular safety issues, especially on bridleways and multi-user routes.
- identify, create, improve and promote greenways giving access to the countryside from urban areas.

The Improvement Plan also identifies anomalies where the network does not connect across County boundaries, including a footpath from Farnham (FP162) which ends on the county boundary with no linking Right of Way in Hampshire. This is a short footpath which runs through part of Rowhill Nature Reserve SANG.

Surrey Biodiversity Opportunity Areas

The Biodiversity Opportunity Areas within Surrey have the same policy objectives as those within Hampshire – to identify opportunities for habitat creation and restoration where resources can be focused to have the greatest positive impact for wildlife.   The Surrey Nature Partnership have led the development of the Surrey BOAs, producing comprehensive maps and policy statements across the County.   The Surrey BOA statements were most recently updated in September 2019.

What assets are identified which connect with or surround Rushmoor?

The Surrey BOAs most geographically relevant to Rushmoor Borough include the River Blackwater (R03), Thames Basin Heaths (TBH03 and TBH04) and Thames Basin Lowlands (TBL01). The BOA statement for the River Blackwater identifies that it is contiguous with the Hampshire Blackwater Valley BOA. Consideration of biodiversity opportunities within Rushmoor Borough should therefore have regards to the River Blackwater BOA in Surrey to ensure ecological connectivity and function cross boundary.

The importance of Thames Basin Heaths and Thames Basin Lowlands within Surrey again reflects the contiguous nature of these habitats across the Surrey / Hampshire borders. Actions undertaken to promote biodiversity opportunities for the Thames Basin Heaths habitats within Rushmoor Borough should have regards to the presence of a wider network of lowland heath habitats cross boundary, especially within Surrey.

Hart Green Infrastructure Strategy 2017

Hart District Council published a Green Infrastructure Strategy in 2017. Rushmoor Borough Council contributed to the Strategy, by attending stakeholder workshops and providing data. The Strategy identified a number of projects, some of which are potentially relevant to this Strategy, including:

- Connecting and protecting the Blackwater Valley
- Enhancing the Basingstoke Canal
- Walk and Cycle Hart
- Connecting Hart's valuable ecological features
- Promote access to the countryside, woods and SANGs
- Create woodland buffer zones around major transport routes and new developments
- Use GI to connect communities to existing green spaces

What assets are identified which connect with or surround Rushmoor?
- Existing SANG at Bramshot Farm Country Park and the recently opened Hartland Country Park and Hawley Farm SANG
- Blackwater Valley
- Basingstoke Canal
- Thames Basin Heaths SPA and component SSSIs
- Fleet Pond
- Number of areas of woodland crossing the boundary
- Parcels of Ancient Woodland close to Rushmoor boundary
- SINCs that sit across the boundary or are close proximity to Rushmoor

Hart Green Grid

Hart District Council has a vision to create a Green Grid across the district. Hart's Green Grid will encourage walking and cycling as well as creating wider opportunities for active recreation and leisure, with potential benefits to health, local ecology and biodiversity.

Hart District Council's recently adopted Vision includes the ambition to create routes between all settlements to encourage walking, cycling and other forms of sustainable healthy transport. As well as connecting communities together, there is an opportunity to connect people to existing green

spaces and other key destinations. These links and green spaces collectively will become Hart's Green Grid.

In 2020, Hart undertook a workshop and survey to inform the emerging Strategy. Rushmoor Borough Council are engaging with colleagues at Hart District Council to identify opportunities to align the Rushmoor GI Strategy and Hart Green Grid.

Guildford Infrastructure Delivery Plan 2017

The Guildford Infrastructure Delivery Plan and Guildford Borough Infrastructure Baseline was prepared to support the Guildford Borough Local Plan. It provides detail on the infrastructure needed to support the level of development and specific development sites included in the Local Plan.

What assets are identified which connect with or surround Rushmoor?
- Existing cycle routes in Ash and Tongham
- Christmas Pie Trail which is an off-road trail for pedestrians and cyclists that connects the south of Ash and Tongham to the north west of Guildford via Ash Green, Flexford and Wood Street Village.
- Lakeside Nature Reserve (SANG)
- Tongham Pools (potential SANG)

Guildford Assessment of Sites of Amenity Value 2017

This report sets out the methodology and results for the assessment of sites of 'amenity value'. A further study, the Open Space Sports and Recreation Study, identifies land that has public value for sports and recreation and amenity across the whole borough These reports form part of the evidence base that informed the Guildford Local Plan (adopted in 2019).

Guildford Open Space Sports and Recreation Assessment (2017)

The Open Space, Sports and Recreation Study was prepared to provide a robust assessment of needs and deficiencies in open spaces in Guildford. As a result, the Council can establish local provision standards and create an up to date evidence base which can be maintained to aid implementation of the policies and the provision of open spaces during the Local Plan period.

The study identified a shortfall across the majority of open space typologies in Ash, Ash Vale and Tongham, with the exception of amenity green space in Ash South/Tongham)

What assets are identified which connect with or surround Rushmoor?
- Tongham Pools (Accessible Natural Green Space adjacent to Rushmoor boundary)
- Parcel of Accessible Natural Green Space (west of Tongham Bowling Club)
- Parcel of Accessible Natural Green Space (south of Shawfield Lane)
- Two Parcels of Accessible Natural Green Space either side of A331 (north of Shawfield Lane
- Lakeside Park (Accessible Natural Green Space adjacent to Rushmoor boundary)
- Parcel of Accessible Natural Green Space close to Rushmoor boundary (north of Lakeside Park)
- Snaky Lane Local Nature Reserve, Ash Vale
- Carrington Recreation Ground, Ash Vale

Surrey Heath Infrastructure Needs Assessment 2017 (informed by the Open Space Assessment 2016)

The Surrey Heath Infrastructure Needs Assessment identifies the supply of greenspace across Surrey Heath. It notes the following:

- Supply of natural and semi-natural greenspace is disproportionately focussed in the east of the Borough
- Low quantity of parks and gardens, although high in west and the majority that do exist are of high quality
- Good overall quality of amenity greenspace.

What assets are identified which connect with or surround Rushmoor?
- Two areas of natural and semi-natural greenspace adjacent to Rushmoor (Blackwater Valley River Route and Watchmoor Reserve)
- Thames Basin Heaths and SPA and component SSSIs
- Three Parks and Gardens close to the Rushmoor boundary (Crabtree Park and Mytchett Recreation Ground)

Surrey Heath SANG Strategy 2020

The Surrey Heath SANG Strategy identified a number of potential SANG sites in the Borough, some of which were in close proximity of Rushmoor Borough. The Council will continue to engage with Surrey Heath to explore opportunities for the delivery of shared SANG and/or improving connections between existing SANG.

Farnham Potential New SANG Assessment (AECOM) 2015

The purpose of this document was to identify possible land parcels and assess them for their potential to provide Strategic SANG for Farnham. The findings of this study were included in the assessment of potential SANG as part of the Hart, Rushmoor and Surrey Heath SPA Mitigation Project (see above). The assessment identified some potential SANG sites in close proximity to Rushmoor including:

- Farnham Quarry/Tices Meadow
- Tongham Pools
- Extensions to the existing SANG at Farnham Park
- Manor Farm, south of Tongham
- Fields off Waverley Lane (Compton Fields)
- Mineral working sites, including Runfold North Sandpit, Runfold South Sandpit, Homefield Sandpit, Jolly Farmer Sandpit and Alton Road Sandpit

Other Relevant Evidence and Strategies

Hampshire Strategic Infrastructure Statement (HSIS) (April 2019)

This statement identifies improvements to land managed by Hampshire County Council's Countryside Service to expand capacity and attractiveness of existing assets and to relieve pressures on more sensitive environmental assets. More information is provided below on the Hampshire Countryside Access Plan (HCAP).

Another key challenge identified in the SIS is the need to encourage the use of walking and cycling as modes of transport and reducing the reliance on the private car for short trips. It sets out a number of themes which the Council's Walking and Cycling Strategies are focussing on, including investment in walking routes, improving cycling infrastructure and promoting recreational cycling. More information is provided below on the Hampshire Cycling Strategy (2015), Hampshire Walking Strategy (2016) and the emerging Rushmoor Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan (LCWIP)

Hampshire Cycling Strategy 2015

The Cycling strategy provides a clear statement of Hampshire County Council's aspirations for cycling by:

- setting a strategic framework to support the planning and development of cycling measures with local partners
- providing a means to prioritise funding for cycling to the best value for money investments
- supporting the County Council in attracting new investment from funding partners for cycling and other sustainable transport measures

The vision for cycling in Hampshire is that:

In 2025, cycling will be a convenient, safe, healthy, affordable and popular means of transportation and recreation within Hampshire

The Strategy focusses on five themes and a number of actions. The actions listed in the table below are considered to be relevant to the Rushmoor Green Infrastructure Strategy.

Theme	Relevant Key Actions
Cycle infrastructure and facilities	
Cycle Routes	• Work with the Local Enterprise Partnerships, Hampshire district and borough councils, National Park authorities, neighbouring authorities, Highways England, cycling charities and local communities to identify strategic cycling routes and priorities for investment. • Develop a prioritised programme of cycle infrastructure investments, based upon robust evidence and business case, to be delivered as funding will allow. • Work with the district and borough councils and property developers to identify how the needs of cyclists can be reflected within the planning and design of streets within new development areas. • Work with partners to better coordinate resources and activities to ensure cycle routes are consistently well maintained.
Cycle wayfinding	• Identify priority routes for signage improvements, focusing particularly on those which are most frequently used by cyclists and / or offer greatest potential for growth in cyclist numbers.
Cycle parking and facilities	• Work with developers, housing associations and other local partners to increase the availability of secure residential cycle storage. • Work with the Hampshire district, parish and town councils and National Park authorities to increase all-weather cycle parking and storage within town centres and other key locations, including potential locations for cycle hubs.

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New developments	• Work with the planning authorities and interested parties to support the planning and coordinated delivery of cycle facilities as part of major new development and regeneration initiatives, including connection to cycle networks. • The needs of cyclists will be explicitly considered as part of safety audits for new development schemes. • Work with developers to ensure that adequate provision is made within new developments (including residential cycle parking and cycle-friendly roads).
Cyclist skills and cycle safety	
Safety improvements	• Identify opportunities to design out safety problems on links and at junctions, including the potential use of innovative new infrastructure.
Promotion of cycling	
Travel Planning	• Review the materials provided to developers in support of travel plan preparation to ensure these correspond to the latest good practice guidelines.
Maps and information	• Improve the awareness of information and journey planning tools provided by partners • Work with the Hampshire district councils, the National Park Authorities and other partners to improve the availability and quality of digital and printed information, particularly in order to complete any gaps in cycle map provision for the county's urban areas and attractive recreational destinations. • Identify the best means of disseminating information and raising awareness of the online resources (including the My Journey tools) with particular focus on marketing to target groups with greatest potential to cycle more.
Recreational Cycling	
Encouraging cycling for recreation	• Work with local partners and volunteers to develop and maintain a network of off-road and lightly trafficked on-road cycle routes. • Work with and encourage local partners to improve access to the countryside from urban areas and railway stations
Cycle tourism	• Work with local partners to develop cycle tourism, that is sustainable both financially and environmentally

The Strategy notes that district / borough councils have responsibility for local planning and housing growth, which includes a key role in developing local cycle networks, providing facilities for cyclists and encouraging more cycling.

Hampshire Walking Strategy 2016

The Walking strategy provides a clear statement of Hampshire County Council's aspirations for walking by:

- establishing a framework to support the development of local walking strategies
- providing a means to prioritise the County Council's funding to the best value for money investments for walking

- realising additional funding opportunities for walking measures

The walking strategy also complements and supports the Hampshire Countryside Access Plan which describes how rights of ways and access to the countryside will be managed over the coming years.

The vision for walking in Hampshire is that:

By 2025, walking will be the travel mode of choice for short trips and the most popular and accessible means of recreation

The Strategy focusses on three themes and a number of actions. The actions listed in the table below are considered to be relevant to the Rushmoor Green Infrastructure Strategy

Theme	Relevant Key Actions
Walking Routes	
Defining a walking network	- Work with partners to define suitable route categories for routes of local and strategic importance and agree the criteria routes within each category should meet - Identify and categorise a framework of routes of local and strategic importance in conjunction with local partners (building particularly on the work already undertaken by the Countryside Access Plan in rural areas), using mapping and supporting data
Route enhancements	- Work with local partners to establish the improvement and maintenance needs of routes of local and strategic importance (potentially using street audits). - Work with local partners to identify appropriate and cost-effective walking interventions (on a whole life cost basis), drawing on best practice. - Identify how required improvements to walking routes can add value to planned maintenance works. - Ensure that borough and district Transport Statements are updated to include prioritised improvements
Wayfinding	- Identify additional wayfinding needs for popular urban routes (particularly for high priority walking routes and new developments) and explore with partners how these can be met through a combination of better design, signage and other supporting visual aids. - Work with local partners to identify how wayfinding can be enhanced to enable more people to walk for recreation, access green space and enjoy the countryside. - Work with local partners to consider how the visitor experience and benefit to the local economy could be achieved through better wayfinding around other popular attractions.
Maintenance and cleansing	Work with local partners to ensure prioritised routes are kept clean and clear of vegetation, rubbish and other obstacles particularly for people with mobility difficulties.
Planning for walking	
Street Design	Work with partners to identify opportunities for giving greater space for pedestrians within areas where vehicular capacity is less important.

	• Work with the local planning authorities to ensure that development allocations are provided with adequate pedestrian links to local services and facilities
Accessibility	• Work with local partners to identify opportunities to safely remove unnecessary fixed obstructions in both rural and urban environments, particularly along busy walking routes (including signs, bollards, or safety railing). • Identify key walking routes which form part of multimodal journeys and work with local partners to deliver improvements
Pedestrian Safety	• Work with local partners to identify key safety concerns for pedestrians (particularly along high priority walking routes) and develop cost-effective solutions aimed at casualty reduction.
Supporting facilities and street furniture	• Work with local partners to identify the facilities needed by pedestrians, particularly within town centres and along priority routes, whilst at the same time reducing the prevalence of street clutter. • Work with local partners to improve the range of facilities (including private facilities such as toilets within local businesses) available within and adjacent to walking routes and pedestrian areas.
Promoting Walking	
Travel Planning	• Continue to require and monitor measures to support access by walking to residential and commercial developments through travel plans in line with the latest good practice guidelines
Maps and information	• Work with local partners to make it easier to identify how and where to obtain easy to use maps and information on walking routes and subject to future funding, provide more extensive links on the My Journey pages.
Marketing, awareness and encouraging behaviour change	• Coordinating marketing and promotional activities with the programming of walking route improvements to raise awareness and publicise the opportunities these provide for a better walking experience • Maximise opportunities to promote innovative ways to engage, support and enable people to walk, such as health walks implemented by some local authorities.

The Strategy notes that district / borough councils have responsibility for local planning and housing growth, which includes a key role in developing local walking routes, providing the facilities that can help make walking more attractive and developing spaces which encourage more walking and social interaction.

Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan (LCWIP)

A Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan (LCWIP) sets out a recommended approach to planning networks of walking zones and cycling routes that connect places that people want to get to, whether for work, education, shopping or for other reasons. It will provide the following:

• A network plan for walking and cycling identifying preferred routes as 'primary' (which represent busy, direct, and main routes), 'secondary' (which represent medium usage routes

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through local areas, feeding into the primary routes) and core walking zones, for further development
- A prioritised programme of infrastructure improvement options for future investment
- A report which sets out the underlying analysis undertaken and provides the rationale for the identified improvements and network

Hampshire Country Council are preparing a Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure (LCWIP) for Rushmoor, but this is at a relatively early stage and more detail is not expected to be available until 2022. More general information on LCWIP is available at What is an LCWIP?[15]

Local Transport Plan and Rushmoor Transport Statement

The current Local Transport Plan (LTP3) was produced in 2011 and was subject to a minor review in 2013. Alongside the LTP, in 2013 HCC prepared a Transport Statement for Rushmoor. This sets out the transport objectives and delivery priorities for the Rushmoor Borough Council (RBC) area up to 2027. It builds on the LTP3 and the Farnborough and Aldershot Town Access Plans (more detail provided below).

The statement notes that whilst walking and cycling routes in the Borough have improved over the last few years, there is also good potential for further improvements, especially for access to the key trip attractors of schools, colleges, town centres and rail stations. It highlights that several missing links in these networks have been identified, and severance caused by strategic transport corridors such as the M3, the A331 and the South-west rail mainline continues to be an issue at certain locations in the Borough.

The Statement includes the following delivery priorities which are of relevance to the Green Infrastructure Strategy:

- Improve and deliver the cycle and pedestrian network across the Borough, including better links to business locations, town centres, schools and rail stations.
- Mitigate the impact of forecast congestion on the highway network through reducing the need to travel and providing good quality walk, cycle and public transport links from new developments.
- Promote low carbon emitting modes of transport, including supporting the necessary infrastructure for low emission vehicles, and encouraging walking, cycling and public transport.

Draft Local Transport Plan 4 is the subject of a public consultation. It makes clear that, in order to meet the proposed transport outcomes, including carbon neutrality by 2050, there will need to be a shift in approach. Based on this, the County Council have identified two guiding principles:

1. Significantly reduce dependency on the private car.
2. Create a high-quality transport system that puts people first.

The draft LTP4 anticipates a Local Area Framework being prepared either for Farnborough or the wider Blackwater Valley area that addresses these two guiding principles.

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[15] https://sway.office.com/0u7EcdCPcekkG6Dg?ref=Link

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Town Access Plans

Town access plans have been developed between Hampshire County Council and district and borough councils. They set out a shared vision for making the best use of roads and public spaces with the aim of improving access to services and facilities.

Aldershot Town Access Plan (2012)

The Aldershot TAP identifies the following relevant objectives:

- Provide improved facilities and priority for pedestrians
- Provide improved facilities and priority for cycles

It goes on to set out a number of relevant principles:

- Pedestrian Access Principles:
  - Overcome severance of communities to the North due to the A323 and South East across the railway
  - Provide for the mobility impaired
  - Ensure that new developments, notably the AUE have good pedestrian access to the town centre
  - Design out opportunities for crime
- Cycle Access Principles
  - Provide a network of cycle routes to enable better access to the town centre for cyclists, particularly from the southern and eastern areas of Aldershot
  - Improve accessibility by cycle between main education, employment, retail and residential areas
  - Ensure that new developments enhance good cycle access to the town centre

Farnborough Town Access Plan

The Farnborough TAP Stage 3 report published in 2011 includes an action plan which seeks to address the access issues identified in Stage 1 of the TAP. There are a number of actions proposed which would improve linkages for walking and cycling across the town, examples include:

- Severance, safety concerns and difficulties crossing for pedestrians and cyclists at various points along the A325 corridor
- Closed/incomplete pedestrian and cycle network
- Severance, diversion and quality of pedestrian network at Pinehurst Roundabout
- Legibility, clarity and quality of pedestrian links and underpasses around the Civic Quarter
- Pedestrian and cyclist severance with limited crossing points along the M3 corridor
- Pedestrian and cyclist severance along South West Mainline. Also perceived safety of, and ability to use, underpasses.
- Pedestrian and cycle links/permeability between Town Centre and surrounding destinations (e.g. Farnborough Business Park)
- Nature and quality of pedestrian links encouraging anti-social behaviour in North Farnborough
- Perceived safety, poorly maintained, poor quality route between North Camp and North Camp Railway Station
- Overall legibility and pedestrian/cyclist wayfinding

Hampshire Healthy Weight Strategy 2015-19

This strategy outlines the aims, vision and objectives of the Hampshire Healthy Weights strategy and sets out the rationale for co-ordinated multi-agency action to increase the proportion of people with a healthy weight in Hampshire. The Strategy identifies that, at the time of publication, Rushmoor had one of the highest proportion of overweight children across Hampshire local authority areas. The Strategy has four strategic objectives:

1. Support an environment that enables people to make physical activity and healthy eating the easy choice
2. Encourage positive lifestyle changes that enable people to improve their health and have a healthy weight
3. Enable access to evidence-based interventions for people who are already overweight and obese
4. Reduce inequalities in health by focussing on people and populations most at risk

Objective 1 is the most relevant to the Rushmoor Green Infrastructure Strategy and the following priority actions and key outputs are of particular interest:

Priority Actions	Key Outputs
Provide and promote accessible outdoor spaces, including paths, open spaces and green spaces	Capital infrastructure projects connect outside spaces to populations Physical infrastructure programmes linked to behaviour change initiatives particularly in areas of greatest need
Develop new and improve existing routes for walking and cycling focusing on areas of greatest need where resources are available	Increased levels of physical activity levels especially in those living in areas of deprivation
Provide public health rationale for investment opportunities in sustainable transport initiatives	Strengthen support and opportunities to access external funding

Hampshire Physical Activity Strategy 2018-21

This strategy provides a framework for all organisations involved in the development and co-ordination of physical activity and sport across Hampshire. The Strategy identifies that, at the time of publication, Rushmoor had one of the highest percentages of inactive adults in Hampshire. It identifies four strategic objectives:

1. To encourage and support positive lifestyle and behaviour changes that enable people to increase their levels of physical activity
2. To use insight, evidence and identification of need to invest and innovate to increase physical activity
3. To reduce inequalities in physical activity by focussing on people and populations most at risk
4. To support an environment that enables people to make physical activity the easy choice

The fourth objective is considered to be the most relevant to the Rushmoor Green Infrastructure Strategy and the following priorities and actions are of particular interest:

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Priorities	Actions
Creating the right spaces and land use to support physical activity	Work with planners to ensure physical activity is built into existing environments and new developments – the quality of public parks and space are key to encouraging activity.
	Increase ease of access to open space especially for those populations most at risk of inequality and inactivity.
Build physical activity into daily routines	Work with Active Travel, Travel Planners and Transport teams to develop and implement policies, systems and interventions which increase daily active travel (walking, cycling).

State of Hampshire's Natural Environment (2020)

This report provides a high-level 'snapshot' of many key elements of Hampshire's natural environment and identifies trends and emerging issues under a number of topics. It highlights some headline findings of particular concern, which mirrors trends across much of England, including

- 48% of a sample of 50 of Hampshire's most notable species are in decline
- Significant decline in many farmland birds in recent years
- Insect and pollinators are continuing to decline

The following findings from the report are considered relevant to the Rushmoor Green Infrastructure Strategy.

Air Quality
The report notes that air quality is generally improving across Hampshire and emissions have decreased over the last 18 years. Rushmoor is identified as a Borough with some of the lowest levels of emissions in comparison to other local authority areas in Hampshire. The report does however note that emissions in the home is contributing significant to our overall national emissions with wood burning becoming of the biggest sources of air pollution in urban areas.

Noise
In 2019, the government undertook a noise mapping exercise across the UK. Noise Important Areas (NIA) were identified at residential locations on roads and railways where the highest noise levels were recorded. Since 2012 the number and areas of NIAs in Hampshire have increased significantly. In Rushmoor, the following NIA have been identified:

- Roads: M3, small parts of A331, parts of A325, part of the A323 and parts of Lynchford Road.
- Railways: parts of the Waterloo to Weymouth line (between West Heath roundabout and Trunk Road and small part east of Prospect Road)

The report also identifies Rushmoor as being one of the least tranquil areas of Hampshire.

Biodiversity

The report identifies some general trends across the Country, including loss of SINCs due to inappropriate management or development, a general improvement in the condition of SSSIs, loss of priority habitats, continuing decline of insects and pollinators and increase in heathland due to recovery from scrub/conifer plantations and the re-introduction of grazing. It identifies that road verges are an increasing important source of pollen.

Recreational Use of the Natural Environment

The report identifies strategic scale managed recreational access to natural environment across the County, including destination country parks/commons such as Yateley Common and the Basingstoke Canal. It also recognises the creation of 12 SANGs in the Hart and Rushmoor.

Hampshire County Council Climate Change Strategy 2020-2025

Hampshire County Council declared a Climate Emergency in the summer of 2019. Two targets have been set for the County Council, and these also apply to Hampshire as a whole:

- 2050 Carbon neutrality
- 2°C preparing to be resilient to the impacts of temperature rise

The following Hampshire wide strategic priorities and supporting policies/strategies are considered most relevant to the Rushmoor Green Infrastructure Statement.

Priorities	Supporting Policies/Strategies relevant to this GI Strategy
Transport - To enable, support and deliver a reduction in transport-related carbon emissions to net zero (neutrality) by 2050 and a resilient transport network.	- Cycling Strategy - Walking Strategy - Local Transport Plan - Traffic Management Policy (Policy TM7 – Pedestrian and cycle crossings)
Natural Environment - To protect, enhance, improve and develop the natural environment maximising the opportunity to manage and increase habitats, landscapes, and biodiversity which in turn support carbon sequestration and climate resilience	- Hampshire Tree Strategy - Local Flood and Water Management Strategy - Hampshire Countryside Service Access Plan 2015-2025

Hampshire Biodiversity Opportunity Areas

Biodiversity Opportunity Areas represent a targeted landscape-scale approach to conserving biodiversity in Hampshire. They identify opportunities for habitat creation and restoration where resources can be focused to have the greatest positive impact for wildlife.   Opportunities identified are based on an evaluation of landscape character, underlying geology type and the habitats and species of particular importance to wildlife conservation in these areas.   They are not a statutory designation and do not infer a constraint to development or land use.

BOAs were identified through extensive mapping work carried out by the Hampshire Biodiversity Information Centre (HBIC) in consultation with a wide range of biodiversity partners. Statements have been produced for each BOA to indicate priorities for that area.

Two BOAs have been mapped to be present within, and relevant to, Rushmoor Borough – Blackwater Valley (Hants) (Ref: BOA13) and Thames Basin Heaths and Plantations (Ref: BOA37). Further commentary on the habitats and species of these BOAs is presented in detail within Chapter 5: Biodiversity Theme.

Hampshire Tree Strategy 2020

This strategy sets out the key principles Hampshire County Council will follow to achieve the target of planting one million trees by 2050 and how it will work in partnership to further increase tree planting and cover across the County.

The approach will include:

- increasing tree planting on HCC land, including schools, residential sites, Country Parks, County Farms and highways land
- expanding their capacity to propagate and grow additional trees to meet demand and ensure that appropriate species of trees are planted
- working with partners to increase and connect woodland areas, 'green' corridors and networks across the County
- influencing and encouraging increased planting on new residential and business/ industrial developments
- enabling and informing residents on the benefits of tree planting in their own gardens
- promoting tree and woodland management skills

It notes that the Hampshire Ecological Network Map (see below for more information) can be used to guide new tree planting to enhance connectivity between woodland sites either through physical corridors or through 'stepping stones'

Hampshire Ecological Network Map (March 2020)

The Hampshire Biodiversity Information Centre (HBIC) was contracted by Natural England in 2015 to produce a detailed Ecological Network Map for Hampshire on behalf of the Local Nature Partnership (LNP). The map represents the hierarchy of international, national and locally designated sites of importance for biodiversity, plus other priority habitats and, importantly, areas identified for habitat restoration or creation.

The network is hierarchical with the following components:

- Biodiversity Opportunity Areas (BOAs)
- the Strategic Network
- Core Statutory Sites
- Core Non-statutory Sites
- Network Opportunity Areas
- Hedgerows (optional)
- Green Grid Areas (urban optional)

The Network Map is designed to guide the location, layout and design of development to enable habitat and species mitigation, restoration and re-creation to inform green infrastructure and achieve biodiversity net gain.

The 'Network Opportunities' component of the mapping can also be used to inform proposals to achieve net gain for biodiversity as part of the planning process in order to:

- promote the restoration and re-creation of priority habitats including increasing the size of existing wildlife sites.
- enhance connections between sites, either through physical corridors or through 'stepping-stones'.
- enable the recovery and enhancement of priority species populations.

The Ecological Network Map has been reviewed in detail and used to inform the priorities and potential projects identified through this Green Infrastructure Strategy. Future updates to the Map will be used to inform the projects identified in the Green Infrastructure Delivery Plan.

Basingstoke Canal Conservation Management Plan 2018-2028

The Basingstoke Canal is a very special waterway of national importance for its unique water chemistry and the range of plants and invertebrates that this supports. It rightly has statutory protection for much of its length. The Conservation Management Plan notes that due to pressure from recreational use since its restoration as a navigable waterway, and the continuing growth of trees surrounding the Canal there has been a decline in the condition and diversity of the waterway. The plan sets out the conservation basis for actions to reverse the declining trend and aims to enables management of the canal to be undertaken based on sound ecological principles.

Local Flood and Water Management Strategy

The County Council has a vision to create a safer, more resilient Hampshire. The flood and water management strategy is about achieving that vision and includes a set of policies with which robust flood mitigation plans can be managed. The following policies and actions are considered to be relevant to the Rushmoor Green Infrastructure Strategy:

Policy	Actions
To ensure successful and sustainable growth Hampshire County Council will support the planning process by encouraging resilient development (Policy 4)	Require developments to utilise Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS) and the drainage hierarchy based on current best practice and industry standards for water quality and quantity.
	Encourage development which demonstrates an understanding of environmental sensitivity and provides appropriate mitigation.
	Require development to demonstrate a net environmental gain in local flood risk management
	Work with the Environment Agency, local planning authorities and other partners to develop the planning skills and capabilities to advise developers on how adaptive approaches should inform strategic local plans and enable climate resilient places.
Work with the Environment Agency, local planning authorities and other partners to develop the planning skills and capabilities to advise developers on how adaptive approaches	Encourage the development and implementation of innovative flood alleviation measures and a flexible policy approach from partner organisations.

| Policy	Actions
should inform strategic local plans, and enable climate resilient places (Policy 6)	

Hampshire Countryside Access Plan 2015-2025

The Hampshire Countryside Access Plan (HCAP) 2015-2025 provides a framework for the management and improvement of public rights of way and other forms of access to the countryside. It refers to the seven area-based plans that formed much of the HCAP for 2008-2013 and which have been retained as reference guides for the current plan. Rushmoor sits within the Forest of Eversley Local Countryside Access Plan (alongside Hart and Basingstoke and Deane Districts). In this area identified infrastructure issues/requirements include:

- There is a demand for more off-road and utility routes for cyclists
- There is a need for greater connectivity of horse-riding routes

Local Nature Partnership

The Government's Natural Environment White Paper "The Natural Choice: securing the value of nature" was first published in June 2011.   The White Paper made a series of commitments, including providing a one-off fund to help local communities set up Local Nature Partnerships.   The aim of Local Nature Partnerships is that they bring together a broad partnership of organisations to work at a strategic landscape scale to deliver a stronger natural environment.
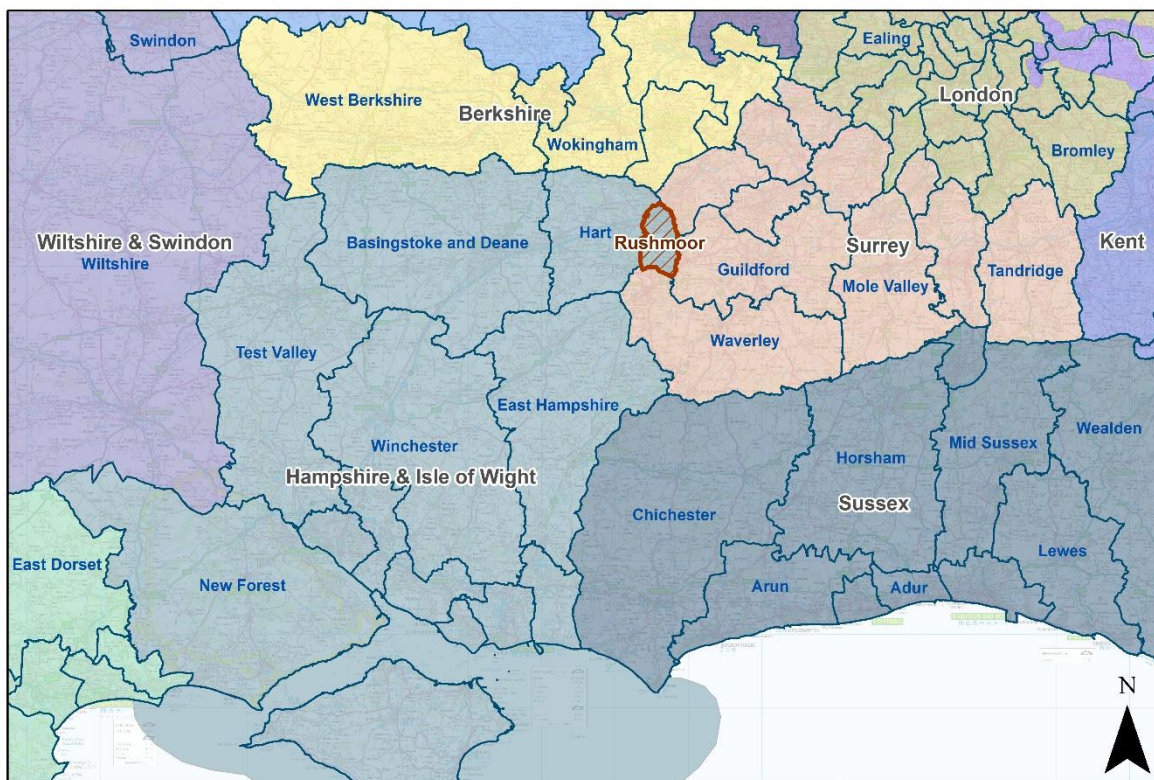
The Hampshire Local Nature Partnership is coordinated by a Board which meets on a regular basis to provide strategic leadership, review priorities, commission projects and to encourage action across

the wider partnership. The group is currently chaired by Natural England.   Rushmoor Borough Council is a supporting partner.

Appendix 3: Emerging Strategic Project Profiles

PP1 – An Interactive Green Infrastructure Mapping Project

Project Summary

This project aims to make information on green infrastructure assets easily accessible and available to all in an interactive format. This will allow green infrastructure to be considered as part of the early stages of the design process and through the decision-making process.

Status

Planned

The data is available on existing assets and has been collated during the preparation of the Strategy. Work will need to take place to create an interactive tool using this data and to ensure that the data is maintained and kept up to date.

Delivery

RBC will explore options for use of the existing GIS systems in place.

Timescales

Short (0-5 years)

Potential Partners

Hampshire Biodiversity Information Centre (HBIC)

GI Outcome

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PP2 – A Development Management Green Infrastructure Toolkit

Project Summary

The concept of green infrastructure is firmly supported through national policy and its wide-ranging benefits well evidenced. Despite this in practice the natural environment is still undervalued and at worst viewed as a constraint on development.

The purpose of this project is to provide tools and guidance to support the Development Management process, to ensure that green infrastructure principles are embedded in development proposals of all scales. This will support the implementation of Local Plan Policy NE2.

Status

Planned

Delivery

It is expected that in consultation with development sector, the toolkit can be prepared by RBC.

Timescales

Short (0-5 years)

Potential Partners

Development sector

GI Outcomes

PP3 – A Biodiversity Net Gain Off-Site Scoping Project

Project Summary

The Environment Act brings in a new statutory biodiversity gain objective in relation to development for which planning permission is granted.   The biodiversity gain objective (also known as 'biodiversity net gain') is met by a development if the biodiversity value of the site after development, exceeds that prior to development.   The Act requires that exceedance to be by 10%.   This is expected to become mandatory in winter 2023.

In summary, a development site has to achieve 10% greater ecological value after development is completed, as compared to before.

In some circumstances, the planning process may determine that the full required 10% biodiversity net gain cannot be met within the boundary of the development site and that some biodiversity net gain will need to be registered and secured off-site.   It is expected that developers will be seeking land on which they can either restore / enhance existing habitats or create new habitats in order to demonstrate their 10% net gain.

In some Local Authority areas, a system of 'biodiversity credits' is operational providing off-the-shelf biodiversity net gain for purchase by developers.   Secondary legislation will provide more detail with regards to how biodiversity net gain should be quantified, evaluated and secured.

Ahead of the secondary legislation, this project aims to identify whether land may be available within Rushmoor Borough for the purposes of achieving biodiversity net gain, secure for the long-term.   Is it feasible or desirable to establish a biodiversity net gain credits system within Rushmoor Borough Council?   How might Rushmoor Borough collaborate with our Local Authority neighbours in situations where biodiversity net gain may be sought outside of our Local Authority boundary.

Status

Planned

Delivery

This project builds on data identified within this Green Infrastructure Strategy, relating to land use, land ownership and existing ecological value of land, to identify potential receptors site where opportunities for habitat restoration / enhancement or creation may be most valuable. Significant data already exists which will need focused evaluation.   Existing mapping primarily available from HBIC is likely to form the core of this evaluation, but more detailed ground truthing of proposals is likely to be necessary.

Timescales

Short (0-5 years)

Potential Partners

HBIC, significant local developers, significant private landowners, adjacent local authorities.

GI Outcomes

PP4 - Access to the Outdoors Project

Project Summary

The Strategy has identified that Rushmoor has an existing Green Infrastructure Network which is valued by local communities. However, this Strategy seeks to encourage more people to use this existing resource, particularly where it can provide health and wellbeing benefits. This project will provide information on the green infrastructure currently available and how to access it.

It could include the following:

- Information on local nature reserves and how to access nature
- Educational opportunities
- Information targeting specific groups or localities
- Promotion of events and/or opportunities to get involved, such as conservation volunteering or health walks.

