



RUSHMOOR BOROUGH COUNCIL

CABINET

*at the Council Offices, Farnborough on
Tuesday, 15th October, 2024 at 7.00 pm*

To:

Cllr Gareth Williams, Leader of the Council and Finance Portfolio Holder
Cllr Sophie Porter, Deputy Leader and Community & Residents Portfolio Holder

Cllr Abe Allen, Enabling Services Portfolio Holder
Cllr Jules Crossley, Policy, Climate & Sustainability Portfolio Holder
Cllr Keith Dibble, Development & Economic Growth Portfolio Holder
Cllr Christine Guinness, Regeneration & Property Portfolio Holder
Cllr Becky Williams, Neighbourhood Services Portfolio Holder

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

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 - 4)

To confirm the Minutes of the meeting held on 10th September, 2024 (copy attached).

3. **CORPORATE PEER CHALLENGE FEEDBACK REPORT AND ACTION PLAN** – (Pages 5 - 40)
(Cllr Gareth Williams, Leader of the Council and Finance Portfolio Holder)

To consider Report No. CEX2405 (copy attached), which sets out the feedback report from the Corporate Peer Challenge exercise that took place in June 2024, along with a draft Action Plan which has been developed in response to the recommendations.

4. **FINANCIAL RECOVERY PLAN** – (Pages 41 - 64)
(Cllr Gareth Williams, Leader of the Council and Finance Portfolio Holder)

To consider Report No. CEX2406 (copy attached), which sets out a Financial Recovery Plan for the Council.

5. **PUBLIC SECTOR EQUALITY DUTY** – (Pages 65 - 70)
(Cllr Gareth Williams, Leader of the Council and Finance Portfolio Holder)

To consider Report No. ACE2411 (copy attached), which sets out two new equality objectives for the Council, along with a new reporting process in relation to equalities.

6. **CONSERVATION AREA APPRAISALS AND MANAGEMENT PLANS** – (Pages 71 - 212)
(Cllr Keith Dibble, Development & Economic Growth Portfolio Holder)

To consider Report No. PG2427 (copy attached), which seeks approval to reconsult on the Aldershot West Conservation Area and adopt the Conservation Area Appraisals and Management Plans in respect of the Farnborough Street and South Farnborough Conservation Areas.

7. **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 items to avoid the disclosure of exempt information within the paragraphs of Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act, 1972 indicated against such items:

Item Nos.	Schedule 12A Para. No.	Category
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8 and 9	3	Information relating to financial or business affairs
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8. **FRIMLEY 4 BUSINESS PARK – DISPOSAL OF PLOTS 4.2 & 4.3** – (Pages 213 - 268)
(Cllr Christine Guinness, Regeneration & Property Portfolio Holder)

To consider Exempt Report No. REG2428 (copy attached), which seeks authority to dispose of the freehold interests in respect of Plots 4.2 and 4.3 at Frimley Business Park.

9. **LETTING OF NO. 8 UNION YARD, ALDERSHOT** – (Pages 269 - 292)
(Cllr Christine Guinness, Regeneration & Property Portfolio Holder)

To consider Exempt Report No. PG2429 (copy attached), which sets out a proposal to grant a capital contribution to assist with shop fit out costs in respect of a potential new tenant of the Union Yard development in Aldershot.

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CABINET

Meeting held on Tuesday, 10th September, 2024 at the Council Offices, Farnborough at 7.00 pm.

Voting Members

Cllr Gareth Williams, Leader of the Council and Finance Portfolio Holder
Cllr Sophie Porter, Deputy Leader and Community & Residents Portfolio Holder

Cllr Jules Crossley, Policy, Climate & Sustainability Portfolio Holder
Cllr Keith Dibble, Development & Economic Growth Portfolio Holder
Cllr Christine Guinness, Regeneration & Property Portfolio Holder

Apologies for absence were submitted on behalf of Cllrs Abe Allen and Becky Williams.

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 **23rd September, 2024**.

20. **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST –**

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

21. **MINUTES –**

The Minutes of the meeting of the Cabinet held on 6th August, 2024 were confirmed and signed by the Vice-Chairman.

22. **REVENUE AND CAPITAL BUDGET MONITORING REPORT - Q1 2024/25 –** (Cllr Gareth Williams, Leader of the Council and Finance Portfolio Holder)

The Cabinet considered Report No. FIN2413, which set out the anticipated financial position for 2024/25, based on the budget monitoring information provided by Heads of Service and Service Managers as at the end of June 2024. Members were informed that the Council continued to face a number of external budget pressures that were having an impact on the 2024/25 budget and the Council's finances over the medium term, including higher than expected interest rates and the rate of inflation. It was reported that, at this stage of the financial year, the projected General Fund net adverse variance was £142,000. The Report set out the reasons for this variance and confirmed that, overall, the financial position was stable. It was confirmed that the risks and pressures were being closely monitored by budget holders and that Cabinet Members were kept updated on a regular basis. The Cabinet expressed appreciation for the work that had been carried out by the Council's financial officers.

The Cabinet RESOLVED that

- (i) the revenue budget forecast, as set out in Section 2 of Report No. FIN2413,

be noted;

- (ii) the Capital Programme forecast, as set out in Section 4 of the Report, be noted;
- (iii) the virements, as set out on Section 3 of the Report, be approved; and
- (iv) the movements to and from earmarked reserves, as set out in Section 3 of the Report, be approved.

23. INSURANCE PROVISION –

(Cllr Gareth Williams, Leader of the Council and Finance Portfolio Holder)

The Cabinet considered Report No. FIN2414, which set out a proposal in relation to the process by which the Council would procure its insurance services in the future.

Members were informed that, for many years, the Council had secured its insurance requirements through Gallaghers, who had been contracted as the broker for the Hampshire Insurance Forum, which consisted of the eleven Hampshire district and borough councils. The Report set out information on how the Hampshire Insurance Forum currently operated. It was reported that the Council's Section 151 Officer had had experience of an alternative insurance collaboration model which was operated by the London Borough of Sutton (LBS) and comprised Sutton Council and seven Surrey local authorities. The Report set out the process by which this operated and explained the difference between this and the Hampshire model. LBS had expressed agreement to Rushmoor joining that scheme and was in the process of working up an insurance proposal that would be tailored to Rushmoor's requirements. This was due to be received imminently.

The Cabinet discussed this and expressed support for the LBS approach being progressed, so long as the proposal received demonstrated best value for the Council.

The Cabinet RESOLVED that

- (i) the Executive Head of Finance, in consultation with the Leader of the Council and Finance Portfolio Holder, the Corporate Manager – Legal Services and the Chairman of the Corporate Governance, Audit and Standards Committee, be authorised to agree the collaborative agreement to join the integrated insurance service led by the London Borough of Sutton as the preferred mechanism for the provision of insurance, subject to a satisfactory proposal being received in September, as set out in Report No. FIN2414;
- (ii) the additional provision of one-off funding of £15,000, to allow the London Borough of Sutton to support the Council's insurance administration until the new arrangements were in place, to be funded from the Stability and Resilience Reserve, be approved; and
- (iii) subject to the collaboration proposal not being acceptable, the proceeding with the Hampshire Insurance Forum approach, as set out in the Report, be approved.

24. **EXCLUSION OF THE PUBLIC –**

RESOLVED: That, taking into account the public interest test, the public be excluded from the meeting during the discussion of the under mentioned item to avoid the disclosure of exempt information within the paragraph of Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act, 1972 indicated against the item:

Minute No.	Schedule 12A Para. No.	Category
25	3	Information relating to financial or business affairs

**THE FOLLOWING ITEM WAS CONSIDERED
IN THE ABSENCE OF THE PUBLIC**

25. **LETTING OF NO. 1 UNION YARD, ALDERSHOT –**
(Cllr Christine Guinness, Regeneration & Property Portfolio Holder)

The Cabinet considered Exempt Report No. PG2423, which set out a proposal to grant a capital contribution to a new tenant that would be coming to the Union Yard development in Aldershot.

Members were informed that the grant would assist the new tenant by contributing towards the cost of fitting out the new commercial unit. The Report set out the amount of the capital contribution and the terms applicable.

In response to a question, it was confirmed that the Council would be exposed to a limited amount of risk of financial loss, which would materialise only if the business concerned failed prior to the commencement of the fit out. Members expressed support for the proposed approach and felt that this would be helpful to the overall launch of the Union Yard development.

The Cabinet RESOLVED that the capital contribution towards the tenant fit out of No. 1 Union Yard, Aldershot, on the terms set out in Exempt Report No. PG2423, be approved.

The Meeting closed at 7.34 pm.

CLLR GARETH WILLIAMS, LEADER OF THE COUNCIL AND FINANCE
PORTFOLIO HOLDER

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CABINET

COUNCILLOR GARETH WILLIAMS
LEADER AND FINANCE PORTFOLIO HOLDER

15 OCTOBER 2024

Key Decision? No

Report No. CEX2405

CORPORATE PEER CHALLENGE FEEDBACK REPORT AND ACTION PLAN**SUMMARY AND RECOMMENDATIONS:**

In June 2024, the Council took part in a Corporate Peer Challenge. The feedback report provided recommendations on how the Council can improve how it delivers its functions.

It is recommended that Cabinet:

- Note the Corporate Peer Challenge report (Annex 1)
- Approve the action plan (Annex 2)
- Agree that progress against the action plan is reported to Cabinet through the standard quarterly performance management process from 2023/24 Quarter 3

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1. The [Local Government Association \(LGA\) Corporate Peer Challenge \(CPC\)](#) provides robust, strategic and credible challenge and support to councils, bringing together political and managerial leadership, through the use of member and officer peers.
- 1.2. In June 2024, the Council's latest CPC took place over three days. The Council has received and published the feedback report.
- 1.3. This report describes how the Council intends to respond to the feedback report and implement its recommendations.

2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1. The [Local Government Association \(LGA\) Corporate Peer Challenge \(CPC\)](#) provides robust, strategic and credible challenge and support to councils, bringing together political and managerial leadership, through the use of member and officer peers.

- 2.2. It is a highly valued improvement and assurance tool that is delivered by the sector for the sector, at no cost, and involves a diverse team of experienced peers comprising of senior local government councillors and officers.
- 2.3. The peer team undertake a review of key finance, performance and governance information and then spend a few days at the council to provide robust, strategic, and credible challenge and support.
- 2.4. The Ministry of Housing, Communities, and Local Government's (MHCLG) [statutory guidance on best value standards and intervention](#) set outs an expectation for all local authorities to have a CPC at least every five years.
- 2.5. The Council's previous CPC took place in December 2017 with a progress review in September 2019. The feedback and follow up reports are published on the [Council's website](#).
- 2.6. In June 2024, the Council's latest CPC took place over three days. In preparation, the Council provided a position statement setting out its successes, priorities, and challenges, which has been [published on the Council's website](#). A final feedback report was received in August 2024 (see Annex 1) and has also been [published on the Council's website](#).
- 2.7. The feedback report described how there is much the Council should be proud of, including:
- High performing services when compared to CIPFA nearest neighbours
 - Strong examples of place shaping and delivery, including Union Yard in Aldershot
 - Strong operational delivery with partners within the Borough
 - Positive community leadership
 - A well-regarded HR and OD team which places a good focus on wellbeing and health to sustain a motivated and productive workforce
- 2.8. The peer review team made ten recommendations:
1. Members and officers need to recognise and act on the Council's precarious financial position. Urgent action needs to be taken to develop a realistic plan to ensure financial sustainability.
 2. The new administration needs to set out a clear vision for what it wants to achieve and how it wants operate.
 3. Strengthen governance arrangement (including Audit, Scrutiny and Policy and Project Advisory Board (PPAB)).
 4. Review and implement improvements to financial management and reporting arrangements.
 5. Take time to work on relationships and build trust between senior members and officers as a foundation for moving forward.
 6. Leverage the skills and goodwill of partners.
 7. Review the organisational structure in line with the administration's new priorities and introduce appropriate policies to shape the approach to flexible working.

8. Alongside any review of structure, reconsider your capacity and capabilities, including the approach to transformation.
9. Review and refresh the approach to internal communication.
10. Do more to shout about your successes and recognise your achievements.

3. DETAILS OF THE PROPOSAL

General

- 3.1. To implement the recommendations of the June 2024 CPC Feedback Report, an action plan has been prepared in consultation with Cabinet and Executive Leadership Team (ELT) (see Annex 2).
- 3.2. Some of the recommendations and actions from the CPC Feedback Report are duplicated in the action plan produced in response to the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy (CIPFA) Report (reported to Cabinet in [report FIN2411 on the 23 July 2024](#)).
- 3.3. It is proposed that actions relating to the Financial Recovery Plan (FRP) and Finance service operations are tracked through that programme of work. This ensures there is a consistency in reporting, avoids duplication of effort and ensures the appropriate oversight from the Financial Recovery Cabinet Working Group.
- 3.4. The CPC Action Plan will be monitored by the Corporate Management Team (CMT) and reported to Cabinet through the standard quarterly performance management process from 2023/24 Quarter 3.
- 3.5. MHCLG's [statutory guidance on best value standards and intervention](#) sets an expectation that the LGA CPC outcomes to be published, the authority to deliver on the review recommendations, and to complete a progress review within one year.
- 3.6. The Council expects a progress review to take place and follow up report to be published in the summer 2025.

Alternative Options

- 3.7. The Council could choose to not respond to the CPC. This would contravene statutory guidance and could invite intervention action from MHCLG. The Council would also miss the opportunity to improve how it operates.
- 3.8. The action plan was written in consultation with Cabinet and ELT. The Council has the freedom to design actions in response to the recommendations. The resulting action plan reflects the consideration of alternative options by these groups.

Consultation

- 3.9. The Council's key public services, voluntary, community, and business partners, as well as members of Council committees, were invited to take part in the CPC and their views are reflected in the feedback report.

4. IMPLICATIONS (of proposed course of action)

Risks

- 4.1. Risks will be considered by the owner for each action and recorded in service risk registers in line with the Council's risk management policy.

Legal Implications

- 4.2. There are no direct legal implications relating to this report.

Financial Implications

- 4.3. There are no direct financial implications relating to this report. Actions identified will be delivered within current approved budgets where possible. If additional budget is required, requests will be brought forward for approval in line with the financial regulations on a case-by-case basis. Delivery of the action plan may have indirect impacts on the Council's finances such as delivery of efficiencies.

Resource Implications

- 4.4. The resource implications of the CPC Action Plan will be considered during the annual service planning process. Service Managers will need to consider how to prioritise the use of resources to achieve the action plan.

Equalities Impact Implications

- 4.5. Whilst there are no direct equalities impacts as a result of agreeing the action plan, equality impact assessments may be carried during the implementation and/or decision making required for carrying out the action plan.

5 CONCLUSIONS

- 5.1. MHCLG's statutory guidance on best value standards and intervention sets an expectation that the Council delivers on the Corporate Peer Challenge recommendations.
- 5.2. This report describes how the Council intends to respond to the feedback report and implement its recommendations.
- 5.3. By implementing the recommendations, the Council will improve how it carries out its functions and better serve the Borough.

LIST OF APPENDICES/ANNEXES:

Annex 1: Corporate Peer Challenge Feedback Report

Annex 2: Corporate Peer Challenge Action Plan

BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS:

None

CONTACT DETAILS:

Report Author – Alex Shiell, Service Manager – Policy, Strategy, and Transformation / alex.shiell@rushmoor.gov.uk / 01252 398188

Head of Service – Paul Shackley, Chief Executive / paul.shackley@rushmoor.gov.uk / 01252 398149



LGA Corporate Peer Challenge

Rushmoor Borough Council

24-27 June 2024

Feedback report



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1. Executive summary

In delivering the peer challenge at Rushmoor Borough Council (RBC), the peer challenge team is mindful of the particular context for the Borough - in particular the change of political control following the local elections in May 2024, the timing of the on-site visit ahead of the UK General Election on the 4th July 2024, and the Council's significant financial challenges as a result of their high levels of borrowing. They have framed our conversations and feedback.

There is much the Council should be proud of. Overall, RBC services are performing well against its CIPFA nearest neighbours and there are some great examples of place shaping and delivery, including the Council's Union Yard development bringing an exciting mix of student accommodation, residential, retail, creative workspace and public realm contributing to the regeneration of Aldershot Town Centre. There is strong operational delivery with partners, for example Farnborough College of Technology and VCSE partners, and there are ample opportunities for regeneration in partnership with businesses, culture and the arts, using the Council's sites and drawing on a vibrant community of internationally renowned businesses and superb business park infrastructure.

The new administration has landed well, bringing energy and understanding of communities and a willingness to listen. Staff are enthusiastic, engaged and appreciate the investments in learning and wellbeing and health. Sickness levels are low and retention is high. The Council exercises positive community leadership, particularly with its Nepali community and there are several community projects focusing on well-being and drawing on community and individual assets.

However, RBC is in a precarious financial position and has a large financial deficit which it needs to address urgently. The Council has identified the scale of this challenge and is formulating a strategy to tackle it. Whilst a balanced budget was set in February for the 2024/25 budget, it required £5.4m from reserves to balance, with 2025/26 requiring a further £4.2m, leaving the Council without reserves by 2026/27 unless action is taken immediately. The immediate cause for this draw on reserves is a significant increase in the cost of borrowing as a result of recent increases in interest rates. This in turn is driven by a high level of borrowing for a council of this size, most of which has been entered into over the last five years to finance regeneration and investment property acquisitions. The latter has generated some financial returns which are invested in service delivery.

The Council commissioned CIPFA in late 2023 to carry out full-scale review of its financial position, including financial management and governance, which will

provide it with independent assessment and recommendations. RBC has also devised a Financial Resilience Plan with clear financial targets for a reduction in revenue spend and debt. A new experienced permanent Chief Finance Officer has been appointed who brings focus and rigour. This provides a framework and capacity to address the significant financial challenges.

The new administration now needs to articulate their vision and priorities for the place, communities and organisation and needs move from campaigning to governing. Notwithstanding the need to understand the reasons for the financial challenges and the detail of the complex regeneration schemes, they need to own the current challenges and opportunities, work with officers on short- and long-term plans and make decisions. Bearing in mind the size and resources of the Council it will be important for staff to be clear on priorities as well as non-priorities. It is important to frame this positively and in the context of both the new administration's ambition and the resources available to the Council (and its communities and partners) to instil hope and positivity for the future.

2. Key recommendations

There are a number of observations and suggestions within the main section of the report. The following are the peer team's key recommendations to the council:

2.1 Recommendation 1

Members and officers need to recognise and act on the Council's precarious financial position. Urgent action needs to be taken to develop a realistic plan to ensure financial sustainability.

2.2 Recommendation 2

The new administration needs to set out a clear vision for what it wants to achieve and how it wants operate.

2.3 Recommendation 3

Strengthen governance arrangement (including Audit, Scrutiny and Policy and Project Advisory Board (PPAB))

2.4 Recommendation 4

Review and implement improvements to financial management and reporting arrangements.

2.5 Recommendation 5

Take time to work on relationships and build trust between senior members and officers as a foundation for moving forward.

2.6 Recommendation 6

Leverage the skills and goodwill of partners.

2.7 Recommendation 7

Review the organisational structure in line with the administration's new priorities and introduce appropriate policies to shape the approach to flexible working.

2.8 Recommendation 8

Alongside any review of structure, reconsider your capacity and capabilities, including the approach to transformation.

2.9 Recommendation 9

Review and refresh the approach to internal communication

2.10 Recommendation 10

Do more to shout about your successes and recognise your achievements.