Status

Planned

Delivery

Opportunities to signpost and/or use existing resources will be explored. There will be potential opportunities to work with a range of partners.

Timescales

Short (0-5 years)

Potential Partners

Hampshire County Council, Blackwater Valley Countryside Partnership, Hampshire Biodiversity Information Centre, Local Interest/Community Groups, Hampshire and Isle of Wight Wildlife Trust, Thames Basin Heaths Partnership.

GI Outcomes

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PP5 - Connecting Rushmoor's Ecological Network

Project Summary

The NPPF states that planning policies and decisions should contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment by *"...recognising the wider benefits from natural capital and ecosystem services..."* and "*...minimising impacts on and providing net gains for biodiversity, including by establishing coherent ecological networks that are more resilient to current and future pressures...'.*

The Hampshire Biodiversity Information Centre (HBIC) was contracted by Natural England in 2015 to produce a detailed Ecological Network Map for Hampshire on behalf of the Local Nature Partnership (LNP). The map represents the hierarchy of international, national and locally designated sites of importance for biodiversity, plus other priority habitats and, importantly, areas identified for habitat restoration or creation. It included a 'Network Opportunities' component and this project will look to review these identified opportunities in more detail.

Status

Planned

Delivery

The Council will work with HBIC to review the 2015 Ecological Network Map and review the network opportunities in more detail with relevant partners. This project may form part of the Council's input into the Local Nature Recovery Strategy (LNRS), which are now required under the Environment Act 2021. However, the Council is awaiting more information on LNRS through secondary legislation and guidance.

Timescales

Short (0-5 years)

Potential Partners

Hampshire Biodiversity Information Centre (HBIC), Hampshire County Council, Hampshire Local Nature Partnership, local interest groups, landowners/managers, adjoining Local Authorities.

GI Outcomes

PP6 - Review of Potential Suitable Alternative Natural Greenspace (SANG) Sites

Project Summary

Hart, Rushmoor and Surrey Heath Councils worked together with Natural England to complete a project reviewing the approach to mitigation within the Thames Basin Heaths. The work analysed eleven potential alternative options when it comes to delivering SPA mitigation. The report concluded that the role and design of SANG could be clarified further. As a result, Natural England have published updated Guidelines for the creation of Suitable Accessible Natural Greenspace (SANG).

The HRSH SPA Mitigation Project report recommends the use of SANG networks, linear orientated sites and small sites of no smaller than two hectares could provide mitigation where traditional SANG is unavailable. Ideally these SANG areas will be linked and/or in proximity to an already established SANG, with an option for them to work alone where equivalent effectiveness can be demonstrated.

In the updated Guidelines, Natural England have clarified that there remains a hierarchy of SANG provision and states:

> *"Great weight will be given to those SANGS meeting all the existing quality criteria (shown in Appendix 1 of the Guidelines) which should be delivered in the first instance. Only if this is not possible, for clearly established reasons, should the delivery of the options outlined in the section below be considered. If any proposed SANGS do not meet all of the Appendix 1 quality criteria, then these SANGS will continue to be assessed on a case-by-case basis and should be agreed with both the competent authority and Natural England.*

> *The proposal will need to demonstrate equivalent effectiveness of mitigation being provided to ensure a robust, consistent approach continues. Any shortfall in SANG criteria should be offset by other complementary means, such as an elevated provision rate, size or high-quality features."*

This project will provide a follow-up to the HRSH SPA Mitigation Project and identify whether there are opportunities to identify new SANG that can mitigate net new residential development within Rushmoor.

Status

Planned

Delivery

The Council will review the findings of the HRSH SPA Mitigation Project, including potential SANG identified. This project will require continued joint working with Hart District Council and Surrey Heath Borough Council and potential collaboration with other adjoining authorities affected by the Thames Basin Heaths SPA.

Timescales

Short (0-5 years)

Potential Partners

Hart District Council, Surrey Heath Borough Council, Natural England, other adjoining Local Authorities, landowners/managers.

GI Outcomes

PP7 - Carbon Reduction through Tree Planting Feasibility Project

Project Summary

The Government has now published its Net Zero Strategy which sets out how the UK will deliver on its commitment to reach net zero carbon emissions by 2050. The Net Zero Strategy is the cornerstone of the Government's proposals to address climate change.

The Strategy provides £124 million into a Nature for Climate Fund towards proposals including restoration of peat resources and a commitment to create at least 30,000 hectares of woodland per year across the UK by the end of this parliament.

A small Borough, Rushmoor already benefits from 21% woodland cover, far above the UK national average of 10%. Much of this woodland cover is found within statutorily protected sites hosting rare habitats that are required, by law, to be managed in a specific way that benefits the habitats and species for which they are protected. It is therefore expected that opportunities for woodland creation or tree planting, where they exist, are likely to be present outside these protected sites, within the urban or suburban areas of Rushmoor Borough. Any new planting must have regard to the ecological value of the habitat already existing at a proposed woodland / tree planting location so that the planting results in a net gain in environmental benefit without comprising or deteriorating existing ecological value.

This project seeks to identify if, where and what type of tree planting may be desirable within Rushmoor Borough, and how Rushmoor Borough may best contribute towards delivery of this woodland creation commitment. It is also envisaged that the project will explore the best ways to green our urban areas through a range of planting options, including hedgerows, identify strategic locations for this planting, set some outline criteria for planting methodology and requirements for ongoing management and seek to identify some sources of sustainable funding for both planting and longer term management.

Status

Planned

Delivery (including funding)

It is envisaged that RBC will need a more detailed evaluation of existing tree cover within the Borough, than is provided within this current strategy. Work undertaken to highlight land use, ecological value and ownership within this Strategy will also inform potential receptor sites for new woodland planting. Existing mapping primarily available from HBIC is likely to form the core of this evaluation, but more detailed ground truthing of proposals is likely to be necessary. Carbon reduction through tree planting may also be realised through greening of urban environments. Urban street trees and urban / suburban hedgerow creation will be explored.

Timescales

Short (0-5 years)

Potential Partners

Forestry Commission, Natural England, Farnborough Airport, local commercial businesses, The Woodland Trust, HBIC.

GI Outcomes

GP1 - Southwood and Cove Brook Floodplain Enhancement Project

Project Summary

The Cove Brook is a tributary of the River Blackwater, part of the wider Loddon and Thames catchments. The closure of Southwood Golf Course and the plans to create Suitable Natural Alternative Greenspace (SANG) (known as Southwood Country Park) offered an opportunity to restore the habitats and physical processes associated with the Cove Brook corridor and associated floodplain, creating a more resilient ecosystem for the benefit of people and wildlife. Therefore, the Council has entered partnership with the Environment Agency, to progress a project which will achieve river floodplain and habitat improvements on the Southwood Country Park and Cove Brook as part of the Phase 2 development of the SANG. The objectives of this project include:

- Improve the Water Framework Directive Status of the Cove Brook and its tributaries through physical habitat enhancement

- Enhance the biodiversity and ecosystem functioning of the project area

- Re-establish hydrological connectivity between the river and its floodplain (where this does not compromise the SANG)

- Increase tree cover within the former golf course to provide woodland and wet woodland habitat within the headwaters

- Create opportunities for nature-based recreation and education

- Identify any opportunities to secure flood risk benefits for local people (including the consideration of natural flood management interventions)

- Improve the biodiversity value of the four associated Sites of Importance for Nature Conservation (SINC) namely

  o Cove Valley, Southern Grassland

  o Cove Brook Grassland

  o Southwood Woodlands (adjacent)

  o Southwood Country Park

- Improve the landscape value of the project area

Status

Under way

Delivery

Consultants have been appointed to manage and lead on this project. A Baseline Report and Longlist of Options, Concept Designs and draft Detailed Designs and associated flood modelling work have been prepared. The Concept Designs were published for public comment in October 2021. Once the detailed design has been finalised, the implementation will be planned to take

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account of the work being undertaken by Esso on the Southampton to London Pipeline Project, which is affecting the Park. It is likely that for this reason the improvements will be undertaken over the next 3 years.

Timescales

Short (0-5 years)

Potential Partners

Environment Agency, Cove Brook Greenway Group, Blackwater Valley Countryside Partnership.

GI Outcomes

GP2 - Blackwater Valley Enhancement Project

Project Summary

This project will explore the potential to build on initial discussions which have taken place at officer-level between local authorities and other partners, regarding enhancements to the Blackwater Valley.

These initial discussions were focussed on three key areas:

- Climate change resilience – identifying opportunities to adapt to climate change

- SANG – identifying and linking SANG

- Biodiversity Net Gain – identifying existing and aspirational projects to create and enhance habitats.

- Leisure and access – identifying, linking and improving access to the Blackwater Valley for general recreation.

There is potential overlap between this project and the following projects identified above:

- Review of Potential Suitable Alternative Natural Greenspace (SANG) Sites

- Connecting Rushmoor's Ecological Network

- Access to the Outdoors Project

Status

Planned

Delivery

The Council will approach those previously involved in initial discussions to understand the potential for joint working on this project. Further discussion will need to take place to understand leadership, governance, funding and capacity amongst key partners to progress this project.

Timescales

Medium (6-10 years)

Potential Partners

Blackwater Valley Countryside Partnership, Wildlife Trusts, RSPB, Biological Records Centres for the three counties, Farnborough Airport, SE Rivers Trust, Thames Water, Environment Agency, Natural England, local authorities within the Blackwater Valley.

GI Outcomes

GP3 - Enhancing the Basingstoke Canal

Project Summary

There is potential to further enhance the Basingstoke Canal by improve its value as a linear green infrastructure asset and valuable green corridor which connects with green infrastructure beyond the Borough. This project has potential to link with a project identified in the Hart Green Infrastructure Strategy 2017.

There is also the potential to link this project with the project identified above relating to identifying SANG networks. However, it should be recognised that parts of the Basingstoke Canal already form part of or connect elements of the Wellesley SANG.

Status

Planned

Delivery

Initial scoping of this project, understanding of overlaps with other projects and discussions with key partners, including the Basingstoke Canal Authority and Hart District Council is required.

Timescales

Medium (6-10 years)

Potential Partners

Basingstoke Canal Authority, Grainger, Hart District Council, other local authorities (Guildford, Surrey Heath, Woking and Runnymede), Environment Agency, Natural England.

GI Outcomes

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GP4 – Cove Brook Greenway Project

Project Summary

The Cove Brook is a tributary of the River Blackwater, part of the wider Loddon and Thames catchments. Working closely with the Cove Brook Greenway Group, this project will explore the potential to enhance Cove Brook and improve its value as a linear green infrastructure assets and valuable green corridor. The focus of the project will be on areas of the Brook not covered by the Southwood and Cove Brook Floodplain Enhancement Project (GP1).

Status

Planned

Delivery

Initial scoping of this project will take place following discussion with the Environment Agency and the Cove Brook Greenway Group.

Timescales

Short (0-5 years)

Potential Partners

Environment Agency, Cove Brook Greenway Group

GI Outcomes

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GP5 - Southwood/Bramshot SANG Network Project

Project Summary

This project will explore the potential to formally identify and agree a SANG network with Natural England, which incorporates existing and potential SANG within Hart and Rushmoor (including Southwood Woodlands, Southwood Country Park, Hartland Country Park and Bramshot County Park). This is expected to be a geographical project which will be identified and supported by the project identified above - Review of Potential Suitable Alternative Natural Greenspace (SANG) Sites.

Status

Planned

Delivery

The potential for establishing a network has been part of previous discussions between officers at Hart District Council and Rushmoor Borough Council. Further discussions will need to take place between the two authorities and Natural England prior to progressing this project.

Timescales

Short (0-5 years)

Potential Partners

Hart District Council, Natural England, Blackwater Valley Countryside Partnership

GI Outcomes

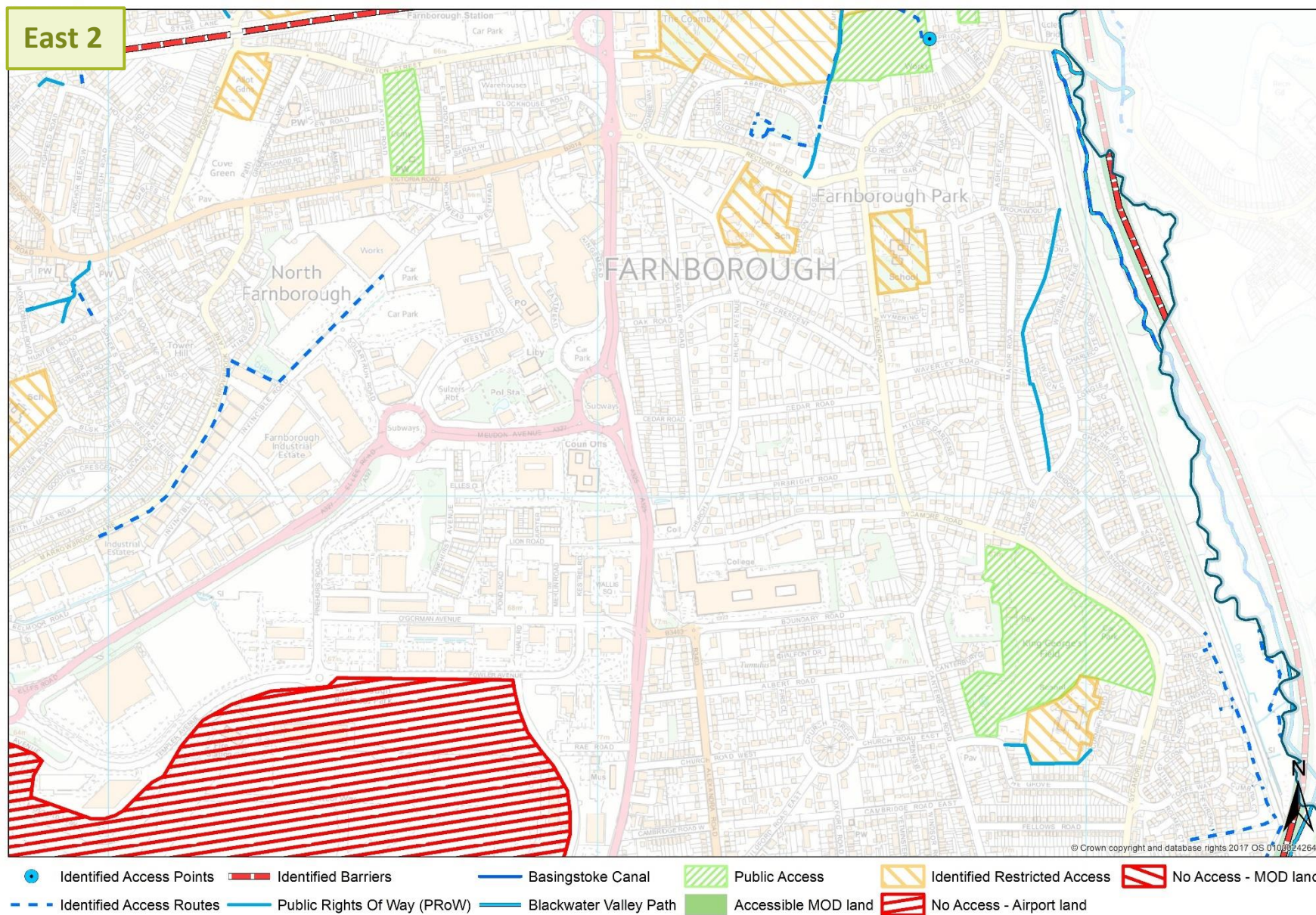# Appendix 4: Area Maps Showing Access, Ownership and Barriers

East 1

Pack Page 177
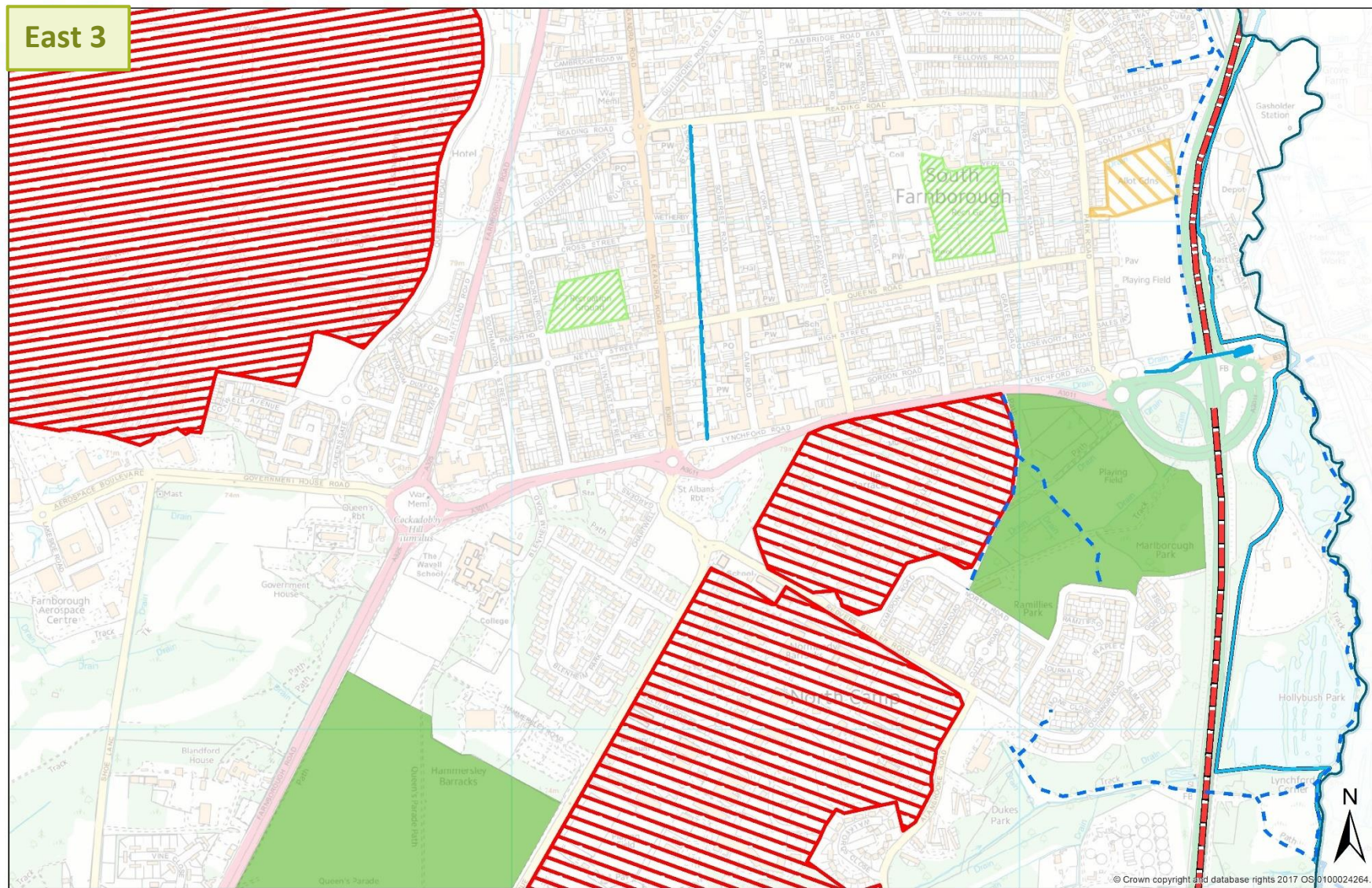
145

Legend:
- Identified Access Points
- Identified Access Routes
- Identified Barriers
- Public Rights Of Way (PRoW)
- Basingstoke Canal
- Blackwater Valley Path
- Public Access
- Accessible MOD land
- Identified Restricted Access
- No Access - MOD land
- No Access - Airport land

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East 2

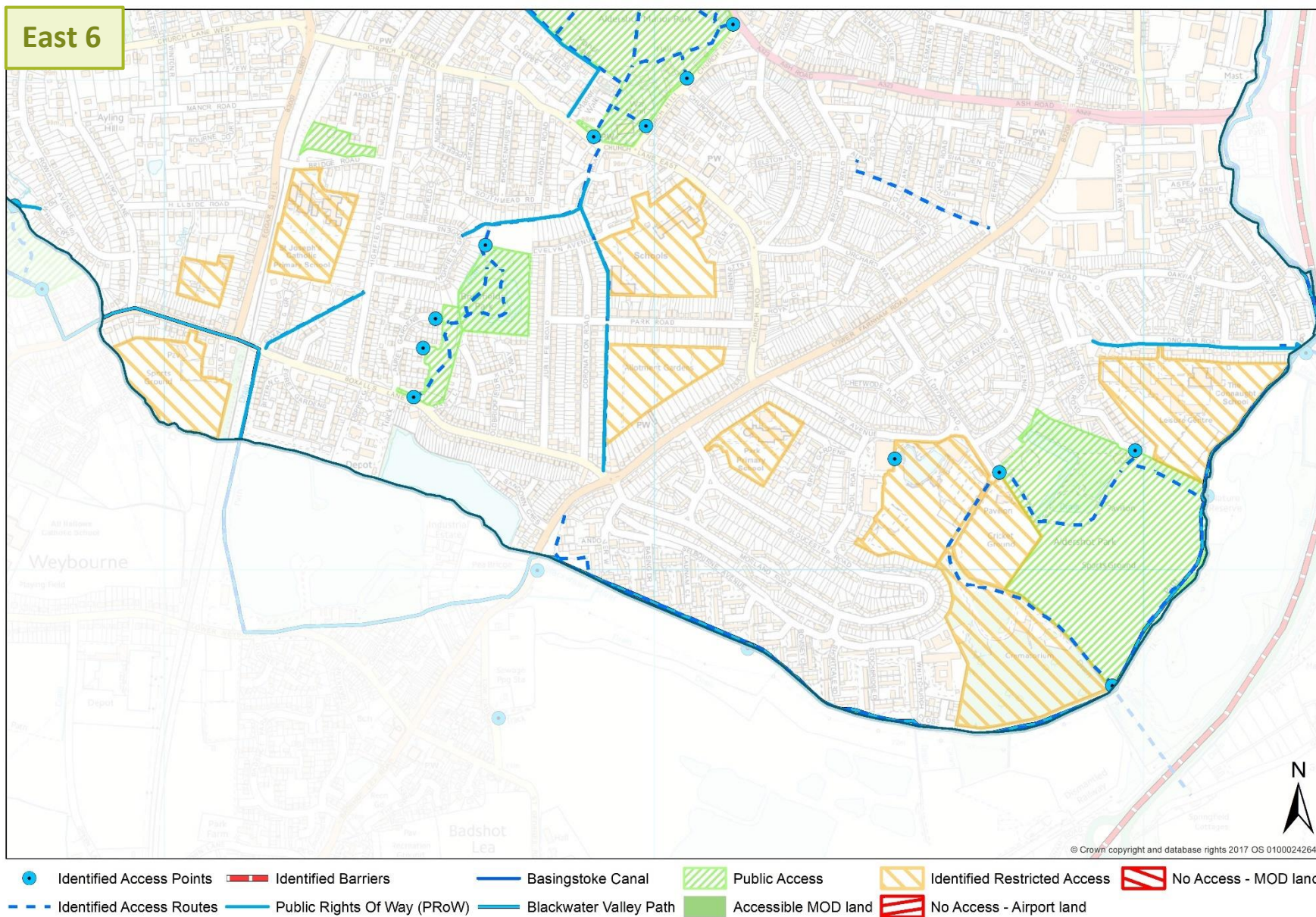FARNBOROUGH

North
Farnborough

Farnborough Park

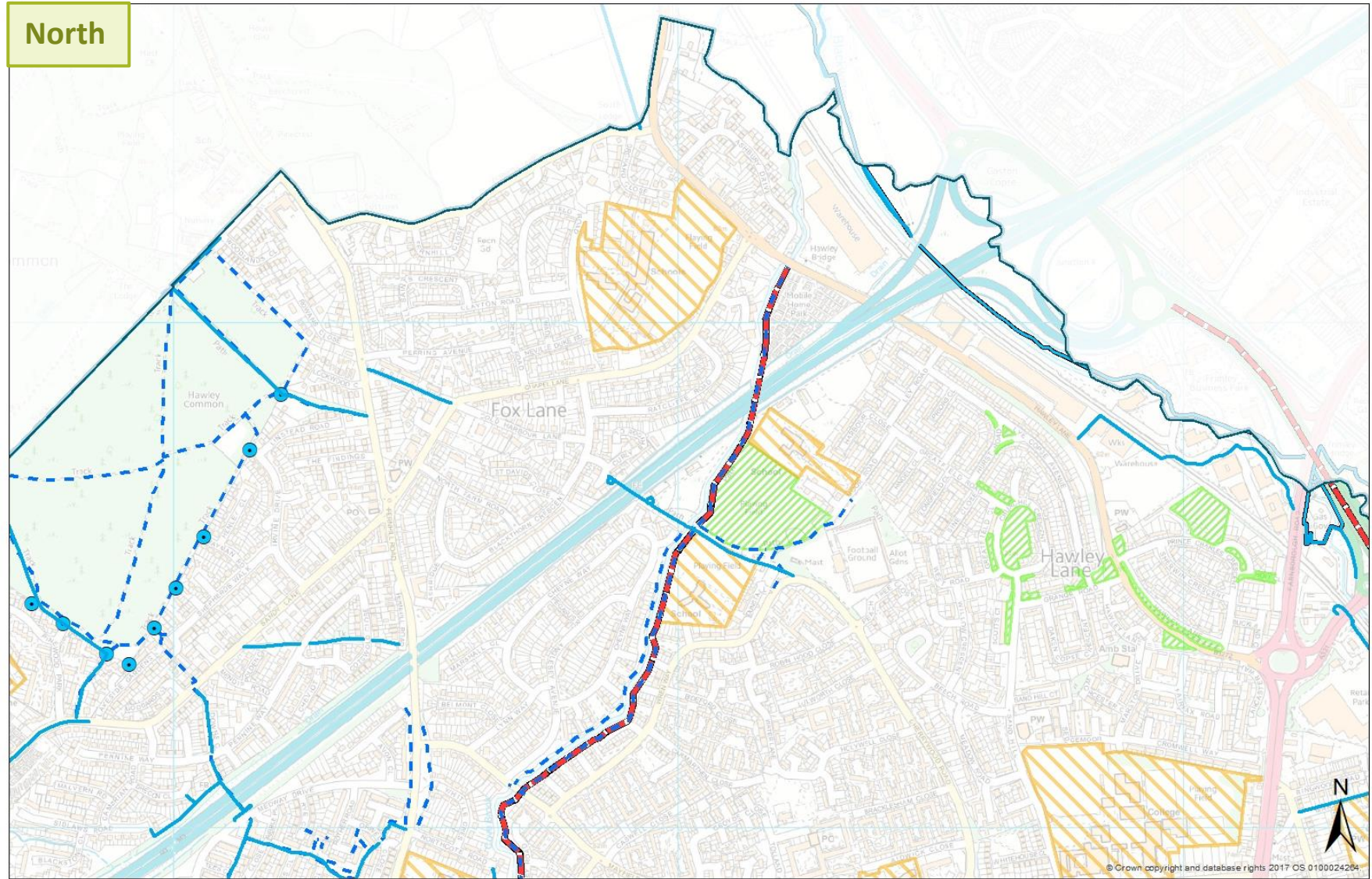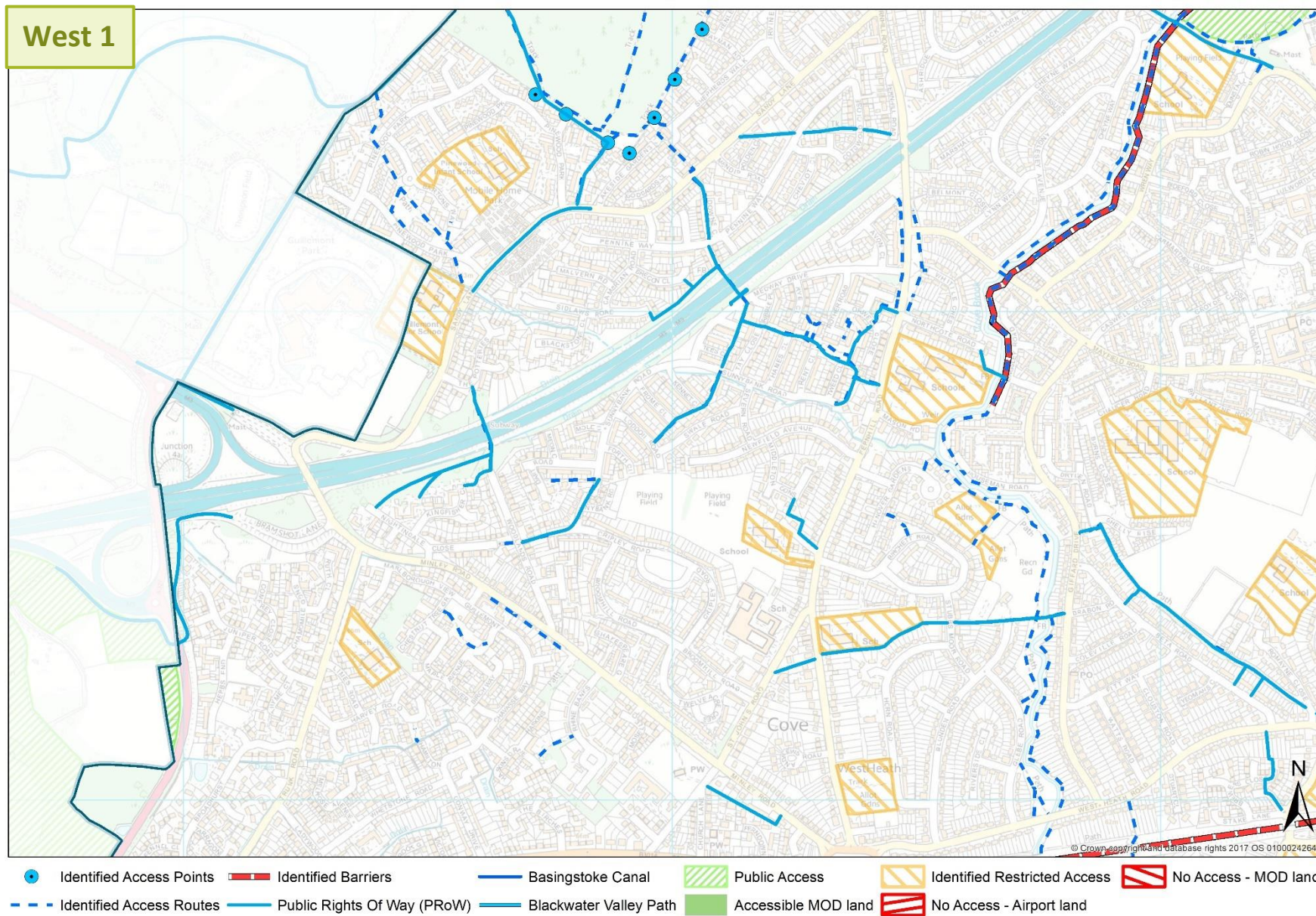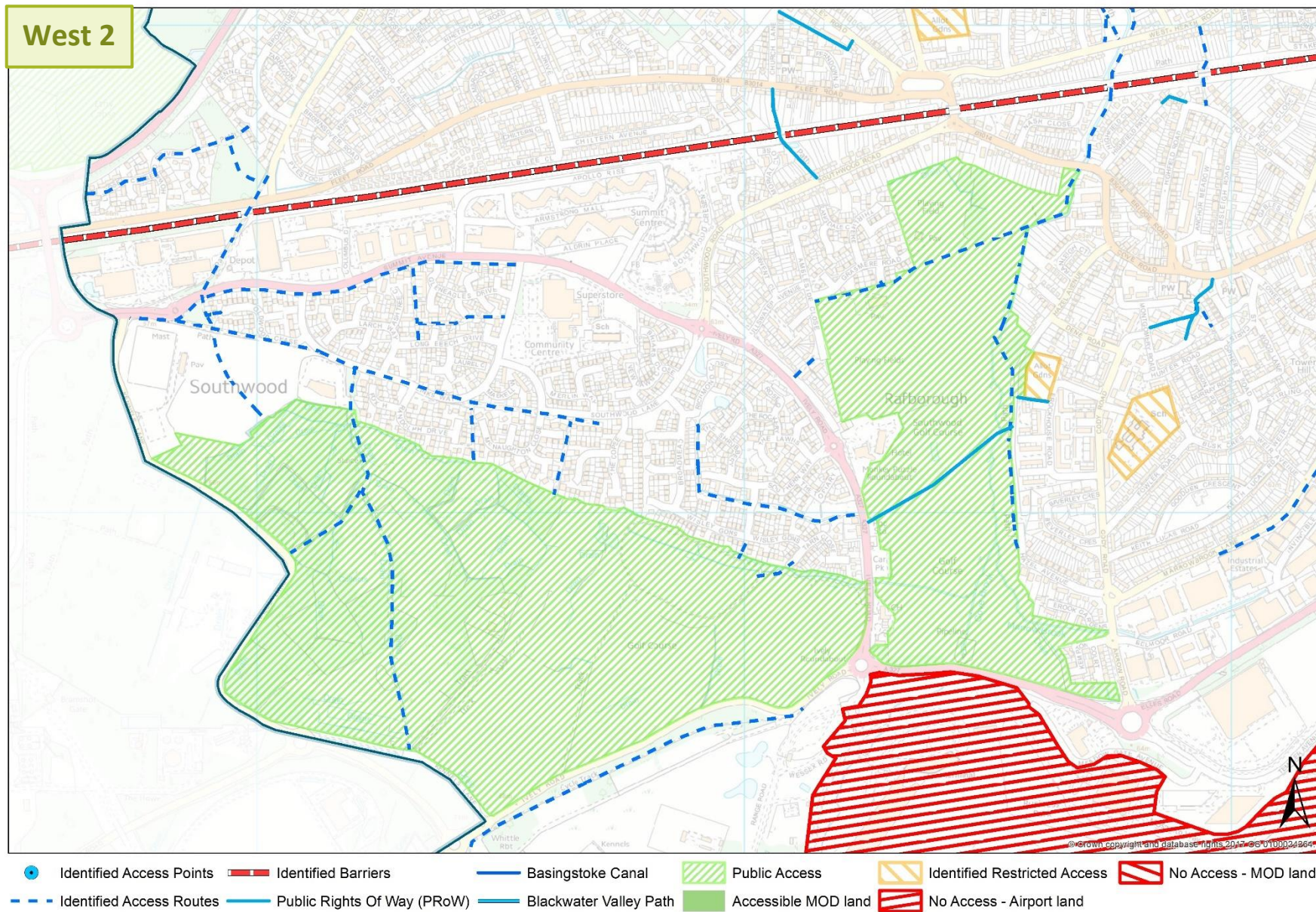| | Identified Access Points | | Identified Barriers | | Basingstoke Canal | | Public Access | | Identified Restricted Access | | No Access - MOD land |
| | Identified Access Routes | | Public Rights Of Way (PRoW) | | Blackwater Valley Path | | Accessible MOD land | | No Access - Airport land |

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East 3

Legend	
● Identified Access Points	
▪▪▪ Identified Barriers	
─── Basingstoke Canal	
▨ Public Access	
▨ Identified Restricted Access	
▨ No Access - MOD land	
─ ─ Identified Access Routes	
─── Public Rights Of Way (PRoW)	
─── Blackwater Valley Path	
▨ Accessible MOD land	
▨ No Access - Airport land	

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East 4

Identified Access Points — Identified Barriers — Basingstoke Canal — Public Access — Identified Restricted Access — No Access - MOD land

Identified Access Routes — Public Rights Of Way (PRoW) — Blackwater Valley Path — Accessible MOD land — No Access - Airport land
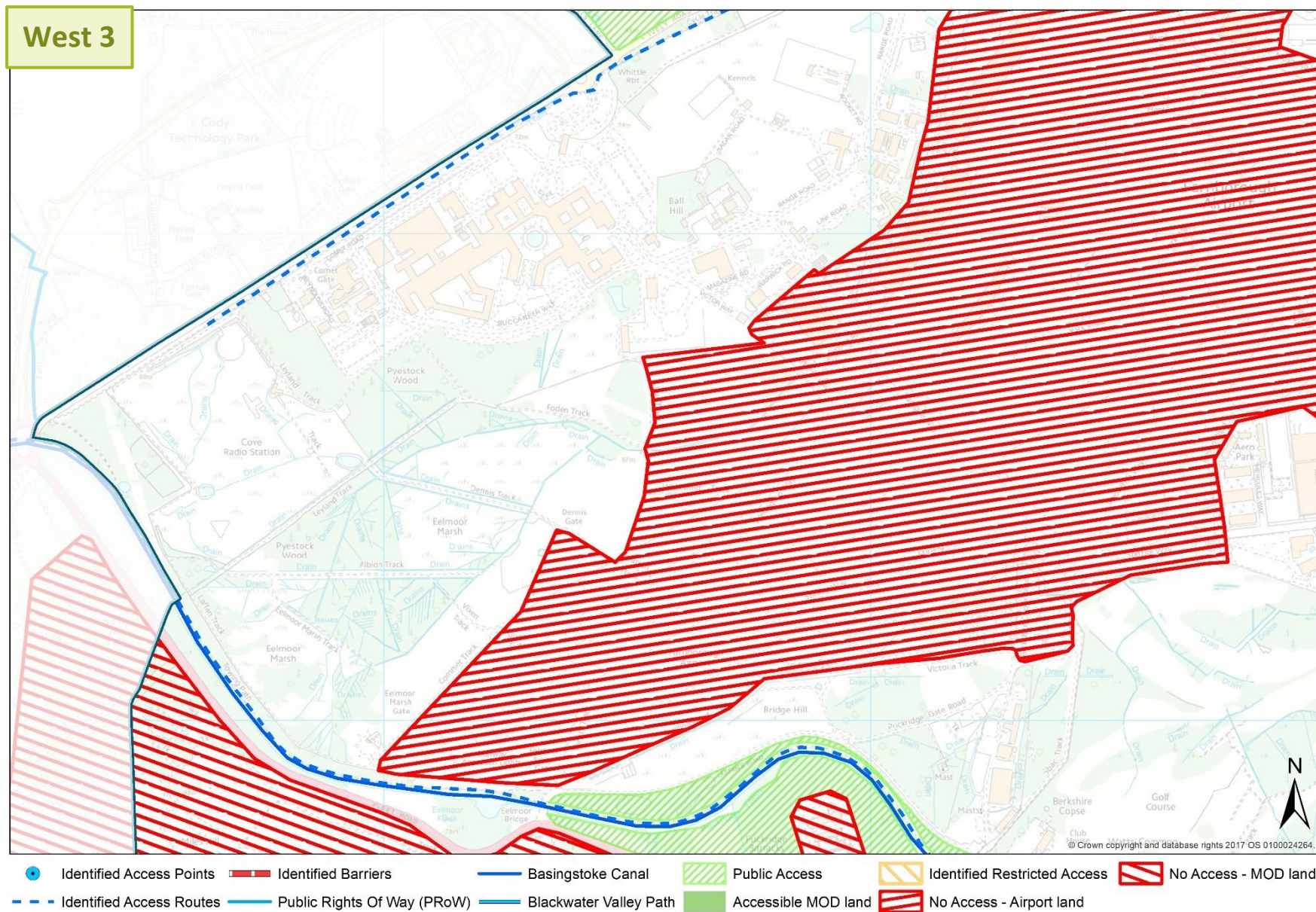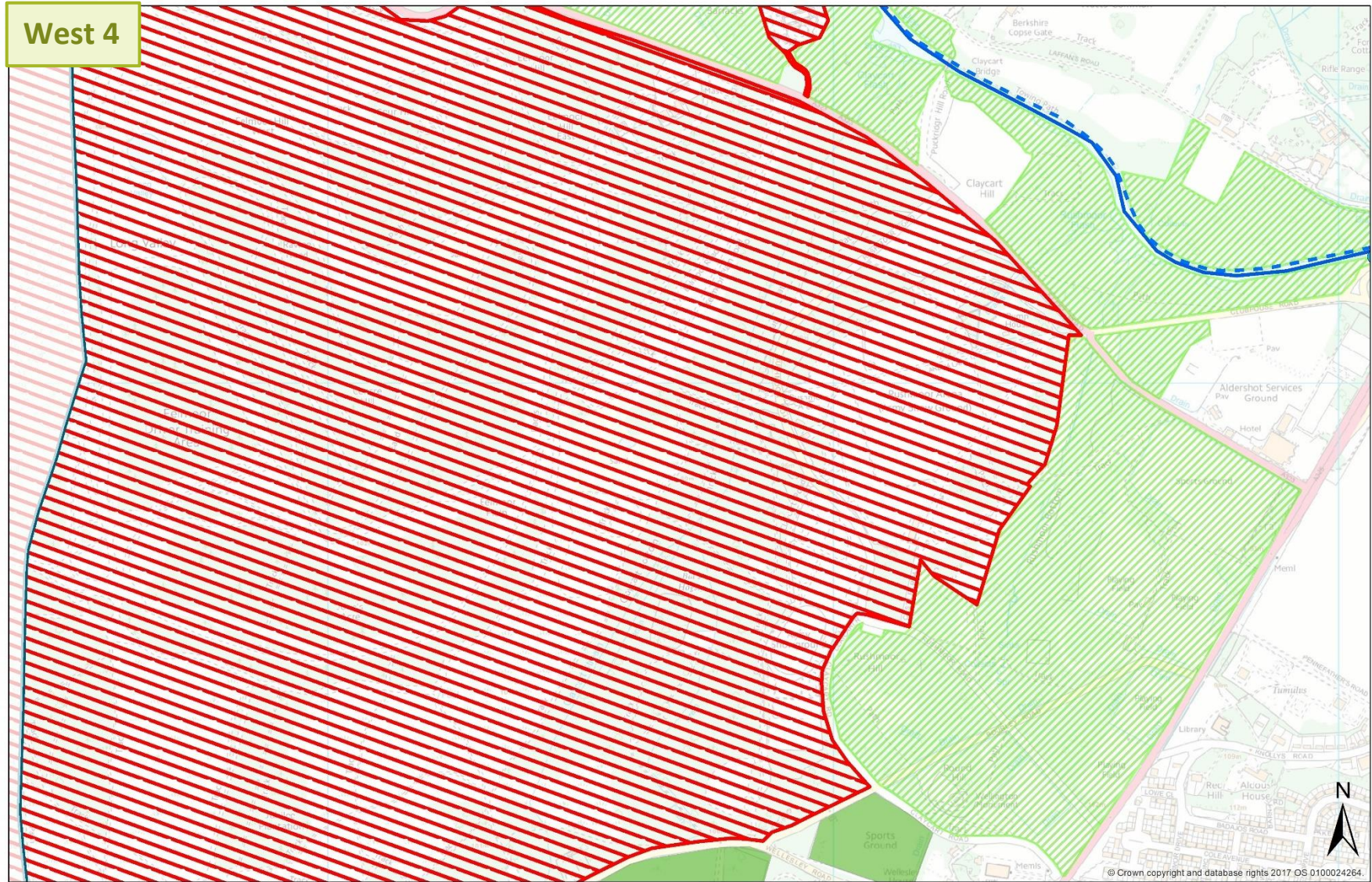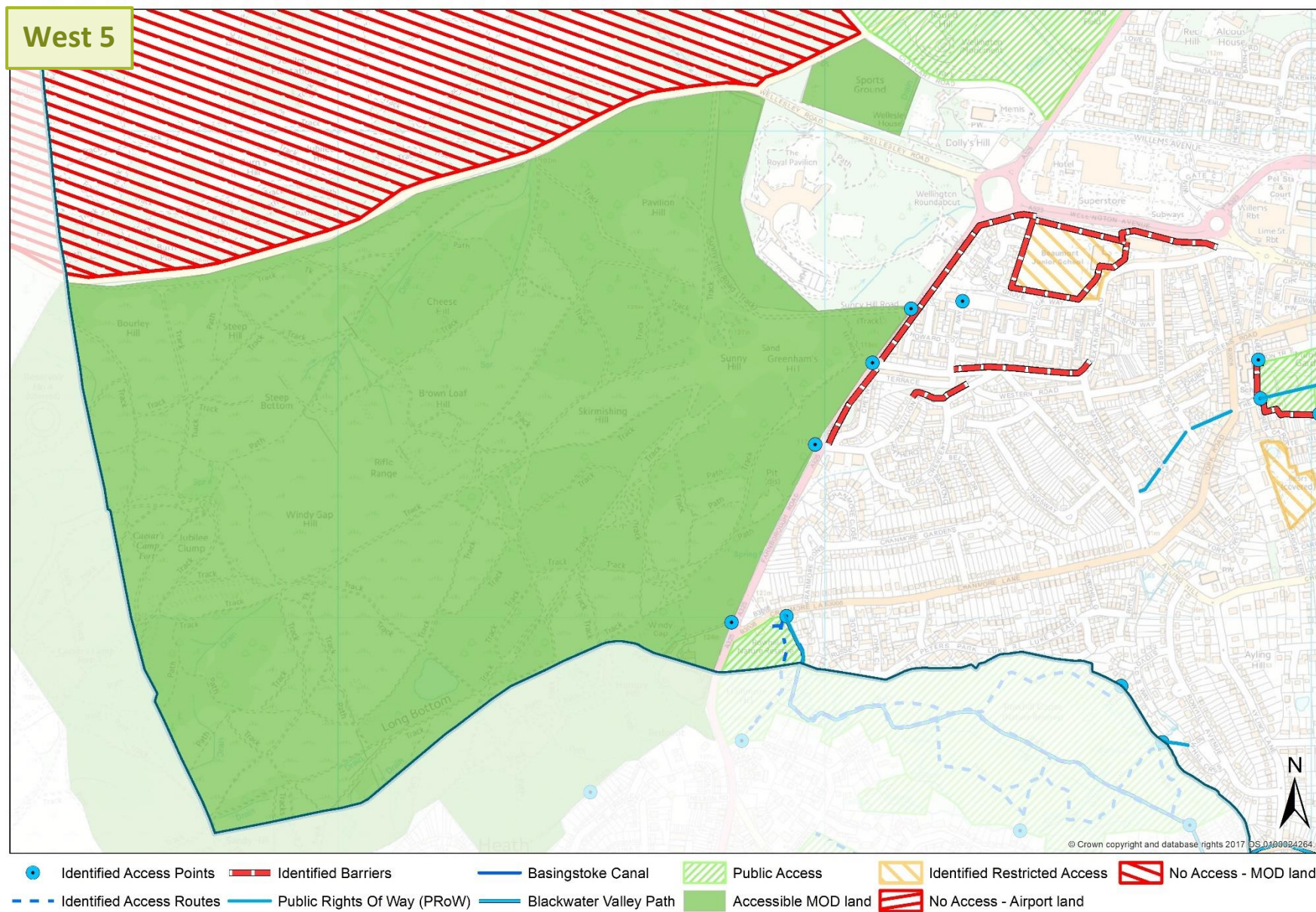
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East 5

ALDERSHOT

Identified Access Points
Identified Access Routes
Identified Barriers
Public Rights Of Way (PRoW)
Basingstoke Canal
Blackwater Valley Path
Public Access
Accessible MOD land
Identified Restricted Access
No Access - Airport land
No Access - MOD land

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N

East 6

Identified Access Points
Identified Access Routes
Identified Barriers
Public Rights Of Way (PRoW)
Basingstoke Canal
Blackwater Valley Path
Public Access
Accessible MOD land
Identified Restricted Access
No Access - MOD land
No Access - Airport land

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N

North

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Legend:
- Identified Access Points
- Identified Barriers
- Basingstoke Canal
- Public Access
- Identified Restricted Access
- No Access – MOD land
- Identified Access Routes
- Public Rights Of Way (PRoW)
- Blackwater Valley Path
- Accessible MOD land
- No Access – Airport land

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West 1

Identified Access Points — Identified Barriers — Basingstoke Canal — Public Access — Identified Restricted Access — No Access - MOD land

Identified Access Routes — Public Rights Of Way (PRoW) — Blackwater Valley Path — Accessible MOD land — No Access - Airport land

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West 2

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Legend:

- Identified Access Points
- Identified Access Routes
- Identified Barriers
- Public Rights Of Way (PRoW)
- Basingstoke Canal
- Blackwater Valley Path
- Public Access
- Accessible MOD land
- Identified Restricted Access
- No Access - Airport land
- No Access - MOD land

West 3

Identified Access Points · Identified Barriers · Basingstoke Canal · Public Access · Identified Restricted Access · No Access - MOD land

Identified Access Routes · Public Rights Of Way (PRoW) · Blackwater Valley Path · Accessible MOD land · No Access - Airport land

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West 4

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Symbol	Legend
● Identified Access Points	Identified Barriers
--- Identified Access Routes	Public Rights Of Way (PRoW)
Basingstoke Canal	Blackwater Valley Path
Public Access	Accessible MOD land
Identified Restricted Access	No Access - MOD land
	No Access - Airport land

West 5

Identified Access Points
Identified Barriers
Basingstoke Canal
Public Access
Identified Restricted Access
No Access - MOD land

Identified Access Routes
Public Rights Of Way (PRoW)
Blackwater Valley Path
Accessible MOD land
No Access - Airport land

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RUSHMOOR BOROUGH COUNCIL

Draft Green Infrastructure Strategy - Tell us what you think

About green infrastructure

'Green infrastructure' describes the networks of natural spaces and corridors across a given area. It can include a range of spaces from parks, playing fields and other open space to woodlands, allotments and street trees. It also includes 'blue infrastructure' like rivers, ponds and canals.

Having a natural infrastructure is essential to helping people to live healthier, happier and more sustainable lives. It's also important to make sure these spaces are accessible to people and wildlife.

Our draft Green Infrastructure Strategy

The purpose of our draft Green Infrastructure Strategy is to identify the valuable green infrastructure in and around Aldershot and Farnborough, to seek to protect, harness and sustain the benefits it provides, and to look for opportunities to improve what we have.

The draft strategy delivers our commitment in the Rushmoor Local Plan (2019) to produce a Green Infrastructure Strategy. The strategy and evidence in this document will inform spatial planning and development management decisions the council makes.

The strategy includes:

- Information about our existing green infrastructure
- A draft vision and objectives
- Some key priorities
- Potential projects

The strategy can be viewed on our website at www.rushmoor.gov.uk/greeninfrastructure.

Your views on the draft Green Infrastructure Strategy

We would like to hear what you think about our draft Green Infrastructure Strategy and on the priorities in it.

Once we have finalised and agreed the strategy, we will develop a Green Infrastructure Delivery Plan. This will set out how we will deliver the projects to protect and improve our green spaces. As part of our consultation, we'd like to hear any suggestions you have for projects we could include in the plan.

The consultation is open until Thursday 24th March.

What happens after the consultation

When we prepare the final strategy, we will take account of your views and suggestions.

It is important to note that although we have identified projects as having potential, it is not a commitment to delivering them or that partnership working has been agreed. Following the adoption of the Green Infrastructure Strategy, we will test potential projects for their feasibility and cost them as part of the preparation of the Green Infrastructure Delivery Plan.

To view our consultation survey privacy notice, please visit www.rushmoor.gov.uk/consultationprivacynotice

* 1. I am responding... *(please tick one)*

☐ As an individual

☐ As a borough / county councillor

☐ On behalf of an organisation, local association, community or group (please tell us in the box below)

☐ Other (please tell us in the box below)

Please write in

| |

RUSHMOOR BOROUGH COUNCIL

Draft Green Infrastructure Strategy - Tell us what you think

Draft vision and objectives

The strategy sets out our draft vision and what we want to achieve through it.

Our draft vision is that:

By 2032 the Council and its partners will have worked with the local community to achieve a high quality, connected and multi-functional green and blue infrastructure network that extends across the Borough, which is sustainable and provides benefits for people, place and nature.

Our draft objectives are:

People	Health and Wellbeing	Provide green infrastructure facilities to encourage, promote and enable healthy lifestyles	
	Connectivity	Improve the connectivity of green infrastructure for people and provide active access to the outdoors	
	Inclusivity	Enable the increased use of green infrastructure across all user groups, social groups and abilities	
Place	Quality and Character	Deliver green infrastructure which protects and enhances the quality and character of the local environment.	
Nature	Improved Function	Enhance existing green infrastructure to function better for wildlife, supporting healthy and more diverse ecosystems.	
	New Habitats and Linkages	Protect and enhance biodiversity by creating new habitats and linkages, improving connectivity and reducing habitat fragmentation.	
Sustainability	Climate Change Resilience	Deliver green infrastructure which helps mitigate, and can adapt to, the existing and future effects of climate change.	
	Long Term Sustainability	Working with partners to build and secure funding, effective governance and stewardship for new and existing green infrastructure to ensure its long-term sustainability and, where possible, to incorporate opportunities to educate and inspire people to care for the natural environment.	

* 2. Do you agree with the draft vision and objectives?

○ Yes

○ No

If you answered no, please explain why.

RUSHMOOR
BOROUGH COUNCIL

Draft Green Infrastructure Strategy - Tell us what you think

Green infrastructure assets

3

Chapter 5 of the draft Green Infrastructure Strategy identifies the green infrastructure assets in Aldershot and Farnborough under the five following themes:

- Landscape and Heritage
- Biodiversity
- Water
- Recreation and Open Space
- Access to the Outdoors and Connection

Under each of the themes we have made an assessment of the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats to these assets.

Landscape and Heritage

In summary, the strategy identifies the following assets:

- Three main landscape character types identified in the Hampshire Integrated Character Assessment (2012) and 30 landscape character areas identified in our local landscape character assessment
- Historic identity attributed to the Borough's association with the military, aviation and Napoleon
- Historic Parks and Gardens
- Scheduled Ancient Monuments
- Conservation Areas
- Listed Buildings
- Designated Important Open Areas recognised for their landscape value

See pages 37 to 43 of the strategy for more information, including maps which show the location of these assets.

* 3. Do you agree that we have identified all of the relevant green infrastructure assets under the Landscape and Heritage theme?

○ Yes

○ No

If you answered no, please let us know what you think we have missed.

The strengths and opportunities we have identified for this theme are:

- Opportunities to enhance or restore historic links between and improve access to heritage assets
- Opportunities to enhance the setting of heritage assets
- Opportunities to restore historic landscape features (e.g. the restoration of hedgerows as part of Southwood and Cove Brook Floodplain Enhancement Project)

The weakness and threats we have identified for this theme are:

- Need to reflect local character
- Hedgerow removal
- Potential for fragmentation of existing green spaces

* 4. Do you agree with our assessment of the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats that we have identified under the Landscape and Heritage theme?

  ○ Yes

  ○ No

If you answered no, please explain why.

RUSHMOOR
BOROUGH COUNCIL

Draft Green Infrastructure Strategy - Tell us what you think

Green infrastructure assets - Biodiversity

Biodiversity

In summary, the strategy identifies the following assets:

- Two National Character Areas
- Two Biodiversity Opportunity Areas
- Thames Basin Heaths Special Protection Area (SPA)
- Five Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI)
- Rowhill Local Nature Reserve (LNR)
- 38 Sites of Importance for Nature Conservation (SINCs)
- Two Road Verges of Ecological Importance (RVEI)
- Habitats of Principle Importance
- 21% woodland cover
- A number of linear features which provide wildlife corridors, including River Blackwater, Ively Stream, Cove Brook, wooded scrub of railway corridors and woodland and grassland corridors of major road network.

See pages 44 to 59 of the strategy for more information, including maps which show the location of these assets.

5

* 5. Do you agree that we have identified all of the relevant green infrastructure assets under the Biodiversity theme?

○ Yes

○ No

If you answered no, please let us know what you think we have missed.

[text box]

The strengths and opportunities we have identified for this theme are:

- Opportunities to improve the wildlife corridors and connections between the Borough's ecological assets
- Opportunities to deliver biodiversity net gain as part of new development
- Opportunities for nature recovery identified as part of the Local Nature Recovery Strategy
- Opportunities to improve the biodiversity potential of Council owned land
- Opportunities to enhance existing ecological assets
- Opportunities to restore native hedgerows (e.g. the restoration of hedgerows as part of Southwood and Cove Brook Floodplain Enhancement Project)
- Opportunities to extend woodland cover, where undertaken sensitively, to ensure existing biodiversity and recreational functions are considered
- Catchment flood alleviation through restoration of natural floodplain habitats
- Opportunities to strengthen woodland corridors along the main arterial transport routes to buffer nearby communities from air pollution
- Increase opportunities for people to connect with nature through recreation and volunteering
- Opportunities for improved function of ecological networks and therefore better delivery of ecosystem services that they offer

The weakness and threats we have identified for this theme are:

- Development resulting in loss of accessible greenspace
- Use of inappropriate non-native planting schemes
- Use of lighting designs that impact on the dispersal and foraging habits of nocturnal species
- Increased recreational disturbance to the Thames Basin Heaths Special Protection Area (SPA) Recreational access to the SPA and component SSSI sites should be discouraged due to their ecological sensitivity
- Lack of funding facing non-governmental organisations (NGOs) affecting their ability to effectively manage sites to maintain good ecological condition
- Poor or inappropriate management of sites and ensuring appropriate balance between recreation and biodiversity
- Lack of statutory obligations on landowners to sensitively manage their Sites of Importance for Nature Conservation (SINCs) resulting in risk of loss of ecological condition
- Where high quality habitat occurs in small isolated and vulnerable blocks this reduces the quality, vitality and robustness of our wildlife, making our biodiversity vulnerable to pressures from climate change and land use change. It also reduces the quality of services (ecosystem services) the natural environment is able to deliver to local communities
- New development puts pressure on sensitive woodland and associated habitats, both directly through decreasing coverage and ecological viability, and indirectly through fragmentation and the potential for increased recreational disturbance
- Risk of spread of invasive species

6

* 6. Do you agree with our assessment of the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats that we have identified under the Biodiversity theme?

○ Yes

○ No

If you answered no, please explain why.

[ ]

RUSHMOOR
BOROUGH COUNCIL

Draft Green Infrastructure Strategy - Tell us what you think

Green infrastructure assets - Water

Water

In summary, the strategy identifies the following assets:

- Basingstoke Canal
- River Blackwater
- Tributaries of the River Blackwater, including Cove Brook
- Tributaries of Cove Brook, including Marrow Brook, Hawley Lake Stream and Ively Brook
- Tice's Meadow
- Network of lakes in the east of the Borough associated with gravel extraction

See pages 60 to 65 of the strategy for more information, including maps which show the location of these assets.

* 7. Do you agree that we have identified all of the relevant green infrastructure assets under the Water theme?

○ Yes

○ No

If you answered no, please let us know what you think we have missed.

[ ]

7

The strengths and opportunities we have identified for this theme are:

- Basingstoke Canal, Blackwater Valley and Cove Brook provide valuable recreational resource. There are opportunities to improve connections with adjoining authorities to enhance these green corridors
- Southwood and Cove Brook Floodplain Enhancement Project
- Promotion of access to rivers and the canal
- River valleys should be protected and managed to promote natural flood alleviation
- Work with key partners to deliver improvements for the Water Framework directive and to deliver actions from the catchment Flood Management Plans and River Basin Management Plans
- Opportunities to promote benefits through appropriate Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems (SuDS) design

The weakness and threats we have identified for this theme are:

- Issues with fluvial and surface water flooding and future impacts of climate change
- Many culverted and diverted natural watercourses
- Condition status of the Canal
- Poor/bad waterbody status (WFD)

* 8. Do you agree with our assessment of the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats that we have identified under the Water theme?

○ Yes

○ No

If you answered no, please explain why.

RUSHMOOR
BOROUGH COUNCIL

Draft Green Infrastructure Strategy - Tell us what you think

Green infrastructure assets - Recreation and Open Space

Recreation and Open Space

In summary, the strategy identifies the following assets:

- Five Suitable Alternative Natural Green Spaces (SANGs) within and in close proximity to the Borough boundary
- 29 parks and gardens of various sizes
- 24 areas of natural and semi-natural greenspaces of various sizes
- 14 parcels of amenity greenspace
- 6 cemeteries and churchyards
- 11 allotment sites
- 8 green corridors
- 36 publicly owned and 2 independent schools that provide recreational space for their pupils and in most cases playing fields (with some schools enabling the use of their facilities outside of school hours to third parties).

See pages 66 to 84 of the strategy for more information, including maps which show the location of these assets.

* 9. Do you agree that we have identified all of the relevant green infrastructure assets under the Recreation and Open Space theme?

- Yes
- No

If you answered no, please let us know what you think we have missed.

The strengths and opportunities we have identified for this theme are:

- Diverse range of public open spaces within the management or ownership of the council, including nature reserves, recreation grounds and green spaces
- Sizable areas of open space within the ownership of the Ministry of Defence that are accessible to the public, including Queens Parade Playing Fields and Ramillies Park
- A number of SANGS in and around the Borough which provide a diverse recreational resource for residents
- Opportunities to create new or improved open spaces or allow access to more open space, through development in the borough, specifically those that deliver public open spaces or additional SANG
- Opportunities to connect existing SANG to create a wider network with other sites in and around Rushmoor
- Opportunities to enhance biodiversity of open spaces, specifically beyond the formal pitch and safety margins of sports pitches that are managed as informal open space

The weakness and threats we have identified for this theme are:

- Some localised areas of open space deficiency, including areas which are outside of the '15-minute walk zone' of a green space
- Indications of potential open space deficiencies, which are linked to more deprived areas and areas with a higher population density
- Accessibility of open space
- Appropriate balance between enhancing resources for people and wildlife

* 10. Do you agree with our assessment of the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats that we have identified under the Recreation and Open Space theme?

○ Yes

○ No

If you answered no, please explain why.

RUSHMOOR BOROUGH COUNCIL

Draft Green Infrastructure Strategy - Tell us what you think

Green infrastructure assets - Access to the Outdoors and Connections

Access to the Outdoors and Connections

In summary, the strategy identifies the following assets:

- Public rights of way
- Basingstoke Canal path and Blackwater Valley Path
- Identified access routes (informal pathways)
- Number of green spaces (also identified under other themes) which are publicly accessible

In addition, we have identified a number of green spaces which have green infrastructure value, but no public access or restricted public access (e.g. Farnborough Airport) and a number of physical or perceived barriers to movement, which may prevent people or discourage people from walking and cycling across the Borough.

See pages 85 to 90 and Appendix 4 of the strategy for more information, including maps which show the location of these assets.

* 11. Do you agree that we have identified all of the relevant green infrastructure assets under the Access to the Outdoors and Connections theme?

○ Yes

○ No

If you answered no, please let us know what you think we have missed.

The strengths and opportunities we have identified for this theme are:

- Relatively compact Borough with good opportunities to walk/cycle
- Existing longer routes available, for example via the Basingstoke Canal and Blackwater River. Potential to improve connections with adjoining authorities and open space beyond the boundary
- Opportunities to promote and improve access to the large areas of countryside surrounding the Borough, whilst acknowledging those areas which are internationally protected and vulnerable to recreational impact
- Opportunities to improve access and reduce the impact of barriers across the Borough
- Opportunities to better provide access for all
- Opportunities to better promote the network of Rushmoor's greenspaces and the informal connections between them (for example, through the creation of an interactive map)
- Opportunities to improve GI connections to key destinations, such as schools, railways stations and town centres
- Opportunities to improve signage and information to inform residents of walking and cycling routes to key locations (e.g. schools, town centres and railway stations)

The weakness and threats we have identified for this theme are:

- PRoW network is fragmented and the Borough as a whole has a low density of PRoW
- There are a number of barriers (i.e. railway lines, M3, A331) which sever ecological networks and act as barriers to accessing open space
- Some access routes, including PRoW may not be attractive to users
- Some open spaces and walking/cycling routes are in close proximity to busy roads, which could discourage local people from adopting healthy transport options, such as cycling and walking

* 12. Do you agree with our assessment of the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats that we have identified under the Access to the Outdoors and Connections theme?

○ Yes

○ No

If you answered no, please explain why.

RUSHMOOR
BOROUGH COUNCIL

Draft Green Infrastructure Strategy - Tell us what you think

Priorities

Using the assessment of the existing Green Infrastructure network we have identified the following broad priorities. Delivering projects focussed around these priorities will enable the Council to deliver the Vision and Objectives for this strategy.

11

Broad priorities

⇨ Increase opportunities for people to connect with nature

⇨ Identify opportunities and prioritise locations for enhancing biodiversity

⇨ Identify opportunities to improve the wildlife corridors and connections between the Borough's ecological assets.

⇨ Identify need and prioritise locations for new trees, hedgerows and woodland

⇨ Deliver green infrastructure that protects and enhances important views and the local landscape character

⇨ Review maintenance and management policies for open space

⇨ Protect the existing Green Infrastructure network, including the Important Open Area and Green Corridor designations in the Local Plan

⇨ Identify opportunities to remove barriers to sustainable movement and to improve access to existing open spaces.

⇨ Promote appropriate Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems (SuDs) and identify opportunities for natural flood alleviation measures

⇨ Increase usage of the green travel corridors

⇨ Identify opportunities to deliver Green Infrastructure enhancements that will improve the state of the natural environment, including air quality and noise issues

⇨ Identify how new developments can connect and enhance the existing Green Infrastructure network

⇨ Identify opportunities to deliver new Suitable Alternative Natural Greenspace (SANG) and improve connections between existing SANG

⇨ Work with partners to improve and enhance the Green Infrastructure network within and beyond the Borough, with a focus on those areas where this will address existing deficiencies and/or provide benefits for deprived areas and for disadvantaged groups

⇨ Work with partners to deliver actions arising from other Strategies which will support the vision and objectives of the Green Infrastructure Strategy

* 13. Do you agree with the broad priorities?

○ Yes

○ No

If you answered no, please explain why, or tell us about the priorities that you think we have missed.

[   ]

14. Please tell us what you consider to be the most important priorities by ranking them, with the most important being number 1.

12

Increase opportunities for people to connect with nature

Identify opportunities and prioritise locations for enhancing biodiversity

Identify opportunities to improve wildlife corridors and connections between the Borough's ecological assets

Identify need and prioritise locations for new trees, hedgerows and woodland

Deliver green infrastructure that protects and enhances important views and local landscape character

Review maintenance and management policies for open space

Protect the existing Green Infrastructure network, including the Important Open Area and Green Corridors designated in the Local Plan

Identify opportunities to remove barriers to sustainable movement and improve access to existing open spaces

Promote appropriate Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems (SuDs) and identify opportunities for natural flood alleviation measures

Increase usage of green travel corridors

Identify opportunities to deliver Green Infrastructure enhancements that will improve the state of the natural environment, including air quality and noise issues

Identify how new developments can connect to and enhance the existing Green Infrastructure network

Identify opportunities to deliver new Suitable Alternative Natural Greenspace (SANG) and improve connections between existing SANG

Work with partners to improve and enhance the Green Infrastructure network within and beyond the Borough, with a focus on those areas where this will address existing deficiencies and/or provide benefits for deprived areas and for disadvantaged groups

Work with partners to deliver actions arising from other Strategies which will support the vision and objectives of the Green Infrastructure Strategy

RUSHMOOR
BOROUGH COUNCIL

Draft Green Infrastructure Strategy - Tell us what you think

Emerging projects

The following projects have been identified in this draft Green Infrastructure Strategy. More detail more can be found in Appendix 3 of the Strategy.

It is important to note that although we have identified projects as having potential, it is not a commitment to delivering them or that partnership working has been agreed. Following the adoption of the Green Infrastructure Strategy, we will test potential projects for their feasibility and cost them as part of the preparation of the Green Infrastructure Delivery Plan.

14

Emerging process projects

- PP1 - An interactive Green Infrastructure Map
- PP2 – A Development Management Green Infrastructure Toolkit
- PP3 – A Biodiversity Net Gain Off-site Compensation Scoping Project
- PP4 - Access to the Outdoors Information Project
- PP5 - Connecting Rushmoor's Ecological Network
- PP6 – Review of Available SANG Sites
- PP7 - Carbon Reduction through Tree Planting Feasibility Project

Emerging geographical projects

- GP1 - Southwood and Cove Brook Floodplain Enhancement Project (underway)
- GP2 - Blackwater Valley Enhancement Project
- GP3 - Enhancing the Basingstoke Canal Project
- GP4 - Cove Brook Greenway Project
- GP5 - Southwood/Bramshot SANG Network Project

* 15. Do you agree with the projects we have identified?

○ Yes

○ No

If you answered no, please explain why.

[ ]

16. Are there additional projects that you would like to see included?

○ Yes

○ No

If you answered yes, please provide more details.

[ ]

17. Do you have any other comments on the draft Green Infrastructure Strategy?

[ ]

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CABINET   **COUNCILLOR MARTIN TENNANT**
5th July 2022   **MAJOR PROJECTS & PROPERTY**
                                                          PORTFOLIO HOLDER

KEY DECISION: YES/NO   **REPORT NO. REG2204**

FARNBOROUGH TOWN CENTRE STRATEGY

SUMMARY AND RECOMMENDATIONS:

Town Centres across the country are changing and these changes have been accelerated and emphasised following the pandemic. The development and wider regeneration of Town Centres has historically been taken forward by the private sector but this can result in a piecemeal approach, uncoordinated and incur delays. It is now recognised that Local Authorities need to be proactive in taking direct intervention, just as the Council has in Aldershot.

In addition to the redevelopment of the Civic Quarter, the Council plan recognises the need to progress the wider regeneration of Farnborough town centre. The first stage of this work is the development of a town centre strategy which takes account of the post pandemic and economic position we are experiencing.

At its meeting on the 15th March, Cabinet agreed to fund the delivery of a Farnborough Town Centre Strategy. The draft strategy was presented to the Policy and Project Advisory Board (PPAB) Meeting on 5th April 2022 as work in progress and again as a draft document on 8th June 2022. PPAB members will make any final comments on the strategy by 28th June and these will be reported at the Cabinet meeting

Recommendation:

That subject to any further comments from the Policy and Projects Advisory Board Cabinet:

1. Agree and adopt the Farnborough Town Centre Strategy (attached as Appendix 1)
2. Consider establishing a Member Task and Finish Group to oversee the implementation of the Strategy.

1.   INTRODUCTION

1.1   The purpose of this report is to explain to Cabinet the reasons why a Town Centre Strategy is required, what the Strategy comprises and to recommend that Cabinet agree and adopt the Farnborough Town Centre Strategy.

2. BACKGROUND

2.1 The habits and preferences of how communities use their town centres has been changing over many years. These changes have accelerated during and following the Covid pandemic and particularly the lockdowns. There is a need therefore to reinvigorate town centres to create vibrant, sustainable, diverse, and welcoming environments for residents, workers, and visitors.

2.2 In the past, town centres have evolved with private sector developments, but these can be site specific resulting in unplanned and uncoordinated town centres which are disjointed, isolated and unsustainable.

2.3 It is now recognised that town centres require a more strategic and holistic approach which can be supported by the intervention of Local Authorities, such as is happening in Aldershot. To ensure the Council can build on the ambitious proposals for the Farnborough Civic Quarter in a strategic and holistic way, it was agreed that a Farnborough Town Centre strategy should be produced.

2.4 Cabinet approved funding at the meeting on 15th March 2022 to produce a Town Centre strategy and following soft market testing with a range of providers, David Lock Associates were recommended and subsequently appointed to take this forward.

2.5 The strategy has been considered by the was presented to Policy and Project Advisory Board (PPAB) on 5th April 2022 and 8th June 2022 and they will prepare their final comments on 28th June and any recommended changes as a result will be reported to Cabinet at the meeting.

2.6 The draft strategy, attached as Appendix 1, sets out how the Council through land ownership and by acting as a catalyst for investment and changes, can secure a prosperous and sustainable future for Farnborough.

3. TOWN CENTRE STRATEGY

3.1 The strategy sets out the context, identifying Farnborough as

- A medium sized town, within easy access of larger order centres
- A young town, with a need to cater for families and younger people as well as national issues around an ageing population
- A strong employment location, with specialities around aerospace, gaming, high tech manufacturing and emerging technologies
- Excellent quality higher education, offering a highly skilled local workforce to support business development
- A historic place, but without a historic town centre
- A place with ambition and recognition of the need to change and regenerate
- An actively and directly involved public sector, as evidenced by land ownership, and appetite for direct involvement

- A developing pace, with active projects such as the Civic Quarter

3.2 In considering and analysing the property market and vacancy levels, the strategy positively finds that Farnborough has a strong economic profile, an opportunity to grow and the potential for long term sustainability.

3.3 It is recognised within the strategy that the town centre today faces a number of challenges including lack of sense of purpose/arrival, poor connectivity with surrounding area due to the road infrastructure severance, historic piecemeal approach to development, lack of balanced mix of uses, low quality public realm, threat of on-line shopping and declining high streets.

3.4 The strategy describes how Farnborough does not offer the environment or mix that will serve the aspirations of its current and future immediate catchment area. It does not have the backgrounds and sights that younger populations seek, and it is felt that it currently struggles to offer an immediate welcome to visitors.

3.5 A key issue that the strategy details is the lack of cultural, performance and arts spaces. Consultation that took place to inform the emerging draft Cultural Strategy identified that 79% of residents would like to see more arts and cultural activity in the town, to improve and enliven the public realm.

3.6 The strategy has been developed taking into account consultation with stakeholders and the wealth of public consultation that took place in relation to the Farnborough Town Centre Supplementary Planning Document and more recently the Farnborough Civic Quarter Masterplan Outline planning application. The stakeholder responses are included in the document as an Appendix. However, it should be noted that further public consultation will take place as the strategy is implemented and projects are progressed.

3.7 The combination of national and local policy context, feedback, perceptions and economy suggests the town centre needs a step change and a vision for Farnborough that is:

- An offer that will make Farnborough attractive – more of a mix of uses, broader leisure, cultural and community offer, something for everybody, a day through to night-time economy
- About place, space, and activity, developing pride, loyalty, a sense of ownership and an identity
- A place where people live and work, celebrate, socialise and play
- A place of education, Leisure, culture, performance, trade, service and business
- A linked-up place, integrated with its surroundings
- An active sustainable environment where people want to spend time
- A greener place

3.8 To draw these objectives into a meaningful strategy, five themes have been identified under which separate workstreams can be developed. These themes

are Identity, Branding and Events; Development; Activities; Access, Gateways and Wayfinding; and Environment, Safety and Wellbeing. These themes are considered in detail within the strategy document.