3. Summary of the peer challenge approach

3.1 The peer team

Peer challenges are delivered by experienced elected member and officer peers. The make-up of the peer team reflected the focus of the peer challenge and peers were selected on the basis of their relevant expertise. The peers were:

- Member Peer – Cllr Jewel Miah, Leader, Charnwood Borough Council
- Member Peer – Cllr Sam Chapman, Leader, Breckland District Council
- Chief Executive Peer – William Benson, Chief Executive, Tunbridge Wells Borough Council
- Officer Peer – Fiona Bryant, Director of Enterprise and Sustainable Development, Cambridge City Council
- Officer Peer – Alan Finch, LGA Associate
- Officer Peer – Amy Wyatt, Brentwood Borough Council
- Peer Challenge Manager – Anne Brinkhoff, LGA Associate

- Project Support Officer – Rachel Stevens, LGA

3.2 Scope and focus

The peer team considered the following five themes which form the core components of all Corporate Peer Challenges. These areas are critical to councils' performance and improvement.

1. **Local priorities and outcomes** - Are the council's priorities clear and informed by the local context? Is the council delivering effectively on its priorities?
2. **Organisational and place leadership** - Does the council provide effective local leadership? Are there good relationships with partner organisations and local communities?
3. **Governance and culture** - Are there clear and robust governance arrangements? Is there a culture of challenge and scrutiny?
4. **Financial planning and management** - Does the council have a grip on its current financial position? Does the council have a strategy and a plan to address its financial challenges?
5. **Capacity for improvement** - Is the organisation able to support delivery of local priorities? Does the council have the capacity to improve?

3.3 The peer challenge process

Peer challenges are improvement-focused; it is important to stress that this was not an inspection. The process is not designed to provide an in-depth or technical assessment of plans and proposals. The peer team used their experience and knowledge of local government to reflect on the information presented to them by people they met, things they saw and material that they read.

The peer team prepared by reviewing a range of documents and information in order to ensure they were familiar with the council and the challenges it is facing. The team then spent three days on-site at Rushmoor Borough Council, during which they:

- Gathered information and views from more than 35 meetings, in addition to further research and reading.
- Spoke to more than 120 people including a range of council staff together with members and external stakeholders.

This report provides a summary of the peer team's findings. In presenting feedback, they have done so as fellow local government officers and members.

4. Feedback

4.1 Context and overall messages and observations

In delivering the peer challenge at Rushmoor Borough Council (RBC), the peer challenge team is mindful of the particular context for the Borough - in particular the change of political control following the local elections in May 2024, the timing of the on-site visit ahead of the UK General Election on the 4th July 2024, and the Council's significant financial challenges as a result of their high levels of borrowing. They have framed our conversations and feedback.

Whilst we understand the Council's motivation to intervene in its town centres (and there are some good examples of delivery), its approach has resulted in high levels of borrowing which are placing unsustainable pressure on its revenue budget.

There seems to be a political need to understand 'what has gone wrong'. This needs to be resolved (and communicated) so the Council can move forward.

The Council needs to recognise that its existing plans are no longer deliverable, but opportunities remain to develop a new plan starting with a clean sheet of paper. The challenge will be to address the immediate (and urgent) issues whilst keeping options open for longer-term place shaping.

Key businesses and partners are keen to see the Council make a success of the town centres (and are willing to put their shoulder to the wheel to help with this).

Aside from regeneration, the new administration needs to move from campaigning to governing and to set out a clear plan of both what they want to deliver and how they want to work.

Internally, the Council needs to think about how it works in a post-Covid world and how it shapes its structures and capabilities to support any new vision.

Aside from the financial challenges, the Council is in a good place with motivated and dedicated staff, good service delivery, well regarded senior officers and good partnership working.

4.2 Local priorities and outcomes

The new administration is realistic about what can be achieved and recognises that previous commitments may no longer be deliverable. This is most pertinent in the masterplan for the Civic Quarter in Farnborough which is being reviewed in the light of the financial challenges. The new administration's manifesto commitments are included in the last year of the Council's four-year Council Plan, and they are keen to explore with officers how the intended outcomes can be achieved being mindful of operational constraints and unintended consequences. This ensures a balance of operational stability with operational changes that signal the change in political control whilst officers and members prepare a new four-year Council plan for the next financial year.

Overall, RBC services are performing well against its CIPFA nearest neighbours. Performance data from LG Inform (June 2024) highlights above average performance in Council Tax and NNDR collection, processing housing benefit claims and processing major planning applications. The number of households on the housing waiting list and the number of people living in temporary accommodation are both below average for the CIPFA nearest neighbours, as are the percentage of vacant dwellings. This bodes well for local residents and must be seen in the context of comparatively low levels of total expenditure in central services and housing, indicating good value for money in these areas.

There are some good examples of place shaping and delivery. The Council's Union Yard development (bringing a mix of student accommodation, residential homes, retail, a 'makers yard' offering smaller creative workshop spaces for small and independent businesses, and a new public square linking the High Street and Union Street) is significantly contributing to the regeneration of Aldershot Town Centre and will open in the autumn. Using a mix of S106 and other funding, the Council has developed Southwood Country Park on the former Southwood Golf course that was subject to frequent flooding. The Park provides informal paths and an all-weather 2.4km formal circular route through the wet grassland and woods in addition to playground facilities and a community centre and Café. Facilities are accessible, including a 'changing places' toilet. These are good examples of the council leading on improvements to places and leveraging resources from partners.

There are good opportunities for regeneration in partnership with businesses, culture and the arts. The Council owns significant sites - some with outline consent - and is home to a vibrant community of internationally renowned businesses, including Farnborough Airport and one of the top business parks in the country for its green

spaces and sustainability. RBC is a priority place for the Arts Council, offering opportunities for town centre regeneration in both Farnborough and Aldershot through arts and culture. The Borough is in close proximity to London and has good infrastructure links which offers opportunities to progress the regeneration even at a time of financial challenges. The Council must focus on the opportunities and may wish to consider different partnerships and wider financing options to progress with the Civic Quarter regeneration in particular.

The Council's priorities are informed by local views. It runs several consultations each year, including an annual residents' survey, alternating between a service satisfaction-based survey and a place-based survey. In 2023, the council achieved a significant response rate of just over 1,500 which provided a wealth of data on what matters to residents and how satisfied they are with services provided. This informs the setting of priorities and service planning.

There are many good examples of operational delivery with a range of partners where the Council is making use of its resources, knowledge and expertise to provide solutions to issues outside its direct control. They include the 'Community Grub Hub' - a repurposed Council-owned empty property that was renovated to provide a free community food 'shop' and is now offering a range of activities and services (many provided by volunteers). Another example is the Council's support to the Farnborough College of Technology in relocating some 300 learners into a vacant council building at speed following the discovery of Reinforced Autoclaved Aerated Concrete (RAAC) which required the College to find new premises for its learners.

There is an urgent need for the Council to address its immediate financial challenges to ensure that it can avoid a situation which might see it placed in intervention and address damaging uncertainty within the organisation. At present, the Council does not have a sustainable financial position and has had to draw heavily on its reserves to set a balanced budget for 2024/25. The Council's financial position deteriorated rapidly in 2023/24 due to rising interest rates and therefore increasing borrowing costs. The Council has devised a Financial Resilience Plan, requiring £500k per annum revenue savings each year for the next four years and generation of capital receipts of £40million to be used to reduce its borrowing (see also the Finance section in this report). Without this, the council's MTFP shows that its reserves will be fully depleted by 2026/27.

In respect of the regeneration schemes, this means that the Council needs to put the past behind them and focus on a new plan. We recognise that this is challenging

Annex 1: Corporate Peer Challenge Feedback Report

given the time and effort put in to-date, but an objective review is critical at this point. There is a need to balance the immediate need to dispose of sites with the possible future gain and opportunity costs. This will require technical expertise as well as a political steer.

More generally in the context of economic development and regeneration, there was strong commitment from the business community to help deliver successful town centre regeneration in order to boost visitor numbers. We heard that the lack of good hotel space was a particular issue but also exploring 'meanwhile' uses of the boarded sites. There may be opportunities to consider more collaborative approaches to the use of external funding.

In the context of the financial challenges, the new administration needs to articulate their vision and priorities for the place and the organisation, including both the 'what it is we want to do' and 'how the council will operate' (for example, how it wants to organise itself and interface with customers and communities). Inevitably this will be an iterative process, where the administration will need to understand and draw on the expertise and experience of staff and managers in the Council. Ultimately, however, it is their prerogative to decide and steer on the future direction. Bearing in mind the size and resources of the Council it will be important for staff to be clear on priorities as well as non-priorities. It is important to frame this positively and in the context of both the new administration's ambition and the resources available to the Council (and its communities and partners) in order to instil hope and positivity for the future.

The next year also provides an opportunity to re-focus on deprivation and some poor public health performance indicators (such as healthy weight, physical activity, under 18 conception) in parts of the Borough. This will require leadership, persistency and strategic engagement with partners to resolve.

Refreshing the Council's Equalities, Diversity & Inclusion objectives for communities and the workforce in the context of a greater focus on social inclusion will provide good alignment. Whilst the decision to engage in an LGA peer challenge in 2021 is to be applauded, we saw limited evidence of progress in delivering against the response to the recommendations. The peer challenge report emphasised the need to set clear equalities objectives, to focus on equality impact assessments and to provide training and development and provides a blueprint for action - but this will need to be resourced and requires leadership at both senior officer and member level.

4.3 Organisational and place leadership

The new Leader is regarded as community-focused and outward looking by staff and members. Whilst there has been very limited time for him to engage with officers across the Council, working arrangements with the senior team have been put in place, including regular briefings with senior officers. We heard that in his short tenure he has contributed to a staff briefing and has been visible to staff in the Council offices. This is creating positive ripples and a sense of openness that is crucial for building trust.

The Chief Executive is seen as being engaging with and supportive towards staff and enjoys good relationships amongst other public sector bodies and partners, in particular the business community.

The new administration has landed well, bringing energy and understanding of communities and a willingness to listen. Managers we spoke with are getting to know the new administration and are engaged in briefings and on-boarding activities and there was an overwhelming sense that the new administration are keen to learn and develop good relationships. This will be crucial in providing members with the information and understanding they need to make the changes required of them, being mindful of resources, navigating technical barriers and avoiding unintentional consequences of their decisions. An example is the implementation of the 'Clean Streets for all' pledge and a willingness to be open to 'means' provided the 'ends' are achieved.

Staff like working for the Council. Feedback we heard included *'it is a great place to work for ... people are lovely and there is a good work-life balance'*. The HR data speaks for itself with below average levels of sickness absence and good staff retention. Many staff we spoke with felt valued, empowered, and appreciated the investment in learning and wellbeing and health. There was a sense of good collaboration between individuals and of support from managers. The health and wellbeing survey (July 2023) had a high response rate (69 per cent) and validates the views we heard from front-line staff and managers.

The Council exercises positive community leadership, in particular with its large Nepali community, and is seen as a credible and responsive operational partner. For example, in response to many rejected postal votes in the local elections, the Council is engaging with the Nepali community to overcome barriers such as language or understanding of the voting process. We heard many examples of engagement with hard-to-reach communities during the Covid pandemic to boost testing and vaccinations. We also heard about community projects to encourage

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healthy lifestyle and the appointment of a community engagement officer to engage on the Council's regeneration schemes. We were told about a good relationship with the Aldershot

Civic Society who play an important 'critical friend' role in the regeneration of Aldershot Town Centre. This shows understanding, empathy and a desire to deliver services and place-shaping that matters to people.

The new administration needs move from campaigning to governing.

Notwithstanding the need to understand the reasons for the financial challenges and the detail of the complex regeneration schemes, they need to own the current challenges and opportunities, work with officers on short- and long-term plans and make decisions. This is particularly important in understanding and leading on the Financial Resilience Plan to make the required savings and reduce borrowing costs. This will require considerable energy and time from the new administration - both individually and collectively.

It will also require building confidence at pace. Effective relationships are built on trust, and senior politicians and officers need to take time to understand their respective roles, backgrounds (including skills, capabilities and experience), work preferences and how they want to work as 'One Team' (whilst recognising their distinctive roles that require challenging each other). Trust needs to grow and is relational. The peer team strongly supports the organisation of externally facilitated informal events to create space to go through this trust-building process. This will be challenging in the context of the past and a (understandably) human desire to attribute blame. The quicker the trust-building process can commence the better it will be for the development of open relationships that enable critical challenge and 'speaking truth to power' to make good decisions.

Partners are crying out for a compelling place-based vision which binds them together and recognises opportunities that are presenting themselves. This applies to businesses as well as statutory partners, particularly around some of the challenges in health, well-being and educational achievement. Developing a place-based vision or high-level strategy and running a place based event (for example a 'State of the Borough conference') could be a first step to engage with businesses, public sector partners, the community & voluntary sector as well as civil society to have a dialogue about the future of the Borough, to harness the collective passion we saw and to allocate responsibility to effect changes. Whilst the Council may initiate and lead such an event (given its place leadership role), it doesn't mean that it must assume responsibility for planning, delivering and controlling any outputs – rather it needs to connect the 'Rushmoor system' to more of itself in order to release

the collective intelligence and bring the change makers together. We repeatedly heard that the Council enjoyed good 'point to point' relationships but could do more to draw these individual relationships into a wider context – for example, in form of a place-based Board.

4.4 Governance and culture

The commitment to transparency and the willingness of the new administration to front decisions has been welcomed. The new administration is explicit about its commitment to be open to residents on the Council's financial resilience and the actions it is taking to solve the debt crisis. The draft CIPFA report, commissioned in late 2023, provides an independent assessment of the Council's financial position. The Council started its financial resilience plan also in late 2023 when it identified a threat to its future financial sustainability. The Council must consider how it will share the information more widely.

The Corporate Governance Group provides a useful forum to focus on the corporate health of the Council. Chaired by the Monitoring Officer, the officer group includes representatives from Internal Audit, IT, Procurement & Risk and the Chief Financial Officer. It meets weekly, works to a standing agenda and is a valuable forum for officers to provide assurance or raise concerns about potential risks. The group reviews the Annual Governance Statement, corporate policies and feeds any actions into the Executive Leadership Team. It has instigated changes to the template for Cabinet reports to strengthen the financial input as well as providing individual and more informal feedback on the better identification of risk mitigations.

There is widespread recognition that the shadow Cabinet arrangements served the Council well in preparing the new administration for being in control. If the arrangements were to continue it will have an impact on Scrutiny arrangements as the shadow Cabinet's principal function is to hold Cabinet to account.

Member to member relationships appear good. Our conversations with members from the different groups highlighted mutual respect and purposeful and collegiate relationships. This bodes well for the various Committee functions, including Corporate Governance, Audit and Standards Committee, Development Management Committee, and Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

The Council is making efforts to engage with staff and seek feedback. There are a range of methods, including themed surveys (ie managing budgets; security in

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reception) and an annual staff survey (Health & Wellbeing Survey). Regular staff live updates with the Chief Executive and leadership team (via email or MS Teams) are welcomed as is the more informal 'Rushmoor Roundup!' which is prepared by the Comms team.

The Council's Policy and Project Advisory Board (PPAB) and Scrutiny function need a fundamental review with a view to providing greater clarity as to their roles and responsibilities. Both Committees operate through tasks and finish groups and there is potential duplication of PPAB with the 'overview' aspect of Overview & Scrutiny. The 'Decision Making Structure' diagram would benefit from a revision and should also include the role of the shadow Cabinet.

The Audit Committee needs to have a sharper focus on governance, better access to information and clearer responsibility for risk. The current remit for Audit is 'Corporate Governance, Audit and Standards Committee' and includes responsibility for Licensing, albeit with a Licensing Sub-Committee responsible for licensing applications. The Audit Committee needs to be focused on assurance with any decision-making, scrutiny or standards issued transferred to other committees to ensure the Audit Committee's independence. Meetings should be more frequent and appropriately supported by a strong internal audit service.

The Council needs to recognise that difficult conversations are vital to the organisation and that it must collectively own and be seen to own its challenges. Disagreement and challenge are vital practices to ensure that performance is tested and without it there is no foundation for shared commitment, accountability and attention to results. This is particularly important for CMT and ELT and in the context of finalising and implementing the Financial Resilience Plan. Without challenge there is a danger that options are not sufficiently tested. Following a series of interim Chief Finance Officers, the Council has now made a permanent appointment to this role. Whilst S151 officers have a statutory responsibility to ensure compliance with all financial, statutory and constitutional requirements, it is important that the wider role of balancing local service with financial sustainability is shared – and be seen to be shared – by the entire Executive Leadership Team. It is particularly important given the nature and urgency of the situation facing the council that the solution is not perceived by the organisation as one of the S151 Officer and his team to solve.

The Council could do more to recognise and celebrate achievements across the organisation. Whilst staff appreciate that there are priority services, the recent 'Outcome Based Budgeting' exercise which ranked services by importance, has left some staff feeling underappreciated and disengaged. A constant focus on

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acknowledging and celebrating the good work staff and managers do will foster a positive culture of collaboration and innovation. Celebrations can be formal – (for example through Staff Awards and communications-led publicity), but it also needs to happen informally and in unstructured ways so that it becomes a natural part of ‘doing business’. A simple yet effective way of promoting this is for team meetings across the organisation to start meetings with a question about ‘what do we celebrate today?’ and for each member to share a small or large example of success.

Whilst many staff appreciate the opportunity to work flexibly, the time may have come to further consider how this is managed. Whilst the recent staff survey highlights that the Council’s flexible approach to hybrid working works well for individuals and teams, we heard a consistent message that some people feel less connected to colleagues, other teams and the community. Whether or not this is a result of hybrid working is unclear. Many staff commented positively about the improvements on work-life balance, personal productivity and well-being and the Council’s flexible approach recognises requirements of different teams delivering very different services. However, it might be time to consider in more detail the implications of hybrid working for different ‘types of workers’ (for example new starters; apprentices; established senior managers) and the types of work we do (for example innovating; supervision; learning; team building) in order to be more nuanced in designing the hybrid working arrangements so they work individuals, teams and the community.

Specifically, some of the questions asked of staff in the various survey exercises focused on staff as individuals, not teams. It might be helpful to expand questions in future surveys to include more about how ‘teams work/feel’ as opposed to how ‘I work/feel’.

At the time of significant change and challenge, visible Leadership is more important than ever to set the tone for the organisation. This does not mean that meetings have to be face to face, but it requires presence and opportunities to engage spontaneously and to build relationships and from a Leader’s perspective, it requires opportunities for ad-hoc conversations and the ability to observe and notice the organisational mood.

The advent of a new administration with changes to portfolios as well as the financial challenges and inevitable re-focus of the regeneration work provides a good opportunity for the Council to review its structures and capabilities to deliver. With this, it may wish to consider whether to reduce overlaps between Cabinet portfolios

and some services in order to have more streamlined relationships between Cabinet members and Service Managers.

The Council owns two companies, Rushmoor Homes Limited and Rushmoor Development Partnership. At present, Rushmoor Councillors sit on the boards of the companies it owns. The shareholder role is undertaken by the CEO and Deputy CEO/Monitoring Officer respectively. Given the current challenges, the Council may wish to re-consider these arrangements to ensure independence and strong governance.

Whilst the Council operates a Corporate Governance Group that provides a regular and robust forum for effective governance, this could be strengthened by including the Council's HR lead in order to consider any risks around staffing and mandatory training. The imminent Code of Practice on Good Governance for Local Authority Statutory Officers by LLG, CIPFA and SOLACE (consultation closed on 5 April 2024) is likely to recommend that the Chief Finance Officer and Monitoring Officer should have a clear and direct relationship to the Head of Paid Service (the Chief Executive Officer), normally through line management or other equivalent arrangements. The Council should consider establishing a regular meeting between the three statutory officers (also known as the 'Golden Triangle'). This will provide for the three officers to exercise their statutory responsibilities to ensure good administrative, financial and ethical governance of the Council.

4.5 Financial planning and management

The Council is in a precarious financial position and has a large financial deficit which it needs to address urgently. The council has identified the scale of this challenge and has put in place a Financial Recovery Plan to address it. Whilst a balanced budget was set in February for the 2024/25 budget, it required £5.4m from reserves to balance, with 2025/26 requiring a further £4.2m, leaving the Council without reserves by 2026/27 unless action is taken immediately. The budget setting process for 2025/26 is therefore the last formal opportunity for the council to identify a plan to reach a sustainable financial position.