3.9   The strategy includes a process for delivery and an action plan broken down to short, medium, and longer-term actions. The suggested actions are indicative of the types of interventions that can be made to secure sustainable change and regeneration.

3.10   As with all strategies, the messages are high level and the detail will be in the workstreams and actions. This strategy is the start of the process which identifies the areas of work that will need to be taken forward to secure change and ensure the objectives become a reality.

4.   Town Centre Strategy and Levelling Up bid

4.1   As mentioned in the Town Centre Strategy, a key issue is the lack of cultural, performance and arts spaces. To address the lack of, and limited cultural and arts activity within Farnborough, the Council is submitting a bid to Government to secure funding from the Levelling Up Fund. If successful, this funding will be a significant contribution to the cost of a Leisure and Cultural Hub Building on the Civic Quarter, which is to accommodate a new library with cultural and arts facilities alongside the new leisure centre. The foundation of the bid is to help 'level up' the health inequalities and poorer educational outcomes in Rushmoor as well as support the wider regeneration agenda.

4.2   Having an adopted Farnborough Town Centre Strategy, would strengthen the Council's bid and demonstrate a coordinated and holistic approach to reinvigorating the town centre to create a vibrant, sustainable, diverse and welcoming environments for residents, workers and visitors.

5.   IMPLICATIONS

Financial Implications

5.1   There is no cost to the Council in adopting the Town Centre Strategy. Any costs required in taking the strategy forward and implementing the workstreams and actions under the five themes will be assessed and reported back separately for approval.

Risks

5.2   There are no risks to the Council in adopting the strategy. However, projects which form part of the action plan could entail risks which may vary between financial and reputational and in many cases across both headings depending on the size and nature of projects.

5.3   Projects and actions that are considered as part of the strategy will be assessed from a risk management perspective in the normal way and reported accordingly prior to implementation.

Equalities Impact Implications

5.4   There are no equalities impact implications as a result of adopting this strategy.

6.   CONCLUSION

6.1   As with most town centres across the country, Farnborough faces challenges which have accelerated following the pandemic and particularly through the lockdowns. A town centre strategy is required to holistically shape the future of the town centre.

6.2   The draft Farnborough Town Centre Strategy attached as Appendix 1, is a high-level strategy which sets the overall direction of travel and work required to secure a sustainable and vibrant town centre for Farnborough through five key themes. Workstreams are set out which sit below each of the key themes and a suggested action plan is also included.

6.3   Whilst strategies require regular monitoring, review and updating, in adopting this strategy, it shows the Council has a plan and knows what it wants to achieve, and this commitment will provide confidence for investors and potential development partners.

CONTACT DETAILS:

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Executive Director: Karen Edwards **(**karen.Edwards@rushmoor.gov.uk)

APPENDICES
APPENDIX 1: Draft Farnborough Town Centre Strategy

DRAFT

FARNBOROUGH
TOWN CENTRE STRATEGY

DAVID LOCK
ASSOCIATES

CONTENTS

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CHAPTER 1:
PURPOSE OF THE STRATEGY

1.1 This strategy has been commissioned by Rushmoor Borough Council (RBC) to help shape the future of Farnborough Town Centre. This considers interventions, actions and the changing role of the town centre, and how development and change can secure a sustainable and prosperous future which will meet the needs of local people and visitors.

1.2 The habits and preferences of local communities and how they use their town centres has been changing over many years. These changes have been accelerated by the pandemic and lockdowns. There is a move to reinvigorate town centres to create vibrant, sustainable, diverse and welcoming environments where residents, workers and visitors will enjoy spending time and will want to return.

1.3 Farnborough is no exception. The Council recognises the need for a strategy which will provide a holistic approach to help drive and curate the improvement of the town centre. A key principle of the strategy will be to build on the ambitious proposals for a new Civic Quarter to the south of the town centre (for which an outline planning application has recently been submitted). It is important to ensure that this integrates seamlessly with the rest of the town centre to maximise the benefit it will bring. It also changes the nature of the town centre from a place people visit to become far more of a place people live.

1.4 The Council has also identified regeneration of the Meads Shopping Centre and adjacent vacant land as a major opportunity for Council intervention in the heart of Farnborough town centre.

1.5 This strategy sets out how the Council, through land ownership and by acting as a catalyst for investment and change, can secure a prosperous and sustainable future for Farnborough.

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CHAPTER 2:
UNDERSTANDING THE CONTEXT

A Brief History

2.1 Farnborough's origins can be traced back to the Anglo-Saxon period, with the settlement being recognised by the Domesday Book of 1086. With a recorded population of 22 households, the town was among the largest 40% of settlements in England at the time.

2.2 Farnborough has a rich history in aviation dating back to the early 20th century. The town's proximity to Aldershot, which is widely considered to be the Home of the British Army, established its appeal as a suitable location for aviation research and development. This strong heritage is evident through numerous aeronautical successes attributed to Farnborough, including being the location where Colonel Samuel Cody piloted the first powered flight in Britain.

2.3 In addition, the now-defunct Royal Aircraft Establishment (RAE) is credited with undertaking research and testing for the development of the Concorde, the first turbojet engine, and several other aviation inventions. Through the RAE, Farnborough has played a significant role in facilitating some of the most notable military and civil aviation innovations in history.

2.4 A further extension of its strong links to aviation, Farnborough is also home to one of Europe's leading business airports. The airport is considered to be "the UK's only dedicated business aviation airport and home to a number of the UK's largest business jet companies"[1]. Farnborough Airport has also hosted the Farnborough International Airshow since 1948, currently attracting over 80,000 trade visitors.

2.5 Beyond aviation, archaeological records indicate that Farnborough was once an important centre for pottery production. Forming the western part of Farnborough, the village of Cove is known to have "13 kiln sites dating from the 15th century to the 20th century"[2].

2.6 Farnborough retains important parts of its heritage through a number of historic buildings. Farnborough Hill School, consisting of a Grade I listed Victorian manor house, was previously the home of the exiled Empress Eugenie of France. The empress, together with her husband Napoleon III and son Prince Imperial, is buried at nearby Grade I listed St. Michaels Abbey. North Camp also consists of distinct buildings of character and interest.

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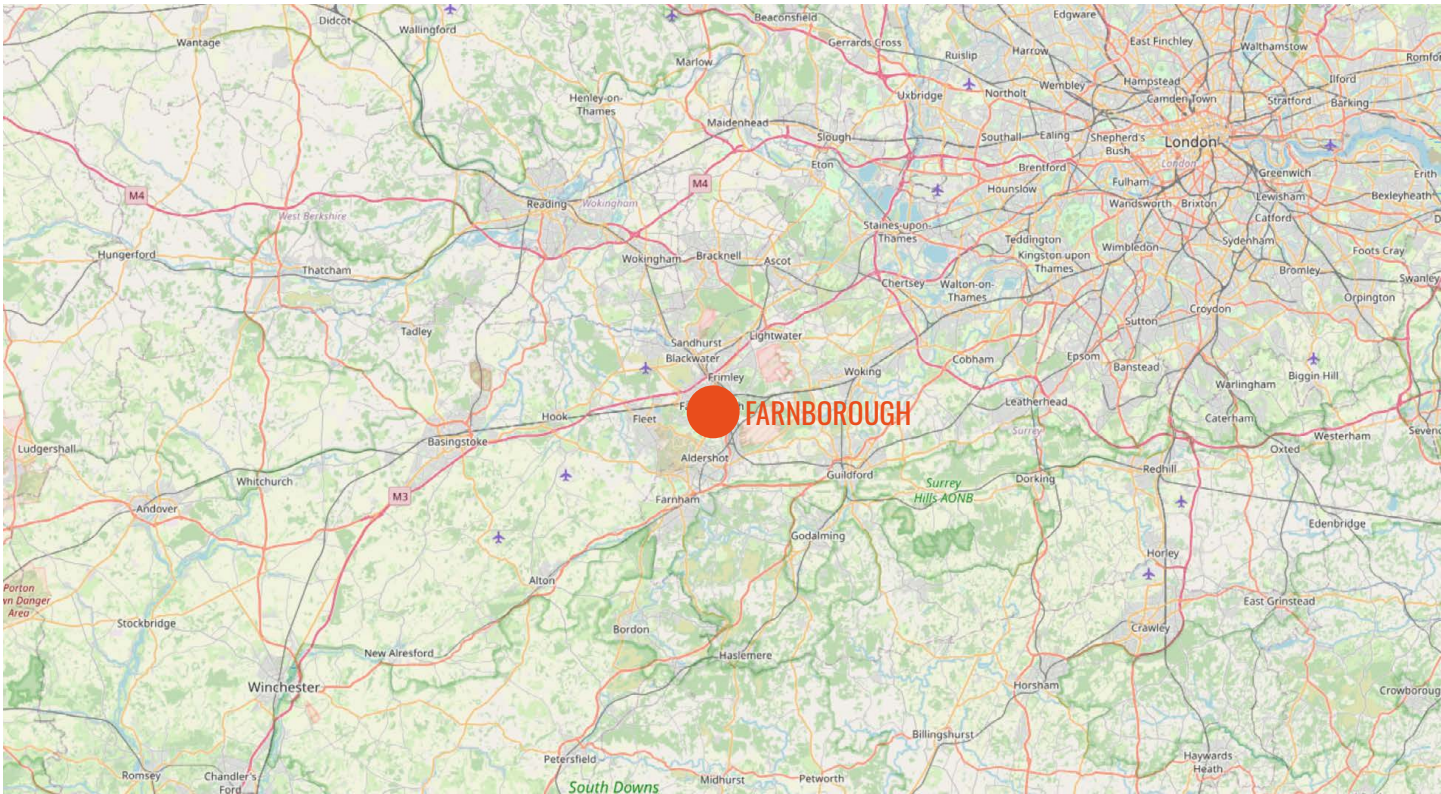
Figure 2.1: Location

2.7 In addition Farnborough has some 7 nationally listed buildings and structures at Farnborough airport and its immediate surroundings (2 x Grade 1, 1 x Grade II* and 4 x grade II).

2.8 Today, the aviation heritage and historic fabric of Farnborough provide a positive contribution to the town's unique character and distinctiveness. It is therefore imperative that these defining characteristics are woven into the way the town centre is shaped for the future.

Farnborough today

LOCATION

2.9 Farnborough is in north east Hampshire 50 km south west of London in the borough of Rushmoor. Situated close to Junction 4 of the M3, which connects the town to London, the south coast and the M25, Farnborough is part of the Enterprise M3 Local Enterprise Partnership. The town also benefits from fast rail connections, including a 34 minute service to London Waterloo, and is recognised as a convenient satellite commuter town for the capital.

2.10 The town is positioned at the centre of a ribbon of development along the A331 on the Surrey/Hampshire border linking it to settlements in both counties: Camberley and Frimley to the north in Surrey and then to the south Aldershot in Hampshire and finally, Farnham back over the border in Surrey. The larger towns of Reading, Guildford, Woking and Basingstoke also provide wider employment opportunities for residents and offer larger shopping destinations than Farnborough town centre.

[1] Key facts about Farnborough Airport (RBC, 2015) https://www.rushmoor.gov.uk/CHttpHandler.ashx?id=14688&p=0

[2] Twelve Walks around Farnborough and Cove (David Cleeve, 2018) https://www.rushmoor.gov.uk/CHttpHandler.ashx?id=19368&p=0

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POPULATION

2.11   The latest data from the ONS Population Estimates show that Farnborough has a population of 64,770 [2020]. This is compared with 57,486 at the 2011 Census. The following breakdown is available from the ONS.

Gender (E 2020)	
Males	32,403
Females	32,367

Age Groups (E 2020)	
0-17 years	14,456
18-64 years	39,832
65+ years	10,482

Age Distribution (E 2020)	
0-9 years	8,408
10-19 years	7,189
20-29 years	7,378
30-39 years	9,318
40-49 years	9,464
50-59 years	9,360
60-69 years	6,392
70-79 years	4,844
80+ years	2,748
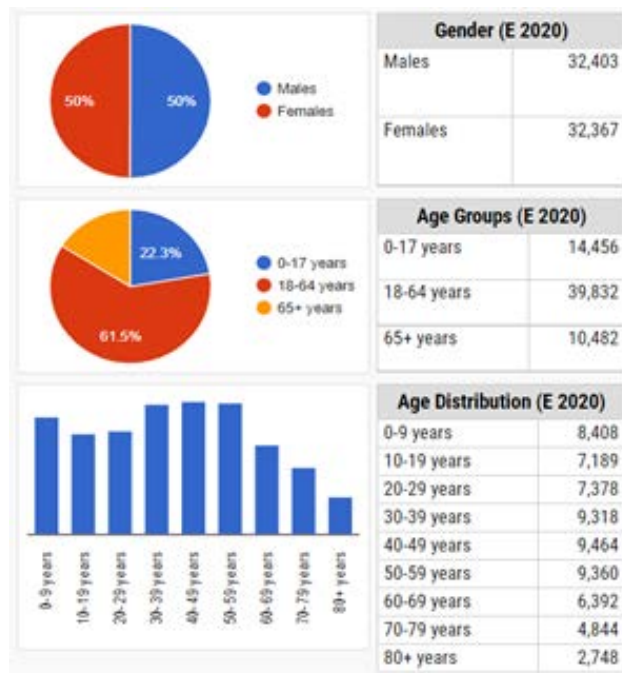
Table 1: Population Data for Farnborough
Source: ONS Mid-Year Population Estimates 2020

Figures for Rushmoor as a whole show that although the population has increased since 2011, it reached a peak in 2016 and has been in decline since.

2.12   Compared with the UK and England Farnborough has a young population profile. Farnborough is underrepresented in the 65 years and over group with 16.2% of the population in this age bracket compared with UK and England averages 18.6% and 18.5% respectively. Conversely there are a higher number of younger adults and young children, and a working age population greater than the UK average, circa 61.5%.

2.13   Locally, the comparison for 2020 estimates is as follows:

Location	% over 65	% working age
Farnborough	16.2	61.5
Camberley	19.39	59.3
Fleet	19	57.9
Farnham	20.95	56
Aldershot	16.7	61.3

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EMPLOYMENT PROFILE

2.14 5 functional economic market areas (FEMAs) have been identified within the Enterprise M3 area. Farnborough sits centrally in the largest of these, the Southern Surrey/Eastern Hampshire FEMA. The role of the town is multi- functional i.e. residential, out-commuting, employment, retail and education. The LEP identifies Farnborough, alongside Basingstoke, Guildford and Woking as a growth town which can play an important role in the LEP economy.

2.15 In terms of employment, important sectors within the town are information & communication and professional, scientific and technical. The presence of Farnborough International Business Airport is very important to the local economy supporting aerospace and advanced engineering clusters. Other clusters represented are in the fields of data, communications and gaming, and a growing representation in film making.

2.16 Farnborough Business Park, which is very close to the town centre has a strong representation of high quality businesses including Fluor and Syneos Health. Other prominent businesses include nDreams and Satixfy at Spectrum Point close to the railway station. Calculations using 2019 ONS business and population data show Farnborough to have an employment ratio of 0.58 - greater than the comparable figure for the UK of 0.46.

2.17 Data on the median gross annual pay of town residents (Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings, 2018) shows median annual gross pay of Farnborough residents to be £22,300 The comparable value for the UK is £24,000[3].

[3] Enterprise M3 Towns Analysis - Part1 (2019) Hardisty Jones Associates

2.18 Currently the town centre has a limited offer to serve the nearby business community, which has led to mobile caterers visiting key business locations to fulfil this demand. The development of a more attractive town centre with a broader hospitality offer and a stronger night time economy could capture more of this spend and make Farnborough a more enticing location for young professionals when considering their employment options. A stronger town centre can only contribute to the growth of Farnborough as an attractive and successful employment location.

FURTHER AND HIGHER EDUCATION

2.19 Farnborough has both an outstanding 6th form college and an outstanding College of Technology with an associated University Centre, and Aerospace Research and Innovation Centre. The range of courses on offer at these outstanding institutions is wide, and incorporates A and T levels, Apprenticeships, BTECs, Degrees, Professional, Technical and Vocational training across a wide range of subject areas.

2.20 Of specific note are specialisms related to the aerospace industry, gaming, drones, robotics, STEM subjects, and E-sports, as well as subjects relating to performing arts and design. This demonstrates that Farnborough offers a fantastic location for employers seeking high quality trainees and has the potential to develop "university town" status where the presence of the educational institution(s) pervades economic and social life. This can bring benefits such as boosting the economic growth and prosperity of the town, and its wider regard.

Fig 2: Land Ownership – source DLA/Land Registry

LAND OWNERSHIP

2.21 The land ownership plan above indicates that extensive areas of the town centre are in the freehold ownership of Rushmoor Borough Council (pink) some of which is currently subject to long leases. The majority of the remaining developed areas of the town centre are generally in single or a limited number of ownerships, with the exception of Victoria Road which demonstrates a more complex multiplicity of ownerships.

2.22 Generally, where significant sections of the town are in single ownership, there is more prospect of developing a relationship with the landowners, and securing buy in to a wider vision and programme of action than where the ownership/control pattern is very diverse. This therefore stands Farnborough in good stead for the management and implementation of future change.

POLICY CONTEXT

2.23 The policy context for Farnborough and its town centre is set out in detail at Appendix 1. This demonstrates that a programme of action to improve the town centre was put in place in 2007, which culminated in the priority development of the Civic Quarter, which is now starting its implementation stage. Work has been carried out to assess the overall position of the town centre as recently as 2021 through the Farnborough Town Centre Planning Policy and Guidance Review. (Carried out by SQW to inform the business case for the Civic Quarter). This recognised the need to establish a new vision, objectives and spatial plan for Farnborough Town Centre, and to move away from a retail centric focus and embrace a more diverse mix of uses. In particular it identified demand for offices and a lack of modern office space within the town centre.

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2.24 In terms of wider issues such as accessibility, movement and transport, the latest policy guidance is found in HCC's consultation draft Local Transport Plan 4 (LTP4), published in April 2022. This seeks to develop a transport system that:

- supports a vibrant economy;

- is safe and healthy to use;

- does not pollute the environment with poor air quality and noise;

- removes severance (where traffic flow impedes the movement of pedestrians and cyclists) and disparities within streets and communities; and

- allows people to live healthier and more empowered lives.

The document also identifies that in the absence of reducing dependency on the private car the Department for Transport (DfT) forecasts that traffic will grow by 22% between 2015 and 2035.

2.25 In respect of Farnborough specifically, LTP4 identifies the potential for significant regeneration in Farnborough town centre which may trigger the need for new area strategies to be developed in line with land use changes being led by the borough council. The development of the strategy has therefore reflected the need for a balance between enabling the inevitable ongoing car access to Farnborough, and supporting greater ease of access by other modes of travel, in particular cycling and on foot.

2.26 Fundamental to the policy baseline for Farnborough town centre is also the declaration by Rushmoor Borough Council of a Climate Change emergency in 2019, and the development of the Climate Change Action Plan for 2020-2030. This specifically identifies the need to reduce carbon emissions, and where possible to reduce car use.

OVERALL CONTEXT

2.27 Overall, this background review identifies Farnborough as:

A medium sized town, within easy access of larger order centres

A young town, with a need to cater for families and younger people as well as national issues around an ageing population

A strong employment location, with specialities around aerospace, gaming, high tech manufacturing and emerging technologies

Excellent quality higher education, offering a highly skilled local workforce to support business development

A historic place, but without a historic town centre

A place with ambition and recognition of the need to change and regenerate

An actively and directly involved public sector, as evidenced by land ownership, appetite for acquisition and control and direct involvement in development projects such as the Civic Quarter

Of specific relevance to the development of the town centre strategy are a more in depth understanding of the local property market and the position and perceptions of the town centre today.

CHAPTER 3:
PROPERTY MARKET & VACANCY LEVELS

3.1 The health of the property market reflects wider economic trends. It is recognised that many of these trends will be outside the control of the local authority. However, there are factors that can be influenced locally, including policy direction, land ownership and partnership. This strategy considers Farnborough's position vis a vis other competing centres to help understand potential gaps in the market and what uses might be encouraged create a unique offer, relevant to current demands.

3.2 The UK retail sector is undergoing a fundamental structural change which can be seen in all high streets across the country, including Farnborough. The change has been accelerated by the pandemic with online shopping increasing from around 20% of all expenditure to around 30% within the space of only 2 years. Whilst it is anticipated that some old shopping habits will return now Covid related restrictions are lifted, it is generally understood that the growth of online shopping will continue, particularly for convenience goods, and that bricks and mortar retailing will have to work harder to attract trade. The types of retailers in town centres and the mix of uses and attractions are changing in response to these national trends. A vibrant mix of uses, range of activities and events and a high quality environment are now considered more important to the success and sustainability of a town centre than simply having a good range of shops.

3.3 Vacancy rates provide a strong indicator of the general health and vitality of a town centre. Between 2019 and 2021 the structural changes affecting town centres resulted in record-high vacancy rates across the country. The average peaked at 14.5% in the second quarter of 2021[4], before marginally falling to 14.4% in the fourth quarter of 2021[5].

3.4 Farnborough town centre is not immune to the impacts of the pandemic and the changes it has accelerated. According to RBC's 2019-2020 Authority Monitoring Report (published December 2020), Farnborough Town Centre's vacancy rates reached 14% in June/July 2020. This was comparable to the national average of 12.2% at the time, with national high street and shopping centre vacancies reaching 12.4% and 14.3% respectively in the second quarter of 2020[6].

[4] Vacancy Rate Plateaus (BRC, October 2021) https://brc.org.uk/news/corporate-affairs/vacancy-rate-plateaus/

[5] Glimmer of Hope for Vacancy Rate (BRC, January 2022) https://brc.org.uk/news/corporate-affairs/glimmer-of-hope-for-vacancy-rate/

[6] Vacancy Rate Highlights Need for Rents and Rates Support (BRC, July 2020) https://brc.org.uk/news/corporate-affairs/vacancy-rate-highlights-need-for-rents-and-rates-support/

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Centre	Frontage Policy	Shopping Frontage	Policy % (non-A1)	No. Units	No. A1 Uses	No. Non-A1 Uses	% A1 Uses	% Non-A1 Uses	No. Vacant Units	% Vacant
Farnborough Town Centre	SP2.1 Primary	Prince's Mead, incl. Asda	20%	33	30	3	91%	9%	5	15%
		Queensmead (61-71, 56-76) and The Meads, incl. Sainsbury's		29	23	6	79%	21%	1	3%
	SP2.2 Secondary	Kingsmead	50%	23	11	12	48%	52%	7	30%
		Queensmead (73-93, 78-98) and Briarcliff House (93-99)	50%	24	11	13	46%	54%	3	13%
		Victoria Road (14-48) and Firgrove Parade (1-5)	n/a	14	3	11	21%	79%	1	7%
		Total:		123	78	45	63%	37%	17	14%

Table 2: Farnborough Town Centre Vacancy Rates (June/July 2020)
Source: RBC 2019-2020 Authority Monitoring Report

3.5 However, RBC's latest records indicate a strong recovery in the first quarter of 2022, with Farnborough's relatively low vacancy rate of 9% outperforming the national average. This suggests that there is demand for retail space, particularly in Queensmead and Victoria Road. What this does not highlight is the size of the vacant units, or the vacancy rate by percentage of floorspace.

3.6 Despite this apparent relative strength, there remains a significant opportunity to improve the vitality of the town centre and its environment, and to further reduce vacancy rates and ensure its long term resilience. It is also particularly important to ensure that the town centre is insulated against the anticipated imminent impact of decreasing levels of disposable income caused by the national surge in living costs. Diversifying the offer, improving the appearance of the town centre and taking advantage of regeneration opportunities could enhance the attractiveness of the town centre and enable it to maintain its vibrancy.

FARNBOROUGH STORES OVERVIEW		Jan-22			Feb-22			Mar-22		
	No. Premises	Active	Dormant	Vacant	Active	Dormant	Vacant	Active	Dormant	Vacant
Queensmead (outdoor area)	51	49	0	2	49	0	2	50	0	1
The Meads (indoor area)	22	18	0	4	19	0	3	19	0	3
Princes Meads (indoor area)	34	28	0	6	28	0	6	28	0	6
Victoria Road	33	31	0	2	30	0	3	30	0	3
TOTALS	140	126	0	14	126	0	14	127	0	13
		90%	0%	10%	90%	0%	10%	91%	0%	9%

Table 3: Farnborough Town Centre Vacancy Rates (Jan-March 2022)
Source: Rushmoor Borough Council

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Fig 3 Heat Map indicating relative regional residential property values – source Zoopla

3.7 In terms of the property market, current housing market analysis is provided at Appendix 2. In summary, this highlights that housing in Rushmoor is more affordable than in the surrounding areas of Waverley and Surrey Heath. This represents an opportunity for Rushmoor, and Farnborough to attract first time buyers and occupiers who are aspiring to settle in the area, but cannot afford some of the more expensive locations. Key to securing and attracting such occupiers is having a good quality stock of suitably sized accommodation.

3.8 Currently, whilst there is a good supply of modern flatted accommodation around the town, the flat market in Farnborough town centre tends to be primarily older properties above existing retail, such as that in Queensmead. Such accommodation may not reflect the demands of aspiring young singles and families, and may attract a more transient occupancy. Newer purpose built accommodation such as that proposed for the Civic Quarter, and likely to be proposed for Princes Mead and other town centre locations offers the opportunity for a much better quality of accommodation and setting, more suited to modern urban living. The promoters of the Bellway development at Meudon Avenue have confirmed that the majority of interest in their flats, which have just been released to market ahead of completion later this year, is from first time buyers and people moving into the Farnborough area to live. They have reported only limited interest from investors. This indicates that good quality accommodation can generate a new stable community which in turn will support the performance and sustainability of the town centre.

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3.9 Looking at retail performance, there is evidence of recent lettings in the Meads and rental values being achieved, depending on the size and location of the unit, of between circa £20psf (215/m2) and £35 (375/m2) per sq ft overall. Prime Zone A rental for Princes Mead is circa £45-£55 per sq ft (£500-600 per m2) (source: VOA). This level of rent suggests that the development of new retail floorspace in non-prime locations is likely to need a mix of uses to support overall viability, and is expected to be underpinned by residential development.

3.10 The office market in Farnborough is strong on the very successful Farnborough Business Park adjacent to the town centre, and the Cody Technology Park by the airport. It is underpinned by Farnborough's inherent accessibility by road, rail and air, a critical mass of businesses in one location, and access to skilled future employees from the colleges. Skills is a key driver for office and R&D occupiers, which puts Farnborough at an advantage regionally compared to other locations such as Camberley and Farnham. Office rents for prime floorspace in Farnborough are currently at around £27.50 - £29 per sq ft (Letting, Fowler Avenue, November 2021, and Ascent, Aerospace Boulevard, June 2020.). This is a strong rental figure which is likely to support new development. By comparison office space in the town centre at The Meads Business Centre, which is more secondary, is asking only £22.50 per sq ft.

3.11 Overall, the property market and vacancy levels indicate:

A strong economic profile

An opportunity to grow

The potential for long term sustainability

CHAPTER 4:
THE TOWN CENTRE TODAY

4.1 The town centre today faces a number of challenges including a lack of sense of purpose/arrival, poor connectivity with the surrounding area due to the road infrastructure severance, a historic piecemeal approach to development, lack of a balanced mix of uses, low quality public realm and the ever present threat of on-line shopping and declining high street sales.

4.2 Farnborough's natural "High Street" is the pedestrianised Queensmead. However, a stranger visiting Farnborough for the first time may be excused for assuming that the central shopping area is the somewhat secondary retail focussed around the eastern end of Victoria Road, as this is most visible from the road network. The majority of the town centre is hidden from view, with its back turned on the A325, and the A327.

4.3 The town centre has 3 dominant shopping (and to a lesser degree leisure) locations: Queensmead, The Meads covered Centre and Princes Mead. These are loosely joined, but function separately, with no clearly defined or logical route around the town centre as a whole. On the edges of these core town centre areas are:

• A substantial and comprehensive area of retail warehousing to the south, incorporating the Horizon Retail Park, and Solartron Retail Park,

• Further retail warehousing and trade counter retailing fronting Invincible Road,

• Retail warehousing forming part of Princes Mead, together with a stand alone B&Q warehouse and Asda supermarket.

To the north are Sainsburys, Premier Inn and the 360 Play centre.

4.4 Whilst immediately adjacent to the town centre, both major supermarkets and the extensive retail warehousing do not function as part of the town centre, but more as an adjunct to it, or separate trip opportunity, as each benefits from its own contiguous surface car parking. If better integrated into the overall town centre offer, these extensive retail offers could benefit the town centre, as they have the critical mass to draw trade from a wider catchment – particularly the unusually wide range of retail warehousing located in one geographical location to the south west of the town centre.

4.5 In terms of supermarket provision, that which is best integrated with the town centre is Iceland, currently located at the southern end of Queensmead, where the town centre will meet the emerging Civic Quarter. This location has been identified for redevelopment as part of the Civic Quarter proposals.

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4.6 The town centre offer is predominantly a mix of convenience (food and household goods) and comparison (clothing, jewellery, footwear, etc) shopping. It is very retail focussed, but even this activity has a significant gap in lack of provision of men's clothing other than sports or activity wear, and little in the way of individual or higher quality women's wear. It appears to appeal to a somewhat limited sector of the local population.

4.7 There is a small but growing representation of restaurants, particularly in The Meads covered centre, associated in that location with the Vue cinema, and along Victoria Road. The majority of the restaurants offer pizzas, burgers, Kebabs, fast food and a variety of Asian/fusion foods, or are chain venues such as Weatherspoons, Beefeater and McDonalds. Further out of the town centre is a more traditional mix of food pubs, such as the Swan, and speciality restaurants such as the Nepalese, reflecting the long standing association in the area with the Ghurkas, Indian and Italian restaurants. There is no specific location where there is a critical mass of higher quality dining opportunities in the town centre, and no "restaurant street" to browse, as is often found in other more traditionally evolved town centres. Farnborough does not currently present as a place people would seek out for eating out. Given the local demographic profile, this offers an opportunity, particularly as the homes identified for the Civic Quarter become a reality.

4.8 There is an emerging leisure offer, building on the draw of the cinema in the Meads, in particular the recent addition of the High Score video arcade. The town centre also accommodates a gym, and the 360 soft play and party venue. It has a valued skate park, and had a well used leisure centre, which is currently being demolished and is intended for replacement as part of the first phase of the Civic Quarter. Overall, aside from the cinema, there appears to be little to attract younger people and families into the town centre after 5.00pm.

4.9 The town has a lack of cultural, performance and arts spaces. Consultation to inform the emerging draft Cultural Strategy identified that 79% of residents would like to see more arts and cultural activity in the town, to improve and enliven the public realm.

4.10 Part of the first impression of Farnborough is a town dominated by large areas of tarmacked surface car parking, with little relief in the way of greening, defined footways or pedestrian/cycle friendly routes. Again, this can be an opportunity, as the surface car parks offer longer term potential for further expansion/ development as Farnborough grows. However, they currently detract from the public realm, and frequently feature as one of the first things you see on arrival at the town.

4.11 Overall, our first impressions are that Farnborough Town Centre:

Punches below its weight

Does not offer the environment or mix that will serve the aspirations of its current and future immediate catchment.

Offers limited arts and cultural activity.

Is not "instagrammable" – something younger populations seek

Does not offer an immediate welcome to those who might visit.

4.12 Of particular note is the Town Centre's lack of visual presence, and the domination of the local road network. This serves as an obstacle to access, and offers an easy route to alternative destinations rather than into Farnborough itself. Whilst the fabric of the town centre is not bad, and the town is clean and fairly modern, there is little variety in the public realm, few places of quality to sit, and little reason to dwell beyond the purpose of the visit.

4.13 One thing that struck us as giving a particularly poor impression was not so much the town itself, but the access points by which you arrive at it:

Welcome To Farnborough!

1 Entrance to subway from Oak Road:

Uninviting access

Steep inaccessible slope

5 Entrance to Princes Mead from Retail parks

Not obvious that there is a shopping centre here

2

6

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Access to Queensmead across the car park

Another uninviting subway

...leading to a car park

3   Entrance to Queensmead

Unwelcoming approach

Dominated by service yard access

4   Entrance to Sainsburys from Victoria Road

Admittedly at its worst, but not very inviting

Crossing from Solartron retail park towards Asda

Crossing point leads to the back of the recycle bins

7   Access from Victoria Road towards Princes Mead

Through another car park

9   Entrances to The Meads

Where's the entrance?

8   Crossing and access from Sainsburys and Beefeater to

Through another car park

This one's Through a service yard!

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Civic Quarter

Area already identified as a major regeneration opportunity and subject to an ambitious masterplan. Its phased implementation and constituent components need to be reassessed to ensure it is market facing and deliverable.

A Leisure Centre and associated uses. A priority project for the Council to deliver to show commitment to the development sector that Farnborough is a place to invest.

B Potential for early investment to be made in the establishment of a new improved town park, as set out in the Masterplan that will form an attractive backdrop for future development plots coming forwards.

C A major barrier to the area's appearance is the proximity to some large and harsh road infrastructure. Apart from occupying a large area within the town centre, steps need to be undertaken to look at how this can be rationalised, with more provision for walking and cycling. There is also scope to release development potential but also helping create a more attractive proposition for people visiting the town and not one which at present is dominated by ugly highway and drab car parks.

D Improvemwents to pedestrian and cycle links are vital if the town centre is to function and serve its adjoining residents.

E Re-provision of store and creation of a new urban square to link town centre to cultural quarter.

NORTH
SOUTH

New private residential scheme: It will be important that new residents are able to access the town centre safely and conveniently if they are to be encouraged to use the town.
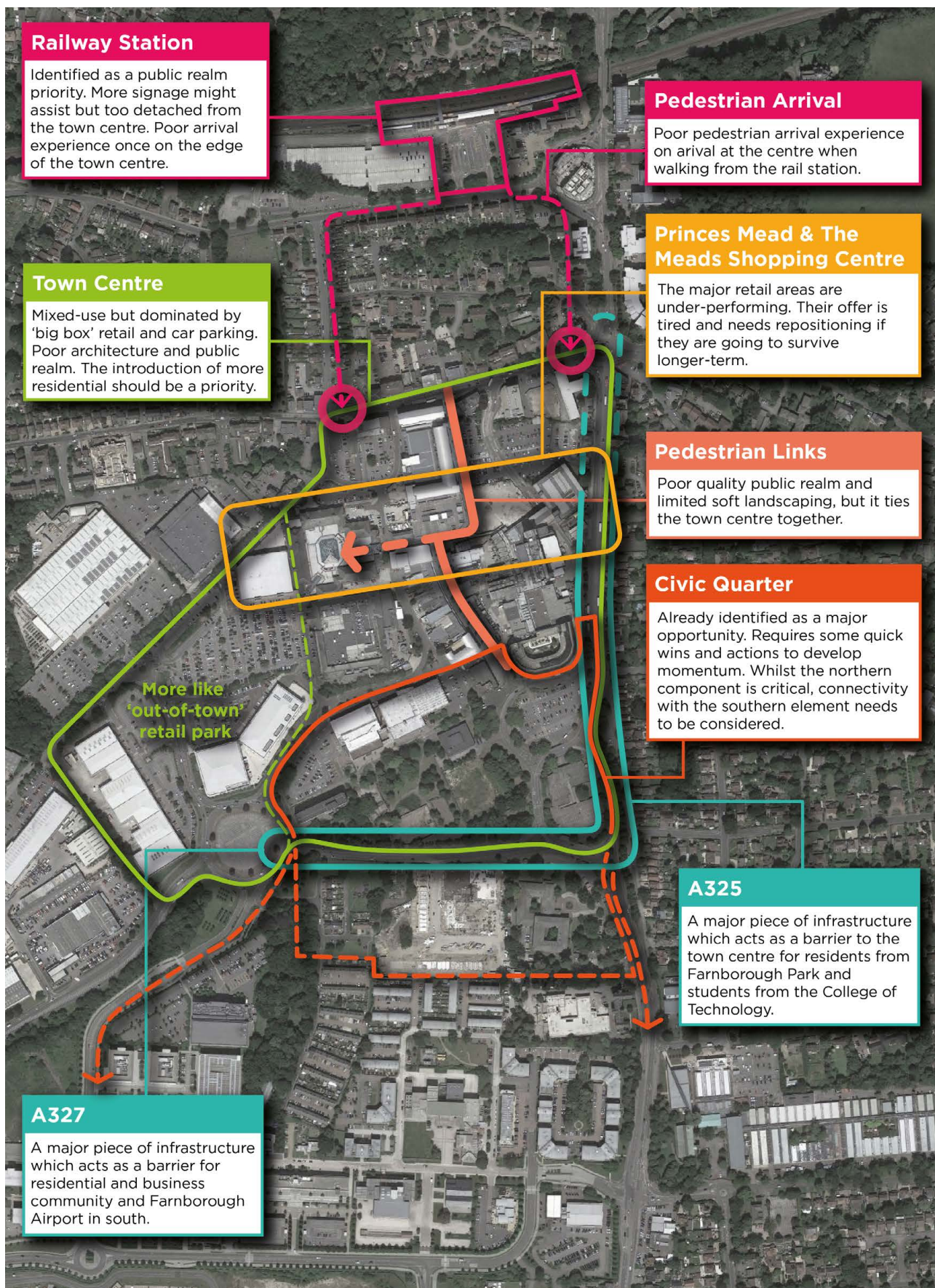
Link to Farnborough Airport is well used but let down at the underpass connecting to the future Cultural Quarter

Rushmoor BC Offices

Identified as a potential redevelopment opportunity. If the site is to make a positive contribution to the town centre's fortunes, and if residential is a preferred future use, then improving pedestrian and cycling connections into the town centre is vital to encourage future residents to visit and use their town centre.
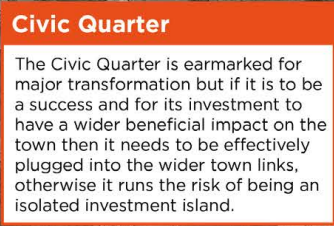
Town Centre Analysis – Civic Quarter

Railway Station

Identified as a public realm priority. More signage might assist but too detached from the town centre. Poor arrival experience once on the edge of the town centre.