The immediate cause for this draw on reserves is a significant increase in the cost of borrowing as a result of recent increases in interest rates. This in turn is driven by a high level of borrowing for a council of this size, most of which has been entered into over the last five years to finance regeneration and investment property acquisitions.

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The latter has generated some financial returns which are invested in service delivery.

The Council commissioned CIPFA in late 2023 to carry out a full-scale review of its financial position, including financial management, an assessment of debt and commercial assets, its capital programme and financial governance. The report is currently in draft and will provide the Council with independent assessment and recommendations.

In parallel to commissioning the CIPFA report, the Council has devised a Financial Resilience Plan. The aims of the plan are to achieve financial sustainability and enable service optimisation within the MTFS period. There are five workstreams and the plan has two financial targets: a) a reduction in revenue by £500k per annum over 4 years; and b) a reduction of debt by £40m in the next three years without reducing net revenue. The plan is overseen by the Executive Leadership Team with oversight from elected Members. This provides a framework to address the significant challenges. There is evidence of good progress towards this year's savings target. However, at the time of the peer challenge the council had not identified and agreed the source of capital receipts needed for the plan.

The Council has a new experienced permanent Chief Finance Officer (CFO). This follows a series of interim appointments. The permanent CFO has brought with him focus and rigour and is supported by a recent appointment of the Financial Services Manager and Deputy S151 officer. They have made a start in rebuilding the finance system to reduce the reliance on excel spreadsheets. Installing the budgeting module into the Finance System in particular will help with better budget monitoring and forecasting.

The new administration has shown a desire to understand and tackle the financial issues and the CIPFA report is aiding the process of understanding and appreciation. There has been open dialogue between the Leader, the CFO and the Head of Finance. There is a need for the new administration to fully own the Financial Resilience Plan and decide how they wish to provide oversight.

The Council has opportunities to further increase fees and charges to ease the pressures on the revenue budget. Discussions with the waste & recycling contractor highlight that green waste charges are below average for the area and there is scope to review car parking charges. This will support the generation of revenue savings.

As the Council moves towards a new vision, it needs to consider corporately how its expenditure adds value and drives its new priorities and cut its cloth accordingly.

A comprehensive asset disposal strategy needs to be developed and agreed with the right capabilities to deliver it. The Council then needs to move immediately to implement the strategy to allow a budget to be set for 2025/26 and beyond. This will have significant impact on the Council's priority for regeneration and it will have to carefully balance short-term pressures with the longer-term opportunities.

There are significant shortcomings in the finance team's capacity, systems and governance that have contributed to the situation and make a soft landing more difficult. For example, there are historical issues in relation to financial reporting, quarterly outturn reporting to Members and presentation of budget/forecast information. The Council's external auditors have referred to issues of capacity and capability in the finance department and in the context of their work. Going forward, there is a need for better in-year information during the course of the financial year in order to mitigate any adverse position.

Understanding of and engagement in the MTFs amongst managers is variable. Our conversations with managers highlighted that some did not feel fully engaged and involved in financial planning. Financial understanding and management is an important aspect of the role of managers and every effort should be made to engage them early in order to capture their ideas in reducing costs and building their ownership and responsibility for Council as a whole.

4.6 Capacity for improvement

There are many examples of good initiatives and delivery at service level and the Council compares well to its CIPFA nearest neighbours. The Council has a transformation team who have supported digital transformation, including a new website and digital solutions in elections and recycling. This is a good basis from which with to work and improve further.

The Council has a strong HR and OD team and places a good focus on well-being and health to sustain a motivated and productive workforce. This is recognised and welcomed by staff. The work is guided by a comprehensive multi-annual people strategy with four priorities and a range of outcomes and actions under each. There are many examples of Corporate Learning & Development initiatives including bespoke training, awareness raising sessions on a range of issues, including neurodiversity, dementia, political nous; and more applied learning such as Action Learning Sets. The Council has procured a new eLearning platform, and a phased launch of modules is under way. This will also help managing compulsory training.

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The Council has identified and documented its behaviours and values and is planning the launch of a Leadership Development programme. There are a range of projects and initiatives to address the current gender pay gap of 12.6%, drawing on the support of in-house female leaders. Many of the initiatives are led by staff highlighting the positive and inclusive culture. It will be vital to continue to invest in corporate learning, development and wellbeing & health to build an engaged and capable workforce of the future, particularly in view of workforce demographics and recruitment challenges. Care should be taken to ensure that this work continues to be regarded as a priority.

Rushmoor is placing a strong focus on growing talent using apprenticeships. At present there are 11 members of staff undertaking an apprenticeship in a range of occupations and levels, including a level 6 Chartered Town Planner and a level 4 Software Developer. RBC spends the majority of its apprenticeship levy and compares favourably to many Councils; it is using this resource to develop skills inhouse which might otherwise be challenging to recruit to.

The Council's office space could be used better to promote collaborative working and engagement. The Council has a mix of open plan and individual offices and shares spaces with partners including Hampshire County Council and Hampshire Police over three floors. The team understand that there are considerations to relocate in the medium term. In the context of the opportunities and challenges of agile working mentioned earlier, the current situation provides a great test bed for trying different configurations of work; including moving everyone into open plan offices and using current office space as meeting rooms. Extending this principle to working with partners may provide opportunities for better collaboration. There is also a possibility for further income generation or for opening the office space to partners, particularly those in the voluntary sector.

There are opportunities to re-frame 'transformation' from a central team who 'do things to others' (including digital improvements), to seeing it 'marbled' throughout the organisation. The next generation of transformation projects are likely to focus on democratising transformation tools (such as artificial intelligence) and may also involve the Council playing a more 'enabling' role. This is likely to require services to take a different lead and the transformation team to facilitate and support, also with links to HR and OD. Similarly, the use of data and business intelligence and predictive analytics could be explored to be sharper about where and how to engage or intervene. The involvement of partners bringing their own datasets is likely to play an important role in this.

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At a time of financial constraints there might be opportunities to deliver social value through procurement by reviewing its social value policy and engaging with the National Social Value Measurement Framework to embed social value in its procurement process.

In the absence of an Intranet, there are limited opportunities for staff to engage with each other digitally in a flexible working environment. Our conversations with staff highlighted that much of the communication is structured and led by the communications team. They would value more agile channels to stay in touch, particularly in the hybrid working environment. There are a range of digital apps (including 'Viva Engage' – already in use by the Council) that could be explored for staff to connect and for the council to land messages or suggestions in a more creative and dynamic way where this is appropriate.

Encouraging and trusting staff to take responsibility, make bold decisions and take managed risks are core behaviours that bring RBC's values alive. These behaviours will be crucial in maintaining and growing a workforce that has the competencies and passion to work for the benefit of the people of Rushmoor.

5. Next steps

It is recognised that senior political and managerial leadership will want to consider, discuss and reflect on these findings.

Both the peer team and LGA are keen to build on the relationships formed through the peer challenge. The CPC process includes a progress review within twelve months of the CPC, which provides space for the council's senior leadership to update peers on its progress against the recommendations from this report.

In the meantime, Will Brooks, Principal Adviser for South East, is the main contact between your authority and the Local Government Association. Will is available to discuss any further support the council requires. William.Brooks@local.gov.uk, 07949 054421.

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ID #	Summary Action	Owner	Action Update - progress to date	Next milestone	Status
P100	Members and officers need to recognise and act on the Council's precarious financial position. Urgent action needs to be taken to develop a realistic plan to ensure financial sustainability.	Chief Executive			Transferred to CIPFA Action Log
P101	Cabinet leadership and oversight of Financial Resilience Plan	Chief Executive	See July MTFS Report and Financial Recovery Plan		Complete
P102	Consider how to share CIPFA report more widely	Chief Executive	See July MTFS Report and Financial Recovery Plan		Complete
P103	Identify and agree source of capital receipts needed to achieve Financial Resilience Plan	Executive Director - Place			Transferred to CIPFA Action Log
P104	Develop and agree Asset Disposal Strategy	Executive Director - Place			Transferred to CIPFA Action Log
P105	Obtain capabilities to deliver Asset Disposal Strategy	Executive Director - Place			Transferred to CIPFA Action Log
P106	Develop new regeneration plan	Executive Director - Place	Alternative strategy being developed	Presented to Capital Programme Board and Cabinet in due course	In progress
P107	Consider different partnerships and wider financing options for Civic Quarter regeneration	Executive Director - Place	Alternative strategy being developed	Presented to Capital Programme Board and Cabinet in due course	In progress
P108	Identify plan to achieve a sustainable financial position	Chief Executive and Chief Finance Officer			Transferred to CIPFA Action Log

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ID #	Summary Action	Owner	Action Update - progress to date	Next milestone	Status
P109	increase fees and charges to ease the pressures on the revenue budget, including green waste and car parking	Chief Executive and Chief Finance Officer			Transferred to CIPFA Action Log
P200	The new administration needs to set out a clear vision for what it wants to achieve and how it wants operate.	Assistant Chief Executive	Cabinet set out priorities for Interim Delivery Plan. Longer term vision to be developed.	February Cabinet Council Vision engagement – Summer 25	In Progress
P201	Develop new Council Plan - including vision, priorities, deliverables and approach	Assistant Chief Executive	Cabinet set out priorities for Interim Delivery Plan. Longer term vision to be developed.	February Cabinet Council Vision engagement – Summer 25	In Progress
P202	Consider link between expenditure, added value, and priorities	Assistant Chief Executive	Priorities will be set through new Council Plan and non-priorities through Financial Recovery Plan (FRP)	FRP – February 25 Council Plan - Summer 25	Planned
P203	Set clear priorities and non-priorities	Assistant Chief Executive	Priorities will be set through new Council Plan and non-priorities through FRP.	FRP – February 25 Council Plan - Summer 25	Planned
P204	Refocus on deprivation and poor public health performance indicators	Assistant Chief Executive	To be developed as part of new Council Plan for Summer 25. Refresh Supporting Communities Strategy	Council Plan - Summer 25 Supporting Communities Strategy refresh – December 24	Planned

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ID #	Summary Action	Owner	Action Update - progress to date	Next milestone	Status
P205	Refresh equality, diversity, and inclusion objectives for community and workforce with greater focus on social inclusion	Assistant Chief Executive	Cabinet report	October Cabinet	In Progress
P206	Review social value policy	Assistant Chief Executive	Included in Procurement Strategy	November Cabinet	In Progress
P300	Strengthen governance arrangement (including Audit, Scrutiny and Policy and Project Advisory Board (PPAB))	Executive Director (Monitoring Officer)	Review by Centre for Governance and Scrutiny to be commissioned and will include relevant consultation with Committees and Members.	Draft Proposal by December 24 Changes in place May 2025	Planned
P301	Review roles and responsibilities of OSC and PPAB	Executive Director (Monitoring Officer)	Review by Centre for Governance and Scrutiny to be commissioned and will include relevant consultation with Committees and Members.	Draft Proposal by December 24 Changes in place May 2025	Planned
P302	Review focus of Audit Committee	Executive Director (Monitoring Officer)	Review by Centre for Governance and Scrutiny to be commissioned and will include relevant consultation with Committees and Members.	Draft Proposal by December 24 Changes in place May 2025	Planned
P303	Increase frequency of Audit Committee meetings	Executive Director (Monitoring Officer)	Review by Centre for Governance and Scrutiny to be commissioned and will include relevant consultation with	Draft Proposal by December 24 Changes in place May 2025	Planned

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ID #	Summary Action	Owner	Action Update - progress to date	Next milestone	Status
			Committees and Members.		
P304	Consider transferring decision making, scrutiny, and standards responsibilities of Audit Committee to other committees	Executive Director (Monitoring Officer)	Review by Centre for Governance and Scrutiny to be commissioned and will include relevant consultation with Committees and Members.	Draft Proposal by December 24 Changes in place May 2025	Planned
P305	Review Council companies governance arrangements	Chief Executive	Review Rushmoor Development Partnership (RDP) and Rushmoor Homes Ltd (RHL) governance	November 2024	Underway
P306	Include HR lead in Corporate Governance Group	Executive Director (Monitoring Officer)	Agenda and papers shared with Corporate Manager - People for attendance as required.		Complete
P307	Establish regular meeting between statutory officers	Chief Executive	Arrangements in place and increased frequency of meetings		Complete
P400	Review and implement improvements to financial management and reporting arrangements.	Chief Finance Officer			Transferred to CIPFA Action Log
P401	Improve finance team capacity, systems and governance	Chief Finance Officer			Transferred to CIPFA Action Log Duplicate of C004
P402	Improve budget monitoring and forecasting, including new budget module in	Chief Finance Officer			Transferred to CIPFA Action Log

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ID #	Summary Action	Owner	Action Update - progress to date	Next milestone	Status
	financial software and reducing use of spreadsheets				Duplicate of C006
P403	Improve in-year financial reporting	Chief Finance Officer			Transferred to CIPFA Action Log Duplicate of C011
P404	Engage managers early in cost reduction	Executive Director (Monitoring Officer)			Transferred to CIPFA Action Log
P405	Improve management ownership of whole Council financial management	Executive Director (Monitoring Officer)			Transferred to CIPFA Action Log
P500	Take time to work on relationships and build trust between senior members and officers as a foundation for moving forward.	Chief Executive	Programme of facilitated meetings for September - November through LGA	September - November 24	In Progress
P501	ELT and Cabinet time to understand roles, backgrounds, preferences and ways of working	Chief Executive	Programme of facilitated meetings for September - November through LGA	September - November 24	In Progress
P502	Organise externally facilitated informal events for ELT and Cabinet	Chief Executive	Programme of facilitated meetings for September - November through LGA	September - November 24	In Progress
P600	Leverage the skills and goodwill of partners.	Assistant Chief Executive	Agree priorities first and then identify stakeholders who can help achieve them.	To be considered as part of Service Planning for 2025/26	Underway
P601	Consider more collaborative approach	Assistant Chief Executive	Agree priorities first and then identify	To be considered as part of	Underway

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ID #	Summary Action	Owner	Action Update - progress to date	Next milestone	Status
	to use of external funding		stakeholders who can help achieve them and maximise opportunities.	relevant Service Planning for 2025/26	
P602	Explore meanwhile use of boarded sites	Executive Director - Place	Considered as part of redevelopment opportunities where feasible.		Completed
P603	Consider establishing Place Board(s) with interested partners	Executive Director - Place	Initial discussions with HCC underway	Next meeting – October 24	In Progress
P604	Develop place based vision with partners	Executive Director - Place	Agree priorities first and then identify stakeholders who can help achieve them.	Council Vision engagement – Summer 25	Not Started
P605	Consider a State of Borough conference	Assistant Chief Executive	Agree priorities first and then identify stakeholders who can help achieve them.	Council Vision engagement – Summer 25	Not Started
P606	Leverage businesses to support Farnborough regeneration	Head of Regeneration		To consider as part of revised regeneration plan	In Progress
P700	Review the organisational structure in line with the administration's new priorities and introduce appropriate policies to shape the approach to flexible working.	Chief Executive	External review commissioned by CX	January 2025	In Progress
P701	Review structures and capabilities in support of new Council Plan and Financial Recovery Plan	Chief Executive			Duplicate of P700

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ID #	Summary Action	Owner	Action Update - progress to date	Next milestone	Status
P702	Review Cabinet portfolios and service structures to reduce overlap	Chief Executive			Duplicate of P700
P703	Review hybrid working arrangements	Executive Director - Place	Policy and Framework to be reviewed in light of recent legislative changes Evidence review/research to identify any changes that may enhance existing approach Promotion of Flexible Working Framework with managers	December 2024	Planned
P704	Develop an Intranet that enables digital engagement and connections	Assistant Chief Executive	Draft Project Terms of Reference for approval	Spring 2025	Planned
P705	Review Health and Wellbeing Survey responses and consider expanding impact on Teams as well as individuals (Team 'wellbeing')	Executive Director - Place	To be included in next Health and Wellbeing Survey in 2025.	September 2025	Planned
P800	Alongside any review of structure, reconsider your capacity and capabilities, including the approach to transformation.	Chief Executive	Subject to revised priorities and structure proposals	Spring 25	Not Started
P801	Redesign transformation approach to enable more empowered service improvement with central support and facilitation, with links to HR and OD,	Assistant Chief Executive	Subject to revised priorities and structure proposals	Spring 25	Not Started

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ID #	Summary Action	Owner	Action Update - progress to date	Next milestone	Status
P802	Prioritise and invest in corporate learning, development, wellbeing and health	Executive Director - Place	Needs will be assessed after development reviews (end Sept) Funding to be considered as part of budget planning process. Linked to P700 and P703.	November 24	Planned
P900	Review and refresh the approach to internal communication	Executive Director - Place	To be considered following management structure review	Spring 25	Not Started
P1000	Do more to shout about your successes and recognise your achievements.	Assistant Chief Executive	To be considered as part of a Communications Strategy and associated Communications Plan	Summer 25	Not Started
P1001	Organise Staff Awards	Executive Director - Place	To be considered in relevant Service Plans for 2025/26	Summer 25	Not Started
P1002	Start communications-led publicity of achievements	Assistant Chief Executive	To be considered as part of a Communications Strategy and associated Communications Plan	Summer 25	Not Started
P1003	Develop informal and unstructured approaches to celebrating achievements	Executive Director - Place	To be taken forward as business as usual	Summer 25	Completed
C007a	Review S151 position in org structure	Chief Executive	There is already a clear and direct relationship between the S151 and CX through the Executive Leadership Team. There are regular meetings in the	To be considered as part of structure review.	In Progress Transferred from CIPFA Action Plan

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ID #	Summary Action	Owner	Action Update - progress to date	Next milestone	Status
			diary for the CX with the S151 Officer.		
C007b	Governance - Reporting arrangements	Chief Executive	CX to consider whether a statutory officers meeting is required and if so what issues it would consider outside of the current arrangements	To be considered as part of structure review.	In progress Transferred from CIPFA Action Plan
C008	Review and update Council Plan	Assistant Chief Executive			Transferred from CIPFA Action Plan Duplicate of P200
C016	Review Corporate Risk Management processes	Assistant Chief Executive	Risk management policy review to commence in November 2024	November 24	Planned Transferred from CIPFA Action Plan
C026	Review CQ and L&CH Plans	Executive Director - Place			Transferred from CIPFA Action Plan Duplicate of P106
C029	Determine future of RDP	Chief Executive	Once the situation is clearer on RHL / RDP this will be reviewed and discussed with the Leader and changes made moving forward.		Not Started Transferred from CIPFA Action Plan
C030	Review and update TOR for Overview and Scrutiny Committee	Chief Executive			Transferred from CIPFA Action Plan Duplicate of P301

Annex 2: Corporate Peer Challenge Action Plan

ID #	Summary Action	Owner	Action Update - progress to date	Next milestone	Status
C031	Clarify Hierarchy of Capital related working groups/boards	Executive Director - Place	Not necessarily agreed but will need to review anyway as part of changed Regeneration/Capital Programme	Spring 25	Planned Transferred from CIPFA Action Plan
C032	Review members of RHL and RDP	Chief Executive	Once the situation is clearer on RHL / RDP this will be reviewed and discussed with the Leader and changes made moving forward.		Not Started Transferred from CIPFA Action Plan
C033	Review member governance	Chief Executive			Transferred from CIPFA Action Plan Duplicate of P300

CABINET**COUNCILLOR GARETH WILLIAMS
LEADER AND FINANCE PORTFOLIO HOLDER****15 OCTOBER 2024****KEY DECISION? NO****REPORT NO. CEX2406****FINANCIAL RECOVERY PLAN****SUMMARY AND RECOMMENDATIONS:**

The Council's Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) approved on 22nd February 2024 presented a cumulative £19.152 million budget deficit over 4 years to 2027-28 before mitigation through a savings programme.

A high-level plan to address the deficit was developed (The Financial Resilience Plan) and the Chartered Institute of Public Finance Accountants (CIPFA) were appointed to review and provide assurance on the plan.

In July 2024, Cabinet and Council considered the Medium-Term Finance Strategy (MTFS) Update and 2023-23 Budget Outturn (Report No FIN 2411). That report included the CIPFA report which endorsed the approach being taken and encouraged the Council to move forward at pace with delivery of a detailed plan.

A detailed Financial Recovery Plan has therefore been developed and includes delivery of revenue savings and capital receipts as well as improving capability and capacity within the Finance function.

Implementation of the Financial Recovery Plan will address the issues and recommendations set out in the CIPFA Financial Resilience Report and also recommendations related to the Council's financial position raised in the Corporate Peer Challenge.

The Council's Overview and Scrutiny Committee considered the CIPFA report at its meeting on 12 September. Matters raised at this meeting are set out in section 3.19 of this report for consideration by Cabinet.

A Cabinet Working Group, the Financial Recovery Working Group, has been established to provide oversight on the delivery of the plan. Comments from the meeting of the Group held on 8 October 2024 will be reported to Cabinet at the meeting.

This report invites Cabinet to consider matters raised by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee and Financial Recovery Working Group and agree the Recovery Plan.

Recommended that Cabinet;

- 1) Consider the matters raised by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee set out in section 3.19 of this report

- 2) Consider any comments on the plan from the meeting of the Financial Recovery Working Group held on 8 October 2024
- 3) Approve the Financial Recovery Plan actions as set out in Annex 2 (Revenue) and Exempt Annex 3 (Capital)
- 4) Note the actions set out and completed in the Finance Service capacity and capability workstream (Annex 1, p2 onwards)
- 5) Note progress made on delivery of actions to date.

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1. The Council has a statutory obligation to set and maintain a balanced budget. In February, the Council identified a significant challenge to its future financial sustainability (as set out at the February 2024 Budget Council) and without mitigation the council would not be in a position to set a balanced budget in 2026-27.
- 1.2. A Financial Resilience Plan was agreed at February Council to address this and put the Council on a financially sustainable footing over the medium term. An independent review of the Financial Resilience Plan was completed by the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accounting (CIPFA), who concluded that the approach in the Financial Resilience Plan was robust, but that a more detailed plan needed to be completed as soon as possible and then delivered at pace. Subsequently, a Financial Recovery Plan has been developed for approval by Cabinet.

2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1. The Council's Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) approved on 22nd February 2024 presented a cumulative £19.152 million budget deficit over 4 years to 2027-28 before mitigation through a savings programme.
- 2.2. A Financial Resilience Plan was outlined in the February 2024 report to address the deficit challenge and support a savings programme.
- 2.3. In July 2024, Cabinet and Council considered the MTFS Update and 2023-23 Budget Outturn (Report No FIN 2411). The report acknowledged that whilst progress has been made within the Financial Resilience Plan, some external factors have become more challenging. The savings requirement set out in the MTFS report was as follows;

Interest and MRP reduction	(240)	(1,558)	(2,040)	(2,040)
Services cost reduction	(500)	(1,000)	(1,500)	(2,000)
Total recurrent savings:	(740)	(2,558)	(3,540)	(4,040)
Net deficit before savings	5,149	4,393	3,920	4,131
Net deficit after savings	4,409	1,835	380	91

- 2.4. The report set out that for the Council to become financially resilient, it would require the implementation of a wide mix of cost reductions, efficiency savings and delivery of substantial capital receipts to reduce borrowing costs.
- 2.5. The July report also set out that the external reviews, conducted by Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accounting (CIPFA) in February and the Corporate Peer Challenge performed in June, indicated that the Council needed to urgently set more detailed actions to achieve financial sustainability through a new Financial Recovery Plan alongside work to improve the capacity and capability of the finance service.
- 2.6. The remainder of this report sets out the approach to the Financial Recovery Plan, identifies work already undertaken and Annex 2 and Annex 3 provide the detail of the actions to be taken relating to revenue and capital respectively.
- 2.7. A full response to the Corporate Peer Challenge is provided separately in Report CEX2405.

3. FINANCIAL RECOVERY PLAN

General

- 3.1. The actions in the Financial Recovery Plan were initially derived from the key recommendations and actions identified in the CIPFA Report. (Annex 1), the high-level Financial Resilience Plan and subsequently recommendations relating to the Council's financial position in the Corporate Peer Challenge report.
- 3.2. Specific governance arrangements and a supporting programme structure (Fig 1) for delivery of the Financial Recovery Plan has been defined and implemented with input from Executive Leadership Team.

Financial Recovery Plan - Structure

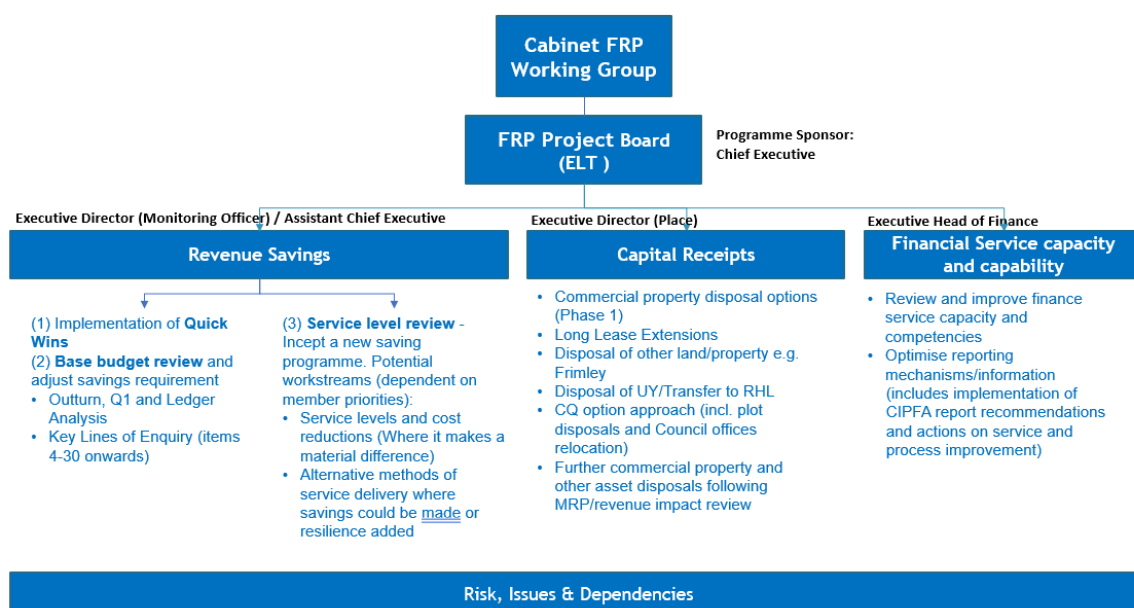


Fig 1.

- 3.3. Day to day management is provided by the Financial Recovery Plan Project Board, consisting of the Executive Leadership Team, and led by the Chief Executive. This board meet on a fortnightly basis.
- 3.4. In terms of member governance, the Financial Recovery Plan will be overseen by the cross-party Financial Recovery Cabinet Working Group who meet on a monthly basis.
- 3.5. Three separate workstreams have been established; (1) Revenue Savings, (2) Capital Receipts, and (3) Financial Service capacity and capability.
- 3.6. The Finance Service capacity and capability workstream includes the CIPFA recommendations and actions included in Annex 1, (p2 onwards). Governance for this workstream is overseen by Executive Director (Monitoring Officer) and Council Leader in his role of Portfolio holder.

Revenue savings workstream

- 3.7. The Revenue Savings workstream is in three parts. The first element is implementation of quick wins which were reported in the Quarter 1 Budget Management report. This work achieved £626,567 savings in 2024/25, exceeding the revenue savings target for the 24/25 financial year. £193,391 of the quick wins are expected to be recurring. In addition, a budget review exercise has identified further recurrent budget adjustments of £134,340.
- 3.8. This is good progress, however, further recurring budget reductions will be needed to achieve the 2025/26 MTFs revenue saving target as set out in table 1 below.

	2024-25	2025-26	2026-27	2027-28
	£	£	£	£
Cumulative Summary				
Cumulative Target Savings	- 500,000	- 1,000,000	- 1,500,000	- 2,000,000
Quick Wins	- 626,567	- 295,933	- 193,391	- 193,391
Budget Adjustments	- 134,340	- 134,340	- 134,340	- 134,340
Remaining savings to be found		- 569,727	- 1,172,269	- 1,672,269
Savings achieved beyond target	260,907			

Table 1: Revenue savings from Q1 budget report

- 3.9. The July MTFs report described several Council expenditure types that could contribute to achieving the required revenue budget reductions in future years. Around 30 lines of enquiry and associated actions have been identified as part of the Financial Recovery Plan (Annex 2). The purpose of this review is to establish a robust base budget requirement based on current service delivery arrangements.
- 3.10. The third element of the Revenue Savings Workstream is a Service level review which will form a new formal savings programme. This programme will identify options for reductions in service levels and costs across the organisation taking into account Council priorities and consideration of alternative methods of service delivery. The scale of saving required is dependent on the outcome of the work on the lines of enquiry and the consequential 're-based budget'.
- 3.11. Separately, a management review, utilising a consultant from Solace is underway. The primary aim is to ensure good alignment with new priorities in line with one recommendation from the Peer Challenge report but may also identify opportunities for reductions in management costs.

Capital receipts workstream

- 3.12. A full review of Council assets has been undertaken, with support from external consultants, to determine the optimal assets to release whilst balancing capital receipt value and ongoing revenue income. Projects have been established, where required, to ensure delivery as quickly as possible.
- 3.13. The current capital receipts target profile as set out in Report FIN 2411 is as follows:
24/25 - £5m
25/26 - £25m
26/27 - £10m
- 3.14. The proposed Council assets identified to date for disposal to support the documented capital receipt targets, anticipated asset value and estimated timescales are outlined in Annex 3. Whilst £5m of receipts is expected to be achieved as proposed in 24/25, there is not currently full certainty of delivery of £25m of capital receipts by the end of 25/26. The work identified in exempt

Annex 3 seeks to achieve this certainty as soon as practicable. In sections 3.46-3.47 of the July MTFS report, the Executive Head of Finance set out a range of sensitivities including the impact of interest rates and the impact of a reduction in the overall level of capital receipts achieved to £20m.

- 3.15. Regular monitoring is in place to provide visibility of progress on the achievement of capital receipts, but it should be recognised that land and property disposals are complex, timetables not always entirely within the Council's control and values subject to the market. Any changes to forecast disposal values and estimated delivery dates together with the revenue impacts of this will be reported to the working group and cabinet as soon as they become certain.

Financial service capacity and capability workstream

- 3.16. The Financial Service capacity and capability workstream is led by the Executive Head of Finance and aims to strengthen capacity and capability in respect of the Finance function. Output from the CIPFA report and Corporate Peer Review has shaped the activity to be undertaken. This includes:

- Understanding latest regulations on capital flexibilities and impact to RBC
- Revision of a regular timetable for financial reporting and budget setting and review.
- Review of treasury operations.
- Review of capital planning methodology.
- Maintenance and improvement of suitable expenditure controls into the medium term.
- Management of the Council's balance sheet.
- Review of team structure and capacity
- Review of the Council's management of insurance
- Review of reserves to improve governance and transparency for drawdown of earmarked reserves
- Complete audit of Statement of Accounts for 2020/21, 2021/22 and 2022/23.

- 3.17. Annex 1 provides an update on progress made to date and timescales for further activity to be completed.

Overview and Scrutiny Committee

- 3.18. Members from Overview and Scrutiny Committee considered the CIPFA report at their meeting on 12 September. That committee endorsed the recommendations as set out in the CIPFA report and have advised that all should be adopted without any undue delay. The Committee further proposed three other areas for consideration:

- (1) That the work of the Financial Recovery Working Group be accelerated to reflect the urgency of the financial position facing the Council.

- (2) Pre-scrutiny be used to consider any future governance matters in a timely manner to avoid any further delays in improving the process of governance.
- (3) Serious consideration be given to appointing an independent person (possibly from CIPFA or similar independent public financial body) to the Financial Recovery Working Group to provide external independence and challenge.

3.19. Cabinet are invited to consider these proposals.

Other consultation

- 3.20. The Finance Working Group last met on 8th October to consider the Financial Working Plan, and their comments will be reported to the meeting.
- 3.21. Corporate Governance, Audit and Standards Committee have noted that the governance matters raised in the CIPFA report and Peer Challenge will be addressed through the Financial Recovery Plan arrangements and/or the proposed review of Governance by the Centre for Governance and Scrutiny

Alternative Options

- 3.22. The Council has a legal obligation to produce a balanced budget and therefore there is not a 'Do Nothing' option. The Council must achieve its Revenue and Capital receipt targets, through implementation of the Financial Recovery Plan.

4. IMPLICATIONS

Risks

- 4.1. Strategic and corporate risks associated with the delivery of the financial recovery plan are included in the council risk register and reported quarterly to cabinet.
- 4.2. The delivery of and timescales for capital receipts for the identified assets is dependent on third party actions and decisions, which are often outside of the Councils direct control.
- 4.3. If interest rates do not fall in line with MTFS projections, the Revenue and Capital Receipt targets will need to be reviewed accordingly. Sensitivity analysis was provided to Cabinet in July and contingency plans to mitigate against this scenario are being considered.
- 4.4. The delivery of some revenue savings will require changes and potentially reductions to services. This may consequently impact residents,

Legal Implications

- 4.5. The Local Government Act 1972 (Section 151) states that “every local authority shall make arrangements for the proper administration of their financial affairs.....” Councillors are responsible for the financial control and decision making at their council. Section 113 of the Local Government Finance Act 1988 requires that an officer of the Council is a qualified member of one of the accountancy institutes. Every council designates a specific officer as their responsible financial officer (the Council’s section 151 officer). This person is central in providing effective financial advice to councillors and officers; organising and maintaining a sound system of financial governance and control; and ensuring that the council follows its legal duties in financial matters. Every council must have a balanced and robust budget for the forthcoming financial year, and a “medium term financial strategy (MTFS”) and plan.

Financial Implications

- 4.6. Successful delivery of all aspects of the Financial Recovery Plan is key in addressing the financial challenges facing the Council. Delivery of the plan will support savings to ensure balanced General Fund budgets in coming years and for the sustainability of the Council's financial position.

Timescales

Set out in Annex 4 – Budget Setting Timetable

Resource Implications

- 4.7. In addition to in house resources, interim and specialist roles may also be required to support some of the actions.

Equalities Impact Implications

- 4.8. There are no direct equality impacts as a result of agreeing the Financial Recovery plan. However, potential reductions to services may have direct impacts and where appropriate, equality impact assessments will be undertaken.

Other

- 4.9. The delivery of the plan is a corporate priority, and all services will need to contribute.

5. CONCLUSIONS

- 5.1 The council has identified a significant challenge to its future financial stability as set out at the February 2024 Budget Council. Approval and subsequent implementation of the proposed Financial Recovery Plan is essential to enabling delivery of the required cost reductions, efficiency savings and capital receipts to mitigate the deficit.

- 5.2 Implementation of the Financial Recovery Plan addresses issues raised in the CIPFA Financial Resilience Report and Corporate Peer Challenge.

LIST OF APPENDICES/ANNEXES:

Annex 1: Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accounting (CIPFA) Report

Annex 2: Revenue savings lines of enquiry

Exempt Annex 3: Capital receipts assets, anticipated values, and timescales

BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS:

Budget Council agenda 22nd February 2024: including the MTFS and Capital Strategy Report 2024-25 TO 2027-28 MEDIUM TERM FINANCE STRATEGY UPDATE AND 2023- 24 BUDGET OUTTURN

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Annex 1: Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accounting (CIPFA) Report

CIPFA Key Recommendations – Financial Recovery Plan

HL Recommendation	Update	Owner	Target Date	Status
Define and Implement FRP Action Plan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Latest July MTFS set out achievable capital receipt position and implications for revenue. Plan to be presented to Cabinet on 15th Oct 	Chief Executive	Oct 24 (Cabinet)	In Progress – on track
Define and implement Governance procedures for FRP (Member oversight etc)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> FRP Working group established as a result of Cabinet Meeting on the 23rd July 2024. ELT to continue with Financial Recovery Project meetings on a 2-weekly basis with project management support. 	Executive Director (Monitoring Officer)	Sept 24	Complete
Include Financial Implications Section in Cabinet Reports	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Template updated to make section clearer 	Chief Executive	July 24	Complete
Review alternative UY Options for disposal of 82 units / Review and sign off of RHL Business Plan (RHL transfer principles including - RHL interest and MRP repayment)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Knight Frank has been commissioned to review the current proposals. Alternative sale options being explored. 	Chief Executive	Oct 24	In Progress – on track
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> RHL in process of updating business plan. Timescales revised due to delay in practical completion of UY 	Chief Executive	Nov 24	In Progress – on track
Define plan for identifying and implementing £40m capital receipts - at asset level	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Proposed alternative action which is to define realistic plan to deliver maximum value of capital receipts. 	Executive Director (Place)	Oct 24	In Progress – on track
Review of Asset Disposal Skills within RBC - Capacity and Experience	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> LSH and JLL currently supporting Frimley disposal. Need for external resources for other disposals will be considered on a project-by-project basis and procured accordingly. 	Executive Director (Place)	Ongoing	Complete

Annex 1: Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accounting (CIPFA) Report

CIPFA Key Recommendations – Finance Function

HL Recommendation	Update	Owner	Target Date	Status
Understand latest regulations on capital flexibilities and impact to RBC	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Dependent on Government and will require the delivery of some capital receipts Will need a review of current savings strategy to divert capital receipts to the application of temporary revenue savings. 	Executive Director (Monitoring Officer)	TBC	Not Started
Review Finance team structure & capacity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Draft Paper due to be considered by ELT & Head of Paid Service Two qualified accountant posts have been job evaluated, to be funded from within existing budget, with potential to release base budget immediately and further savings over the MTFS period. 	Executive Head of Finance	Nov 24	In Progress – on track
Review of treasury operations & Skills	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Arlingclose providing TM support. Regular meetings in place 	Executive Head of Finance	Ongoing	Complete
Revised MTFS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Presented to council in July, next update due in December 	Executive Head of Finance	Dec 24	In Progress – on track
Review of capital (and other project) business case approval methodology	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Needs to be "project planning" as it also includes revenue projects. Focus is on treasury 5 cases model and capturing all resource implications and risks, including Project initiation, outline and full business case process. Not an urgent priority 	Executive Head of Finance	Mar 2025	Not Started
Maintenance and improvement of suitable expenditure controls into the medium term	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Action to be considered by the Cabinet working group depending on the revenue forecast to end of September. 	Executive Head of Finance	Dec 25	Not Started

Annex 1: Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accounting (CIPFA) Report

HL Recommendation	Update	Owner	Target Date	Status
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Requires financial analysis by an experienced accountant 			
Management of the Council's balance sheet	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Requires approval of new qualified accountant post and successful recruitment. Interim experienced accountant will be required to avoid delay 	Executive Head of Finance	Jan 25	Not Started
Update presentation of financial information to improve clarity and consistency of financial reporting. Specifically, Improvements in the quality of working papers, documents, and reconciliations through establishment of new standards for these materials	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Work commenced. Finance Team discussed Q1 24/5 reporting with ELT and is revising the way information is presented. Audit working papers being reviewed by Ernst Young (external auditors). Lines of enquiry completion specifically on the planned maintenance, and Commercial property income as key risks. 	Executive Head of Finance	Dec 24 (Audit Completion)	In Progress – on track

CIPFA Other Suggested Actions – Finance Function

HL Action	Update	Owner	Target Date	Status
Update Budget reporting format (Net)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Presentational change in General Fund Budget to show drawdown of reserves as last item on the I+E schedule – it is a cosmetic adjustment. 	Executive Head of Finance	Feb 25 (Budget Council)	Not Started
Undertake detailed reserves review. Review and improve governance and transparency for drawdown of earmarked reserves	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Report Fin 2413 that will be presented to Cabinet in Sept 24 as Q1 reporting carries a specific section on current use of earmarked reserves and seeks approval to all movements as part of the recommendations - this 	Executive Head of Finance	Jul 24	Complete