Pedestrian Arrival

Poor pedestrian arrival experience on arival at the centre when walking from the rail station.

Town Centre

Mixed-use but dominated by 'big box' retail and car parking. Poor architecture and public realm. The introduction of more residential should be a priority.

Princes Mead & The Meads Shopping Centre

The major retail areas are under-performing. Their offer is tired and needs repositioning if they are going to survive longer-term.

Pedestrian Links

Poor quality public realm and limited soft landscaping, but it ties the town centre together.

Civic Quarter

Already identified as a major opportunity. Requires some quick wins and actions to develop momentum. Whilst the northern component is critical, connectivity with the southern element needs to be considered.

More like 'out-of-town' retail park

A325

A major piece of infrastructure which acts as a barrier to the town centre for residents from Farnborough Park and students from the College of Technology.

A327

A major piece of infrastructure which acts as a barrier for residential and business community and Farnborough Airport in south.

Town Centre Analysis

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Queensmead

Convenient pedestrian route linking retail and car parking facilities in the north of the town centre with the core central area and "High Street". Functional, not particularly attractive and leads to Victoria Road that is a highway barrier.

The Meads

A dated and inward facing shopping mall. Creating a successful new addition will depend upon the right choice of land uses and how well they can integrate with the town centre.

Princes Mead

A large indoor shopping mall that has a number of vacant units and presents an air of vacancy. It does offer a link between the High Street and a large area of car parking but only during opening hours, a major disadvantage. Severs any opportunity for a loop or circuit. Seek redevelopment based on streets.

Queensmead

Lower grade units with a poor quality public realm presents a downbeat appearance for a main retail frontage. The service yard to the Meads presents a conflict in terms of safety and the environment.

Potential for a circuit to be created that links the Prince's Mead, the High Street and Civic Quarter.

Civic Quarter

The Civic Quarter is earmarked for major transformation but if it is to be a success and for its investment to have a wider beneficial impact on the town then it needs to be effectively plugged into the wider town links, otherwise it runs the risk of being an isolated investment island.

Town Centre Analysis – Retail

CHAPTER 5:
WHAT YOU TOLD US
consultation with stakeholders, and what our youngsters found for themselves

What you told us

5.1 Whilst it is important to gain our own first impressions in developing the strategy for Farnborough Town Centre, it is even more important to understand the views of local stakeholders with a long term interest in and knowledge of the town. The limited budget, timescale and scope for the task did not allow for public consultation at this stage, and as this is a high level strategy rather than a statutory document, this was not a formal requirement. RBC provided a list of stakeholders who were consulted, but inevitably the list grew naturally as we spoke to people. RBC also provided the full outcomes of the public consultation process carried out in respect of the Civic Quarter proposals. We would like to thank the following for their contribution to this process:

- RBC Policy & Project Advisory Board (PPAB)

- RBC Councillors

- RBC Town Centres Manager

- Farnborough International Exhibition and Conference Centre

- Enterprise M3

- Hampshire County Council

- Farnborough Air Sciences Trust

Regard was also had to the outcomes of the public consultation exercise carried out in respect of the proposed Civic Quarter

5.2 A full summary of the feedback from the stakeholders is provided at Appendix 3. Overall, the stakeholders demonstrated a positive enthusiasm for Farnborough, and confirmed that the town as a whole has a lot to offer, great prospects for growth and prosperity and offers a wealth of opportunity and accessibility to London and the wider south east for its population. It was however recognised that the Town Centre did not necessarily live up to the quality of other offers such as the business park, exhibition centre and the airport, and provide an opportunity for regeneration. The proposed Civic Quarter is generally welcomed and is seen as a step change in developing the town centre offer, moving towards more living in the town centre, and could be a catalyst for wider improvement.

5.3 From the stakeholder feedback, we have formulated summary "word clouds" which express the nature of the feedback we have received, further detail is provided at Appendix 3:

What is good:

What is bad:

What needs to be improved / changed?

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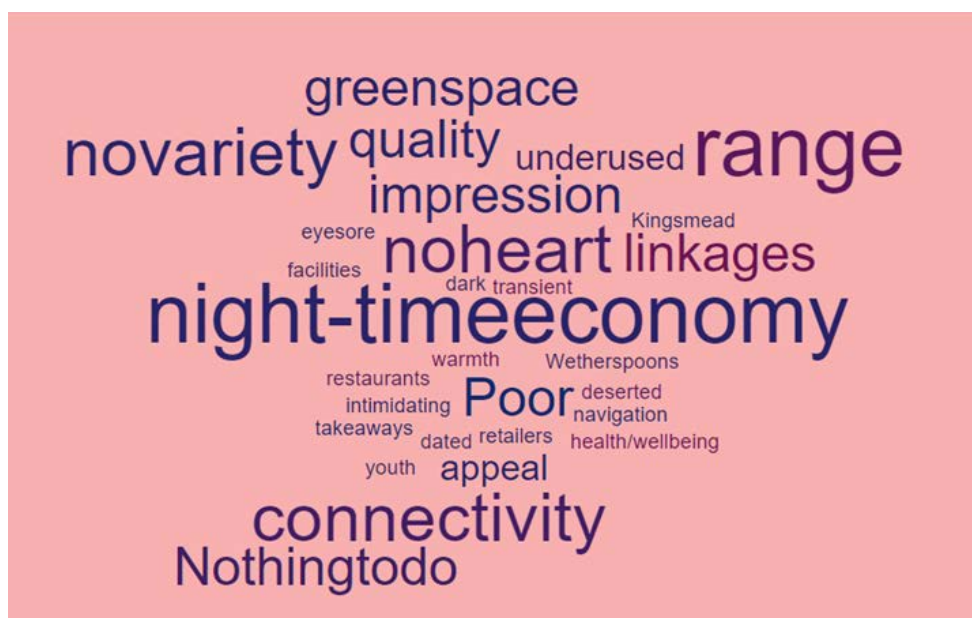
5.4 Some individual comments made by the stakeholders also struck a chord:

"Farborough is a place you got to for what you need, not what you want"

"Farborough needs to elevate its brand and connect with its history"

"The exhibition centre alone brings between 170,000 and 250,000 visitors per year – if the town centre had the right offer, the benefits to Farnborough could be multiplied"

"There is nowhere to buy menswear, other than sports or outdoor clothing – You cannot buy a suit or a pair of chinos in Farnborough, so you go elsewhere or online"

"If we do not provide a range of facilities that can attract under 40s, the town centre will struggle to compete against other urban centres in Surrey, Hampshire and Berkshire".

What our youngsters found

5.5 To inform our understanding of Farnborough from a younger person's point of view 3 Graduates spent the day looking at Farnborough and the local competition in Camberley, Aldershot and Farnham. This is what they told us:

- Lack of leisure activities: Skatepark, Cinema or Arcade, with indoor go-carting located to the south, but lack of spur of the moment opportunities.

- Poor connectivity: town centre isolated by dual carriageways and busy roads and physically blocked off by fencing. Inaccessible to pedestrians. Access should prioritise walking and cycling, enabling them to become a preferred and safe option.

- Library appeared well used. The Civic Quarter should look to capitalise on this, but provide further integration with the wider town centre.

- Too much car parking: better to utilise multistorey car parks in key areas rather than spreading parking over a large area.

- Significant need to improve the amount of green space in the town centre.

- Good selection of fast-food operators, but limited choices for dining, with only a Wetherspoon, Sticky Sisters or Prezzo.

A more detailed analysis of their findings is provided at Appendix 4.

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CHAPTER 6:
A VISION FOR THE FUTURE FARNBOROUGH TOWN CENTRE

6.1   The combination of national and local policy context, feedback, perceptions and economy suggest that Farnborough Town Centre needs a step change to maintain and enhance its role and to become a sustainable destination for local people and visitors. Key to that is establishing a simple vision.

6.2   The stakeholder feedback suggest that a suitable starting point could be:

Farnborough Town Centre – where people choose to go for what they want and need, and find so much more...

6.3   Ultimately it will be a matter for local people to determine the vision, which needs to be inclusive, age blind, broad and ambitious, but also achievable. The fundamentally robust economy, and clear evidence of investment activity indicates that the strategy and actions that arise from it are being developed in a deliverable location. This is not a process of promising the moon and the stars and setting the process up to fail, but of establishing the themes that need to be developed and invested in to ensure that the town centre grows and changes in a way that matches and complements its wider economy.

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6.4 This involves a process of understanding the role that is now being demanded of town centres and how this can be developed for Farnborough:

- The type of offer will make Farnborough attractive – more of a mix of uses, less of an emphasis on retail, broader leisure, cultural and community offer, something for everybody, a day through to night time economy

- What Amazon Can't Do – reasons for people to come to the town centre

- About place and space as much as activity, developing pride, loyalty, a sense of ownership and an identity

- Living in the town centre – a growing trend across the UK and an intrinsic part of the financial equation for making positive change in Farnborough

- Linking up spaces – Civic Quarter, Airport, college, business parks, retail parks – what does the town centre need to enable this

- Linking up minds through culture, art, performance and communication, physically, digitally and virtually, embracing the way in which new technologies can contribute to personal development.

- Creating an attractive, sustainable environment where people want to spend time

- Working in partnership – being open to imaginative/innovative partnership models and processes embracing economic activity

6.5 To draw this into a meaningful strategy, a number of themes have been identified under which work streams can be developed.   A high level spatial concept plan has also been produced, highlighting some of the key priority areas for change and intervention.

6.6 The key themes are as follows:

6.7 These themes have many areas of overlap, but collectively identify the focus for change. Each is explored in more detail below:

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Theme 1: Identity, Branding & Events

Key issues	Objective	Ideas for Action
Need for a clear and recognisable identity	To generate loyalty, a sense of pride, ownership and inclusivity, and to increase town centre footfall and dwell time through diversification of attraction	Develop a brand for Farnborough Town Centre
Making Farnborough special and distinctive		Work with local design students, possibly by way of a competition
USP		Build on Aviation history – Public Art?
Enlivening the town		Develop and market a programme of town centre events and a stronger cultural offer – at least 2 per month, some incorporating day and evening elements, with different activities to attract a variety of age groups. Market the programme using the branding material, and via Social Media. Involve local businesses and community representatives. Speciality markets and festivals etc. Develop a prospectus for Farnborough, setting out the ambitions of the Council and the development/regeneration programme.
Making reasons for people to visit		
Creating a dynamic community related programme of activities		

An example from wider afield – South West France, Toques et Cloches annual wine and food festival – each local small town takes it in turn year by year to host an auction and an afternoon and evening event aimed at fundraising to maintain the church towers and bells. Tickets are sold in advance, everyone brings a plastic cup, in the town food stalls and shops are all open selling their wares (particularly food and drink), and local growers and providers set up stalls. Visitors buy a book of 5 tickets for a fixed sum (more are available throughout the evening), and exchange each ticket with a trader for a drink or something to eat. This enables the organisers to distribute a payment to those who have sold stuff, and to take a small top slice towards the costs of the event and the towers and bells fund. There are processions, lots of different types of bands providing live music, dancing, street theatre, art exhibitions, craft stalls etc. The event attracts families, older and younger people from all the surrounding villages. It finishes at around 11 pm, and a team of street cleaners then comes in to ensure that the town can trade as usual the next day. Toques et Clochers | Wine festival in Aude | Where? What? When? (tasteatlas.com)

Toques et Cloches

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Lead and potential organisations involved	Measuring success	Delivery mechanisms and indicative timetable	Longer term aspirations
RBC Town Centre Management team, plus Culture/Libraries at HCC	Use baseline survey on perceptions of TC, linked to scoring, and repeat each year, e.g. Town Toolkit	EXAMPLES OF MEASURING SUCCESS, or alternatively engage a local task group of business and resident representatives to endorse processes and actions. e.g. of good practice: Peoples Panel (dudley.gov.uk)	Lead by RBC Town Centre Manager. Seek sponsorship from local business community.	Generate a level of interest that will enable the development of the town centre as a Business Improvement District, which can levy a charge on businesses to fund an ongoing active programme e.g. of good practice: Hinckley Shops, Pubs, Businesses, News & Events (hinckleybid.co.uk)
Involve the schools and colleges, particularly Graphic design students – Competition?		Seek involvement from education establishments – a real life project – secure design work at no cost	
FAST – to help reflect the Aviation history in the branding		Explore existing community organisations to partner with for some events – e.g. Local Running Groups – TC half marathon? or dance troupes, Local Music business – live music in the town event etc., busking pitches, Build on Heritage – museums, TC exhibitions? Borrow ideas from elsewhere – e.g. soap box aeroplane race through Queensmead? Town Centre Curry/fusion food night – with concession stands and music?	
Invest in town centre management and involving the community, this will pay back investment in the longer term E.G of good practice Town Centre Engagement Officers - Doncaster Council			
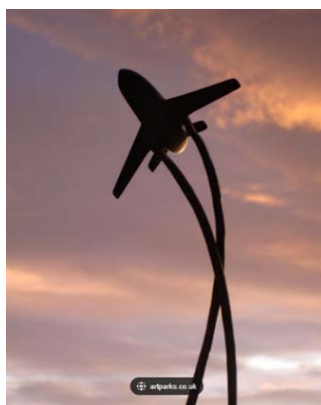
Examples of aircraft related sculptures

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Theme 2: Environment, Safety and Wellbeing

Key issues	Objective	Ideas for Action
Creating an attractive and active town centre environment	To develop a town centre that is a place to spend time, not just shop or access services. A place that contributes to a feeling of wellbeing and provides access to cultural experiences. Make the town part of the experience of living and socialising in Farnborough Make the town comfortable and accessible for all people. Change perception so that when people think of Farnborough Town Centre they think of an enjoyable place to visit rather than just a functional one	Linked to identity and branding, but with a Greener aspect – More planters, more seating, Green strips in open areas, Fountain, water feature?
Greening the streets – providing important shade for climate change comfort, and opportunities for natural drainage,		More trees, Greener areas in car parks, better defined walkways etc. Needs a more detailed public realm masterplan to set out a comprehensive scheme. Incorporate new green focus in Meads redevelopment site where it intersects with Queensmead by Starbucks
Seating and gathering places – public and associated with cafes, restaurants etc		Secure Public Art for key entrance to the town centre – Queensmead – linked to access gateways and wayfinding Secure opportunities for open air public performance and gatherings
A safe and attractive place – Extending CCTV to improve security and feeling of safety, linked to evening activities and lighting		Consider introduction of heritage trail through town centre, linking e.g. paving which tells a story in engraved pictures and captions. Consider incorporating art into new construction. Consider incorporating green walls and roofs Develop a "Selfie Trail" or "Selfie wall trail" Slough selfie trail goes live as part of Christmas ceremony	Royal Borough Observer (windsorobserver.co.uk) The Bournemouth & Poole Selfie Wall Trail - Bournemouth
Developing beauty, through the design of new buildings and spaces, improvements to the existing public realm, and the introduction of public art, opportunities for public performance and heritage		
Developing an "Instagrammable environment" Where people want to see and be seen		

Examples of incorporating art into buildings:

Poem on wall of Premier Inn Guildford

The Headington Shark (Listed!!)

Pixel Building Melbourne Australia
Example of sustainable architecture

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Lead and potential organisations involved	Measuring success	Delivery mechanisms and indicative timetable	Longer term aspirations
RBC and HCC and Developers/ development partnerships Building on the work being done for Farnborough Civic Quarter.	Measuring social media activities No of Instagram posts (Currently 123k compared to 234k for Farnham, 112k for Camberley, 167k for Bracknell, 638k for Guildford) No of followers on social media (Farnborough TC site 991 followers 25.4.2022) Via town centre satisfaction surveys	Via Development briefs, use of any available s.106 money from development, or development of policies whereby any development within the TC or the adjacent areas makes a financial contribution to TC management and improvement. Explore Sponsorship opportunities. Develop a detailed Public Realm Masterplan, either as part of a wider TC masterplan, or as a standalone exercise.	A well maintained town centre where the feeling of green space, beauty and sense of place and wellbeing extends throughout the Civic Quarter and the Town Centre evenly – building on the proposed park and square in the Civic Quarter, via a new events space at its linkage with Queensmead, and through to Princes Mead, the retail parks and in front of Sainsbury's. Linked places where people can sit and people watch or socialise in a friendly enjoyable environment.

Greening the centre:

Buildings in Miami

Small green space and pop up performance space, manchester

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Theme 3: Access, Gateways and Wayfinding

Key issues	Objective	Ideas for Action
Poor access on foot and by bicycle, and for people with disabilities – often through car parks	To make the presence of the town centre obvious from the outset To provide clear easy access routes and links, and to identify key gateways positively, linked to branding To develop pride and a sense of place and ownership To support the changes needed in how people get to the town centre, as part of the actions to mitigate climate change To minimise the negative impact of extensive surface car parking on the visual amenity of the town centre. To improve health and wellbeing though walking and cycling.	Develop a detailed wayfinding plan, and link the signage and route marking to the town centre branding.
Poor sense of arrival and lack of welcoming, easily identified gateways		Break the barriers that are created by the existing road network – particularly across the A325 between Oak Road and Briarcliffe House, between Asda and the Civic Quarter, and across the A 327 between the Business Park and the Town Centre
Lack of wayfinding both within and to the town centre, particularly from Station, Business parks, nearby residential areas		Create Better delineated , if possible more direct, and pedestrian and cycle friendly crossings at the locations identified above and across Victoria Road. Wayfinding related to the station and the town centre at the junctions of Victoria Road with Elm Grove Road and the A325 roundabout
Blockage and disincentive to access and finding the town centre created by the existing road network		Design and install clear gateway indicators • where Briarcliffe house and the proposed Civic Quarter intersect with Queensmead, • at the entrance on Victoria Road leading to Sainsburys, • as part of any new development of the Meads vacant site, • where Princes Mead meets the retail parks – the existing entrance is only apparent once you have arrived at it. See spatial concept plans.
Car focussed		
Easy to drive away from!		

Some examples:

Bolton: Junction upgrades

Weston Super Mare

Thunder Bay city

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Lead and potential organisations involved	Measuring success	Delivery mechanisms and indicative timetable	Longer term aspirations
RBC and development partners in liaison with HCC – NB suggestions accord with the key principles set out in HCC latest draft LPT4, regarding improving accessibility to a wider variety of sustainable and healthier modes of transport other than the car.	Town centre footfall

Satisfaction surveys | Working with HCC on developing a Transport Plan for Farnborough

Some elements linked to delivery of Civic Quarter and associated changes to A 327

Need some short term changes to secure early confidence – in particular improvements to key gateways – especially where these are in public control.

Development of a wayfinding plan – short term.

Overall delivery medium term. | Less car dominated environment and accessibility, with better delineated pedestrian and cycle routes, and clear gateways and pathways through and around the town centre. |

Tooley St Wayfinding triangle, and Reddacliffe Place

Example of green arch

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Theme 4: Activities

Key issues	Objective	Ideas for Action
Farnborough is primarily a "shopping" town, with additional attraction provided by Vue Cinema. There is a need to diversify the offer to generate greater footfall and dwell time, and to attract a younger age group.		Creation of a Leisure, Cultural and Civic Hub linked to play, indoor and outdoor leisure activity, performance, art. health and fitness and community participation space.

Concentrate commercial/competitive leisureWelcome | Gravity (gravity-uk.com) Savills UK | Competitive Socialising and Emerging Concepts in Leisure What is Competitive Socialising? (homeleisuredirect.com) and flexible leisure space around the Vue cinema and within and approaching The Meads, possibly table tennis tables in the mall space. |
| *The development of a cinema in Farnham is a threat to Farnborough, as this will impact on the wider catchment available for Vue.*

Additional activities identified to be developed include Leisure (especially given the timing of demolition of the existing leisure centre), commercial leisure, Culture, Community, Restaurants, particularly more quality dining, Living in the town centre, and events (see Identity branding and events above). | To broaden the purpose and attraction of Farnborough.

To secure a sustainable and flexible offer for the long term.

To appeal to all sectors of the population, specifically including attractions for families and young people.

To lengthen the day, with a range of uses and activities that stretch from day to evening, and to enable a vibrant night time economy.

To create momentum that will attract an upward spiral of investment. | Work with developers of Princes Mead to secure active ground floor frontages, active links and a high quality built environment.

Introduce space for community activity, , e.g. within Council led development; within the new leisure centre which should ideally be designed to accommodate multiple activities Blog Archives - Everyone Events; Bracknell Leisure Centre - Everyone Events; and as part of the public realm – outdoor Events Space at the entrance to Queensmead, and its junction with the access to Princes Mead.

Introduce flexible space for local commercial uses in Council led development, to enable new young businesses to have representation, and to try out new concepts.

Adopt a lettings policy for Council controlled space that encourages and enables new and specialist operations to be represented.

Explore the opportunity for pop up events/performance space, open mike nights in the town centre, pop up food offers – to enable targeted food based festivals

Energise the public realm around the skatepark to incorporate family orientated activities, seating café and natural surveillance to create an attractive welcoming environment. F51 - Skate Park | Climbing Centre | Boxing Club

Develop digital and virtual experiences alongside physical leisure and community activity. |
| *Key is an offer that includes speciality, local and service based activities – What Amazon Can't Do.* | | |

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Lead and potential organisations involved	Measuring success	Delivery mechanisms and indicative timetable	Longer term aspirations
RBC, through preparation of development briefs for The Meads and vacant land in conjunction with land owners. Through the planning process and working with developers who bring forward proposals for Princes Mead. Through the development partnership for delivery of the Civic Quarter. Through working with the Arts Council, HCC and Hampshire cultural Trust on the cultural offer. Through partnering with an events management company to make best use of the new Leisure Centre for community and cultural use, and as live music/performance venue.	Town centre satisfaction surveys. The ability to attract competitive/commercial leisure operators. Number of events hosted in Farnborough per annum.	Largely linked to delivery of development projects. Short term development of Masterplans for Town Centre sites, and policy context for developments. Short term – introduce leisure in mall space in The Meads – collaboration with Table Tennis England Home - Table Tennis England Short term: provide busking locations, enable pop up venues/activities/performance opportunities, work with local colleges, charities etc to instigate immediate range of activities. Short term: Explore potential for charitable delivery of multi-function ambitious skateboard/climbing facility such as that in Folkestone. Longer term collaboration and partnering with the Private sector where appropriate.	For Farnborough to be recognised within the region as a location that offers unique leisure destinations, has an active cultural and live music scene, including the ability to host medium sized bands, and for Farnborough to be identified and used as a place to eat, with an evening economy offer that spans age groups and a quality range from fine and speciality dining to fast and street food.

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Case Study: F51

Funded by The Roger De Haan Charitable Trust and run by local sports charity, The Sports Trust, Folkestone 51 is the world's first purpose built multi-storey skatepark. Only a 54 minute train journey from London St Pancras, it is home to the largest lead climbing wall in the South East while also featuring bouldering facilities and a boxing gym. With three floors dedicated to skateboarding, including two world class suspended concrete bowls, F51 has turned heads both nationally and internationally. Equipped with our friendly team of coaches, our venue is for everyone, no matter where your level of skill or confidence is.

F51's design, location and conception aims to revolutionise the way we look at town/city spaces and how we can incorporate more facilities for sport and young people within town centres that may already feel cramped and populated. F51 seeks to put skaters, BMXers and climbers at the forefront of Folkestone, celebrating existing talent and encouraging new beginners to get involved through a range of lessons and inclusive sessions to ensure that there is something for everyone."

Images of F51:

The venue

Climbing

Skateboarding

Coaching

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Table tennis tables outside shopping centre in Milton Keynes, outside John Lewis in Milton Keynes shopping centre, and in open green space:

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Theme 5: Development

6.8 The Development theme does not lend itself to the format above, but requires consideration on a site by site basis, including commentary on how the sites are linked. The Key development areas considered are:

- The Civic Quarter – Maximising the benefit
- Vacant town centre site & The Meads
- A new Town Centre outdoor events space - southern end of Queensmead
- Princes Mead
- Longer term opportunities – Westmead Car Park? The Meads?

THE CIVIC QUARTER – MAXIMISING THE BENEFIT

6.9 The proposals for the Civic Quarter offer an exciting opportunity to introduce urban living, and an urban park into the town centre, together with space to enhance the community, health, sport, leisure, culture, evening economy and hotel offer and a new Leisure, cultural and Civic hub for Farnborough. The proposed Mobility Hubs introduce the concept of bringing EV charging into the centre, and enable areas of dominant surface car parking to be redeveloped. Such an ambitious and extensive development will represent a step change in the Farnborough offer, in line with the ambitions in the strategy, but will take time to deliver.

6.10 These proposals also align with Rushmoor's recent identification by the Arts Council as a "Priority Place" where actions to bring more cultural experiences to the local community will be supported, and where it is recognised that the power of culture to bring people together can make a real difference. The Civic Quarter embeds the Council's cultural ambitions through its aspiration to create a place for the entire family, with day to night activities covering a range of cultural and leisure activities from play to theatre, integrated with active indoor and outdoor leisure.

6.11 At this stage the proposals are in outline only, and therefore capable of refinement should demands and ambitions change over the delivery period. Key to the success of this development for the performance of Farnborough overall is the way in which the cultural and civic offer expands throughout the town centre and provides the physical and activity related links needed to knit the town centre together. This will spread the benefits these new activities will bring, and create a halo effect across the town centre as a whole.

6.12 In terms of knitting the town together, the masterplan indicates linkages across the A325 to residential areas, however this appears to include the route of the existing underpass. In our view the natural gateway to the

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town centre is at the southern end of Queensmead, where there is a large open area adjacent to Briarcliffe House. This may offer a strong landing point for connectivity to the east, and enable people arriving at this location to see both the existing town centre and the activities in the new Civic Quarter.

6.13 At the western end of the Civic Quarter plans, there is a proposed link between the new development and the Horizon Retail Park/Princes Mead. This is an important node in creating the potential for a circular route through the town centre and the Civic Quarter. This area may be worthy of further detailed study and liaison with the owners of the Asda and its car parking, to ensure that a comprehensive and visually attractive scheme can be developed to maximise the benefit of this link. The proposed location of the new skate park offers an opportunity to expand the attraction of this area to include play, café, seating areas and direct linkages to the Leisure, Cultural and Civic Hub, the park, community and cultural uses. This will activate this location and attract people from the retail park and the wider town centre, and will help to strengthen and establish this route. A detailed public realm study and additional ground floor commercial uses may further enhance this link, particularly if it can be visually related to any outdoor focus for performance and gathering within the Civic Quarter park.

6.14 The proposed link across the A327 will provide a gateway for people from the business park and nearby commercial and residential areas offers an excellent opportunity to improve access to the town centre, leisure and cultural activities, and choice to local people. It also brings the town and its offer closer to the business park, which should encourage greater use, particularly at lunch times and immediately after the working day.

6.15 A key part of the Civic Quarter development is the point at which it physically links to the town centre gateway at the southern end of Queensmead. Here, the masterplan indicates the retention of a building in the current orientation of the existing Iceland unit. As this appears to be a new building, this is likely to require a break in trade if Iceland is to be re-accommodated in this location. The orientation of this block as currently indicated appears to represent a visual obstacle for people within the Civic Quarter being able to see the linkage to Queensmead until they reach the very eastern end of the development. To maximise benefit to the town as a whole, and draw users and residents of the Civic Quarter into the rest of the town, visual connectivity is essential. Minor amendments to the orientation or design of this block could improve the visual connectivity, and lead people better to the rest of the town centre. This could be addressed at the detailed design stage.

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VACANT TOWN CENTRE SITE AND THE MEADS

6.16 The Council is exploring the acquisition of the stalled development site adjacent to The Meads shopping centre. This offers a significant opportunity to provide a broader mix of uses at this end of the town centre, and to provide a development of quality which takes on board the need for place making. In principle, the findings that have contributed to this Strategy indicate that the development would ideally include active commercial frontages at ground floor level, a small area of green landscaped public realm to offer a balance to the much larger park in the Civic Quarter and inevitably, to ensure a viable development, residential floorspace above.

6.17 The commercial space should ideally be designed to be flexible, so that it can be occupied in smaller or larger units, to be sustainable to changes in market demand over time. Use class E indicates that there will be some flexibility going forward for types of occupation in any event. The development may also accommodate a more community focussed area, which can be used to provide indoor selling and doing spaces to emerging local businesses, and possibly to include a dedicated space which can be used by the college for students to promote their new ideas. This may also be able to incorporate a room available to rent for community use behind the active frontage. To attract more local and individual traders to Farnborough town centre, the Council could consider adopting a lettings policy that is more flexible than traditional commercial leases. This could include a more flexible attitude to financial references, easy in/out terms, some space that is fitted out to a basic level to enable businesses to operate at little initial capital outlay, fully inclusive terms charged on a weekly or monthly basis. This will encourage smaller local providers of goods and services to have a go at stepping up to the town centre, and will encourage an eclectic and individual mix of trades that is much wider than the usual established offer.

6.18 The location of the site also offers a unique opportunity to improve the overall layout and function of The Meads and Queensmead. Careful design should seek to provide a limited servicing opportunity at the northern end of The Meads, which can enable trolley service access to the service road to the rear of the eastern side of Quensmead. This will enable the intrusive service road access at the key gateway to the town centre to be closed to traffic, providing an opportunity to create an outdoor events space at the junction of Quensmead and the Civic Quarter and to provide art/gateway features that provide a clear welcome to the town centre.

6.19 The development can also provide a new entrance to The Meads shopping centre, ideally incorporating space suitable for the development of commercial socialising uses.

A NEW TOWN CENTRE OUTDOOR EVENTS SPACE - SOUTHERN END OF QUEENSMEAD

6.20 As introduced above, there is a large amount of undeveloped space at the junction of Queensmead, Briarcliffe House and the southern entrance to The Meads, the existing Iceland unit and the link to the Civic Quarter. This is currently bisected by a service road, which renders the space largely unusable, creates a conflict between pedestrians and delivery traffic, and impacts visually on the space. Currently the space is incoherent, somewhat unwelcoming and unfriendly.

6.21 If the service road can be removed, or redesigned and managed in such a way as it enables the space to be used for other activities, this offers the opportunity for a new Town Square of circa 170 M2, circa 0.14 ha (just over a third of an acre). This area will differ in character, but link directly into the proposed Westmead Square as shown in the Civic Quarter masterplan. It offers an opportunity for events, markets, pop up food traders, trade fairs, links to the Exhibition Centre where e.g. car fairs can have a presence in the town centre, thus increasing traffic between the two venues, etc. It will also be big enough to incorporate some high quality public art, possibly linked to Farnborough's aeronautical heritage as a key gateway feature, or an active water feature. This area has the potential to be an easily identifiable, inspirational front door to both the new Civic Quarter and the existing town centre. In our view this represents a key priority in securing a step change in the identity of Farnborough, on which progress can be made ahead of completion of the major development projects.

6.22 Whilst investment will be needed, by starting the process and setting the tone for a new level of quality in public realm, such action will engender confidence that the town is in the process of wholesale regeneration, and will help to attract both investors and new occupiers to Farnborough. It will demonstrate evidence of intent and a positive attitude to securing improvement. One Public Estate funding may be available to develop the feasibility stage of this project, and to identify how to unlock the servicing issue, as the aim is to make better use of publicly owned land, to enable it to develop a more commercial role.

PRINCES MEAD

6.23 Princes Mead has recently been marketed for sale, on the basis that it has potential for comprehensive redevelopment to include a significant number of new homes, as well as replacement commercial floorspace. It is anticipated that this will be commercially led by the buyer of the centre, but offers a clear opportunity for the Council to work with a new owner to secure contribution to a holistic town centre masterplan. Benefits that might be secured through this process include:

- A more street based less monolithic design suitable to urban living with flexible commercial space and active frontages at ground floor level

- A better gateway and town centre presence where the development links into the retail park, enhancing the opportunity for a circular route around the town

- Improvements to the gateway from Victoria Road via Westmead car park

- Improved linkage to Queensmead, with a new entranceway

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- Opportunities for new public realm, greening and another small square where people can gather

- Modern high quality frontages and high quality designs for urban living

Plans to redevelop the centre may offer an opportunity for some of the existing traders to move either to empty units elsewhere in the town centre, or if carefully sequenced to new commercial floorspace in The Meads development area.

6.24 The interest in Prince Mead for redevelopment, together with the ambitious proposals for the Civic Quarter, and the town centre site indicate that the majority of the town centre will be coming forward for improvement within the next 10-15 years. The current exception is Queensmead, which indicates that this should ideally be a priority for early public realm improvements.

LONGER TERM OPPORTUNITIES – WESTMEAD CAR PARK? THE MEADS?

6.25 As the town centre changes with the development of the Civic Quarter, and the focus for arrivals and transport moves towards the new transport hubs, it is likely that the next area that may be considered for redevelopment in the longer term could be Westmead car park. This will offer an opportunity to expand and improve the Victoria Road frontage and create a more outward facing link to existing residential areas and towards the Station.

6.26 Similarly, as other areas of the town improve, and the nature of Farnborough town centre changes The Meads may start to look like an opportunity for investment. Monolithic single building shopping/leisure provision in town centres is now considered somewhat dated, and does not offer the flexibility for incremental change that smaller blocks of street based development can enable. In the longer term we anticipate that The Meads may therefore come forward for remodelling or redevelopment to meet the changing standards and quality of the rest of the town

CONCEPT PLANS ILLUSTRATING IDEAS FOR INTERVENTION

6.27 The following concept plans illustrate spatially the core ideas and opportunities identified in the themes and development opportunities set out above.
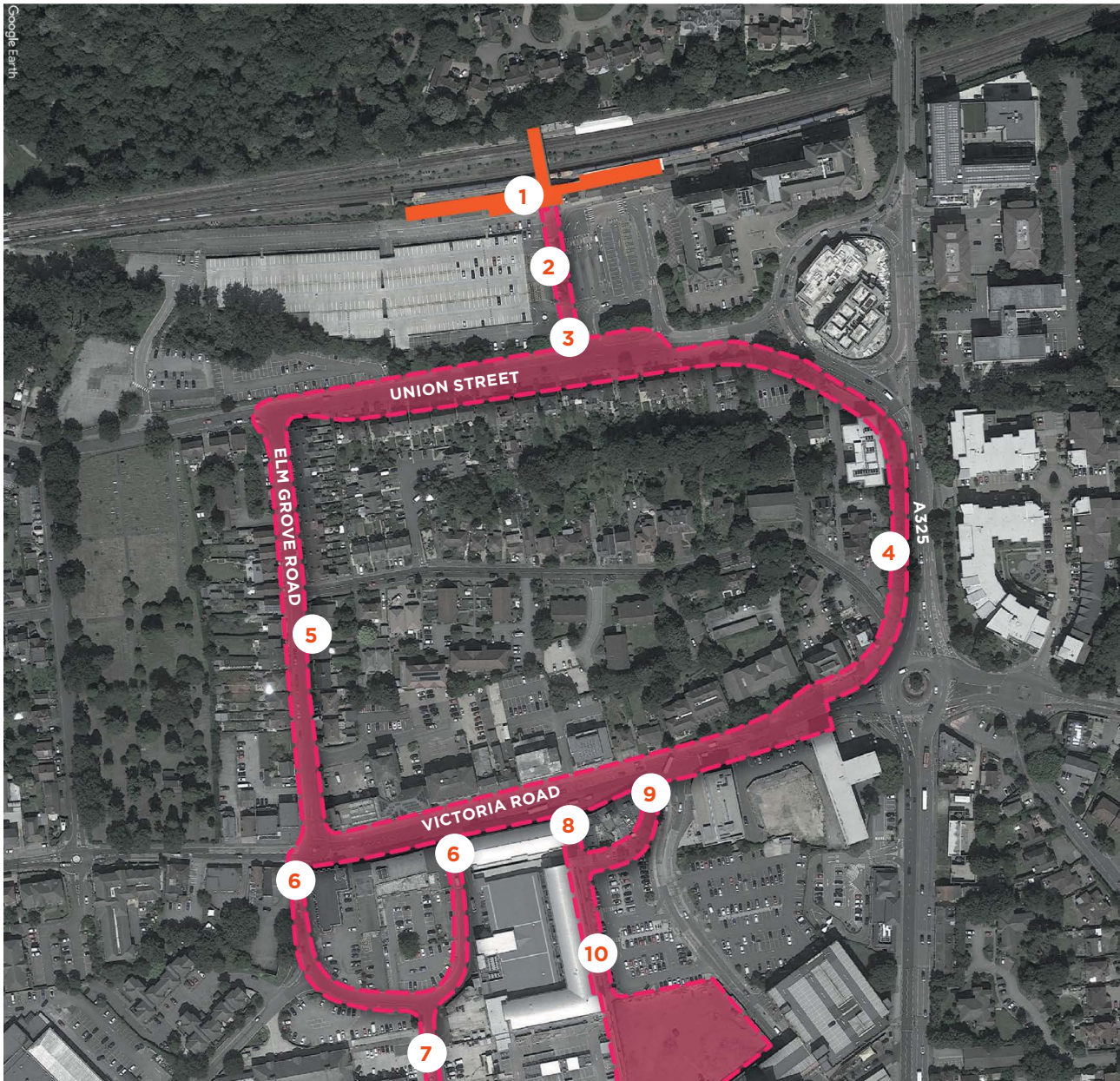
1. Farnborough Rail Station.