Annex 1: Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accounting (CIPFA) Report

HL Action	Update	Owner	Target Date	Status
	will be adopted as the default way that this is presented and governed			
Complete audit of Statement of Accounts for 2020/21, 2021/22 and 2022/23 <i>– No longer relevant 2023/24 audited accounts are in play – key issue is to gain certainty on useable reserves available from 1st April 2023, i.e. current financial year.</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ernst Young - Council's Auditors reported to CGAS on 31st July to present their provisional audit planning report for the accounts period ended on 31st March 24. The timeline for completion of this work was noted as Jan 25. The Government have recently reintroduced legislation to deal with the outstanding backlogged audits - which will assist in closing down previous accounts prior to 23/24 	Executive Director (Monitoring Officer)/ Executive Head of Finance	Feb 2025 (CGAS sign off of 2023/24 audited account)	In Progress – on track
Revision of a regular timetable for financial reporting and budget setting and review	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Budget/MTFS will be updated at each Full Council meeting. No longer doing one off annual budget setting. Changes will be approved as we go. 	Executive Head of Finance	Ongoing	Complete

Annex 2: Financial Recovery Plan - Revenue savings lines of enquiry

Prioritised Lines of Enquiry

#	Lines of Enquiry	Latest position	Owner	Target Date	£ - Range	Status
5	Determine Vacancy margin budget	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To be applied in December MTFS Update Agree vacancy margin governance 	Executive Head of Finance Corporate Manager – People	Dec 24	Up to £400k	In Progress – on track
11	Review Reactive Property Maintenance costs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Paper in draft To be included in December MTFS update 	Executive Head of Property and Growth	Sep 24	£100k	In Progress – on track
12	Review Planned Property Maintenance schedule	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Paper in draft To be included in December MTFS update 	Executive Head of Property and Growth	Sep 24		In Progress – on track
31	Review forecast pay rise position	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Budgeted for 5% increase. The National Employers offered a pay increase, which is waiting for Union/employer agreement. Calculated potential saving of employer proposal 	Service Manager - Finance	TBC	Up to £200k	In progress – on track
15	Review and challenge other costs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Preparing schedule based on financial analysis work Options to be presented to ELT and Cabinet for strategic review 	Service Manager - Finance Service Manager – Policy, Strategy, and Transformation	Nov 24	TBC	In Progress – on track
18	Review fees and charges – potential to increase	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Preparing a discretionary fee schedule with estimated RPI (3.5%), 5% increase, 10% increase and increase to neighbour average. 	Service Manager – Policy, Strategy, and Transformation	Nov 24	£250k - £500k	In progress – on track

Annex 2: Financial Recovery Plan - Revenue savings lines of enquiry

Other lines of enquiry

#	Lines of Enquiry	Latest Position	Owner	Target Date	£ - Range	Status
4	Review one off and grant funded posts which are not in MTFS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Internal Finance BAU double check Service Managers review earmarked reserves, grants, and establishment list to identify opportunities for applying grant funding to existing posts 	Service Manager - Finance	Oct 24	TBC	Planned – on track
6	Confirm previous budget saving initiatives applied to budget	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Confirmed that all budget saving initiatives have been applied to budget, other than those corrections made as part of Feb 24 Budget Discounted proposals shared with Cabinet. 	Service Manager - Finance Service Manager – Policy, Strategy, and Transformation	Oct 24	Nil	Complete
7	Identify revenue impact of capital projects	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Current year review 	Service Manager - Finance	Oct 24	TBC	Planned – on track
8	Compile list of revenue projects & consider impact	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To be considered as part of service planning process 	N/A	N/A	N/A	Closed
9	Challenge council tax and business rates rateable values	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reconcile budget and actuals Schedule of rateable properties for review May need agent for actual challenge. 	Service Manager - Finance	Mar 25	TBC	In Progress – on track
10	Align utilities costs and budgets	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Schedule of properties' utilities budget, actual spend, difference and recharges Make budget adjustments taking account of above information. Consider centralised budgets 	Service Manager - Estates Service Manager - Finance	Oct 24	TBC	In Progress – on track
13	Compile IT contracts inflation schedule	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Business Analyst review underway 	Service Manager – Policy, Strategy,	Oct 24	TBC	Planned – on track

Annex 2: Financial Recovery Plan - Revenue savings lines of enquiry

#	Lines of Enquiry	Latest Position	Owner	Target Date	£ - Range	Status
			and Transformation			
14	Review software requirements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No Action – undertaken previously 	N/A	N/A	N/A	On Hold
16	Reduce grounds maintenance activity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No Action – dependent on member priorities, contract risk 	N/A	N/A	N/A	Closed
17	Review Property service charges	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Consideration being given to how this can be brought forward. 	Service Manager - Estates Service Manager - Finance	Jun 25	TBC	In progress – on track
19	Align property income to budget, identify risks, and set up income smoothing reserve	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Updated and reviewed data and assumptions Analysis underway 	Service Manager - Estates	Oct 24	TBC	In progress – on track
20	Confirm trading accounts cover non-direct costs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Propose to remain on hold until April due to insufficient finance capacity 	Service Manager – Policy, Strategy, and Transformation	Apr 25	N/A	On Hold
21	Maximise SANG/S106 drawdown	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> S106/SANG Paper under review 	Executive Head of Property and Growth Executive Head of Finance	Oct 24	TBC	In progress – on track
22	Review spend covered by external grants	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Agree principles and processes for future grant applications 	Assistant Chief Exec	Nov 24	N/A	In progress – on track
23	Review debtor balances	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Analysis of Sales Ledger invoices for payment upfront Review debtor balances and process Clear down unrecoverable balances 	Service Manager - Finance	Feb 25	N/A	In Progress – on track
24	Review Farnborough International loan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reviewed – No further action – loan as per existing conditions 	Executive Director (Monitoring Officer) Executive Head of Finance	Sep 24	TBC	Closed

Annex 2: Financial Recovery Plan - Revenue savings lines of enquiry

#	Lines of Enquiry	Latest Position	Owner	Target Date	£ - Range	Status
25	Review planned spend from earmarked reserves	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Schedule of Earmarked Reserves Service Accountant check and challenge 	Service Manager - Finance	Oct 24	TBC	Planned – on track
26	Review opportunity for Community assets disposal	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No action – process in place 	N/A	N/A	N/A	On Hold
27	Determine Southwood SANG repayment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> S106/SANG Paper under review 	Executive Head of Property and Growth Executive Head of Finance	Oct 24	£1m Capital receipt	In Progress – on track
28	Review opportunity to offer trading licences	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No action – small income 	N/A	N/A	N/A	On Hold
29	Analyse Community asset costs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review rent relief budget 	Executive Director (Monitoring Officer) Executive Head of Property and Growth Assistant Chief Executive	Oct 24	Up to £50k	Planned – on track
30	Review interim contractor spend	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Finance review of findings to determine budget implications 	Service Manager – Finance Service Manager – Policy, Strategy, and Transformation	Nov 24	TBC	In progress – on track

By virtue of paragraph(s) 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A
of the Local Government Act 1972.

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Annex 4: Financial Recovery Plan – Budget Setting Timetable

Budget Strategy

- The 2024/25 budget adopted at Council in February 2024 is the base budget for the MTFS review.
- The 2024/25 MTFS review and forward budgets will be informed by issues and changes as they arise in year, budget and MTFS will be adjusted, and decisions sought as appropriate at the first available cabinet & full council.

Key
Q2 monitoring & MTFS update
Q3 monitoring
TM strategy & Capital Strategy
Budget & MTFS

Month	Date	Deadline	Key Issues
October	31/10/2024	ELT - report deadline - MTFS update & Q2 & Treasury Management Performance	2024/25 Budget Management <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Update service forecasts to year end i.e. pay, non-pay & income performance • Borrowing assumptions & Treasury Management i.e. interest receipts and paid • Impact of Pooled Funds - UBS & CCLA divestment • Revenue Impact of latest position on Union Yard, Commercial Property & RHL interest • Capital programme forecasts to year end • Savings achieved to date - current & non-recurrent • Financial Risk Update • Reserves Position MTFS Update <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recurrent service variances at Q2 • Growth anticipated to impact 2025/26 and onwards i.e. Serco, Leisure Contract & Commercial Property • Inflation Assumptions • Borrowing assumptions & Treasury Management i.e. interest receipts and paid • Revenue Impact of latest position on Union Yard, Commercial Property & RHL interest • Identified Savings Impact on MTFS • FRP: Lines of Enquiry - anticipated outcome where timing and value can be quantified • Revised savings targets to bring the MTFS back into financial sustainability without the use of reserves • Reserves Forecast • Chancellor's budget: summary and analysis.
November	05/11/2024	ELT - MTFS update & Q2	ELT to review, comment & agree strategy & numbers.
	07/11/2024	Cabinet - report deadline - MTFS update & Q2	Finance to update report to reflect ELT feedback, and latest treasury management information
	26/11/2024	Cabinet - MTFS update & Q2 & TM	
	27/11/2024	Treasury Management update	Half year report and forward look at key assumptions for 2025-26 Treasury Strategy

Annex 4: Financial Recovery Plan – Budget Setting Timetable

Month	Date	Deadline	Key Issues
December	TBC	LG finance settlement	Date unknown - dependant on government announcements. Detail will be shared once know
	05/12/2024	Council - MTFS update & Q2	
	12/12/2024	ELT - report deadline - Q3 & MTFS update	2024/25 Budget Management <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Update service forecasts to year end i.e. pay, non-pay & income performance Borrowing assumptions & Treasury Management i.e. interest receipts and paid Capital programme forecasts to year end Savings achieved to date - current & non-recurrent Financial Risk Update Reserves Position MTFS Update <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Recurrent service variances at Q3 Inflation Assumptions - contractual, pay & fees and charges Borrowing assumptions & Treasury Management i.e. interest receipts and paid Identified Savings Impact on MTFS FRP: Lines of Enquiry - anticipated outcome where timing and value can be quantified Revised savings targets to bring the MTFS back into financial sustainability without the use of reserves Reserves Forecast
	17/12/2024	ELT - Q3 & MTFS update	ELT to review, comment & agree strategy & numbers
	19/12/2024	Cabinet - report deadline - Q3 & MTFS update	Finance to update report to reflect ELT feedback, and latest treasury management information
January	09/01/2025	ELT - report deadline - Budget & MTFS	Budget & MTFS <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Confirm base budget adjustments based on service variations Confirm establishment Confirm Inflation assumptions Confirm Borrowing assumptions Confirm Government Funding Settlement including Council Tax Confirm Savings achieved to be built into base budget Reserves Forecast - informed by progress on 2023/24 External Audit implications
	16/01/2025	Cabinet - report deadline - Budget & MTFS	
	20/01/2025	CGAS - report deadline - TM Strategy & Capital Strategy, Q3 TM performance	
	14/01/2025	ELT - Budget & MTFS	

Annex 4: Financial Recovery Plan – Budget Setting Timetable

Month	Date	Deadline	Key Issues
	14/01/2025	Cabinet - Q3 & MTFS update	
	29/01/2025	CGAS meeting - TM strategy & Capital Strategy	
February	04/02/2025	Cabinet - Budget & MTFS & TM Strategy	
	20/02/2025	Council Meeting - Budget & MTFS & TM Strategy	

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CABINET

COUNCILLOR SOPHIE PORTER
DEPUTY LEADER AND COMMUNITY AND
RESIDENTS PORTFOLIO HOLDER

15 OCTOBER 2024

KEY DECISION? NO

REPORT NO. ACE2411

PUBLIC SECTOR EQUALITY DUTY

SUMMARY AND RECOMMENDATIONS:

The Council has statutory duties under the Equality Act 2010 and is required to comply with these. In order to achieve this, it is recommended that Cabinet:

- Approve the two new equality objectives set out in section 3.2.
- Agree to publish an annual equality report and other information as described in sections 3.3 – 3.6.

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1. This report sets out the Council's statutory duties under the Equality Act 2010, its compliance with those duties, and proposes action to ensure compliance.

2. BACKGROUND

Public Sector Equality Duty

- 2.1. The Council has a duty under the [Equality Act 2010](#) to give due regard to the need to:
- put an end to unlawful behaviour that is banned by the Equality Act 2010, including discrimination, harassment and victimisation.
 - advance equal opportunities between people who have a protected characteristic and those who do not.
 - foster good relations between people who have a protected characteristic and those who do not.
- 2.2. The Council must publish:
- equality information every year
 - gender pay gap information every year
 - one or more equality objectives every four years

Equality Peer Challenge

- 2.3. In 2021, the Council commissioned the Local Government Association to conduct an [Equality Peer Challenge](#).
- 2.4. The report highlighted a number of strengths, including the exemplary long-standing work with the Nepali community. However, it also noted that there was an inconsistent approach to equality impact assessments, limited training, and more work to do to achieve a representative workforce.
- 2.5. In recent years, the Council has:
 - Worked to improve the accessibility of the Council website.
 - Run several staff awareness sessions in topics including dementia, neurodiversity, and guiding a blind or partially sighted person.
 - Increased the number of reminders encouraging staff to update their personal records to be able to identify and remove any barriers in our working practices.
 - Employed Nepali speaking customer service advisors to improve access to Council services for this community.
 - Agreed and implemented a [cultural strategy](#) that aims to celebrate and engage the borough's diverse communities.
 - Supported the development of Rushmoor Accessibility Action Group (RAAG), an independent group that aims to develop awareness of inclusion, accessibility, and safety for people with mixed abilities, set key targets around improving access in Rushmoor, and highlight the importance and value of inclusivity.
 - Rolled out mandatory staff training on the importance of equality, diversity, and inclusion.

Inequalities and protected characteristics

- 2.6. [The King's Fund](#), the [National Institute for Health and Care Excellence](#) and the [Office for Health Improvement and Disparities](#) have proven a link between health inequality and having a protected characteristic.
- 2.7. The [Ministry of Housing, Communities, and Local Government](#) have published data showing a link between living in deprived neighbourhoods and ethnicity.
- 2.8. The Council's [Supporting Communities Strategy](#) includes priority themes around economic hardship and physical and mental health. The outcomes from this strategy should contribute towards advancing equal opportunities between people who have a protected characteristic and those who do not.

3. DETAILS OF THE PROPOSAL

General

- 3.1. It is proposed that the Council takes action to ensure compliance with the Equality Act.
- 3.2. As part of the Equality Act 2010 the Council must prepare and publish one or more equality objectives at least every four years in order to meet the general equality duty. In order to ensure compliance with this requirement, Cabinet is asked to approve two new equality objectives, as follows:
 - 3.2.1. To promote the use of equality impact assessments as part of the Council's decision making, policy making, procurement, and service design to ensure inclusivity, accessibility, equal opportunities, and good relations.
 - 3.2.2. To tackle the effects of poverty and deprivation, and to have a positive impact on people's daily lives through delivery of Supporting Communities Strategy projects.
- 3.3. It is proposed that the Council publish an equality report each year to fulfil its duty under the Equality Act to publish equality information.
- 3.4. The report will demonstrate how the Council:
 - is performing in the area of equality.
 - makes decisions with due regard for the Equality Act.
 - has complied with the general duty.
 - can be held to account for equality actions.
- 3.5. This report will draw on the previous year's equality impact assessments.
- 3.6. The Council's equality objectives, equality impact assessments, and equality reports will be published on the Council's website.

Alternative Options

- 3.7. Taking no action would mean the Council would be non-compliant with the Equality Act and risks enforcement action from the Equality and Human Rights Commission.
- 3.8. Cabinet could choose to be more ambitious with its equality objective(s). Given the work already required to meet the Council's statutory obligations under the Equality Act, the Cabinet could consider more ambitious equality objective(s) for the next review in four years.
- 3.9. Cabinet could choose to [voluntarily adopt the socio-economic duty under Section 1 of the Equality Act 2010.](#) Given the work already required to meet

the Council's statutory obligations under the Equality Act, it is proposed that compliance is achieved first. Cabinet could consider voluntary adoption at a future date.

Consultation

3.10. This report has been prepared in collaboration with these service teams:

- Policy, Strategy, and Transformation
- People
- Communications
- Community and Partnerships
- Economy and Growth
- Customer Services

3.11. The report is informed by the LGA Equalities Peer Review report of 2021 which included input from a range of stakeholders including frontline staff, managers, Members, third sector and other partners as well as community representatives.

4. IMPLICATIONS (of proposed course of action)

Risks

4.1. The proposed course of action will reduce the legal and reputational risk of non-compliance with the Equality Act.

Legal Implications

4.2. The Council has a duty under sections 149 to 157 of the Equality Act 2010 to have due regard to equality considerations when exercising its functions, like making decisions, delivering programmes and running services.

4.3. The Council should consider how its functions will affect people with different protected characteristics.

4.4. The duty supports good decision-making and should be applied in a proportionate way depending on the circumstances of the case and seriousness of the potential equality impacts.

Financial Implications

4.5. There are no direct costs of the proposals within this report, however there will be internal resource requirements.

4.6. Not complying with the requirements of the Equality Act may have financial risk regarding any enforcement action the Equality & Human Rights Commission may take if the Council is found to be non-compliant with legislative requirements.

Resource Implications

- 4.4 Equality Impact Assessments may increase the work required to take reports to decision making committees. This will be partially mitigated by taking a proportionate and reasonable approach to assessment. This will ensure that only those decisions with significant equalities impacts will be subject to the most time-consuming full assessment.

Equalities Impact Implications

- 4.5 The proposed course of action will have a positive impact on people with protected characteristics by making it more likely that their interests are promoted in Council decision making, policies, procurement, services, and the recruitment, promotion, and performance management of employees.

5 CONCLUSIONS

- 5.1 This report sets out the Council's statutory duties under the Equality Act 2010, its compliance with those duties, and proposes action to ensure compliance.
- 5.2 The Equality Act provides a legal framework to protect the rights of individuals and advance equality of opportunity for all. By complying with the Equality Act, the Council can improve how it makes decisions, develops policies, procures goods and services, designs services, and recruit, develop and retain employees. It reduces the legal, reputational and financial risk of enforcement action arising from non-compliance.
- 5.3 The Borough has known health inequalities and areas of deprivation. Meeting the Public Sector Equality Duty and considering equality, diversity, and inclusion will contribute towards reducing these issues.

LIST OF APPENDICES/ANNEXES:

None

BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS:

None

CONTACT DETAILS:

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CABINET

COUNCILLOR KEITH DIBBLE
DEVELOPMENT AND ECONOMIC GROWTH
PORTFOLIO HOLDER

15 October 2024

KEY DECISION? NO

REPORT NO. PG2427

CONSERVATION AREA APPRAISALS AND MANAGEMENT PLANS**SUMMARY AND RECOMMENDATIONS:**

This report sets out the background to the review of the Aldershot West Conservation Area and proposed amendments to the boundary as a result of public consultation. It seeks approval to consult upon and, if there are no substantive changes, adopt a revised Appraisal and Management Plan.

This report also sets out the background to the reviews of the Farnborough Street Conservation Area and South Farnborough Conservation Area and seeks approval to adopt the appraisal and management plans, which have been amended as a result of public consultation.

This report seeks Cabinet's approval to:

- a. agree to reconsult on the revised appraisal and management plan for Aldershot West Conservation Area (Appendix 1), and thereafter delegate authority to the Executive Head of Property and Growth (in consultation with the Portfolio Holder) to make any necessary final amendments to the appraisal and management plan that are not substantive in the light of consultee comments received before it is finally adopted;
- b. adopt the Farnborough Street Conservation Area appraisal and management plan (Appendix 2) and delegate authority the Executive Head of Property and Growth (in consultation with the Portfolio Holder) to make any necessary minor amendments prior to publication;
- c. adopt the South Farnborough Conservation Area appraisal and management plan (Appendix 3) and delegate authority the Executive Head of Property and Growth (in consultation with the Portfolio Holder) to make any necessary minor amendments prior to publication.