2. Public realm improvements to prioritise pedestrian movements from rail station entrance to Union Street.

3. Improved pedestrian crossing to be made across Union Street.

4. Improvements to footpaths along with increased signage to enhance experience of walking from the rail station towards the town centre along A325.

5. Narrow footways and highway in existing residential area potentially restrict pedestrian movements along Elm Grove Road which is a quieter alternative route to the town centre than alongside A325. Improved signage could help people navigate towards the town centre.

6. Crossing Victoria Road into Northmead and Westmead are highway dominated and could be enhanced to improve pedestrian cycle crossings. Whilst these routes link into Princess Mead Shopping centre , Northmead and Westmead they do not currently present an attractive route into the Princes Mead Shopping Centre.

7. Improvements to be made to better identify entrance into Princes Mead Shopping centre.

8. Access alley to Queensmead is acceptable albeit it doesn't present an attractive arrival route and is not overlooked so not secure.

9. Potential to major on this route along Kingsmead to provide a more positive, obvious and welcoming arrival experience into the top of the town centre.

10. Existing Kingsmead pedestrian route to be enhanced with street tree planting and seating.

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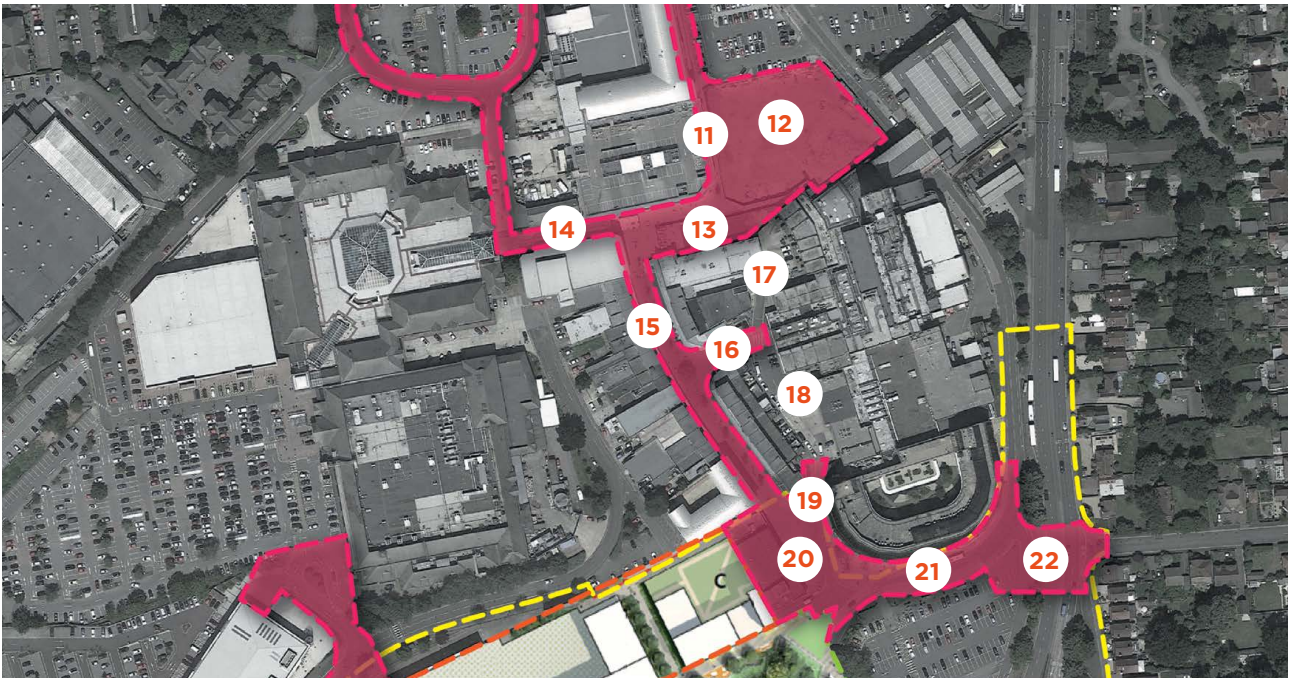
11. Consider widening pedestrian route to allow for enhanced movement and street tree planting.

12. Major opportunity site. Important that development, aside having the right mix of uses, provides active ground floors and an obvious and welcoming entrance to the Meads Shopping Centre, and considers alternative servicing designs to enable removal or reduction of service road access at southern end of Queensmead .

13. Potential for an enhanced and enlarged public space to anchor the northern end of the Queensmead. Proposals to include high quality public realm with new soft planting, coordinated street furniture that can connect through and down the Queensmead and down into the Civic Quarter creating a seamless environment.

14. Improvements to existing public realm to connect into Princes Mead Shopping Centre.

15. A coordinated approach is required to modernise the Queensmead to improve its environment. New high quality public realm with soft landscaping and new street furniture will create a new feel for the Queensmead, coupled with investment in the shop frontages. Stevenage has undertaken a similar process on their listed Town Centre. https://stevenage-even-better.com/stevenage-regeneration-schemes/

16. The ability to access and exit the shopping centre onto the Queensmead is positive but the public realm needs to connect right up to the entrance of the Meads Shopping Centre to improve the arrival experience. This is impacted by the service yards to The Meads and the Queensmead being accessed across this route.

17. Service yards to the Meads and Queensmead stores require either alternative access or its use limited to key business hours to reduce the conflict between vehicles and pedestrians at the southern end of Queensmead, and to enable better use of the public realm.

18. See above.

19. See above

20. Scope to modify existing proposed replacement Iceland unit to create an enlarged public space and southern anchor to Queensmead. Critcally this could enhance the physical and visual link between the Queensmead and the proposed new park that sits at the heart of the new Civic Quarter.

21. Major modifications are required to the existing highways to transform a road dominated environment into a more pedestrian focussed welcoming place. Access and servicing can be permitted but restricted where alternative arrangements are not possible.

22. To improve connectivity for the town's residents with their town centre and to increase overall patronage, targeted yet significant alterations are suggested across the A325 to create direct and convenient access for residents and remove the need to resort to inadequate and unsafe subways that are not on direct desire lines.

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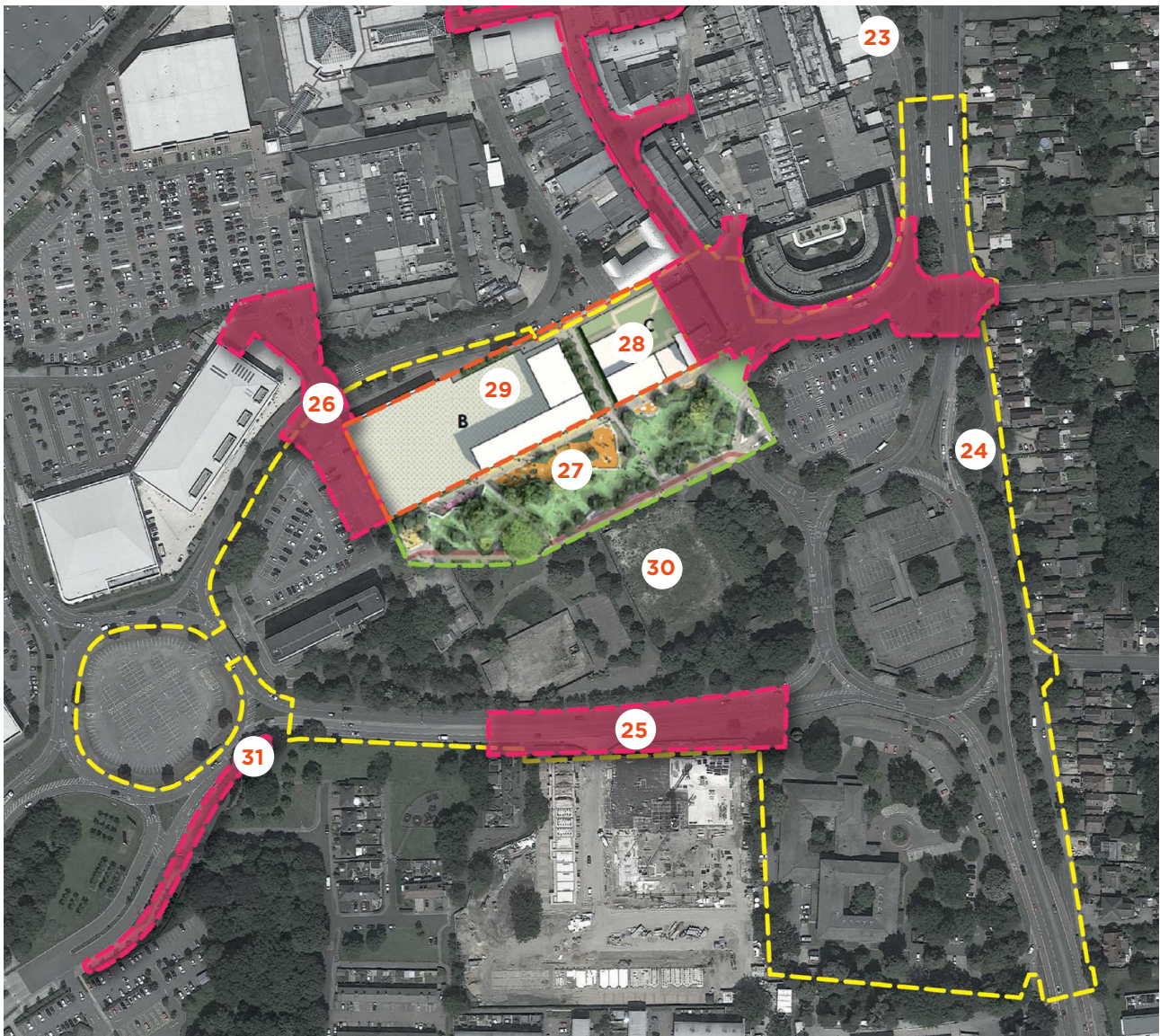
23. New arrangements should be explored for servicing access along Kingsmead off the A325.

24. Remove existing subways under A325 & A327 once surface level crossings are established.

25. Consider major alterations to this section or part of the A327, akin to the transformation of the Ashford Ring Road with the establishment of super-crossings to prioritise pedestrian and cycling movements from the south into the Civic Quarter and onwards in the Town Centre.

26. Initiate major public realm improvements across Westmead to enhanced pedestrian crossings between the Civic Quarter and Princes Mead Shopping Centre and the western retail parks. This will hopefully help establish a "retail circuit" and connect key locations within the town centre. This may benefit from an enhanced public realm and the introduction of additional family focussed activities alongside the proposed skatepark as part of the first phase of the wider civic offer. Explore how to establish Central Park as early in the process as possible as this will

form a key destination. Consideration should be given to how the Central Park could be marketed as an attraction in its own right for Farnborough Town Centre, as well as forming an integral part of the Civic Quarter.

27. Consider redesign of new replacement building (presently shown as ground floor retail and entertainment) to enable improved physical and visual connection between the High Street and the Central Park and Civic Quarter.

28. Early phased delivery of Civic Hub and Library and associated cultural and leisure facilities and works to show commitment and momentum in delivery of the Civic Quarter.

29. Phased delivery of the remainder of the Civic Quarter, including major highway remodelling at the Queensmead and Pinehurst roundabouts.

30. Once modifications have been made to the A327 to improve crossing for pedestrians and cyclists it is desirable to encourage people from Farnborough Business Park and beyond to use the surface level crossing as opposed to an underpass

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PROJECT:
Queensmead and The Meads Shopping Centre

Location Plan

This location is a critical cross roads for pedestrian movement within the town centre providing North – South and East - West links and so has huge potential to capitalise on this and help boost footfall through the town centre, especially if a new retail circuit can be delivered. The space itself however is currently disappointing. Whilst the scale of the space is appropriate and will act as a good bookend for the proposed [and enlarged] urban space to the south of Queensmead and in the Civic Quarter the southern elevation is defined by a blank façade which does nothing to encourage people to dwell and meet.

An urgent action would be to look at creating a new active edge to the southern side of the square. There is also minimal street furniture and street trees to enliven the space. A potential model to learn from is work undertaken at Stevenage as part of their town centre regeneration. They have been bold to appeal to a younger generation and have added new play areas for children, and provided attractive street furniture to encourage people to spend longer in the town with the aim of boosting footfall.

New play areas in primary shopping streets in Stevenage

Play area and activity wall at Fosse Park, Leicester

PROJECT:
Westmead - Civic Quarter
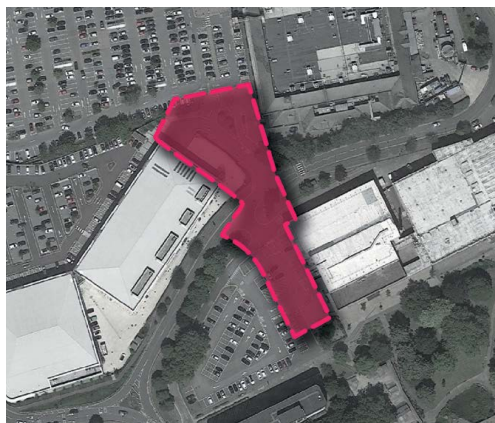
Location Plan

The ability to connect sites together and create a retail circuit needs to be considered. Whilst the Princes Mead Shopping Centre and the surrounding retail parks are an out-of-town environment they are a popular attractor, they also offering ample car parking that could benefit the town centre activities more than they do at present. Providing better pedestrian links and improving the public realm and attractions in the vicinity of the proposed skate park as a part of the Civic Quarter could help create an important missing link in the town's retail circuit.

View looking westward along Watermead Road – a highway dominated environment with limited provision for walking and cycling

A more direct and visible route, potentially retaining some of the existing trees could be created to enhance the experience of walking between the two areas of the town centre.

Potential for a circuit to be created that links the Prince's Mead, the High Street and Civic Quarter.
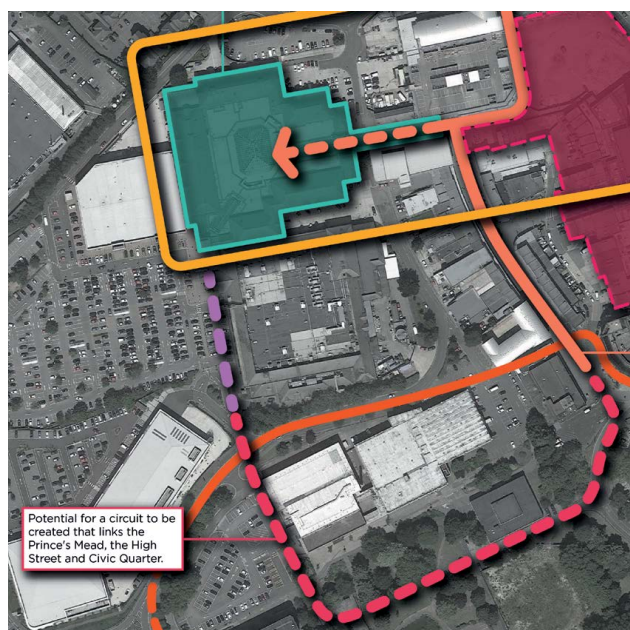
Scope to establish a missing link for the towns retail circuit

Improvements to pedestrian links between Civic Quarter and Westmead Shopping Centre.

New pedestrian priority crossing over Westmead.

Westmead

Relocation of skate park to improve connectivity between sites.
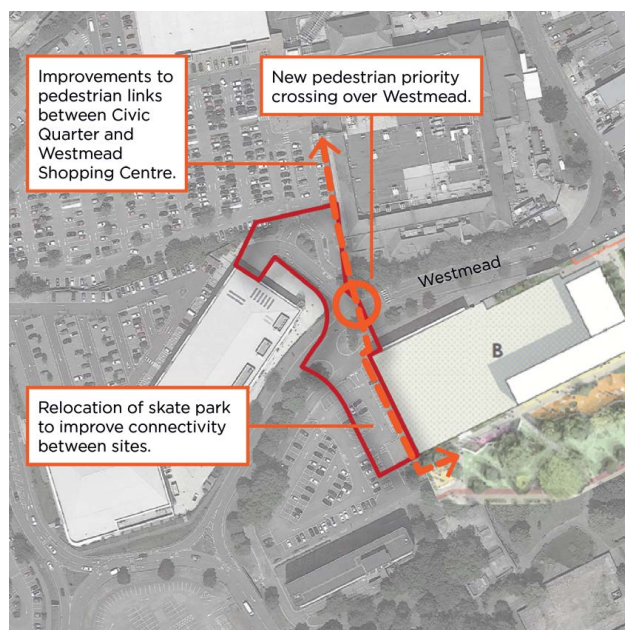
Sketch Layout

PROJECT:
A327
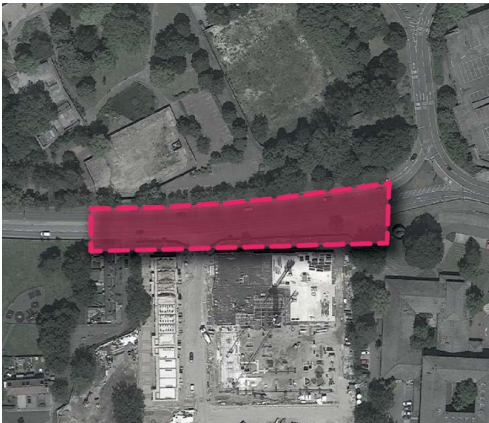
Location Plan

The A327 is a major highway that runs to the south of the town centre. It effectively cuts off North – South pedestrian and cycle movement from both the existing and anticipated residential communities to the south and also the numerous businesses that occupy the Farnborough Business Park and further afield Farnborough Airport. Better accessibility could impact on the vitality of the town centre and the potential spend from people who otherwise are deterred from the experience of the route into the town centre and what it has on offer. The proposed Civic Quarter will play a positive role in changing the offer

Image of A327 – Meudon Avenue looking westwards; with 5 lanes of traffic.

Image from the A4 – Wellington Street, Slough showing how high quality public realm, landscaping and super crossings alongside active travel and public transport measures can create an enhanced setting and encourage people to cross over and connect with the Civic Quarter and town centre.

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PROJECT:
Oak Road > Kingsmead > High Street

Location Plan

Residents living to the east of the town centre currently have to cross the A325 – Farnborough Road through a series of underpasses. Oak Road is a prominent residential street that connects with the town. It is proposed that instead of an indirect dogleg movement being required to reach a new surface level crossing, a new direct route is provided that lead straight into the proposed new Square that sits of the bottom of Queensmead.

Existing view looking towards the town centre from Oak Road.

Locate new pedestrian and cycle crossing over road where it is most conveneint at the junction with Oak Road.

Relocate Crossing.
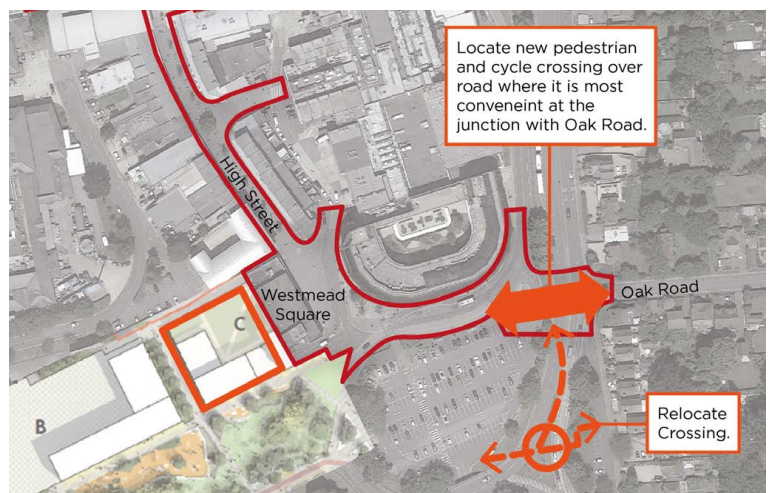
Potential view that would great residents from Oak Road and adjoining area when walking to the town centre.

Illustrative Sketch: Image of an alternative, more direct pedestrian and cycle link into the town centre

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CHAPTER 7:
DELIVERY

INDICATIVE SEQUENCING AND ANTICIPATED TIMESCALES FOR DELIVERY

7.0   With the quantum and extent of regeneration planned for Farnborough Town Centre the sequencing of delivery will be important in making sure that not all of the town centre suffers upheaval at once. Ideally, there will remain a critical mass of activity, and early evidence of improvements to maintain the shopping habit of users and generate interest in the change. Once shoppers and town centre users habits are altered, it can be difficult for them to re-establish.

7.1   The table sets out some indicative sequencing that aims to bring forward benefits whilst maintaining overall activity, and reflect the likely reality of development timescales:

EARLY WINS AND MEANWHILE USES

7.2   To generate early activity and demonstrate commitment to positive change it is useful to take actions that secure short term tangible improvement. This can stimulate a public conversation about the town centre, and can help engage people with the need for a comprehensive plan. Examples of early interventions that can make a difference include:

- Redecoration of the hoardings around the vacant town centre site – this could be achieved by way of a competition to design art for each subsection of the hoardings, involving local schools, colleges, art groups etc, with the winning entries then being implemented

- An alternative could be to use the hoardings to create a heritage trail/exhibition, using images from the FAST archive, setting out some of the key historical aviation history achievements and some interpretation of the contribution these have made to the UK

- Provision of some new seating in the town centre

- Time limiting the servicing at the southern end of Queensmead, and removal of the bollards to provide a space for exhibitions, and working with the exhibition centre to bring activity to the space that links with their programme

- Identifying busking locations in the town centre, and establishing a bookable busking programme, and auditions process

- Allowing pop up hot food/local produce providers in Queensmead one day month, possibly linked to a theme.

- Running a design competition for the branding of Farnborough, where each competitor provides a flag and an explanation of their design, which could then be exhibited in the concourse of The Meads, and voted on by the public

- Exploring opportunities for the use of coloured/dynamic lighting for areas of the town centre

- Extending the CCTV to cover all of Queensmead to improve security

Short term actions 1-3 years	Medium term actions 3-7 years	Longer term actions 7-12 years	Future opportunities to be planned for 12-15 years	Comments
Develop Branding				Priority
Commissioning public art/ gateway markers	Implementation- public art, gateways			Subject to funding/ sponsorship. Priority
TCM Programme of events				
Developing Social media profile				Ongoing – already initiated
Develop public realm strategy for town centre	Implementation greening town centre, Heritage trail, Selfie trail, selfie walls			Selfie trail/walls can be expanded and changed as development comes on stream
Wayfinding plan	Implementation of way finding linked to brand			
Transport Plan for Farnborough	Improved cycleways and crossings			NB some crossings linked to timetable for delivery of Civic Quarter
Redesign servicing for eastern side of Queensmead	Implement changes to servicing and development of new Events square			Priority
Secure development partner and Masterplan, for TC site at The Meads	Secure planning permission and implement development			Priority
Develop relationship with new owners of Princes Mead	Secure Masterplan for Princes Mead and planning permission	Implementation of Princes Mead redevelopment		
Develop relationship with Competitive leisure/competitive socialising market, and market The Meads for new leisure uses	Implement any changes required to accommodate new leisure uses			Priority
Research opportunity for more ambitious Skate park/multi use facility				More detailed planning and studies for key linkages
Refine plans for Civic Quarter	Civic Quarter implementation			
Specify new Leisure, library and cultural centre to incorporate capability as events location/ music venue	Part of Civic Quarter implementation			
		Develop revised town centre strategy	Westmead Car park redevelopment	
			Redevelopment of The Meads	
Develop prospectus for Farnborough Town Centre, summarising the ambitious programme of work and regeneration				
	Masterplan for the existing Civic Offices site			Assuming new Hub includes relocated Civic Offices, or alternative town centre location is progressed

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- Discussions with landlords of Princes Mead and Queensmead to secure permission for meanwhile uses in vacant shops, such as student exhibitions, makers spaces, artist studios etc., or where this is not possible the introduction of false shop fronts to animate the streetscape, using large scale images to introduce colour and interest.

- Temporary exhibition of a large physical attraction, such as an aircraft, within the town centre

- The introduction of a movable mini forest of potted trees along the centre of Queensmead, linked to information relating to the benefits of tree planting – after the period of exhibition these could be auctioned off

7.3 It is recognised that such meanwhile uses do not come for free. Options for funding could include sponsorship from local businesses, whose name/logo would appear as part of the event, linkage with local interest groups who may provide support/equipment, working with the colleges to link into their curriculum, asking for contributions from key anchor retailers, including those on the retail parks as well as those in the town centre as part of their Corporate Social Responsibility, Crowd funding.

PROCESS FOR DELIVERY

7.4 This Strategy is the first stage in a process which seeks to determine what the town centre will look like in the future, how it will perform, and the overall vision for its transformation. It sets the direction and aspiration, which will rely on progress being made across a number of areas, in summary as follows:

- **Policy development:** Building on Local Plan Policies and refining the development principles to enable managed implementation through the preparation of a comprehensive Farnborough Town Centre Masterplan. This will set out a more detailed development framework for Farnborough guiding the qualitative and spatial approach to development whilst retaining the flexibility to adapt as the dynamics of the market evolve. The masterplan will be supported by a suite of more detailed studies, ideally including:

  o A Public Realm Strategy
  o A Wayfinding Strategy
  o A Farnborough Transport Plan
  o Design principles for Town Centre living
  o Completion of the draft Cultural Strategy

  Ideally, the Masterplan will be developed in collaboration with the emerging new owners of Princes Mead, who are looking to redevelop, and with involvement of any development partner for The Meads, the involvement of the Civic Quarter partnership to ensure that the benefits of this development are maximised and (if achievable) in collaboration of the owners of Queensmead. All have a vested interest in the ongoing success of Farnborough, so should be prepared to invest in determining its future

- **Town Centre Management:** Expanding the focus on town centre management for Farnborough, and developing a programme of activities, including meanwhile uses and longer term actions to enliven the town and increase footfall and trade. As activities increase and benefit is proven, an aspiration would be to involve the retailers more positively in the management of the town, with a view to moving to a position where a Business Improvement District could be successfully established.

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- **Development areas:** Progress on each of the development areas will take place through the leadership of a range of different organisations:

  o Civic Quarter – through the ongoing delivery programme with the RDP, which involves direct involvement of the Council

  o Princes Mead – Lead by the new owners, but subject to a proactive process of engagement led by the Council and starting with discussions regarding the preparation of a town centre masterplan

  o Queensmead – Proactive engagement led by the Council to secure involvement in the masterplan, and specifically on the need for environmental and public realm improvements and activities

  o The Meads – finalisation of council considerations relating to direct involvement leading to a range of options for delivery:

Method	Description	Pro's	Cons
RBC Direct development	RBC take the lead in the development and procure its design, planning and delivery	RBC maintains full control and reaps long term financial benefits, guarantees compliance with all policy requirements, subject to financial sustainability.	RBC assumes all the risk High resource implications with impact on budgets Potential problems securing and retaining appropriate expertise. Arguably not the role of a LA to take such risk
Joint Venture/ Development partnership	Partnership established whereby each party contributes resources. A joint venture is created whereby parties collaborate to share the risks and benefits of the venture. Council would contribute land and potentially further funding Developer provides funding expertise and project management. It will be important to set clear quality and mix aspirations before securing a partner by competitive procurement. If sought at an early stage Partners can contribute financially to the development of the Masterplan and any more specific development principles for the site and can work with the Council to secure the right design team for the scheme.	Council has a direct stake in the development and shared control of delivery. Council can secure financial benefits for the short or longer term depending on the structure of the partnership, and whether the Council is seeking income or capital receipt. Shared risk – reduced risk to Council and Development partner	Development Partner will want at least 50% share in control and design process. May be differing qualitative aspirations. Some Developers will want to bring their own design team. No guarantee the partnership will succeed if external influences impact on the private sector Development Partner's commitment or ability to proceed.
Sale/ partnership via Development Competition	Council develops a detailed brief for the site, and holds a competition to secure a development delivery team including design. The brief will set out the development and financial requirements, which could include a range of options such as sale of land by the Council on satisfactory completion (can be problematic and may need to be phased where residential involved), shared income approach, or share of completed development.	In a strong market this can generate a lot of interest and lead to a high quality outcome. Reduced or managed risk to the Council, as established in the brief ahead of marketing. Requirements clear from the outset.	Market may not respond where there is perceived to be a high risk of abortive work, or may require payment for abortive work. In a weak market, Council may have Hobson's choice after a very public process. High degree of preparation work required by Council.

Organisational implications

7.5   The development of the strategy has highlighted a number of areas in which the Council's organisation for delivery of town centre regeneration may need to be reinforced. To achieve the ambitious changes identified will require the following:

- An adequately resourced Town Centre Management and promotion function

- An adequately resourced development team and pro-active planning team

- A dedicated bids manager to fully exploit funding opportunities – this is a role currently being developed in many local authorities to ensure that all funding opportunities are identified and prioritised, and to increase chances of success through expertise

- An ongoing pro-active approach to developing new partnerships and collaborative working with landowners, development promoters, and occupiers, and to taking the lead in the direct development of projects

To secure commitment from investors and partners, the Council will need to be seen to deliver, as has been the case for the Civic Quarter. Without long term resourced commitment and a recognition of the need for hands on involvement in the curation and operation of the town centre, the benefits that can be reaped will not be maximised. It is now widely understood that securing a successful town centre cannot be left purely to commercial intervention as was the case in the 1980's and 1990's, but requires the long term commitment and leadership of those who are responsible for its continued governance.

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CHAPTER 8:
CONCLUSIONS

8.1 This strategy sets the overall direction of work required to achieve improvement to Farnborough Town Centre, building on and pulling together the array of policies and activities already underway. It identifies 5 key themes for action which collectively promote a step change in the function and performance of Farnborough Town Centre.

8.2 The suggested actions are indicative of the types of interventions that can be made to secure sustainable regeneration. The aim is to bring the town centre to the level of quality that the town and those who live and work in it, and visitors to it demand and deserve. Whilst ambitious, the level of interest in Farnborough town centre, its economic context, and the activity already instigated suggest it is eminently deliverable.

8.3 As for any strategy, the messages are intended to be clear and high level but the devil will be in the detail. This is the start of a process which sets out the areas of work that will need to be taken forward for this to be a reality. It is recognised that funding is an issue, however in the longer term, the development and increased expenditure and footfall in the town centre, and the improvements in its environment will reap long term financial, economic and social rewards.

8.4 Commitment to the delivery of the strategy and a clear direction of travel will provide confidence for investors and development partners that the Council has a plan for the town centre, knows what it wants to achieve, is developing more detailed plans for how it will get there and communicates it with a united voice.

APPENDICES

Appendices to Farnborough
Town Centre Strategy Report:

Appendices to Farnborough Town Centre Strategy Report:

Appendix 1: Policy Context

Information	Source	Summary	Issues and Opportunities
NATIONAL			
National Planning Policy Framework (June 2021)	Government	Sets out national policy for town centres and requires policies to take a positive approach to their growth, management and adaptation and provides wider relevant policies that relate to: • Building a strong, competitive economy; • Ensuring the vitality of town centres; • Promoting healthy and safe communities; • Promoting sustainable transport; • Achieving well designed places; • Conserving and enhancing the historic environment	Provide a high level context of national policies for guiding the development of local plan policies, strategies and proposals, and for guiding decision making on planning applications.
National Planning Practice Guidance	Government	Provides further detailed guidance to support the National Planning Policy Framework and is set out under a number of categories which are relevant to town centres with those (not exclusively) including: • Advertisements; • Design; • Healthy and safe communities; • Historic environment; • Planning obligations; • Town centres and retail	Provides additional more detailed guidance to the policies set out in the NPPF for guiding local plan policies, strategies and proposals and for guiding decision making on planning applications.
National Design Guide, National Model Design Code & Guidance Notes for Design Codes	Government	Sets out how well-designed places that are beautiful, healthy, greener, enduring and successful can be achieved in practice. Forms part of the Government's collection of planning practice guidance to be read alongside the separate planning practice guidance on design process and tools.	Valuable resources for understanding the widely held principles for good urban design for all aspects including town centres and set out ten characteristics of well-designed places. The model design code sets out the process for coding at town wide with area types including town centres, and guidance notes for the possible contents of design codes that are modelled on the ten characteristics of well-designed places.

			Has the potential to inform more detailed design guide that is relevant and specific to Farnborough Town Centre without overly repeating the guidance that exists at a national level.
The High Street Report	Government	Report of an Expert Panel Chaired by Sir John Timpson – set up at the request of the High Streets Minister, Jake Berry in July 2018 to diagnose issues facing high streets and town centres. Key recommendations include: • Establishing the High Streets Task Force – to provide support for collaborative efforts for high streets and town centres; • Future High Streets Fund – to support town centres with viable visions for their high streets and town centres; • Short term measures – including day to day cleaning and maintenance, meanwhile use of empty properties, and reviewing parking provision and restrictions.	Underpins the importance of creating a Vision and Strategy for the town centre, even without the direct funding support from the High Streets Task Force.
High Streets Task Force	High Streets Task Force	Commissioned by government in 2019 as part of its plan for the High Street in response to The High Street Report, by the High Streets Expert Panel. Run by the Institute of Place Management with an alliance of place making experts. Is a resource that provides guidance, tools and skills to support the transformation of the High Street with an extensive knowledge base for all to draw upon. Four objectives: • Boost local authority capacity – providing expert knowledge and support to solve problems holding places back; • Build place making skills – of organisations and groups to deliver effective strategies;	Whilst Farnborough is not one of the towns identified for direct support, it underpins the importance of evolving a strategy for Farnborough Town Centre and one that is tailored and unique to the context of Farnborough. Valuable resource to draw upon in developing the town centre strategy follow on actions.

		• Coordination – connecting local and national decision makers and those that can influence high streets, as well as promoting positive messages about towns and cities; • Information and data sharing – vetting, integrating and providing data and evidence to people making important decisions about the future of their high streets, towns and city centres. Specific direct support provided to 70 local authorities, selected based on need following support in pilot locations. Further authorities to be nominated in mid-2022	
Health on the High Street (December 2020)	NHS Confederatio n	Summary of roundtable discussions involving local government, community businesses and range of experts invited to discuss the role of health in the revitalisation of the high street. Includes recommendations for how health, local authority and LEPs can integrate health as an element of town centre regeneration, whilst increasing health service delivery capacity and addressing health inequalities. Linked also to the structural changes in health care provision with a shift from CCGs to ICPs and seeks to align service delivery with local authorities and other partners. NHS has a role in the high street policy agenda by: • Running health services form vacant property, including vaccination programmes; • Broadening the range of services provided within communities; • Supporting and participating in the design of healthy communities and places	. Highlights a key opportunity to explore how health and health service provision could have a greater presence in Farnborough and how this relates to the existing estate used for health care provision. Highlights the possibility for running health services from vacant properties. CCG recently obtained funding to improve facilities at the District Hospital which may involve repurposing of buildings. Opportunity to discuss with the CCG potential future intentions of the site and also it aims to act on the Health on the High Street Agenda in terms of using vacant spaces on a temporary basis or for more permanent forms of health service delivery. This may not be clear until the transition to Integrated Care Partnerships is complete in 2022 but will be worth exploring, as part of efforts to diversify the town centre offer.

Grimsey Review 1 (2013) Grimsey Review 2 (2018) Grimsey Review Build Back Better – Covid 19 Against All Odds: How independent Retail, Hospitality, and Services Businesses have adapted to survive the pandemic (Grimsey Review) (2021)	Grimsey Review Team	**Grimsey Review (2013)** Report provides 31 recommendations on transforming high streets with three overarching conclusions. High Streets and Multifunctional Hubs, the need for radical government action and importance of local authority plans, visions and partnership working. **Grimsey Review 2 (2018)** Builds on the first review, reflecting on progress being made and offers 25 recommendations for transforming town centres which are grouped into four overall key findings: • Transforming places into community hubs – town centres as multi-functional community hubs; • Strong leadership and vision – local authorities and place leaders to collaborate to create longer-term visions; • Establishing place distinction and unique heritage – consider the unique offer and heritage of a place, to provide a unique experience; • Support from an independent body – sharing, data, evidence, and best practice. The High Streets Task Force is a resource to support revitalising town centres. **Grimsey Review Build Back Better – Covid 19 Supplement for town centres (2020)** Sets out a suggested approach to revitalising town centres in the context of the Covid 19 Pandemic and its opportunities for an alternative locally driven approach towards recovery that embraces sustainability, quality of life and experiences and local leadership.	Town centres need to rely less on retail and become multifunctional hubs. Farnborough Town Centre has the potential to further evolve as a multi-functional hub. The Grimsey review papers highlight the opportunities to: • Explore the potential to strengthen health, entertainment, education, leisure and business. Further draw on and celebrate Farnborough's unique history and heritage;

		Against All Odds: How independent Retail, Hospitality, and Services Businesses have adapted to survive the pandemic (Grimsey Review) (2021) Research on how small independent retail, hospitality, and services businesses have survived the pandemic and what the future looks like for them. Emphasises the importance of these types of small businesses in creating unique experiences in town centres and the need for support given the impacts of the Covid-19 Pandemic. Requires their involvement in the process of revitalising town centres.	
High Street 2030: Achieving Change (December 2018)	Institute of Place Management	Takes a people and place-based approach to understanding the changes in town centres. Summarises the findings of surveys from participants in five different town types including Bolton Teenage Market. Important attractions to retain include: independent shops; community atmosphere; music venues; key service provision; markets; leisure and entertainment; good public transport; heritage; unique features that create distinctiveness (often related to greenspace or waterways). Young people interviewed on the Teenage Market. Bolton supportive of many of these attractions, including food, leisure and entertainment offers, public transport access, and the improved public realm. Other findings: • Create more of an experience • Improve accessibility that is more environmentally-friendly • Create public spaces or areas, centres that better serve older people • More central services	Highlights that all town centres and different – a one size fits all approach is not appropriate. Key findings and principles are relevant to Farnborough in terms of focussing on: • Providing an experience • Potential of independent shops • Ensuring that the town centre can continue to facilitate events • Exploring the potential for key service provision to be based in the town centre • Accessibility - walking and cycling in a 20 minute catchment, car parking, bus station and rail station Drawing out the aspects of Farnborough that are unique to the towns identity, that incudes heritage and culture. Facilitating residential development positively that does not compete or constrain other town centre uses and activities. Further exploring the potential for pop up retail and leisure.

		• Town centre living • Create places for entertainment and leisure • More frequent use of pop-up retail and entertainment. Whilst retail was still seen as an important element, participants saw high streets offering other activities that served the community – places where individual and collective experiences should happen. Fundamental principles identified that can apply to all places include: • Leadership and partnerships: network rather than hierarchy, with place leaders, acting together, achieving change • Blending local and expert knowledge: identify solutions that are appropriate for their location using data and involving expert. • Communication: sharing and discussing knowledge, ideas, data, plans, achievements and problems – facilitated by good, active, place leadership • Young people: contributing to the evolution and development of town centres that they will inherit – encouraged with innovative active engagement methods • Places served by place professionals: from different backgrounds acting in the long-term interest of the place, being part of the leadership, engendering trust, sourcing knowledge and communicating with all to provide professional support for place change	

Revitalising Town Centres: A handbook for council leadership (May 2018)	Local Government Association	Accompanied with an online toolkit, offers guidance on the role of governance in approaching the revitalisation of town and city centres by delivering long-term impacts and using broad principles that can be tailored to meet local needs. Provides a high-level overview to guide councils in taking a strategic and evidence-based approach. Contains suggestions of further reading, resources and examples of good practice that can be accessed through the online toolkit. Includes a Town Centre Checklist structures around key 'Factors' that cut across many functions underpinning the importance of a joined-up approach to town centres.	Underpins the importance of this study in forming an assessment of current activities taking place in Farnborough Town Centre and further work that is necessary to secure the ongoing improvements to the town centre in a context that has since been affected by the Covid-19 pandemic in addition to the ongoing and accelerated restructuring of the retail sector. Many of the key notes in the document further support the development of a town centre strategy.
Active Design 2 (2015)	Sport England	Report which promotes the opportunities to encourage and promote sport and physical activity through the design and layout of the built environment.	Efforts have been made by the Council to improve walking and cycling provision across the town centre. The report utilises case studies across England which could help to inform development specific improvements that would assist in further improving active transport activities as part of the built environment. The concepts taken from AD2 could be expanded to develop town wide principles.
Rushmoor Borough Council DEVELOPMENT PLAN			
Rushmoor Local Plan 2014-2032	RBC Planning Policy	Adopted in February 2019, the Local Plan sets out a vision, spatial objectives, supporting development across the borough, as well as providing specific policy support for the regeneration of Farnborough town centre, including development management policies designating Primary and Secondary Frontages.	In recent years there have been significant global and market changes that have had an impact on town centres, including Covid-19, the rapid expansion of online retail and a focus on climate impacts. The Local Plan although adopted in 2019, already holds content which may no longer seem in-keeping with policy and these changes. Section 7 of the Local Plan focuses Shaping Places, to which Policy SP2, identifies the need for the revitalisation of Farnborough Town Centre. Any proposed regeneration strategy will need to aim to achieve each of the broad objectives within the policy to be able to be seen as a success.

| | | | The broad objectives are closely aligned to several of the design criteria of the Civic Quarter redevelopment, including enhancing accessibility for all into and around the Town Centre by providing better connections to surrounding commercial and residential areas.

Policies SP2.1 and SP2.2 do place some limitations as to potential opportunities for development by stating which areas which are primary and secondary frontages, rather thinking forward as to where may be better for the frontages to be focused. Furthermore, as consumer trends have shifted to a desire for small scale, local, independent retailers, there is less of a demand for large store units, which many of the secondary frontages are. |
|---|---|---|---|
| Affordable Housing SPD (September 2019) | RBC Planning Policy | The purpose of this SPD is to provide further guidance to support the implementation of the affordable housing policies of the Rushmoor Local Plan and housing delivery objectives of the Rushmoor Housing and Homelessness Strategy 2017-20222.

A core purpose of this SPD is to ensure the delivery of affordable housing that meets residents' needs and aspirations, and which supports the delivery of sustainable, inclusive communities. | Consideration will need to be given as to how much of any potential development within the town centre will be appropriate for affordable housing, particularly as there is an increasing focus on providing residential units within town centres for vitality. |
| Car and Cycle Parking Standards SPD (November 2017) | RBC Planning Policy | Sets out the Council's approach to car and cycle parking in new development. The SPD provides information about the Councils expectations for car and cycle parking in new residential and non-residential development and support the implementation of the parking standards. | The SPD will need to be appropriately considered as to the potential for any parking for new development within the town centre. The significant amount of existing public car parking is set to be removed through the Civic Quarter redevelopment, will have likely have an impact on the opportunities for car-focused development.

It is positive to see that in-keeping with the Councils Climate Emergency that the SPD does have a focus on cycle parking standards as well as car parking. As part of the regeneration of the town centre, any opportunity to provide cycle parking should be used to evidence best case |

			examples for what the Council expects for future development.
Farnborough Civic Quarter Masterplan SPD (June 2015)	RBC Planning Policy	The SPD will act as a material consideration for Rushmoor Borough Council in decision making regarding planning applications for proposed development in the Civic Quarter area. The SPD has been developed to supplement policy SP4 of the Rushmoor Core Strategy (2011) and the principles of the document will be carried forward within the emerging Local Plan, which will inform planning decisions in the area. A number of principles and development priorities are: 1. Re-establish a network of connected streets and spaces that historically existed in the area but were lost over time. 2. Integrate the site with its context and adjoining streets to overcome its current disconnection for pedestrians and cyclists. 3. Enhance the central green space and retain significant trees in the area. 4. Establish a balance of uses that contributes to Farnborough's long term vitality. 5. Ensure continuity of existing community uses as sites within the area come forward and are redeveloped. 6. Deliver practical development plots that can come forward flexibly to accommodate different uses. 7. Work within existing ownership and occupancy boundaries as much as possible to facilitate the re-provision of community services.	Provides a useful context for the current focus and goals in terms of regenerating the town centre. As the SPD has been carried forward into the current Local Plan there is strong opportunity to expand upon the design criteria and proposals w to develop a wholistic approach to the wider town centre. This would enable the Council to look at focusing on which sections of the town centre could be better focused and where appropriate concentrations of retail provision, restaurants and residential units could be placed. It would also enable a cohesive design of the town centre rather than the currently piecemeal design and development, which although shows the history of the development of the town, has not enable the town centre to naturally adapt to market / cultural changes.

		8. Be as flexible as possible in terms of phasing, to respond to opportunities and necessities as they arise. 9. Enable as much change as possible in terms of redevelopment before requiring major infrastructure investment	
Farnborough Town Centre SPD (July 2007)	RBC Planning Policy	The SPD sets out the Councils Eight strategic objectives: 1. To encourage and facilitate the revitalisation of Farnborough town centre by developing a robust retail core with a broad range of shops and services; 2. To create a high quality network of streets and spaces to provide a more attractive town centre environment; 3. To encourage the development of the evening economy; 4. To enhance accessibility into and within the town centre by all means of transport; 5. To create a unified and coherent civic quarter; 6. To ensure that the town centre meets the needs of all sectors of its community; 7. To support partnership working; and 8. To promote the town centre as a shopping and leisure destination. The SPD also separates the town into 6 key development areas: Area 1: Union Street/Station Environs *(priority)* Area 2: Farnborough Road North Area 3: Town Centre *(Priority)* Area 4: Princes Mead West Area 5: Civic Quarter *(Priority)* Area 6: Farnborough Business Park North	The document is now 15 years old and much of the document has now either been achieved or superseded by more recent applications/SPD's such as the Civic Quarter Masterplan.

Farnborough Town Centre Prospectus SPD (May 2012)	RBC Planning Policy	Provided an update on the on-going proposals following the 2007 Town Centre SPD, it split the priority areas further, as well as highlighting individual developments/building which could be brought forward and regenerated.	The supplementary prospectus supports the original town centre SPD and can be used to highlight what the council has achieved since its publication. Similar to the 2007 SPD many of the actions within the report have been delivered. Some actions however still remain relevant and include bringing forward sites The Town Centre Strategy will in effect update the Farnborough Town Centre Prospectus SPD.
Shop Front Design Guide (February 2015)	RBC Planning Policy	The SPDs purpose is to provide design guidance on the alteration or installation of shop fronts and shop signage in order to maintain or raise the design quality of these features of the townscape. It applies to all buildings in Use Classes A1 (shops), A2 (financial and professional services), A3 (restaurants and cafes), A4 (drinking establishments) and A5 (hot food take-aways). It will also apply to other town centre uses that require an active ground floor frontage.	Shop Front Audit would provide a useful evidence base of the issues with shop front design and inform improvements and measures necessary. More control and opportunities to secure improved shopfront design could be achieved by designating an Area of Special Control of Advertisements (ASCA), evidenced with a shop front survey. Example where this has been used includes Wellingborough. See: https://www.wellingborough.gov.uk/downloads/download/2360/area_of_special_control_of_advertisements
Locally Listed Heritage Assets SPD (December 2020)	RBC Planning Policy	Sets out the criteria for identifying buildings and structures of local importance and the procedure for adding them to our Local List. It also identifies the relevant conservation principles which apply to these buildings. The key objectives of this SPD are: • To raise the profile of, and give recognition to, buildings and structures that contribute to the special local character and distinctiveness of an area; • To encourage the preservation and repair of buildings and structures of local historical and architectural importance; • To provide clear guidance to the Council's Development Management Team and developers on alterations to	Several heritage assets are within close proximity to the town centre, including St Michaels Abbey, The Tumble Down Dick and the Farnborough Airship Hangar Frame, all of which can play a role in developing the distinctiveness and character to the town centre. There could be an opportunity to expand upon the importance of these buildings and assets through improved signage and routes directing individuals to them and explaining their history and context. A heritage walking route or as part of an improved wayfinding network could be implemented so as to better connect the history of the town whilst also improving active travel connections to the town centre.

		such buildings and structures where planning permission is required; • To enhance the appearance of the Borough's built environment; • To ensure that developments are sympathetic and appropriate to the character of the Borough's locally important historical buildings and structures.	
Draft Green Infrastructure Strategy (February 2022)	RBC Planning Policy	The GI Strategy is currently in draft form but set to be adopted in 2022. It follows the Council commitment in the Rushmoor Local Plan (2019) to produce a GI strategy, and will be used to inform spatial planning and development management decisions in Rushmoor. The Report and evidence base aims to identify key Green Infrastructure in and around the Borough, seeking to protect, harness and sustain the benefits it provides, and identify opportunities for enhancement.	As the draft strategy is in its final stages before being approved, any development or strategy-based decisions should take the GI strategy into account with significant weight. Furthermore, through effective use of the GI Strategy, the Council would be in a position to advances its climate change credentials as well as improving the streetscape for resident, and work to support the local ecology / biodiversity within the Thames Basin Area.s.
WIDER EVIDENCE BASE			
Climate Change Action Plan (November 2020)	RBC	The aim of the Action Plan is to ensure that the Borough meets the target of becoming greener and more sustainable and that the Council's operations become carbon neutral by 2030.	This is a continuation of the early adoption of Rushmoor Borough Council in becoming greener and more energy efficient since the first plan in 2008. This could help to form the basis for a future strategy for the town centre through incorporating the goals and aims of the action plan to help Farnborough become an exemplar town. There is an opportunity for RBC to embrace the concept of 20-minute neighbourhood to create a "20-minute Farnborough" which fundamentally advocates less use of the car with a preference to more sustainable modes of transport. There is a large catchment of residential areas that are accessible on foot to the town centre with a wider area beyond that is accessible for cyclists. This underpins efforts for the town centre to become an accessible multifunctional hub. Achieving a "20-minute Farnborough" will be reliant on maximising accessibility with good quality walking and

			cycling connections, measured in terms of quality of experience, continuity, perceptions of safety and ease of movement. New developments within 20-minute walking and cycling catchments could provide opportunities to capture value to invest in maximising the accessibility of the town centre through new links and enhancing existing links and with investment in public transport infrastructure. Improved footpath and cycle links, in encouraging local trips would support the availability of car parking for visitors who do not have access to other modes. Car Parks include EV charging spaces, which begins a transition towards electrified mobility. In response to questions on utilisation of EV spaces some flexibility in managing the use of these spaces could be considered to ensure use of space is optimised, and in turn to feed into expansion of EV spaces in due course. Other potential measures that may include solar installations, micro wind generation. Parking standards that include EV charging and enhancing green landscaping in context with wider objectives of the updated strategy.
Retail, Leisure and Town Centres Study: Part 2 - Town Centres (June 2015)	RBC		Part 2 of the study provided an audit and review of the existing centres within the two separate authorities, as well as identifying the capacity of centres to accommodate the new town centre development requirements. Key objectives	Produced in context of the wider restructuring of retail although this was prior to the COVID 19 Pandemic and changes to the NPPF and Use Classes Order. Whilst some of the findings and recommendations remain relevant the study will be out of date. The report highlights that Farnborough Town Centre has good levels of comparison shops and floorspace and good provision of mainstream/middle-market multiple retailers. The range and choice of shops is reasonable for the size of the Centre, and there is a good selection of food stores. Farnborough also has a good range of non-retail service uses. However, the proportion of restaurants and cafés is significantly below the national average, whilst fast-food outlets, takeaways, banks and other financial services are significantly above the national average.

| | | | Therefore, the regeneration strategy should take the opportunity to rebalance the unit types and shopping opportunities within the town centre.

Now a shift from planning for new floor space to planning to consolidate the supply of floor space and provide a composition of spaces that will best respond to the change. This includes adapting to a receding representation of national retailers that rely on larger, purpose built and more rigid formats to smaller and adaptable forms of provision.

It is more likely that a planned response is to favour a consolidation of retail with a focus towards a more local and concentrated independent offer of retail and supporting uses that support an ongoing process of diversification.

Changes to national policy will undermine the purpose and objectives of primary and secondary frontage designations although this could be managed e.g. through Article 4 directions which will have to be robustly justified. The Town Centre Strategy could support this justification and could be balanced out by being clear where non-retail could be focussed. |
|---|---|---|---|
| South East Plan: POLICY NRM6: THAMES BASIN HEATHS SPECIAL PROTECTION AREA | Regional Planning Policy | The only remaining policy from the former South East Region wherein, any new residential development which is likely to have a significant effect on the ecological integrity of Thames Basin Heaths Special Protection Area (SPA) will be required to demonstrate that adequate measures are put in place to avoid or mitigate any potential adverse effects. Such measures must be agreed with Natural England. | Being within the Thames Basin Heaths Special Protection Area creates an additional challenge in that all development will need to demonstrate adequate measures to mitigate or avoid any potential adverse effects.

However, on the flip side, this challenge could be utilised as an opportunity to boost Farnborough's green credentials, particularly in relation to the Climate Emergency and offer significant biodiversity improvements throughout the town centre. |
| Hampshire Climate Change Strategy | Hampshire County Council | Key principles are:
• Carbon Hierarchy
• Co-benefits
• Proportionate, Affordable, Equitable
• Accelerate Where Appropriate | |

		• National Government - Policy and Funding • Digital and Innovation	
Hampshire Climate Change Action Plan	Hampshire County Council	Progress report showing the wider goals for Hampshire County in achieving the goals set out in the Hampshire Climate Change Strategy.	Rushmoor Borough Council has created its own Climate Change Action Plan which is in line with the County Climate Change Action Plan.
Rushmoor Draft Cultural Strategy and Action Plan	RBC	Strategy to enable Rushmoor to become a stronger, more innovative and diverse creative society and economy by 2030. Potential for Arts Council funding.	Development of a Cultural Compact – Direct links to developing a programme of activities and events in the town centre and introducing art and culture as part of the programme.
TRANSPORT AND MOVEMENT			
Draft LTP 4	Hampshire County Council	Draft Transport Plan for Hampshire. Little specific on Farnborough. Key objectives of moving to a more people based sustainable transport network align with need for better pedestrian and cycle linkages to and through the town centre.	Opportunity to work with HCC to improve pedestrian and cycle facilities, and possibly to develop a Transport Plan for Farnborough

Appendix 2: Housing Market Analysis

Farnborough Housing Market data

Affordability data Rushmoor

Median house price by local authority district, England and Wales, year ending September 2019 to year ending September 2021 (£)

Local authority name	Year ending Sep 2019	Year ending Sep 2020	Year ending Sep 2021
Rushmoor	300000	299325	325500
Surrey Heath	422750	430000	455000
Waverley	460000	480000	520000

Median gross annual (where available) workplace-based earnings by local authority district, England and Wales, 2019 to 2021 (£)

Local authority name	Year ending Sep 2019	Year ending Sep 2020	Year ending Sep 2021
Rushmoor	36979	35298	33435
Surrey Heath	37682	38780	38424
Waverley	29376	29116	28391

Ratio of median house price to median gross annual (where available) workplace-based earnings by local authority district, England and Wales, 2019 to 2021

Local authority name	Year ending Sep 2019	Year ending Sep 2020	Year ending Sep 2021
Rushmoor	8.11	8.48	9.74
Surrey Heath	11.22	11.09	11.84
Waverley	15.66	16.49	18.32

Source:ONS

Farnborough

Data collated as at 04 April 2022

Summary of Properties for Sale in Farnborough

Total properties for sale in Farnborough:	348
Properties for sale in Farnborough listed in the last 14 days:	65
Average* price of properties for sale in Farnborough:	£360,617
Median* price:	£343,475
Average time on market (ToM) of unsold property in Farnborough*:	165 days
Median time on market (ToM) of unsold property*:	59 days

Properties for Sale in Farnborough by Price
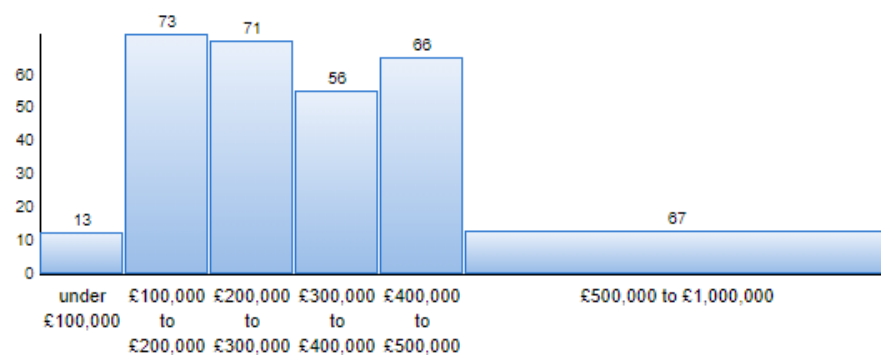
Note: The area of each bar not its height represents the number of properties

	No. of properties	Average ToM*
under £100,000	13	125 days
£100,000 to £200,000	73	236 days
£200,000 to £300,000	71	259 days
£300,000 to £400,000	56	109 days
£400,000 to £500,000	66	70 days
£500,000 to £1,000,000	67	132 days
over £1,000,000	2	149 days

Property Prices in Farnborough by Number of Bedrooms

- One bedroom
- Two bedrooms
- Three bedrooms
- Four bedrooms
- Five bedrooms
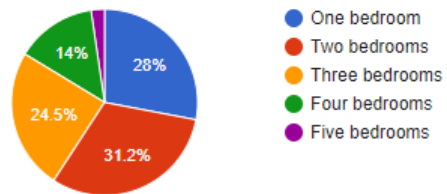
	No. of properties	Average price	Median price	Average ToM
One bedroom	96	£184,810	£177,500	201 days
Two bedrooms	107	£285,021	£275,000	224 days
Three bedrooms	84	£467,450	£450,000	87 days
Four bedrooms	48	£633,958	£600,000	102 days
Five bedrooms	8	£685,625	£700,000	189 days

Property Prices in Farnborough by Type

- Flat
- Terraced
- Semi-detached
- Detached
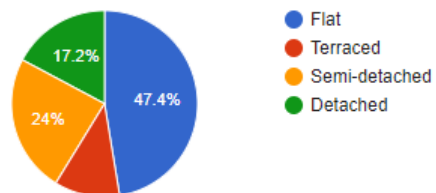
	No. of properties	Average price	Median price	Average ToM
Flat	146	£226,396	£210,000	222 days
Terraced	35	£371,541	£365,000	106 days
Semi-detached	74	£450,242	£450,000	98 days
Detached	53	£660,189	£625,000	123 days

Properties for Sale in Farnborough by Time on Market
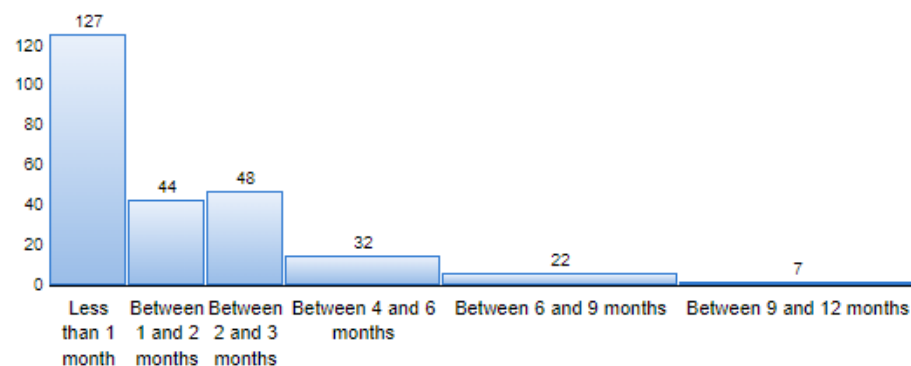
Note: The area of each bar not its height represents the number of properties

	No. of properties
Less than 1 month	127
Between 1 and 2 months	44
Between 2 and 3 months	48
Between 3 and 4 months	18
Between 4 and 6 months	32
Between 6 and 9 months	22
Between 9 and 12 months	7
Between 12 and 18 months	10
More than 18 months	36

Note: The house prices for Farnborough were calculated by sampling over all properties for sale in the Home.co.uk property search within 2 miles of the centre of Farnborough

www.home.co.uk/guides/house_prices.htm?location=farnborough

Appendix 3: Record of Stakeholder consultation

Record of stakeholder consultation on the Farnborough Town Centre - April/May 2022

The stakeholders listed below were asked their feelings about the town as it is now and how it could be improved /changed. Reponses were either canvassed via remote discussions or received by email.

What is good about the tow centre/works well?	Leisure - 24 hr gym above Sainsburys, 360 Play Centre good for young families, Vue Cinema Retail - Lower vacancy rate than a lot of towns, introduction of independent international food offer in some retail units. Good for homewares, DIY, garden things, supermarket shopping, pharmac. Transport links - close to motorways/ major road network, airport and railway station. Good parking facilities and bus access. Eclectic mix of usesaround the town - business park, schools and colleges choice of residential and the Abbey.
What is not good /doesn't work?	Poor appearance/impression no heart to the town. Although streets pedestrianised streets - not used enough Needs a better range of retailers/ restaurants not a good enough variety of quality shops or eateries, and there is no particular night-time economy apart from Wetherspoons and a couple of takeaways. Kingsmead in particular needs to looks so dated – has no appeal and is a an eyesore with the dark red brick and adjoining car-park. Poor linkages makes town centre difficult to navigate. Poor connectivity to train station and business park Cold and lacks warmth, lack of green space Town centre after dark when things are closed can be quite deserted and intimidating. Lack of things to do for all age groups. Poor youth, health/well being facilities No visitor appeal - viewed as a transit location
What needs to be improved/ changed?	Approaches gateways - town needs arrival points. Better signposting. Provision of community/education space. Over dependency on car/ too many open car parks. Introduce EV charging points. Introduction of branding and identity - emphasis on heritage and culture Residents choosing to spend their money and leisure time elsewhere eg Farnham, Guilford, Woking and Reading. Need more choice of where to shop eat and stay if visiting. Demolition/facelifting of shopping centres Farnborough needs a USP and new infrastrucurebuildings should champion green living/working and travel. Safe walking/cycling routes to/from the station via the town centre (25min walk from exhibition centre to station) Pick up/drop off points for rental bikes or scooters in the town centre to encourage people to travel sustainably to the station/exhibition centre/college /business park. Introduce a diverse events calendar - live music, markets/pop up shops, cultural events with comedy/ story telling, family fun days. Create opportunties for pop up events - dedicated events area in town centre in a vacnt unit to promote larger events at the Exhibtion Centre. Explore opps for events banners in town and around town centre. Large Gaming market in Farnborough should be developed (Educational gaming expo scheduled for November 2022). Gaming could create destination appeal and build on sector presence. Skateboarding - right facility could make positive impact and encourage younger demographic. New hotel to drive competition Opportunity to walk/cycle to town centre - more active travel
Developing Themes	
Accessibility	Linkages navigation wayfinding, green travel
Destination appeal	Greater choice - reasons to stay retail/ leisure offer/ events. Appealng to a wider demogrphic
Branding	Heritage (aviation links) cultural offer recognisable at Farnborough
Spaces & Places	Gateways, public space squares, green space for events. Atrrative walking routes, quality buildings
Health and Wellbeing	
List of stakeholder consultees	
Policy and Project Advisory Board	
Councillor Munro	
Erin Edwards Interim - Town Centre Manager	
Carlo Zoccali - Farnborough International Exhibition Centre	
Emma Meredith - Regeneration and Development Manager HCC	
Tim Martienssen Asset Management and OPE Partnership HCC	
Emma Noyce - Assistant Director, Culture and Information Services HCC	
Bellway Homes	
Bob Gentry - Farnborough Air Sciences Trust	
Others were invited but did not respond	

BRIEFING NOTE

FARNBOROUGH SITE VISIT
APRIL 2022

CONTEXT

A site visit was conducted by three assistant planners aged between 22-27, of whom only one had previously been to Farnborough or the surrounding towns. The purpose of the site visit was to consider the initial impression of the town, as well as what may be needed to attract younger people to visit again.

As part of the site visit, and to gain a greater understanding of the context of the town, three additional urban centres were visited. These towns were selected based on their proximity to Farnborough and being similar in size and role, the towns were Camberley, Aldershot and Farnham. Whilst reviewing the towns, we considered what each offer to residents in their immediate and wider catchment, how each supports the local and wider economy and if there is an identifiable role which Farnborough could use to stand out from the crowd.

Camberley

What do you like	What do you dislike	Opportunities/Development	What could be replicated
There are small activity areas for young children within The Square, which gave the shopping centre a sense of vibrancy and life. As you walk through The Square, you can still see the history of the shopping centre, however small updates have been provided which	Active frontages along the main spine were limited to food/drink with retail mostly confined to the indoor centres.	At this point it was felt that the town centre was in a very strong position having been continuously updated since the millennium.	The town centre has been regenerated over the past decade but has managed to ensure that the Highstreet is connected to The Atrium through the subtle modernisation of The Square. Furthermore, the refurbishment of Park St, High Street was then also refurbished in a similar design to

connect it to the wider redevelopment of the town centre. Significant amount of parking is available however this is does not dominate the street scene as it is provided through. The town provided a clear sense of direction and arrival.			link the two. This is the same for the redevelopment of Princess Way. Utilising available office space as shared office space would attract individuals to come into the town more frequently. They can offer meeting spaces to those who work from home which has increased since covid, and don't require monthly payments. Park St is still accessible to certain vehicles, however it has been design for pedestrians, by placing street furniture in such a way as to act as car management tools.

Aldershot

What do you like	What do you dislike	Opportunities/Development	What could be replicated
The town centre and wider town provides a strong connection to its military history throughout the public realm. The connection is not overbearing nor cheap in its vision but clearly shows a sense of local pride. Princes Green was a good space and showed a sense of pride in the town. Lovely flowerbeds and litter free area.	Westgate appears to be a reasonably new addition to the town centre, however it already shows signs of wear and neglect, including broken seating and empty units. Although the area creates a pleasant setting it feels disconnected from the rest of the town. Signs of economic decline in the limited variety in town centre offer, vacant/derelict properties and lack of public realm maintenance.	The opportunities provided by the current redevelopment at Union Street could offer significant regeneration potential.– Potential to use Princes Green area as an events space.	Although outside of current proposals Farnborough town centre could look to replicate the proposed redevelopment of The Galleries, both towns are centred around indoor shopping centres which appear dated and somewhat shabby. The opportunity to open Princes Meads to create a new outdoor shopping area could improve the connection between the Queens Mead as it would elongate the Highstreet.

	The town centre has provided communal herb gardens along Union Street which have not been maintained and appear to have become secondary waste bins.		

Farnham

What do you like	What do you dislike	Opportunities/Development	What could be replicated
The town centre has maintained the historic buildings as much as it can, including the retention of small yards and courtyards in which pedestrians can walk through as well as shop. The small retail units provided along Castle Street act as a catalyst for small business to operate within the town centre. The design of the buildings is in keeping with the wider aesthetic of the town centre. Integration of local park with the town centre (with playful direction for children).	There is significant congestion that always encircles the town centre, with crossing points appearing to be more focused on vehicles, as they took a significant amount of time to change.	The provision of new retail units and a cinema in Farnham will lead to less of a reason for residents to venture from the more idyllic town	Farnham has implemented temporary road alterations to widen footpaths throughout the town centre. In pre-empting the alteration of the town centre roadways, it could prove beneficial to implement a similar approach in Farnborough to consider actual desire lines for cyclists and pedestrians rather than being reliant on models. Small retail units could be provided along Queensmead, wherein they could be used as pop-up shops or cheaper rented units for small businesses.

Farnborough

What do you like	What do you dislike	Opportunities/Development
The town centre feels spacious although dated, but offers The community centre/library was in a great position and well used at the time of the visit, although dated it provided a strong sense of community within the town. The skatepark was also use by a large number of people, this should either be expanded or maintained at the same size to continue to provided active leisure for the large number of 10-18 year olds in the town.	The Street scene is dominated by the car, whether the cars are in transit or parked. This is emphasised through the large amount of access gained through service yards as well as the car parks around the town centre, and dual carriageways which create a barrier to entry. Externally the most recent development (The Meads) felt somewhat dated and dirty whereas the brick-built buildings had aged more graciously and offer more of a sense of timelessness. Internally the newer development felt bland and underutilised as it does not form part of the natural flow of pedestrian traffic, with most shoppers remaining on Queensmead rather than going into The Meads unless for a specific purpose. The town centre is disconnected from the wider town and each of the meads, particularly due to the lack of cohesive design. Improvements are needed to the activities within the town centre, at the time of visiting there was the Skatepark, Cinema or Arcade, with the indoor go-carting located to the south of the retail park, but nothing else which could be enjoyed on a spur of the moment decision. Although a good selection of fast-food operators, there are limited choices for dining-	There is currently unused space behind hording near to Sainsburys, this could be utilised as additional green space within the town centre. There is currently only one green space, which is blocked from view by surrounding buildings, and has significantly limited links to the wider town. There is poor connectivity both within the town centre and to the wider town. The town centre is separated by dual carriageways and main roads which are too busy and inaccessible to pedestrians, and many are physical blocked off by fencing. As part of the Town centre regeneration strategy, active travel should be prioritised, including safe and accessible pedestrian, and cycling routes. Currently no cohesive network, which is easy to follow, is available within the town centre to wider areas. Therefore, the opportunity should be taken to develop a wholistic approach to the town centre, to include, either as a separate report or as a section within the main document, a town wide active travel network. The town centre already has one multistorey carpark, which sets the precedent for others to be provided, these would lessen the amount of space required for parking currently and could be utilised as mobility hubs or transport interchanges.

	in, with only a Wetherspoons, Sticky Sisters or Prezzo within the town centre.	

CONCLUSION

Farnborough Town centre suffers from several key issues which need to be addressed in order to attract those aged 16-29, those key issues are the poor retail offering, the poor restaurant offering and the limited leisure options. The opportunity for regeneration is significant, particularly given the limited cohesion of the three shopping areas within the town centre, and the potential to create link between each to draw shoppers into each area, rather than visiting the main supermarket on either side and not venturing further into town.

SW/RBC001

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CABINET 5th JULY 2022   **REPORT OF LEADER OF THE COUNCIL**

KEY DECISION: YES   **REPORT NO. LDR2201**

RUSHMOOR BOROUGH COUNCIL AND HART DISTRICT COUNCIL WORKING TOGETHER

SUMMARY AND RECOMMENDATIONS:

SUMMARY:

This report provides cabinet with proposals for Rushmoor Borough Council (Rushmoor BC) and Hart District Council (Hart DC) to work more closely together, to achieve better local government, reduce cost and improve service delivery. Cabinet is asked to approve a statement of intent to work together.

The report includes details of a proposal for a shared Chief Executive and suggests an approach to identifying services which could be shared subject to undertaking further work to identify the potential benefits.

The proposals in this report are about shared services and shared working, and not about merging the councils. Both councils will retain their legal and political arrangements as well as their separate civic identities.

A similar report is being presented to Hart DC Cabinet for approval.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

That Cabinet:

1. Approve the *Joint Working Together Statement* at Appendix 1 of this report.

2. Note the report of the independent consultant on sharing a Chief Executive at Exempt Appendix 2 and agree to proceed with further work to produce a business case to consider a shared Chief Executive, including obtaining relevant HR and Legal advice.

3. Agree to undertake work to assess services which may be suitable to be delivered as shared services, based on the approach outlined in Appendix 3 of this report.

4. Approve the utilisation of £27,500 from Earmarked Reserves (as set out in paragraph 2.5 of the Draft Outturn Report FIN2221) (£27,500 being 50% of the overall cost) to undertake the work identified.

5. Note the indicative timeline of these activities shown in Appendix 4.

6. Note the risks identified in Paragraph 8 of this report.

1.   BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT

1.1   In the Spring of 2021, the Councils commenced discussions on how they could work more closely together. This was driven by several factors which included the imminent publication of a White Paper on devolution, local political considerations in organising effective local government in Hampshire, and the critical pressures to reduce cost through more efficient working.

1.2   The Government finally set out plans in the *Levelling Up the United Kingdom* White Paper published in February 2022[1], which includes several proposals to drive change in local government. Whilst the White Paper did not prescribe the rationalisation of democratic governance, which would have meant re-organising local government, it nevertheless underlined the Governments wish to speak to fewer organisations and establish a more efficient and effective dialogue with locally elected leaders.

1.3   It is against this backdrop that the councils have continued a dialogue to explore joint working, building on a history of successful partnership working in both organisations. The two councils believe that in exploring the opportunity of working together the following benefits are achievable:

- **A reduction in overall costs.** By identifying ways to deliver services and share resources, it will be possible to reduce duplication and overall management costs.
- **A stronger voice in the County and with Government**. The increased scale and combined resources will bring a stronger voice to represent our communities.
- **Improved joined-up service delivery**. By working closely together, in an area that shares many similar challenges and history, it will be possible to deliver better organised, coordinated and joined up services for our communities.
- **Better use of scarce resources.** The combined capability of two organisations working collaboratively together to recruit and jointly manage, will provide an opportunity to attract and retain higher calibre candidates.
- **Improved resilience**. In potentially sharing services and staff resources, over time each council will improve its resilience to deal with both planned and unplanned events.

1.4   This report seeks approval of a *Joint Woking Together Statement* which is a statement of our intention to pursue further joint working with Hart DC. It brings forward proposals to undertake further work on the idea of a shared Chief Executive between the councils and the examination of a range of potential future shared services.