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1. The Planning team has been reviewing the borough's conservation areas over the last few years. In previous rounds, the Cabinet has approved appraisals for Basingstoke Canal, Cargate, Farnborough Hill, Manor Park, Military Town and St Michael's Abbey. This report now seeks approval for the final tranche of

conservation area appraisals and management plans (CAAMP), namely Farnborough Street, South Farnborough and Aldershot West.

- 1.2. These three appraisals were published for public consultation in 2023. Following consultation and after seeking external heritage advice on the objections and recommended boundary changes received (Appendix 4), Officers have revised the three appraisals.
- 1.3. As revisions to the Farnborough Street CAAMP and South Farnborough CAAMP are minor (and the former has already been subject to two consultations), the recommendation is that Cabinet adopt both documents.
- 1.4. However, as the proposed boundary changes for Aldershot West includes the proposed addition of a new sub-area, the recommendation is for the Cabinet to agree to reconsult on the revised appraisal. If there are no substantive changes required following this consultation, this report delegates the adoption of the appraisal and management plan to the Executive Head of Property and Growth, in consultation with the portfolio holder. In the event of substantive objections being received, the matter will be brought back to Cabinet for consideration.

2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1. A conservation area is “an area of special architectural or historic interest, the character or appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance” which local authorities such as Rushmoor have the right to establish. There are currently eight of these in Rushmoor. By law, the council must keep these areas under review ‘from time to time’¹. This means, the council can extend, alter or reduce their boundaries. The council made a commitment in the Rushmoor Local Plan 2019 (Policy HE3) to do this.
- 2.2. The National Planning Policy Framework (para 197) states that “when considering the designation of conservation areas, local planning authorities should ensure that an area justifies such status because of its special architectural or historic interest, and that the concept of conservation is not devalued through the designation of areas that lack special interest.”
- 2.3. The council has published a Conservation Area Overview Document that sets out the context in which conservation areas in Rushmoor have been designated. It includes the legislative and planning policy framework, as well as the geographic and historic setting of the area. The overview document should be read alongside the individual character appraisals and management plans.
- 2.4. Aldershot West Conservation Area is located within and to the west of Aldershot Town Centre. It is currently bounded by High Street, Short Street and Barrack Road to the north. It includes Alexandra Terrace, parts of Edward Street and Queens Road. It extends down to the Municipal Gardens to the south and is bounded by Grosvenor Road to the east. The Conservation Area lies to the immediate north of Cargate Conservation Area.

¹ S69(1) Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990

- 2.5. Farnborough Street Conservation Area is located in north-east Farnborough. It forms part of an area which was first designated as the Farnborough Hill Conservation Area in 1977. As part of the process of reviewing and appraising this conservation area, and following public consultation, the Council decided to split into two parts:
- i. a 'new' Farnborough Hill Conservation Area - centred on Farnborough Hill school and its grounds, and
 - ii. Farnborough Street Conservation Area - centred on the crossroads where Farnborough Street meets Rectory Road, Ship Lane and Highgate Lane
- 2.6. South Farnborough Conservation Area is located to the south of the town of Farnborough. The Conservation Area is bounded by Farnborough Road to the west and properties on the east side of Alexandra Road to the east, Lynchford Road to the south and Reading Road to the north. Church Circle is a separate element to the north-west.
- 2.7. In November 2022, Cabinet approved the adoption of the new Farnborough Hill CAAMP. In addition, Cabinet agreed to consult on the draft Aldershot West CAAMP and agreed to reconsult on the revised appraisal for Farnborough Street Conservation Area solely to seek views on whether it should be extended to include the Station Master's House. In August 2023, Cabinet approved the publication of the draft South Farnborough CAAMP for public consultation.
- 2.8. Following public consultation and after seeking external heritage advice on the objections and recommended boundary changes received (Appendix 4), Officers have revised the three appraisals (as set out in more detail in Section 3 of this report).

3. DETAILS OF THE PROPOSAL

General

Aldershot West Conservation Area (Appendix 1)

- 3.1. This conservation area was designated in 1980. It has a mixed character but is distinctive overall because it retains examples of Aldershot town centre as it was in the early 20th century. In 2023, we consulted on a draft CAAMP which proposed only minor changes to the boundary.
- 3.2. Responses to the public consultation on the draft CAAMP suggested some areas for inclusion within the Conservation Area. Following consideration by officers and external heritage advice (Appendix 4), the revised appraisal proposes the inclusion of two additional areas:
- Land from Princes Gardens to Buzz Bingo (as a new sub-Area)
 - Rowhill School (as an extension to Sub-area 1)
- 3.3. The proposed additional sub-area is occupied by two large buildings which were historically cinemas, and Princes Gardens. The Empire and the Ritz (Buzz

Bingo) retain their architectural form and features, and both have landmark quality and reflect the cinema-going habits of the 1930s when it was the most popular of activities. They are both of local historic interest – they contribute to the distinctive history of the town - a town dominated by the army, where the provision of entertainment was crucial. The gardens are also considered worthy of inclusion as they form a commemorative open space uniting both the civilian and Army components of Aldershot. It has historic associations with the Royal Engineers, and positively contributes to the character of the area.

- 3.4. Rowhill School was built in 1889 by the Aldershot School Board (a few years after the development of the West End Centre, built in 1881 also as a Board School). It contributes positively to the wider conservation area, sharing a common palette of materials, style and form and sitting amongst trees on the western side of the Municipal Gardens. It is of historic interest as a school built in response to the 1870 Education Act and associated with the Aldershot School Board, and it holds some group value with the nearby West End Centre. The building meets a number of the Historic England requirements for inclusion and will positively contribute to the significance of the Conservation Area. It contributes to the quality of recognisable open space that is the Municipal Gardens, makes a positive contribution to the neighbouring heritage assets, and is still in its original use.
- 3.5. The proposed changes to the boundary are shown on Figure 3, page 34 of the draft CAAMP (Appendix 1).
- 3.6. The Planning team will consult on the revised appraisal. This consultation is expected to begin in early November and will run for six weeks. Letters and leaflets providing background information on the conservation area designation, explaining the implications of the proposed boundary change and how to respond to the consultation will be sent to those within the existing Aldershot West Conservation Area boundary. One in-person event will be held in Aldershot, where officers will be on hand to answer questions about the appraisal.
- 3.7. Delegated authority is sought to allow the Executive Head of Property and Growth (in consultation with the Portfolio Holder) to make any minor revisions following this consultation before it is finalised. In the event of substantive objections being received, the matter will be brought back to Cabinet for consideration.

Farnborough Street Conservation Area (Appendix 2)

- 3.8. The current Farnborough Hill Conservation Area was designated in 1977 and covers a swathe of land north of Farnborough town centre. It was last reviewed in 1989. As noted in paragraph 2.5 above, the decision was made to split the Conservation into two parts and remove parts of the existing Conservation Area.
- 3.9. Farnborough Street Conservation Area is centred on the crossroads where Farnborough Street meets Rectory Road, Ship Lane and Highgate Lane. Bounded to the south by the South West Main Line and to the east by the North

Downs Line railway lines and incorporating Farnborough Street to the east of the crossroads, Rectory Road to the south, and parts of Ship Lane and Highgate Lane to the north and west respectively, the conservation area comprises the location of the original village of Farnborough, from where the town of today developed from the mid- to late nineteenth century.

- 3.10. As part of the removal of parts of the current Farnborough Hill Conservation Area, it is proposed that the majority of Chapel Street is removed from the Conservation Area. Following responses received to the consultation and subsequent external heritage advice (Appendix 4), it is now recommended that 2-4 Chapel Street are also removed from the existing conservation area boundary. These are modern infill dwellings built in the 1950s and 1960s and are considered to have no architectural or historic merit and, therefore, do not warrant inclusion within the conservation area. The properties directly affected by this change have been notified by letter.
- 3.11. The proposed changes are set out in an appendix to the CAAMP and shown on Figure 3, page 32 (Appendix 2).

South Farnborough Conservation Area (Appendix 3)

- 3.12. The South Farnborough Conservation Area is located to the south of the town and was designated in 1987. The conservation area is bounded by Farnborough Road to the east and properties on the east side of Alexandra Road to the west, Lynchford Road to the south and Reading Road to the north. Church Circle is a separate element to the north-west. Although Church Circle is physically separate, it is designated as part of a single conservation area and is linked to the larger element by Guildford Road East.
- 3.13. During the public consultation on the draft CAAMP undertaken 2023, it was proposed to remove the following areas from the conservation area:
- Industrial and commercial buildings between the Queens Hotel, Farnborough Road, Netley Street and the rear boundaries of properties on the west side of Southampton Street.
 - Ettrick Court and the terrace between Osborne Road, Farnborough Road and Guildford Road West.
 - The telephone exchange, Neelam Court and Kashmir Court south of Reading Road.
 - Farren House and Baveno House complex north of Reading Road.
- 3.14. A number of objections to the removal of Farren House and Baveno House were received, which prompted an officer review and external heritage advice (Appendix 4). This has recommended that Farren House and Baveno House should be retained within the conservation area.
- 3.15. The proposed removal of these properties was on the basis that they have been significantly altered, and their setting was compromised by the erection of three accommodation blocks on the site, constructed in the 1970s. However, the advice received (Appendix 4) concluded that the houses contribute to the character of the area, and illustrate the development of Farnborough in a period where housing development was at its peak. They are of high architectural

quality, and this has not been eroded to a point where they are no longer recognisable or significant. Overall, they are considered to make a positive contribution to the wider Conservation Area. The properties directly affected by this change have been notified by letter.

- 3.16. The proposed changes are set out in an appendix to the CAAMP and shown on Figure 3, page 40 (Appendix 3).

Trees within the Conservation Areas

- 3.17. Trees in a conservation area that meet specified criteria² are protected by legislation requiring the Council to be notified of any works to a tree. Therefore, the proposed boundary changes could result in the removal of tree protection. The proposed areas to be removed from the Conservation Area have been subject to survey by the Council's Arboricultural Officer. Where justified, Tree Preservation Orders will be made to ensure that important trees remain protected. Any new Tree Preservation Orders will be made and in place before boundary changes are affected to ensure continued protection.

Article 4 Directions

- 3.18. Some additional planning controls over development within conservation areas restrict changes to external appearance and prevent buildings within a conservation area from being demolished without planning permission. Further information is available in the Rushmoor Conservation Area Overview document. Permitted development rights do however allow certain alterations without the need for planning permission. Many of these alterations can have an unintended negative impact on the character or appearance of an area.
- 3.19. Further protection of the key features of the conservation area can be accomplished by introducing Article 4 direction restricting the exercise of some permitted development rights. Such an order is already in place covering the Church Circle sub-area serving to prevent inappropriate replacement windows and loss of chimneys and boundary walls. There is also an Article 4 direction in place covering Cargate Conservation Area. Following the adoption of the full suite of CAAMPs, consideration will be given to extending similar Article 4 control over other parts of the Conservation Areas. This would be the subject of a separate report and consultation if it was pursued.

Alternative Options

- 3.20. An alternative option would be to adopt the CAAMPs and associated boundaries as proposed in the consultation, without further amendment. However, this would not take account of the consultation responses received and would be contrary to the heritage advice received on this matter (Appendix 4).

² <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/tree-preservation-orders-and-trees-in-conservation-areas#Protecting-trees-in-conservation-areas>

Consultation

3.21. The three draft CAAMPs were subject to six weeks' public consultation between the 29th August and 10th October 2023.

3.22. A range of methods were used to raise awareness of the consultation. These included:

- Promotion via media release, the Council's website and using social media.
- Letters and information leaflets delivered to properties within the existing Conservation Area boundaries.
- Notification sent to those registered on the Rushmoor Local Plan consultation database (including local residents, businesses, statutory bodies such as Historic England and civic groups).
- Two in-person consultation events
- Static display boards in the reception of the Council offices.
- Information leaflets and copies on deposit at Farnborough and Aldershot libraries.

General Comments

3.23. The Council received comments from Historic England relating to all three appraisals. They made the following comments:

- welcome the appraisals and consider that they provide detailed and observant accounts of each area,
- overall the documents are set out clearly, with helpful mapping, and are easy to navigate.
- recommend that a short summary or statement of special interest is provided at the beginning of each appraisal (as suggested in Historic England Advice Note 1)

Aldershot West

3.24. The Council received three responses to the consultation which commented specifically on the Aldershot West CAAMP. The main comments/issues raised were:

- Consider inclusion of the roundabout to the south of Municipal Gardens.
- Question the inclusion of William Farthing Close.
- Consider inclusion of Rowhill School, given its relationship to the West End Centre.
- Propose the inclusion of the land from Princes Gardens to Buzz Bingo
- Question why the flower garden in front of Queens Hotel was being removed.

Farnborough Street

3.25. The Council received 6 responses to the consultation which commented on the Farnborough Street CAAMP. The main comments/issues raised were:

- Support for the inclusion of the former Station Masters House.
- Objection to the removal of Chapel Street, in particular the inclusion of the former Methodist Chapel as a building of local significance.

- Question why the former Methodist Chapel (11a Chapel Street) is not locally listed, despite the adjoining property being added.
- Objection to the removal of areas within the existing Farnborough Hill Conservation Area and potential for this to damage the setting of the conservation area(s).
- Objections to the proposed removal of areas of significance in pottery production and associated sites of significant archaeological remains (medieval kilns/pottery manufacture).

South Farnborough

- 3.26. The Council received 13 responses to the consultation which commented on the South Farnborough CAAMP. The main comments/issues raised were:
- Concerns raised about impact of increased traffic, problems with on-street parking, loss of trees and green space and buildings detracting from the special character (including specific reference to the impact of cars parked within Alma Square)
 - Importance of maintaining the character of this area
 - Support for removal of the Telephone Exchange and Ettrick Court, but concern about loss of protection if the sites were to be redeveloped.
 - Objections to the removal of Farren House and Baveno House. Considered to have architectural and historic interest and make a positive contribution to the local character and appearance.
 - Need to ensure mature trees on sites proposed for removal are protected using Tree Preservation Orders.
 - Objection to proposal to remove parts of the Conservation Area, due to loss of protection if these sites come forward for re-development and loss of protection for the trees on these sites.
 - Specific objection to removal of the Telephone Exchange due to concern over potential increase in traffic and parking issues/ impact on Reading Road arising from redevelopment.
 - Note the potential for archaeological remains associated with the tumuli at Cockadobby Hill/Queen's Roundabout and Albert Road and the appraisal should acknowledge this.
- 3.27. The proposed changes to the conservation areas have been shared with the Portfolio Holder for Development and Economic Growth and considered at meeting of the Strategic Housing and Local Plan Working Group on 17th September 2024.

4. IMPLICATIONS (of proposed course of action)

Risks

- 4.1. There are not considered to be any risks associated with the implementation of the recommendations of this report.

Legal Implications

- 4.2. The council has a statutory duty to review its conservation areas under Section 69(1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990. The Council will be required to notify the Secretary of State and Historic England if there are changes made to the designation of conservation areas. In addition, paragraph 4.5 below, sets out the council's compliance with its public sector equality duty. That duty is a continuing duty, any actions flowing from this report will have regard to that duty and if necessary, further report will be made to the Cabinet.

Financial Implications

- 4.3. None. The adoption of the three CAAMPs and consultation on the Draft Aldershot West CAAMP will be carried out from within existing staff and budget resources.

Resource Implications

- 4.4. None. The adoption of the three CAAMPs and consultation on the Draft Aldershot West CAAMP will be carried out from within existing staff and budget resources.

Equalities Impact Implications

- 4.5. The council's public sector equality duty applies to the designation, revocation or amendment of conservation areas. No direct implications arise from the process itself. However, the duty also applies to public consultations on conservation areas.

Other

- 4.5. None.

5 CONCLUSIONS

- 5.1 This report seeks approval to adopt the final conservation area reviews of the current programme, carried out in line with the council's legal duties and fulfils a commitment given in the Rushmoor Local Plan.
- 5.2 The proposed Conservation Area boundaries have been amended as a result of public consultation and external advice. The proposed changes have been reviewed, and are supported, by the Portfolio Holder for Development and Growth and the Strategic Housing and Local Plan Working Group.
- 5.3 Due to the scale of the proposed changes, the Aldershot West CAAMP will be subject to further public consultation. Delegated authority is sought to allow the Executive Head of Property and Growth to make any minor revisions following this consultation before the CAAMP is adopted. In the event of substantive objections being received, the matter will be brought back to Cabinet for consideration.

- 4.6. The adoption of the documents will help preserve and enhance the character and appearance of the three Conservation Areas, by providing a framework for determining planning applications and ensuring that development proposals are of a high quality.

LIST OF APPENDICES/ANNEXES:

Appendix 1 - Aldershot West Draft Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan

Appendix 2 - Farnborough Street Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan

Appendix 3 - South Farnborough Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan

Appendix 4 - Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan: Boundary Review Advice Note August 2024 (Stephen Levrant Heritage Architecture)

BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS:

None

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Conservation Area

appraisal and management plan



Aldershot West



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1. Introduction

- 1.1 This document should be read alongside the Council's [Conservation Areas Overview document](#) which sets out the context in which conservation areas in Rushmoor have been designated. This includes the legislative and planning policy framework, as well as the geographic and historic setting of the Borough.¹ The Overview document also explains what requires planning permission in a conservation area.
- 1.2 A conservation area is a place of special architectural or historic interest, the character or appearance of which it is desirable to conserve or enhance. Building groups, walls, trees and hedges, open spaces, views and historic settlement patterns all combine to create a sense of place. It is this character, which is required, rather than simply individual buildings, that the designation of conservation area status seeks to protect. The location of the boundary for a conservation area is a qualitative decision relating to character. It is essential for the protection of conservation areas that only areas which are heritage assets are designated so that 'the concept of conservation is not devalued'.²

Appraisal and Management Plan

- 1.3 This Appraisal document sets out the special architectural and historic interest of Aldershot West conservation area, the character or appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance. The Appraisal identifies the features of the conservation area that make a positive or negative contribution to its significance and is accompanied by a Management Plan which sets out how change can be managed to conserve and enhance the area.
- 1.4 Conservation area appraisals and management plans provide a framework and guide to enable planning decisions to be made on a site-specific basis, within the context of national planning policy and the adopted Local Plan. This Appraisal has also been prepared having regard to [Historic England Advice Note 1 \(Second Edition\)](#).³
- 1.5 Every effort has been made to include or analyse elements that are key to the special character of the conservation area. However, where buildings, structures or features have not been specifically highlighted, it does not necessarily follow that they are of no visual or historic value.

¹ Available to view at <https://www.rushmoor.gov.uk/planning-and-building-control/conservation-and-heritage-assets/conservation-areas/>.

² National Planning Policy Framework (2023), para. 197.

³ Available to view at <https://historicengland.org.uk/images-books/publications/conservation-area-appraisal-designation-management-advice-note-1/>.