1.5   This is a significant programme of work for both councils which must be properly assessed and resourced and any benefits clearly identified. This will require additional resources and funding in advance of realising the potential benefits.

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[1] https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/levelling-up-the-united-kingdom

1.6   The report identifies the indicative costs and outlines the implications of undertaking the next stage of work. The report is intended to provide a basis for each council to progress further discussions and for Members to consider the opportunity via their respective decision-making processes.

1.7   The report includes a detailed communication plan at Appendix 5 to ensure that joint messaging to key stakeholder groups is coordinated.

2. **JOINT WORKING TOGETHER STATEMENT**

2.1 Attached at Appendix 1 of this report is the proposed Rushmoor BC and Hart DC *Working Together Statement*. This statement has been developed jointly between the councils and has involved Leaders, Deputy Leaders, and Leaders of the opposition of each council working together in workshops and various meetings to produce an agreed statement.

2.2 The purpose of the statement is to set out our intention to work together to deliver improved services at reduced cost. As indicated in the statement, the focus is on shared services and shared working, not on merging the councils. Both councils will retain their legal and political arrangements as well as their individual civic identities.

2.3 The approved Joint Statement will provide each council with the basis to explore further the opportunities for joint working identified in this report. Subject to approval by Members, this statement will be publicised by both councils.

3.   A SHARED CHIEF EXECUTIVE

3.1   In October 2021, the councils commissioned an independent report into the opportunity to appoint a shared Chief Executive across both councils, to lead the delivery of the potential advantages of working together. This is an arrangement which several other local authorities have successfully implemented. The independent report is attached at Exempt Appendix 2, and Members have received a presentation on the report from the consultant.

3.2   The key points of the independent report are:

- There is an opportunity to consider the appointment of a shared Chief Executive which could provide overall savings of about £100k p.a. across both authorities (excluding costs of any redundancy).

- A business case should be developed to assess fully the financial and non-financial benefits and outline the process for the appointment of a shared Chief Executive.

- That any move towards a shared Chief Executive should be linked to further work on defining the future ambition of both councils for shared services and wider shared management.

- That legal and HR advice should be sought to ensure that the interests of both councils are protected and that the process and future shared Chief Executive arrangement meet all relevant statutory requirements and best practice guidance.

3.3   To proceed with an ambition to undertake further shared working between the councils, it is vital that strong and effective leadership is secured. Appointment of a shared Chief Executive could provide this leadership and an opportunity for whoever is appointed to work across both organisations aligning organisational structures to deliver better services at lower cost. However, before proceeding it is recommended that a business case is developed to explore the advantages and disadvantages to each Council of appointing a shared Chief Executive.

3.4   The work required to develop a business case for a shared Chief Executive cannot be delivered using existing internal resources without significant impact on existing programmes of work in both councils. It will therefore be necessary to use some limited external support, particularly for Legal and HR advice and to provide project management capacity.

3.5   It is therefore recommended that Members approve additional funding as outlined in Paragraph 7 of this report, to appoint external resources to undertake the following work:

- Identifying the advantages and disadvantages of sharing a Chief Executive between the organisations.

- Working with both councils to develop a business case and proposal for a shared Chief Executive, including identifying and recommending an appropriate process for recruitment and appointment, taking account of both councils existing Chief Executive arrangements.

- Identifying the appropriate senior management structure required to support the shared Chief Executive including relevant backfill roles/additional resources in the period of change.

- Identifying the costs associated with change and the future savings as a result of moving to a shared Chief Executive, and how these benefits will be shared between the councils.

- Develop job requirements (in consultation with Members), job description and person specification for the appointment of a Shared Chief Executive.

3.6 An indicative timetable for the process to undertake this work, including relevant reports to Members for final approval, is included in Appendix 4 of this report and shown below:

Figure 1 Indicative Timeline Hart and Rushmoor Working Together

4. SHARED SERVICES

4.1 Attached at Appendix 3 of this report is a matrix identifying an approach for assessing potential shared services which could be undertaken between the councils. Appendix 3 also includes a full list of service/functions currently delivered by both Councils which could be considered for sharing over time.

4.2 The matrix allows services to be assessed against a set of business criteria to provide a high-level indication of the best opportunities to deliver benefits from being shared, and to help to determine the order in which to undertake any future business cases.

4.3 Members are asked to approve the approach outlined in Appendix 3 and agree additional funding outlined in Paragraph 7. This will allow further work to be undertaken to assess all service areas/functions and prioritise those most relevant for the development of detailed business cases.

4.4 The business cases will be developed working closely with the relevant lead officers in each council and will identify the potential benefits, savings, and service improvements of moving to a shared service for each area, as well as identifying the costs of making these changes and any legal, technical or organisation issues or impacts.

4.5 It is intended that business cases will be reported to Members of both Councils for approval prior to proceeding with any shared service decision. This report will include recommendations by officers based on the outcome of the business case as to whether to proceed with the shared service opportunity.

5. TIMETABLE

5.1 Appendix 4 provides an indicative timetable to proceed with the Working Together activities identified in this report.

5.2 The timetable is intended to ensure that progress is made at pace, whilst ensuring that the risks identified in Paragraph 8 of this report are minimised. The timetable includes a period to procure the relevant external resources required to support undertaking the various business case development.

6. COMMUNICATION PLAN

6.1 It will be critical to ensure effective joined-up communication of the activities outlined in this report and further developments in shared services and potential changes to organisational structures or shared management over the period.

6.2 Appendix 5 of this report provides a draft communication plan which will need to be developed further with communications input from each council working together to implement it.

6.3 The draft communication plan identifies key stakeholder groups and the messaging required to inform them of the proposal in this report. Members

should note that some of the communication activity has been undertaken prior to the issue of this report.

7.   COSTS AND RESOURCES

7.1   The table below provides an indicative estimate of costs to undertake the work outlined in this report, including the estimates associated with the process to develop a business case for a shared Chief Executive and undertake business cases for shared services.

Activity	Budget estimate	Resource
Additional resource to develop shared CX business case and project manage support (July – September 2022)	£15,000	Procurement/market test
HR and Legal advice to support the development of the shared Chief Executive business case	£10,000	South East Employers
Shared services business case development	£30,000	Procurement/market test
Total	**£55,000**	
Cost to Rushmoor BC (split 50:50)	**£27,500**	

7.2   It is recommended that Cabinet approve the utilisation of the earmarked reserve to fund Rushmoor's share of the £55,000, subject to the same approval being received from Hart DC Cabinet.

7.3   The cost to be shared 50:50 with Hart DC, therefore the cost to Rushmoor BC is £27,500.

8.   RISKS

8.1   In proceeding with the proposals in this report, Cabinet should note the following risks:

- This is a significant programme of work which neither organisation has the capacity to undertake with existing internal resources, without impacting other critical programmes of work which both councils are committed to.

- As identified in all similar shared services and shared working arrangements, costs will be incurred before longer term benefits are achieved.

- Several similar shared working arrangements have not always been successful, with a recent example of an arrangement being ended at Havant Borough Council and East Hampshire District Council.

- Exit costs of the incumbent Chief Executives of both organisations are significant and therefore any move towards a shared Chief Executive needs to be made in the best interests of both councils with an agreed process forming part of the business case.

- It is likely that the changes could impact morale and motivation of officers in the councils given the level of potential change, particularly if the councils move towards future shared management arrangements.

8.2   In acknowledging the above risks, work will be undertaken at every stage to mitigate each risk with a clear focus on delivering what are potentially significant financial and service benefits for both councils.

9.   IMPLICATIONS

9.1   **Legal and HR Implications**

9.2   There are no direct legal or HR implications as a result of recommendations in this report. Implications relating to a shared Chief Executive and any future changes to services will be contained in the future reports.

9.3   **Financial and Resource Implications**

9.4   Approval of the recommendation results in a direct financial commitment of £27,500. The costs and resources relating to shared working will be assessed as part of subsequent reports.

10.   BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS:

a) White Paper - Levelling Up the United Kingdom – Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities February 2022

b) Stronger Together – Shared Management in Local Government Association 2016

c) Shared Services and Management – A guide for Councils – Local Government Association 2011

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Joint Working Together Statement Hart District Council and Rushmoor Borough Council

JUNE 2022

This statement is issued on behalf of Hart District Council (Hart DC) and Rushmoor Borough Council (Rushmoor BC). The statement has been endorsed by each council.

Background

Local Government is in a period of change and reform. Public expectation of services continues to increase whilst resources reduce, creating a constant challenge about how best to deliver high quality services with limited resources.

The Government set out plans recently in the *Levelling Up the United Kingdom*[1] white paper, which includes details of a new devolution framework and a raft of proposals to drive change in local government. Central to these proposals is the need for renewed and strong local leadership, and the opportunity for councils to drive locally led change, to reorganise and work together, where there is broad local support.

It is against this backdrop that Hart DC and Rushmoor BC commenced a dialogue to find ways to work collaboratively, share resources and drive significant and sustained improvements in services for residents in a combined area serving more than 200,000 people.

The Opportunity

The two councils believe that in exploring the opportunity of working together several benefits are achievable:

1. **A reduction in overall costs**. By identifying ways to deliver services and share resources, it will be possible to reduce duplication and overall management costs.
2. **A stronger voice in the County and with Government**. The increased scale and combined resources will bring a stronger voice to represent our communities.
3. **Improved joined-up service delivery.** By working closely together, in an area that shares many similar challenges and history, it will be possible to deliver better organised, coordinated and joined up services for our communities.
4. **Better use of scarce resources**. The combined capability of two organisations working collaboratively together to recruit and jointly manage, will provide an opportunity to attract and retain higher calibre candidates.
5. **Improved resilience.** In potentially sharing services and staff resources, over time each council will improve its resilience to deal with both planned an unplanned event.

The focus of these proposals is on shared services and shared working, not on merging the councils. Both councils will retain their legal and political arrangements as well as their proud individual civic identities.

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[1] February 2022
https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1052708/Levelling_up_the_UK_white_paper.pdf

What are we intending to do?

Hart DC and Rushmoor BC have committed to working together as equal partners, to consider the opportunity for the appointment of a shared Chief Executive and to build on and grow our shared service delivery. To do this our early steps will be to explore:

- *A Shared Chief Executive* - An early step will be to establish a process to appoint a shared Chief Executive responsible for leading the change programme across both councils. This creates an opportunity to reduce management cost, but more importantly ensures that strong leadership is in place, committed to setting the tone and culture for future shared and collaborative working. This will also enable a joint strategic voice working across North Hampshire supporting both Leaders in discussions with external partners and stakeholders such as The Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC), Hampshire County Council, other district councils and with Integrated Care Systems (ICSs) partnerships.

- *Further Shared Services* - The sharing of services is commonplace amongst local authorities. There is evidence that where many councils have undertaken shared activity, they have delivered savings, made improvements to services or improved resilience, for example in better recruitment and retention. Hart and Rushmoor already share some services and both councils are now keen to extend shared services, looking at other areas to deliver improved services at a lower cost.

To reiterate, we are not considering a merger of our Councils, now, or in the future. However, as we align ourselves further opportunities may present themselves, such as the ability to share more knowledge skills and resources within our management teams, leveraging benefit for both Councils and the communities we serve.

Next Steps

We want to ensure that we move quickly to deliver change, but at the same time work together to identify, understand, and agree the right opportunities.

The councils will develop business cases to support any changes, detailing the potential opportunities, and recommending which order any changes are made. Where the business cases prove worthwhile, we will rapidly implement shared working arrangements. We are keen to ensure an open and transparent dialogue with our communities over these changes.

We will be setting up arrangements to consult on the proposals as they emerge in more detail. Further information will be made available on our respective websites in due course. We believe these proposals offer exciting opportunities to improve services and reduce cost for both councils.

Leader of Hart DC   Leader of Rushmoor BC

Final Version 1.0 25th May 2022

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By virtue of paragraph(s) 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A
of the Local Government Act 1972.

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Indicative Shared Service Assessment Process

Service or Function	Business Need	Potential Impact (savings/service improvement)	Timescale to Implement	Complexity	Phase/Notes
Service/Function 1					
Service/Function 2					
Service/Function 3					
Service/Function 4					
Service/Function 5					
Service/Function 6					
Service/Function 7					
Service/Function 8					
	High – solves significant and urgent business issue(s) **Medium** – solves a business issue **Low** – does not solve any particular business issue, or only makes a minor contribution	**High** = significant savings, significant service improvement **Medium** = some savings, some service improvement **Low** = low savings or service improvement	**Long** = more than 12 months **Medium** = 6 to 12 months **Short** = within 6 months	**High** complexity, **Medium** complexity or **Low** complexity by reference to level of organisational, technological and/or people change	**Phase 1** – Start (Business Case) Immediately **Phase 2** – Start after 6 to 12 months **Phase 3** – Start beyond 12 months

Services/Functions delivered by Rushmoor BC

Customer Experience and Transformation	Operational Services	Corporate Services	Major Projects and Property	Democracy, Strategy & Partnerships	Planning & Economy
Communications	Housing Options & Homelessness	Finance, Audit	Regeneration	Community Development	Strategic Housing
Customer Services	Private Sector Housing	Revenues & Benefits	Property & Estates	Democracy & Members Support	Economy
Website	Food, Health & Safety	GDPR	Capital Projects	Election	Town centres
Transformation	Environmental Control & Pollution	Procurement	Highways & Infrastructure	Partnerships	Skills
IT & Digital	Waste, Cleansing, Parks & Grounds Maintenance	Human Resources & Learning and Development	SANGS	Risk Management	Planning Policy
Facilities	Parking	Payroll		Corporate Strategy & Performance	Development Management
	Leisure Centres & Princes Hall	Legal		Policy & Scrutiny	Building Control
	Bereavement Services				
	Community Safety & Safeguarding				
	Community Patrol				
	Licensing				

Services/Functions delivered by Hart DC

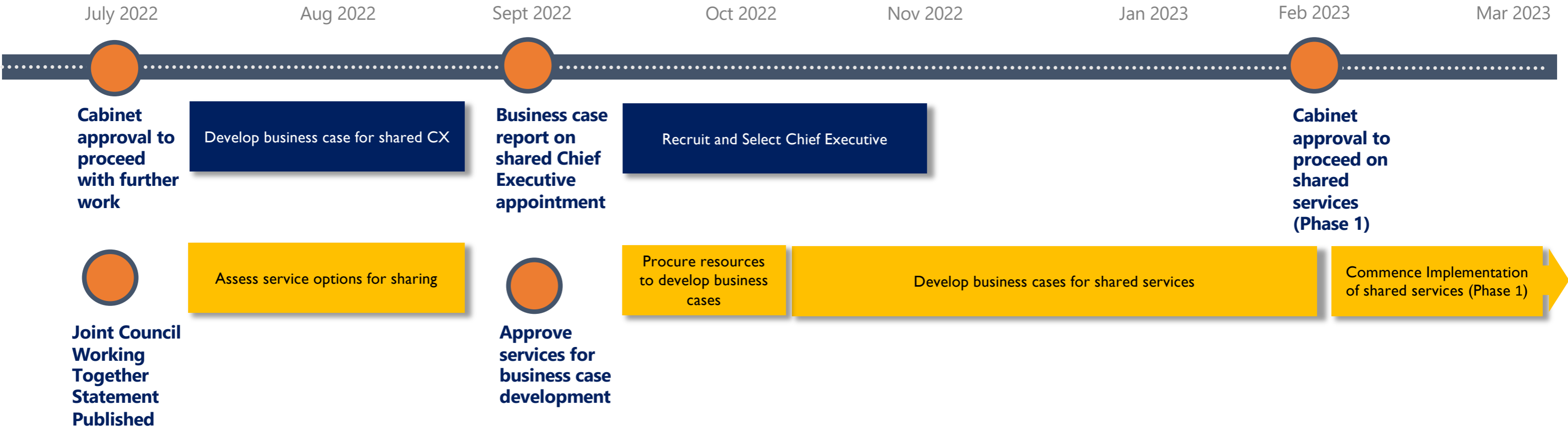| Place	Environmental & Technical	Community	Corporate	Outsourced
Development Management	SANGS	Private Sector Housing	Elections and Committee Services	Land Charges (Capita)
Planning Policy	Countryside (Promotion, Open space & and Commons, trees, and biodiversity)	Community Safety	Communications and Digital	Leisure Centres (EA)
Heritage	Highways Agency	Homelessness	IT (part contracted)	GIS (East Hants DC)
Environmental Health	Property	Disabled Facilities grants	Finance	Licensing (Basingstoke BC)
Facilities	Parking	Safeguarding and Equalities & Diversity	Audit and Risk Management (part contracted)	Legal (Basingstoke BC)
Business Support	Highway Infrastructure	Housing allocations	GDPR	Rev & Bens (Capita)
FOI	Emergency Planning	Strategic Housing	Performance, Policy and Procurement	IT infrastructure (Capita)
Food Health and safety	CCTV	Community Partnerships	HR and payroll	Customer Service/Contact Centre (Capita/Basingstoke BC)
Street naming and numbering		Health and Wellbeing/Here for Hart		Waste, street care and grounds maintenance (Basingstoke BC)
				Dog Warden (SDK)

Version 0.5

INDICATIVE TIMELINE

Hart DC and Rushmoor BC Working Together

Version 0.3

July 2022   Aug 2022   Sept 2022   Oct 2022   Nov 2022   Jan 2023   Feb 2023   Mar 2023

Cabinet approval to proceed with further work

Develop business case for shared CX

Business case report on shared Chief Executive appointment

Recruit and Select Chief Executive

Cabinet approval to proceed on shared services (Phase 1)

Joint Council Working Together Statement Published

Assess service options for sharing

Approve services for business case development

Procure resources to develop business cases

Develop business cases for shared services

Commence Implementation of shared services (Phase 1)

Hart District Council and Rushmoor Borough Council Working Together – Communication Plan June and July 2022

Version 0.2

When	Who is the audience	Proposed key messaging	How will it be achieved	Lead Officer/Member	Outcome
June	Executive Leadership Team **Rushmoor** (6th June 2022)	• Presentation/consultation/engagement on content of Cabinet Report	Teams/Meeting Briefing Copy of Report/Presentation	Chief Executive	Ensure all senior officers are aware of purpose and content of Cabinet report and current political thinking (as far as it is known)
	Corporate Management Team **Rushmoor** (14th June 2022)	• Presentation/consultation/engagement on content of Cabinet Report • Explain political context and reasons for the report • Reassure senior management about the process and their input to future changes • Discuss honestly potential impact and likelihood of proposals proceeding	Teams/Meeting Briefing Copy of Report/Presentation	Chief Executive	Clarity on proposals and reasons for report Clarity on next steps Reassurance
June	Senior Leadership Team **Hart** (7th June 2022)	• Presentation/consultation/engagement on content of Cabinet Report • Presentation/consultation/engagement on content of Cabinet Report • Explain political context and reasons for the report	Teams/Meeting Briefing Copy of Report/Presentation	Chief Executive(s)	Ensure all senior officers are aware of purpose and content of Cabinet report and current political thinking (as

When	Who is the audience	Proposed key messaging	How will it be achieved	Lead Officer/Member	Outcome
		• Reassure senior management about the process and their input to future changes • Discuss honestly potential impact and likelihood of proposals proceeding			far as it is known) Clarity on proposals and reasons for report Clarity on next steps Reassurance
June	Cabinet Members **Hart** (**6**th June 2022)	• Presentation/consultation/engagement on content of Cabinet Report • Why we are doing this – as described in report • The Benefits – as described in report • Opportunity to debate the report and raise concerns	Teams/Meeting Briefing Copy of Report/Presentation	The Leader(s)	Ensure all Members of the Cabinet understand the proposals and support them
June	All Members **Rushmoor** (14th June)	• Presentation on content of Cabinet Report • Why we are doing this – as described in report • The Benefits – as described in report • Opportunity to debate the report and raise concerns	All Member Briefing	The Leader	Ensure all Members are aware of the report and have had the opportunity to
June	Other Members **Hart** (30th June TBC)	• Presentation on content of Cabinet Report • Why we are doing this – as described in report • The Benefits – as described in report • Opportunity to debate the report and raise concerns	All Member Briefing	The Leader	Ensure all Members are aware of the report and have had the opportunity to
June	Staff and Unions **Rushmoor** (16th June email from CX and all	• Leading politicians from Rushmoor and Hart Councils want the councils to work more closely – explaining	All council email from Chief	Chief Executive Directors/Heads of	Ensure staff are aware of proposed process and

When	Who is the audience	Proposed key messaging	How will it be achieved	Lead Officer/Member	Outcome
	staff briefing 5th July)	reasons and background • We are not merging the Councils • This will commence by agree a range of initiatives in a Cabinet Report and publishing a joint statement of working together outlining the reasons and benefits • The next steps will be to do more work to identify if it is a good idea to move to a shared Chief Executive between the councils • We will also do more work to look at which services might be capable of being sharing between the councils. This will require the development of business cases to explore the pros and cons • This programme of work is at an early stage. We will consult fully with all staff involved in any changes. There may be new opportunities brought about by these changes, but we are also aware that staff will feel nervous. • We are committed to making any changes transparently so please talk to your line manager or Head of Service if concerned	Executive Backed up intranet/social media communication All staff briefing (Staff Live) Team Briefings (Directors and Heads of Service to lead – preferably face-to-face)	Service Comms Team	potential changes Reassure Be transparent Provide opportunity for discussion and to raise concerns
June	Staff and Unions **Hart** (w/c 13th June)	• Leading politicians from Rushmoor and Hart Councils want the councils to work more closely – explaining reasons and background • We are not merging the Councils • This will commence by agree a range of initiatives in a Cabinet Report and publishing a joint statement of working together outlining the reasons and benefits	All council email from Chief Executive(s) Backed up intranet/social media communication Team Briefings	Chief Executive(s) Heads of Service	Ensure staff are aware of proposed process and potential changes Reassure Be transparent Provide

When	Who is the audience	Proposed key messaging	How will it be achieved	Lead Officer/Member	Outcome
		• The next steps will be to do more work to identify if it is a good idea to move to a shared Chief Executive between the councils	(Heads of Service to lead – preferably face-to-face)		opportunity for discussion and to raise concerns
		• We will also do more work to look at which services might be capable of being sharing between the councils. This will require the development of business cases to explore the pros and cons			
		• This programme of work is at an early stage. We will consult fully with all staff involved in any changes. There may be new opportunities brought about by these changes, but we are also aware that staff will feel nervous.			
		• We are committed to making any changes transparently so please talk to your line manager or Head of Service if concerned			
June/July	Public - **Rushmoor and Hart**	• Rushmoor and Hart are working together more closely • We are not merging the Councils • We continue to meet our pledges set out in the Corporate Plans • This will mean better services at potentially lower cost • Very exciting opportunity • Outline of next steps • Will keep you updated vis our website and news releases	Press Release Interviews Articles on website	Leaders	Promote the idea Inform the public Promote the benefits
July	Other elected representatives -	• Advise on the intention to work together, the reasons and the benefits together with emphasis on the wider	Letter from joint Leaders	Leaders	Ensure key stakeholders are

When	Who is the audience	Proposed key messaging	How will it be achieved	Lead Officer/Member	Outcome
	Rushmoor and Hart (Town and Parishes, MP's, HCC Councillors)	intended benefits for Hampshire as whole • Advise on further collaboration as an important step, with an agreement to a statement of intent, which exemplifies how we can work together as partners and in doing so, protect our front-line services, for our residents and communities			aware of intentions Build trust
July	Other Local Authorities in Hampshire - **Rushmoor and Hart**	• Advise on the intention to work together, the reasons and the benefits together with emphasis on the wider intended benefits for Hampshire as whole • It does not mean the cessation of partnerships already in place with other local authorities, but does provide a strategic alternative when opportunities arise, to consider value for money • To lead this process, our first action will be (if this approach is agreed) to appoint a single chief executive, across both organisations, who's role will be to lead on bringing together those services which would benefit from greater integration and collaboration	Letter from Chief Executives/joint Leaders	Chief Executives (s) Leaders	Ensure key stakeholders are aware of intentions Build trust
July	Basingstoke and Deane – **Hart** (Note may need to develop further messaging depending on existing partnerships)	• Rushmoor and Hart are looking to work together more collaboratively in the future, and these are our first steps to take this forward. • We do not anticipate an immediate exit from arrangements with partners such as yourselves but will look for natural opportunities to review our delivery models, as we would do normally to ensure ongoing value for money and strategic alignment.	Email from Chief Executive(S)	Chief Executive(s)	Inform and reassure
July	5 Councils Partnership - **Hart**	• Rushmoor and Hart are looking to work together more collaboratively in the future, and these are our first	Email from Head of Paid Service	Head of Paid Service	5 councils reassured that this

When	Who is the audience	Proposed key messaging	How will it be achieved	Lead Officer/Member	Outcome
		steps to take this forward. • We do not anticipate an exit from the Capita contract, however it does provide the Council with a useful exit strategy for many services currently provided by Capita, when the contract concludes in 2025 • It may mean a change to the representatives at the Strategic Management Board, and other key meetings, over time.			does not alter the existing contract (except for membership of meetings)

CABINET

COUNCILLOR DAVID CLIFFORD
LEADER OF THE COUNCIL
REPORT NO. ACE2204

5 July 2022

KEY DECISION: NO

UK SHARED PROSPERITY FUND (UKSPF) INVESTMENT PLAN AND LEVELLING UP FUND APPLICATION

SUMMARY & RECOMMENDATIONS:

This report provides an update on the development of an Investment Plan which is required to be submitted for Government approval in order to access up to £1m from the UK Shared Prosperity Fund (UKSPF).

As preparation and submission of the Investment Plan must be made by 1st August 2022, Cabinet is asked to –

(i) note the development of the draft Investment Plan to date as summarised in this report; and

(ii) give the Chief Executive delegated authority in consultation with the Leader to approve and submit the Investment Plan once complete.

The report also sets out that the Council is preparing a bid for submission for Government's Levelling Up Fund. The bid which must be submitted by 6th July 2022 seeks circa £19.8m towards the development of a new Leisure and Cultural Hub for Farnborough. Cabinet is asked to -

(iii) support the submission of the bid and note that the Executive Director and Executive Head of Finance will sign off the bid in accordance with the fund requirements.

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1. **INTRODUCTION & BACKGROUND**

1.1. Launched in April 2022, the UK Shared Prosperity Fund (UKSPF) is the UK Government's domestic replacement for the European Structural Fund and Investment Programme. Part of a suite of complementary funding, the UKSPF is a central pillar of the Government's Levelling Up agenda and a significant component of its support for places across the UK.

1.2. The UKSPF provides for £2.6 billion of funding for local investment by March 2025, with each area of the UK receiving an allocation from the fund via a funding formula rather than a competition. Rushmoor has been allocated up to £1 million from the fund, with the majority (£898k) of the funding allocated in the final year of the programme (2024/25). The remaining balance of funding is available in the first two years, with £34k available in 2022/23 and £68k in 2023/24.

1.3. Aligning with the Levelling Up White Paper, the primary goal of the UKSPF is to build pride in place and increase life chances across the UK. Consequently, underpinning these aims are three UKSPF priorities; namely

- **Communities and place** – to strengthen social fabric, foster a sense of local pride and belonging, and build resilient and safe neighbourhoods;

- **Supporting local business** – to create jobs and boost community cohesion, promote networking and collaboration, and increase private sector investment in growth-enhancing activities; and

- **People and skills** – to boost core skills and support adults to progress in work, support disadvantaged people to access the skills they need to progress in life and into work, to fund local skills needs and supplement local adult skills provision and reduce levels of economic inactivity and move those furthest from the labour market closer to employment.

1.4. While there are detailed objectives associated with each priority, access to allocated funds can only be made on preparation and Government approval of a local Investment Plan. These are to set out the interventions that will be made to deliver the fund's objectives and, by extension, the key priorities for the funds awarded. Investment Plans must be submitted for approval of the Department for Levelling Up, Housing & Communities (DLUHC) by 1st August; with the first payments to be made from the fund scheduled to be made from 1st October. Preparation and approval timescales are therefore tight and constraining.

1.5. Consequently, following a series of workshops and meetings, a draft Investment Plan is being prepared that identifies the context, justification and evidence base for a number of local interventions in delivery of the fund's objectives and priorities. The draft Investment Plan will form the basis of the council's bid to secure and access the £1m allocated UKSPF funds.

1.6 Cabinet is asked to note the development of the draft Investment Plan and give the Chief Executive delegated authority in consultation with the Leader to approve and submit the Investment Plan once completed in view of the tight timescales referred.

1.7 Linked to UKSPF is the announcement from Government of Round 2 of the Levelling Up Fund. The Levelling Up Fund is designed to invest in infrastructure that improves everyday life across the UK. The £4.8 billion fund will support town centre and high street regeneration, local transport projects, and cultural and heritage assets.

1.8 Having considered the detailed guidance relating to the fund and reviewed the outcomes from the first round of funding, a bid for Levelling Up Funding is being developed and details are set out in section 4 of this report.

2. UKSPF

2.1. The Council is awaiting additional technical guidelines on UKSPF (expected early July) which will help inform format and structure of the Investment Plan. Current guidance suggests that Investment Plans need only give a high-level outline of the approach and the interventions to be taken and that specific project-level detail is not required at this stage. Consequently, and in line with stakeholder feedback and officer analysis (see below), it is proposed that the Council's Investment Plan should centre on delivery of local interventions falling under the following themes; namely –

Communities & Place

(a) Public realm improvements (for example, wayfinding, cycling and pedestrian access opportunities)

(b) Town centre events & promotions (including town centre management, events & support for town centre businesses)

(c) Practical support for place and businesses during town centre transition (including small scale adjustments and changes to support wider regeneration programmes)

(d) Heritage, Culture & Arts activities

(e) Health (to address priority needs (e.g. hypertension, childhood obesity and mental health) in areas of deprivation (e.g. Active modes, access to green space etc))

(f) Local & neighbourhood support (to incorporate smaller scale, more local projects)

Supporting Local Business

(g) Sector Support (including Aerospace, Digital & Creative and Incubator Hubs)

People & Skills

(h) Apprenticeships, Training & Skills Development

The themes listed above largely relate to interventions E1, E3, E6, E7, E12, E13, E14, E24, E31 and E38 identified by Government (Interventions list for England - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)).

3. STAKEHOLDER FEEDBACK & CONSULTATION

3.1. The draft Investment Plan has been prepared following a series of workshops and meetings with stakeholders and partners to identify a long list of interventions that will meet the UKSPF objectives. Collectively, these resulted in 108 local intervention ideas. While subject to some overlap between priorities, this included 47 (43.5%) linked to the Communities &

Place priority, 40 (37%) linked to Supporting Local Business priority and 21 (19.5%) linked to the People & Skills priority.

3.2. Following PPAB input and engagement (see below), interventions were subsequently shortlisted and categorised (i.e. themed) on the basis of the context, need and/or evidence base for each intervention, and assessment of whether each intervention –

    a) is a priority in the Council Plan or an action in any other existing Council strategy;

    b) is visible and will deliver tangible benefits for the residents of Rushmoor;

    c) is sustainable within the confines of the fund (i.e. will not incur additional costs or resource demands for the Council (now or in the future)).

3.3. Significantly, alignment with the Council Plan and/or other strategies means that the proposed interventions can not only be accommodated within scope of existing resources and projects but also benefit from the fact that the Council Plan and/or strategies have also been subject to recent consultation in their own right.

Policy & Projects Advisory Board (PPAB)

3.4. An update on the UKSPF and the development of the Investment Plan has been reported to and discussed by the Policy & Projects Advisory Board (PPAB). As part of this, PPAB indicated their support for the shortlisting process outlined above and identified specific areas of interest around -

    a) Community/voluntary sector/ward grants to support relatively small-scale, neighbourhood level projects.

    b) Youth engagement

    c) Supporting town centres

    d) Ongoing community/stakeholder engagement

3.5. At the time of writing, PPAB are due to review the draft Investment Plan for comment at their next meeting on 13 July. Given the timescales by which the Investment Plan must be submitted, together with respective meeting cycles and reporting schedules, it is proposed that the Leader and Chief Executive be consulted on any comments and matters arising as appropriate.

Consultation with local MP

3.6. In accordance with the UKSPF prospectus and guidance, the Investment Plan will be subject to consultation and approval of the local MP Leo Docherty.

3.7. Again, given the tight timescales involved in preparation of the Investment Plan, it is proposed that the Leader and Chief Executive be consulted on any comments and matters arising as appropriate.

4. LEVELLING UP FUND BID

4.1. As Members are aware, the Council has been working for a number of years to develop an exciting and ambitious regeneration programme in the heart of Farnborough. Currently known as the Civic Quarter regeneration scheme the programme has been the subject of extensive public engagement and there is a strong desire for the programme to deliver quality public facilities that will help provide a focus or 'heart' for the Farnborough community.

4.2. Round two of the Levelling Up Fund opened in April and bids can be up to £20m. Bids need to align with UK Government policy objectives, including the missions set out in the Levelling Up White Paper, and legal and statutory commitments, such as the Clean Growth Strategy, Clean Air Strategy and the target to achieve Net Zero carbon emissions for 2050.

4.3. The Council's bid focuses on the delivery of a Leisure and Cultural Hub to be delivered as an early phase of the regeneration programme. The Leisure and Cultural Hub will be an iconic, forward thinking, sustainable (net zero carbon) destination venue that will proactively address recognised shortcomings in the offer to the local community aligned to health, social wellbeing and culture.

4.4. Although the Council has been categorised by the Government as the lowest priority for the Levelling Up Fund there is a strong business case for interventions related to culture and health. Rushmoor has been identified as one of 11 Priority Places in the region by Arts Council England in need of cultural investment with average annual investment per capita for the years 2017/18 to 2019/20 the lowest at £1.12 per head. The Borough also scored lowest on the Active Lives Survey with only 43% of residents having any arts or museum engagement 3 or more times in a 12-month period.

4.5. The Borough's health outcomes also provide a significant challenge with 24.5% children classed as overweight or obese by the time they start reception and 64.3% adults classed as overweight or obese. Only 62.4% of adults in Rushmoor are physically active which is the 4th lowest in the whole of the South-East.

4.6. The proposal will help address these issues through providing a new state-of-the-art leisure centre, library and cultural space, improving access to key services and help create the community heart desired for Farnborough.

4.7. The Council is requesting key partners and stakeholders including the local Member of Parliament to support the submission by providing letters of support, which we will submit as part of the application.

4.8. The bid represents a significant investment in officer time and has to be submitted with a detailed business case in line with Government requirements and is being developed with assistance from Grant Thornton who supported a number of successful bids in round one. Once complete the bid will be agreed with the portfolio holder for Property and Major Projects and submitted through an electronic portal. In accordance with the guidance the bid will need to be 'signed off' by the Executive Director as Senior Responsible Officer and the Executive Head of Finance. The guidance for bid preparation can be found at https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/levelling-up-fund-round-2-application-guidance .

5. IMPLICATIONS

5.1. **Risks**

5.2. While the draft UKSPF investment plan sets out a number of ambitious interventions and activities, these will be aligned with the council's key strategies and plans, ongoing or pre-planned projects that have already been costed and/or are subject to project and performance management arrangements. Given the detailed objectives of the fund, delivery of the proposed interventions will also be subject to a range of desired outcome measures. These will form the basis for future monitoring and review of the plan as part of the council's performance monitoring arrangements.

5.3. **Legal implications**

5.4. Whilst there may be legal implications associated with some of the individual activities outlined in the plan, these will be subject to their own project and risk management arrangements as outlined above. Beyond this, there are no specific legal implications applicable to the preparation and/or approval of the plan.

5.5. **Financial and Resource Implications**

5.6. The shortlisting of suitable interventions for inclusion in the draft Investment Plan is, in part, being undertaken in consideration of whether each intervention is sustainable and whether it will incur additional costs or resource demands for the Council (now or in the future). Accordingly, where approved, intervention projects identified in the draft plan will be funded directly from the UKSPF.

5.7. If the levelling up bid is supported by Government the Council will need to fund the remainder of the project through its own resources, borrowing and grants or funding from other organisations. This will require an adjustment to the Capital programme which will be brought forward for consideration in due course.

5.8. **Equalities Impact Implications**

5.9. The draft plan will outline a number of interventions intended to make a real, positive and tangible difference to both the area, businesses and the residents of Rushmoor. As individual project detail emerges, they will be subject to their own equality impact assessment and measures where appropriate. It is considered that there are no direct implications associated with the preparation and/or approval of the investment plan.

6. CONCLUSIONS

5.1 The council has been allocated up to £1 million from the UKSPF. To access the funds, the council must prepare and submit an Investment Plan for approval by Government. This must outline the local interventions to be made in delivery of the funds objectives and must be submitted for approval by 1st August.

5.2 Following a series of workshops with stakeholders, a local investment plan is being prepared with a number of proposed local interventions. Cabinet is asked to note the development of the draft Investment Plan and give the Chief Executive delegated authority in consultation with the Leader to approve and submit the Investment Plan once completed in view of the tight timescales involved.

5.3 Although the Borough is categorised as a low priority by the government for Levelling Up Funding there is a strong business case for investment supported by a positive benefit cost ratio. The proposed Leisure and Cultural Hub is a cornerstone in the civic quarter regeneration programme and if supported by Government will bring a wide range of positive benefits to Farnborough and the Borough's communities.

BACKGROUND PAPERS:

None

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