2. Overview of Aldershot West Conservation Area

Designation History

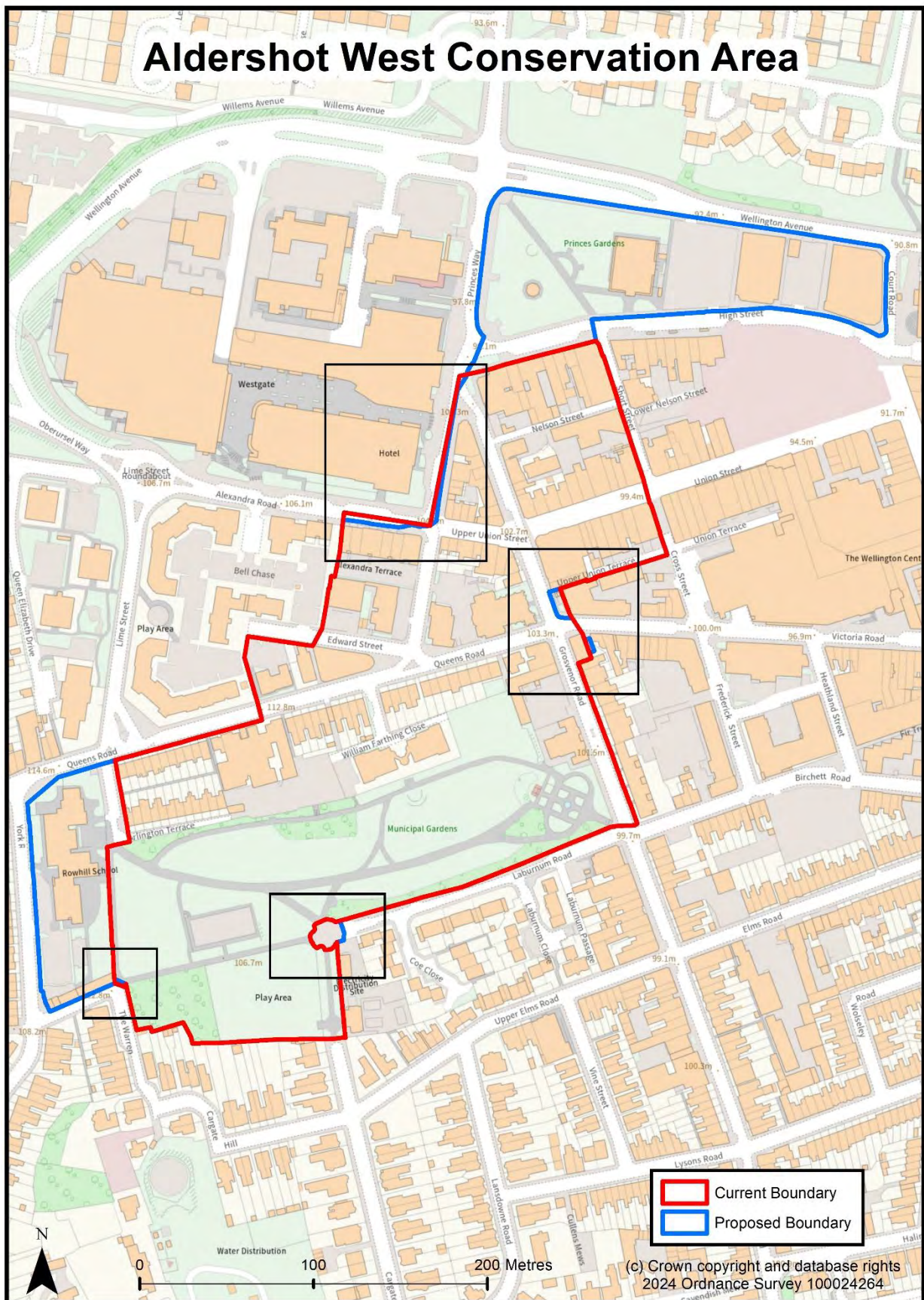
- 2.1 Aldershot West conservation area was designated in 1980 and has since been reviewed in 1983 and 1989. There is no adopted appraisal and management plan for the area.
- 2.2 The Council consulted on a draft Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan in 2023 in which it was proposed to make only minor boundary realignments to the conservation area. A number of people who responded to the consultation suggested that Rowhill School and an area to the north of the conservation area comprising Princes Gardens and two 1930s former cinema buildings should be included within the conservation area. The Council considers that the school and the area to the north have historic and architectural interest and warrant inclusion within the conservation area. It therefore now proposes to include Rowhill School and the gardens and cinemas area within the conservation area and has updated this draft Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan accordingly.

Location

- 2.3 Aldershot West conservation area is located within and beyond the current Aldershot Town Centre, as designated within the [Rushmoor Local Plan](#) (adopted in February 2019),⁴ and lies to the immediate north of Cargate conservation area.

⁴ Available to view at <https://www.rushmoor.gov.uk/planning-and-building-control/planning-policies/the-rushmoor-local-plan/>.

Figure 1: Map of Current and Proposed Boundary of Aldershot West Conservation Area



Area Development

- 2.4 The development of Aldershot Town as a settlement started with the government's decision in 1853 to establish a permanent military garrison on heathland west of the historic Manor and village of 'Aldershott', exploiting the area's links to London and Portsmouth.⁵
- 2.5 The establishment of a town serving a civilian population followed from the construction of the garrison between 1854 and 1859. The civilian population of Aldershot was recorded as 685 people in 1841, rising to nearly 5,000 in 1861. The Aldershot Board of Health first met in 1857, the town was connected by rail in 1870, and a range of municipal and civic buildings, and churches to cater for the area's different religious congregations, were constructed in the 1860s and 1870s. By the 1890s, the town's population had grown to some 25,000 people, and much of the area now included in the conservation area had been built.⁶
- 2.6 The Aldershot Board of Health became the Aldershot Urban District Council following the passing of the Local Government Act in 1894. In 1904, Aldershot Town Hall and Fire Station were built, and the Urban District Council opened a public park, the Municipal Gardens, on former allotment land to the south. Laid out formally with distinctive geometric patterns, the Gardens consist of green open space and trees, with parterres and a fountain in the south-east corner. A tree-planting ceremony took place in the park in 1905, providing an eclectic mix of trees, some of which are still in place. The Municipal Gardens also house the town's distinctive granite war memorial, the Aldershot Cenotaph, which was unveiled by Prince Henry, Duke of Gloucester on 18 March 1925 and dedicated by Frank Woods, the Bishop of Winchester.⁷

Area Summary

- 2.7 Much of the prevailing character of the area has remained largely unchanged, although there has been some infill development (for example, the sheltered housing development at Highview Lodge, William Farthing Close) and redevelopment of plots on Grosvenor Road and Barrack Road.
- 2.8 The principal external building materials are orange/red and buff brick with shallow 'natural' slate roofs, although some of the grander municipal buildings have stucco. Some of the residential frontages

⁵ H.N. Cole (1980) *The Story of Aldershot*, Southern Books (Aldershot) Ltd; S. Phillips and G. Picken (2000) *Aldershot Past*, Phillimore & Co. Ltd.

⁶ S. Phillips and G. Picken (2000) *Aldershot Past*, Phillimore & Co. Ltd.

⁷ S. Phillips and G. Picken (2000) *Aldershot Past*, Phillimore & Co. Ltd.; Historic England, 'Aldershot Cenotaph', available at <https://historicengland.org.uk/listing/the-list/list-entry/1464695?section=official-list-entry>.

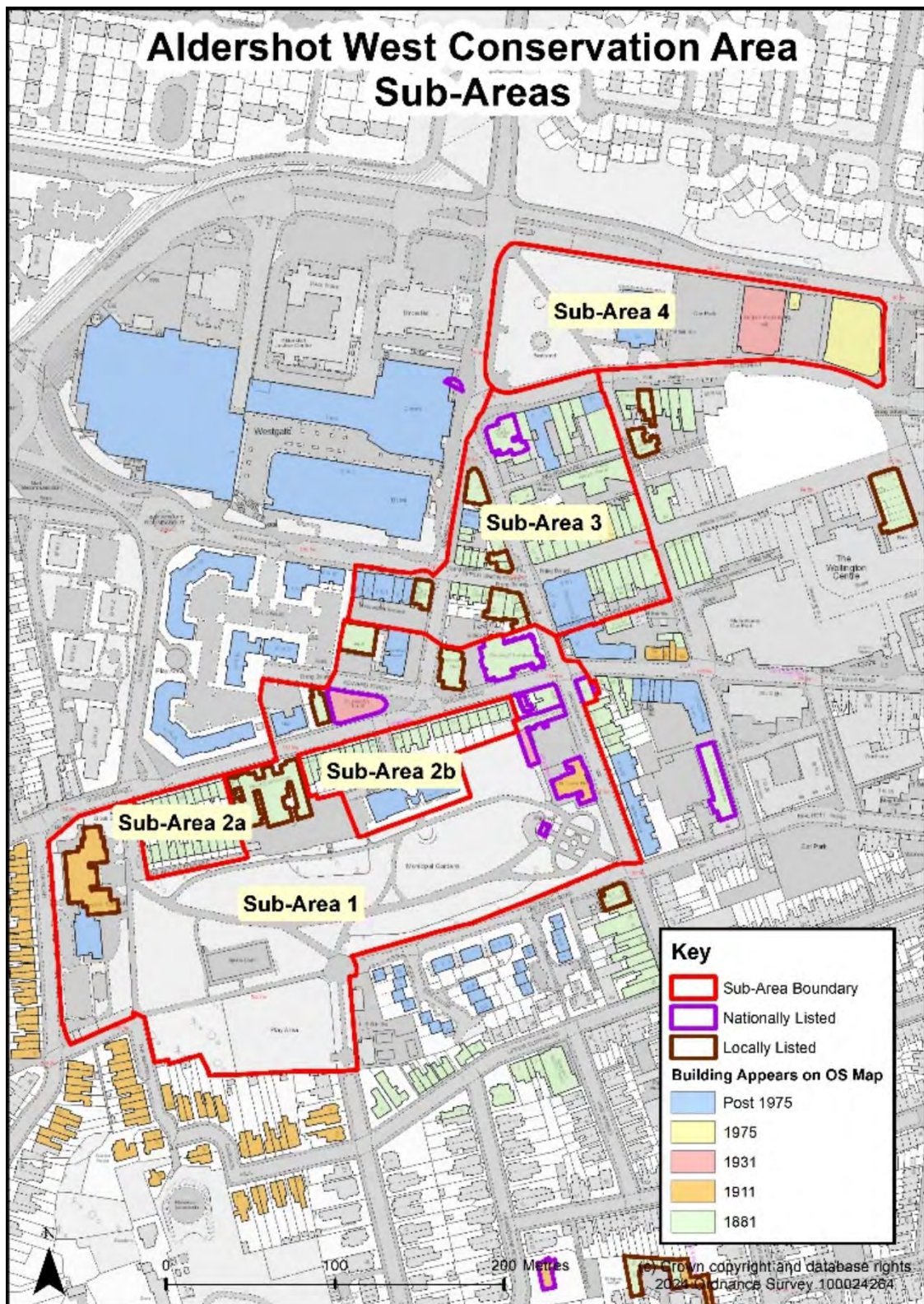
(for example, Arlington Terrace) have been rendered and painted, and there are a number of buildings of sandstone construction. The Aldershot Cenotaph war memorial is of granite construction.

2.9 The conservation area, including the proposed addition of land comprising Princes Gardens and the two former cinema buildings, has four areas of distinct character:

- Sub-Area 1: Civic and Municipal Quarter.
- Sub-Area 2: Residential Area.
- Sub-Area 3: Commercial Area.
- Sub-Area 4: Gardens and Cinemas

2.10 Whilst the character of the conservation area is varied in its form and uses, it provides a typical example of Aldershot as it was in the early twentieth century.

Figure 2: Map of Sub-Areas⁸



⁸ This map depicts when buildings first appeared on the 1881, 1911, 1931 or 1975 Ordnance Survey (OS) map of the area (see Chapter 7). It does not show the definitive age of the buildings. For example, a building which first appeared on the 1931 OS map would have been built in the period between the publication of the 1911 and 1931 maps.

3. Sub-Area 1: Civic and Municipal Quarter

Area Summary

- 3.1 This sub-area includes a cluster of municipal and commercial buildings and places of worship, which date from the Victorian and Edwardian eras, which front the main thoroughfares of Grosvenor Road and Queens Road, as well as properties fronting Edward Street, parts of Barrack Road and the Municipal Gardens. It is proposed that Rowhill School, which is located to the west of Arlington Terrace, is included within this sub-area.

Building Form and Details

- 3.2 This sub-area contains a number of listed buildings, the most striking of which is the former Methodist Church, a Grade II* listed building which is now in office use located at the junction between Grosvenor Road, Queens Road and Victoria Road. Mixed Gothic in character with Early English, Decorated and Perpendicular features, and constructed from local sandstone rubble with Bath stone dressings, the Church dates from 1875 and has important townscape value, for its distinctive four-stage corner clock tower is visible from a number of vantage points within and outside the conservation area.
- 3.3 To the west of the former Methodist Church on Queens Road on a tightly wedged site at the junction with Edward Street lies the Grade II listed Roman Catholic Church of St Joseph's. Designed by George Drysdale and constructed in 1912/13, the building replaced a temporary church of corrugated iron which had been constructed on the site in 1872. It has high flank walls, a rounded east end and doorways on both street frontages. The robust external form of brindle-banded red brick work and its east-end bell turret are dominant features in Queens Road and Edward Street. The building's cliff-like quality is relieved by its colourful door friezes. east-end bell turret are dominant features in Queens Road and Edward Street. The building's cliff-like quality is relieved by its colourful door friezes.
- 3.4 Grosvenor Road passes north to south through the sub-area and is an important route through Aldershot. It provides views through and beyond the conservation area and includes a number of prominent listed buildings on a tight urban grain.
- 3.5 For example, occupying a prominent corner position at the junction between Grosvenor Road, Queens Road and Victoria Road, the Grade II listed 26 and 28 Grosvenor Road are fine examples of late-nineteenth-century classically styled shop buildings with accommodation above. Number 26 has a double frontage on Grosvenor Road and Queens Road, whilst number 28, which occupies a mid-terrace position between numbers 26 and 30, fronts on to Grosvenor Road. Both buildings have well-articulated façades and are of three storeys in height, although the second and third storeys at number

28 are recent additions constructed in 2019. Whilst the upper floors of number 28 are of white render, the corresponding storeys of number 26 are of yellow brick, although both have stucco features, including second-floor moulded bands and architraves. Both properties have extensive stuccoing on the ground floor and wide-cambered openings which provide a continuous series of windows along the street frontage.

- 3.6 Immediately to the south, and forming a terrace with numbers 26 and 28, lies 30 Grosvenor Road, which is also Grade II listed. Similarly built in the late nineteenth century and of three storeys, and previously in use as Aldershot Registry Office, the building has a richly detailed neo-classical front façade and shares common features with the adjacent 26 and 28 Grosvenor Road. The integrity in its form means that these buildings contribute to a visually rich and interesting streetscape.
- 3.7 On the opposite side of Grosvenor Road, also occupying a prominent corner position at the junction of Grosvenor Road, Queens Road and Victoria Road, lies 27 Grosvenor Road, a two-storey Grade II listed Italianate commercial building of the late nineteenth century. Its two main facades on Grosvenor Road and Victoria Road define the double aspect and prominent position of the corner site. The building's upper walling is of yellow brick, and the ground floor is in rusticated stucco. These details and the shallow-pitched slate roof with wide eaves on brackets give the building a stylistic cohesion with 26, 28 and 30 Grosvenor Road which face the building on the other side of the road.
- 3.8 To the south of 26, 28 and 30 Grosvenor Road lies Aldershot Town Hall, a Grade II listed building designed by C.E. Hutchinson and constructed in 1904. Featuring a central block of three storeys and two wings of two storeys, the building has a symmetrical façade built in a mix of brick, stone and render. The roofscape is also distinctive, with hipped slate roofs with bell-cast and wide eaves, a central slatted wooden turret and prominent rendered chimneys. Because the front façade is situated directly on to Grosvenor Road, the side elevations of the building are more prominent in views along the road. The building's carefully articulated forms and stepped quality make a positive contribution to the streetscape, particularly as the building is spatially separated by a car park to the north and the Municipal Gardens to the south.
- 3.9 In addition to the statutorily listed buildings described above, the sub-area contains several locally listed buildings associated with the civic and religious history of Aldershot, including the West End Centre on Queens Road, St Joseph's Rectory on Queens Road, Wesley Hall on Barrack Road and Queens Road, and the Masonic Hall on Edward Street.
- 3.10 Believed to have been constructed in the 1880s following the passing of the Education Act in 1870, the West End Centre on Queens Road, the former West End Junior School, is an impressive red-brick one-

and two-storey building with a clay-tile roof. Currently an arts centre, the building is distinguished by its gables that front the road and by the very large casement windows to each gable. It is an attractive building in the townscape and contributes strongly to the character of the conservation area as a local community facility.

- 3.11 Further west along Queens Road, Rowhill School is an attractive Victorian building and is locally listed. Built in 1889 by the Aldershot School Board, but with later additions, it is constructed in red brick with a steeply pitched clay-tile roof and retains its original decorative features and windows. It is a building of distinction and has a large two-storey modern extension to the south. Although it was constructed a few years later, it relates in style and materials to the nearby West End Centre. Rowhill School contributes positively to the wider conservation area, sharing a common palette of materials, style and form. It is of historic interest as a school built in response to the 1870 Education Act and is still in its original use. The building is not currently within the conservation area, but it is proposed to be included within Sub-Area 1.
- 3.12 Located on the opposite side of Queens Road to the northeast and built in 1874, St Joseph's Rectory is immediately adjacent to the Grade II listed St Joseph's Church and is a striking red-brick building with a natural slate roof. It comprises two double-height square-brick bays with chamfers to corners and parapets which face Queens Road, with brick gables above, and windows in a tripartite arrangement. The Church Hall, a relatively modern single-storey red-brick building, lies to the west.
- 3.13 Wesley Hall lies further to the east at the junction of Queens Road and Barrack Road. Built in around the 1870s, the building was formerly the hall for the Methodist Church but is now in office use. Constructed from local sandstone rubble and featuring Bath stone dressings, the building has a late-twentieth-century extension to the north and a semi-circular turret on its southeastern corner, as well as a large geometric tracery window on its south elevation. The building provides a focal point and an interesting counterpoint between the former Methodist Church to the east and St Joseph's Church to the west.
- 3.14 To the northwest of Wesley Hall and to the north of St Joseph's Church and St Joseph's Rectory lies the Masonic Hall on Edward Street. Built in 1863, the building was formerly a lecture hall for soldiers and was originally attached to a much-larger building which housed the Miss Daniell's Soldiers' Home and Institute. Constructed from rubblestone with Bath stone dressings, and with a natural slate roof with stone copings to gable, the building is a simple single-cell chapel-type building, with Y-tracery windows separated into five bays by buttresses.

Open Spaces, Parks and Gardens, and Trees

- 3.15 Occupying much of the sub-area to the south, the Municipal Gardens has a combination of formal trees and walking routes, with an equipped play area to the south. Many of the park's well-established avenues of trees were planted when it first opened to the public in 1904. As open space, it provides important views from the public highway towards the Aldershot Cenotaph, a Grade II listed granite war memorial which was erected within the Gardens in 1925. It also provides views of the former Methodist Church to the north, as well as views of an established terrace of Victorian housing at Arlington Terrace to the north west (Sub-Area 2a). Its spear-topped railings, painted in a gilded colour, of later period, consciously contribute to the heritage value of the park. Perimeter trees soften and blur the boundaries of the Gardens and create attractive and informal glimpses of surrounding buildings.

Views

- 3.16 The predominant views within the sub-area are of the former Methodist Church tower, both from the south and the north, and the distinctive St Joseph's Church, which is visible at close distance on Edward Street, Barrack Road and Queens Road, but also from further along Queens Road and Victoria Road closer to the core of the town centre.

Sub-Area 1: Civic and Municipal Quarter



Former Methodist Church, Queens Road



Aldershot Town Hall, Grosvenor Road



St Joseph's Roman Catholic Church, Queens Road



Aldershot Masonic Centre, Edward Street



26, 28 and 30 Grosvenor Road

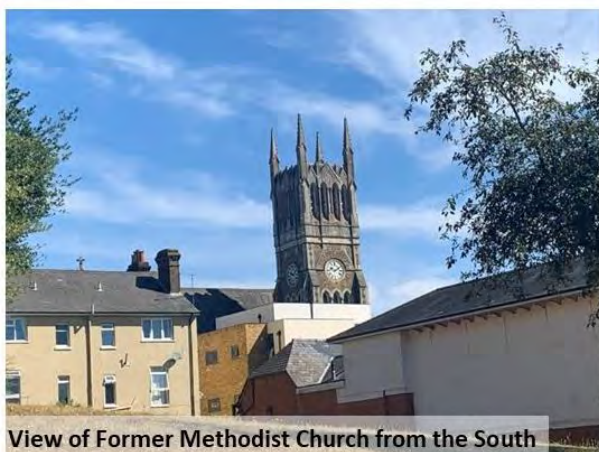


Aldershot Cenotaph, Municipal Gardens

Sub-Area 1: Civic and Municipal Quarter



West End Centre, Queens Road



View of Former Methodist Church from the South



View of Municipal Gardens from Grosvenor Road



Rowhill School (proposed addition to conservation area)

4. Sub-Area 2: Residential Area

Area Summary

- 4.1 This sub-area includes Victorian terraced housing situated to the west of the West End Centre on Queens Road and Arlington Terrace and Queens Road to the west of the West End Centre (Sub-Area 2a), and on William Farthing Close (built in the 1980s) and Queens Road to the east of the West End Centre (Sub-Area 2b).

Building Form and Details

- 4.2 Arlington Terrace comprises a group of Victorian two-storey terraced houses, the front elevations of which face southwards on to the Municipal Gardens. A narrow alley separates the rear gardens of the dwellings from those of a similar terrace of houses which front on to Queens Road to the north. The street has a cottage-like character derived from the unelaborated façades and informal leafy setting. It has a simple ordered rhythm created by the repeated pattern of door and bay windows at ground-floor level and paired sash windows at the first floor, with the façades linked by a continuous ridge line and eaves.
- 4.3 To the north and northwest, the Victorian housing on the southern side of Queens Road is articulated by a series of three- and four-storey buildings which form short terraces. These rows gradually step downwards towards Aldershot Town Centre, and the change in levels is accommodated by a gradual increase in storey height on the lower sections approaching the junction with Grosvenor Road and Victoria Road. Although the scale of the various rows differs, they exhibit the same ordered patterns of fenestration, strong eaves lines and dominant chimneys. Halfway up the hill slope, the projecting brick gables of the West End Centre offer a subtle interruption to the two-storey rows, although the well-proportioned massing of the building skilfully maintains the rhythm and continuity of the street frontage.
- 4.4 The front gardens of the properties on Arlington Terrace and Queens Road are generally characterised by boundary walls, rendered or otherwise, although some appear to have been demolished over time. Some of the dwellings on Queens Road have railings and piers, although a number of these have been removed.
- 4.5 Many of the original features of the terraced housing, including wooden sash windows, timber doors and slate tile roofs, have been lost over time. Whilst the original fenestration pattern has also been altered in places, the overall terrace form remains intact, as does the row of solid brick chimney stacks which are silhouetted against the sky.

- 4.6 To the south and accessed from between the dwellings at numbers 24 and 30 Queens Road, William Farthing Close comprises the three-storey Highview Lodge sheltered flat development. Constructed in the 1980s, the building respects its exposed position relative to the Municipal Gardens to the south and the Victorian housing on Queens Road to the north through its use of brickwork, banding, render and slate-style roof.

Views

- 4.7 The terraced housing on Arlington Terrace and on Queens Road is visible from the public highway. In addition, Arlington Terrace and Highview Lodge are visible from the Municipal Gardens.

Sub-Area 2: Residential Area



Arlington Terrace



View of Arlington Terrace from the Municipal Gardens



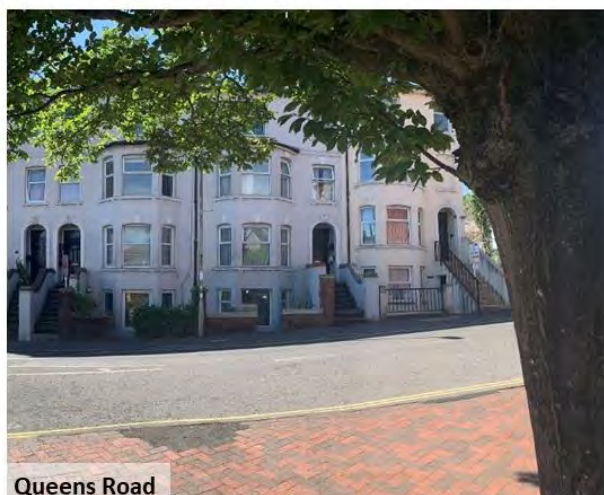
Queens Road



Queens Road



View of Highview Lodge from the Municipal Gardens



Queens Road

5. Sub-Area 3: Commercial Area

Area Development

- 5.1 This sub-area covers the northern part of the conservation area and comprises a number of commercial frontages, including shops, public houses, and some residential conversions/redevelopment.

Building Form and Details

- 5.2 Two landmark late-Victorian public houses, The Queen Hotel and The Alexandra, are visible from the northern edges of the conservation area. Located on the western end of High Street, on the corner where the road merges into Grosvenor Road and Barrack Road, The Queen Hotel is a late-nineteenth-century Grade II listed three-storey building with a stucco finish and a hipped slate roof. The Alexandra is a locally listed building which also dates from the late nineteenth century. A three-storey corner building at the junction between Alexandra Road and Barrack Road, and adjacent to the pedestrianised Upper Union Street to the east, the building is of painted stucco with a natural slate hipped roof.
- 5.3 To the north of the sub-area, Nelson Street runs behind commercial properties on High Street, including The Queen Hotel, and connects Grosvenor Road with Short Street, which forms the eastern boundary of the conservation area. It is of visual interest because of its intimate lane quality and use of granite paving. On the southern side of the narrow street lies Nelson House, a building of two and three storeys with an imposing red-brick façade and traditional green fenestration. A fine example of an industrial building of the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, it was converted to residential use in the 1990s.
- 5.4 To the west of High Street and Nelson Street are two landmark locally listed 'corner shop' buildings on the western side of Grosvenor Road (Imperial House, 2 Grosvenor Road; and 14, 16 and 16a Grosvenor Road). Both buildings date from the mid- to late nineteenth century and feature traditional shop front details. Between the locally listed buildings on this side of the road, the shop buildings which front on to Grosvenor Road, as well as those located on the north side of Upper Union Street, retain traditional Victorian frontage features, including timber-framed shop fronts and stall risers.
- 5.5 The southern side of Upper Union Street also retains a Victorian appearance but is residential in nature. The former Wesley House, a two-storey gabled Gothic-style locally listed former soldiers' home which was built in around the 1870s, occupies a prominent corner site with frontage on Upper Union Street and the western side of Grosvenor Road. The eastern side of Grosvenor Road is also largely Victorian in appearance. Whilst some redevelopment has taken place that respects the bulk and massing of the

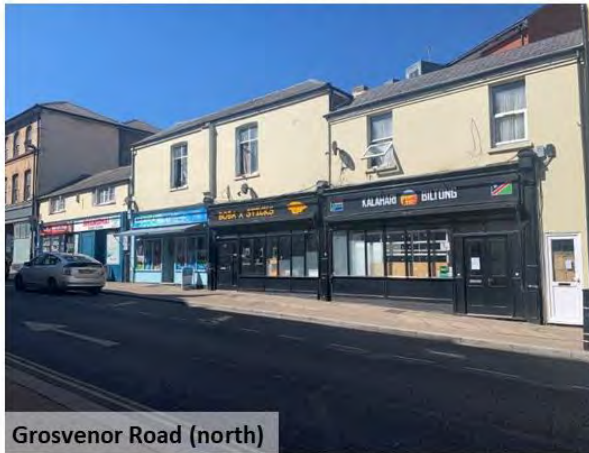
frontage on this side of the road, it has generally been less successful in its implementation in terms of the choice of brick, the use of uPVC windows and doors, and the introduction of balconies.

- 5.6 In contrast, Barrack Road to the west and the pedestrianised shopping street of Union Street to the east have largely retained their Victorian character. The main character of Barrack Road derives from the combination of buildings which, because of the topography and road arrangement, are attractively juxtaposed in views. Most notable are views across the rear courtyard of the Wesleyan buildings and, in particular, the towering, complex roofscapes and traceried windows of the Methodist Church to the south, which is probably the most revealing view of the whole mass and form of the building in all its constituent parts.
- 5.7 The eastern side of Barrack Road comprises a perimeter block of residential and commercial premises which continue along the northern side of Upper Union Street to create a perimeter frontage and a triangular block of development which encloses inner service yards. The locally listed Alexandra public house dominates the western side of Barrack Road; sited at a prominent corner location, it arrests the long views up the road. Built in the 1980s on the former site of the Alexandra Road cinema, Alexandra Terrace, which faces on to Alexandra Road and adjoins the public house, is a formal three-storey series of offices, with columned porches, small balconies and decorative ironwork. Similar to Queens Road, these buildings once formed part of the close-knit development of the town but now mark the transition between modern apartment buildings and the older commercial area.

Views

- 5.8 As identified above, there are a number of prominent landmark buildings within the sub-area that underline and define its commercial character, and which relate to the core of Aldershot Town Centre located to the south and east.

Sub-Area 3: Commercial Area



Grosvenor Road (north)



Former Wesley House, Upper Union Street



Upper Union Street



The Alexandra, Alexandra Road



The Queen Hotel (from Grosvenor Road)



Paving on Nelson Street



Nelson Street

6. Sub-Area 4: Gardens and Cinemas

Area Development

- 6.1 This proposed sub-area covers an area of land to the north east of the conservation area. Located adjacent to the commercial sub-area (Sub-Area 3), it comprises Princes Gardens and two large 1930s buildings, both of which were formerly in cinema use (the Ritz and the Empire) and are locally listed. The area has historically marked the meeting point of the civilian and army parts of Aldershot and was a gateway between the military and civilian population. The area represents a transitional point where army personnel and civilians would meet from the 1930s, when the cinema was a principal form of entertainment.

Building Form and Details

- 6.2 A good example of 1930s picture palaces, the Empire Theatre opened its doors on 1 August 1930. Constructed for the Empire (Aldershot) Ltd, it was designed on two levels, with stalls and a horseshoe-shaped balcony, with a stage and seating for 1,599 people. The Theatre was renamed Odeon in 1964 but closed its doors in 1981. A Christian organisation took over the building and rebranded it as 'The King's Centre' until 2015, after which it was sold and is now in use as an entertainment venue. The architect, Harold S. Scott (1883-1945), was a noted architect of cinemas throughout the 1920s and 1930s. The building was locally listed in 2020.
- 6.3 A fine example of cinema architecture from the interwar years, the Ritz Cinema was built adjacent to the Empire Theatre and opened in May 1937. Also locally listed, the building was designed in an Art Deco style, with an auditorium featuring two levels, with stalls and a balcony. It closed in 1977 and was converted into a bingo hall with a triple cinema. The architects, Verity and Beverley (est. 1871), are a notable firm, most renowned for their theatres, such as the Criterion Theatre (Grade II* listed) at Piccadilly Circus in London, and a large number of other cinema buildings across London. From 1920 to 1939, they designed primarily for Paramount and are still in business today.

Open Spaces, Parks and Gardens, and Trees

- 6.4 Princes Gardens was created in 1930 by Aldershot Borough Council on the site of the former Royal Engineers Yard, which came into being in 1853. This is commemorated on a modest plaque in the ground. An ornamental fountain was unveiled in the gardens in 1954 to commemorate the 100th anniversary of the army in Aldershot, although this is no longer in situ. The space has continued to be used to commemorate the military and their presence in Aldershot, with a number of sculptures having been erected over the years. For example, a sculpture of a charging horse on a section of a Bailey

bridge was unveiled in 1994 to commemorate the link between Aldershot and the Royal Engineers and cavalry regiments. A statue of an airborne soldier mounted on a stone block from the Falkland Islands was unveiled in 2019 in recognition of the special relationship between Aldershot and the Parachute Regiment and Airborne Forces between 1946 and 2000, and a sculpture celebrating the bravery and tenacity of the first Gurkha Victoria Cross recipient, Kulbir Thapa, was unveiled in 2021. A refurbished cast-iron wheel on a blue-pearl granite plinth is also located in the Gardens to celebrate the 100th anniversary of the Rotary movement.

Views

- 6.5 As identified above, there are two prominent landmark buildings within the sub-area that are visible from High Street and Wellington Avenue, which underline and define its character. The predominant views into the sub-area from the north west, along Wellington Avenue and from Hospital Hill, are of and through Princes Gardens.

Sub-Area 4: Gardens and Cinemas



Princes Gardens and Bandstand



Plaque



Former Empire Theatre

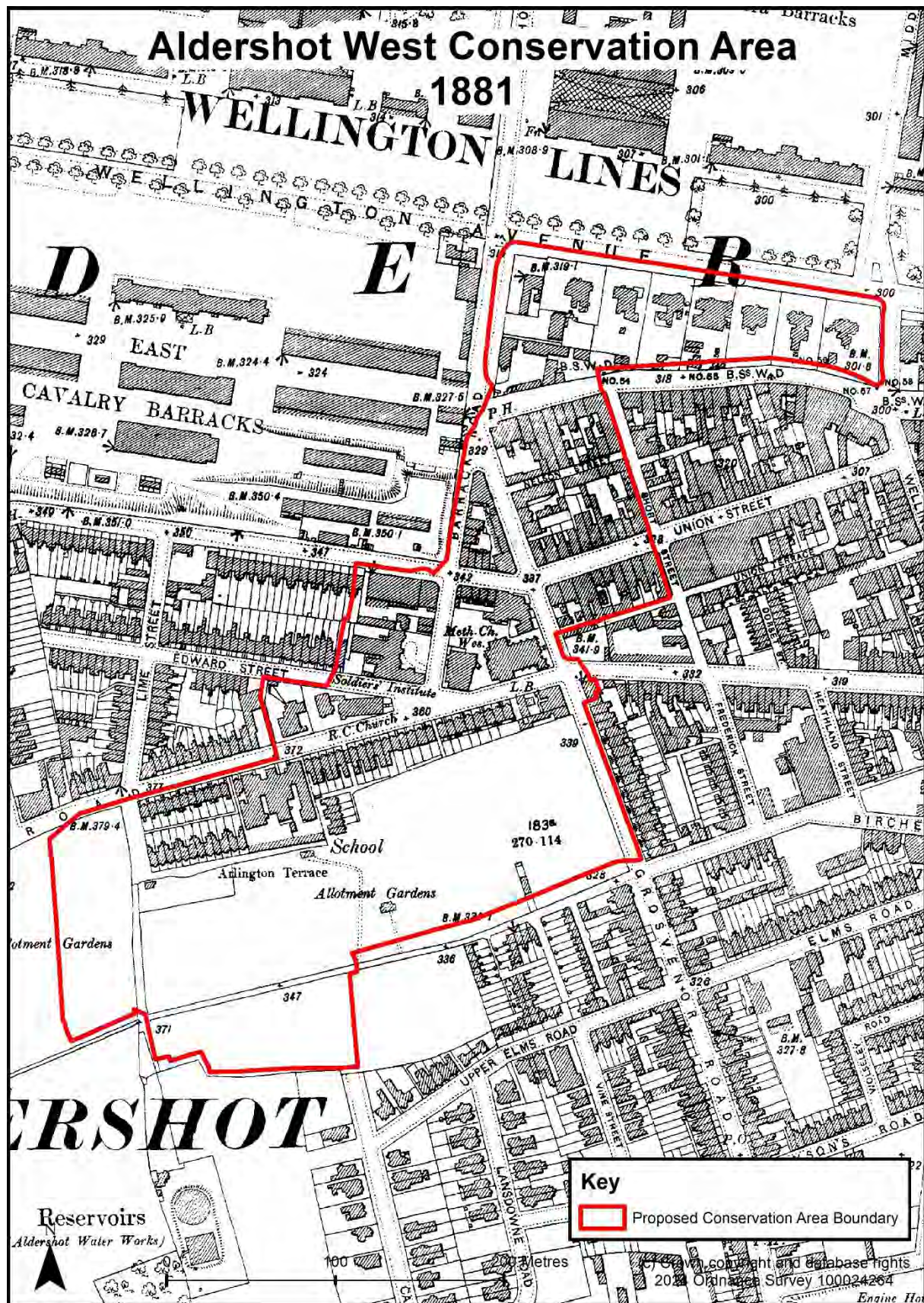


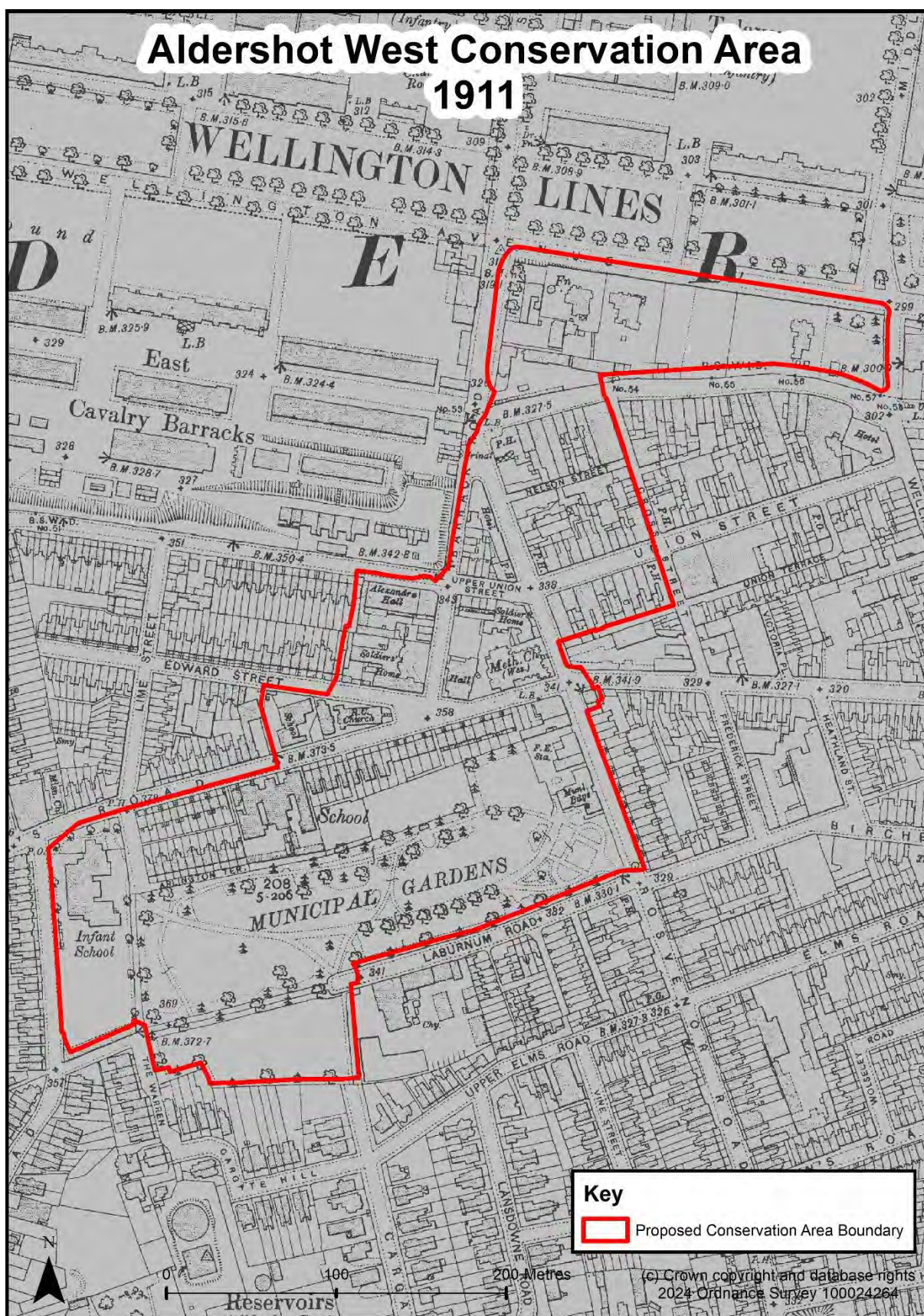
Charging Horse Sculpture

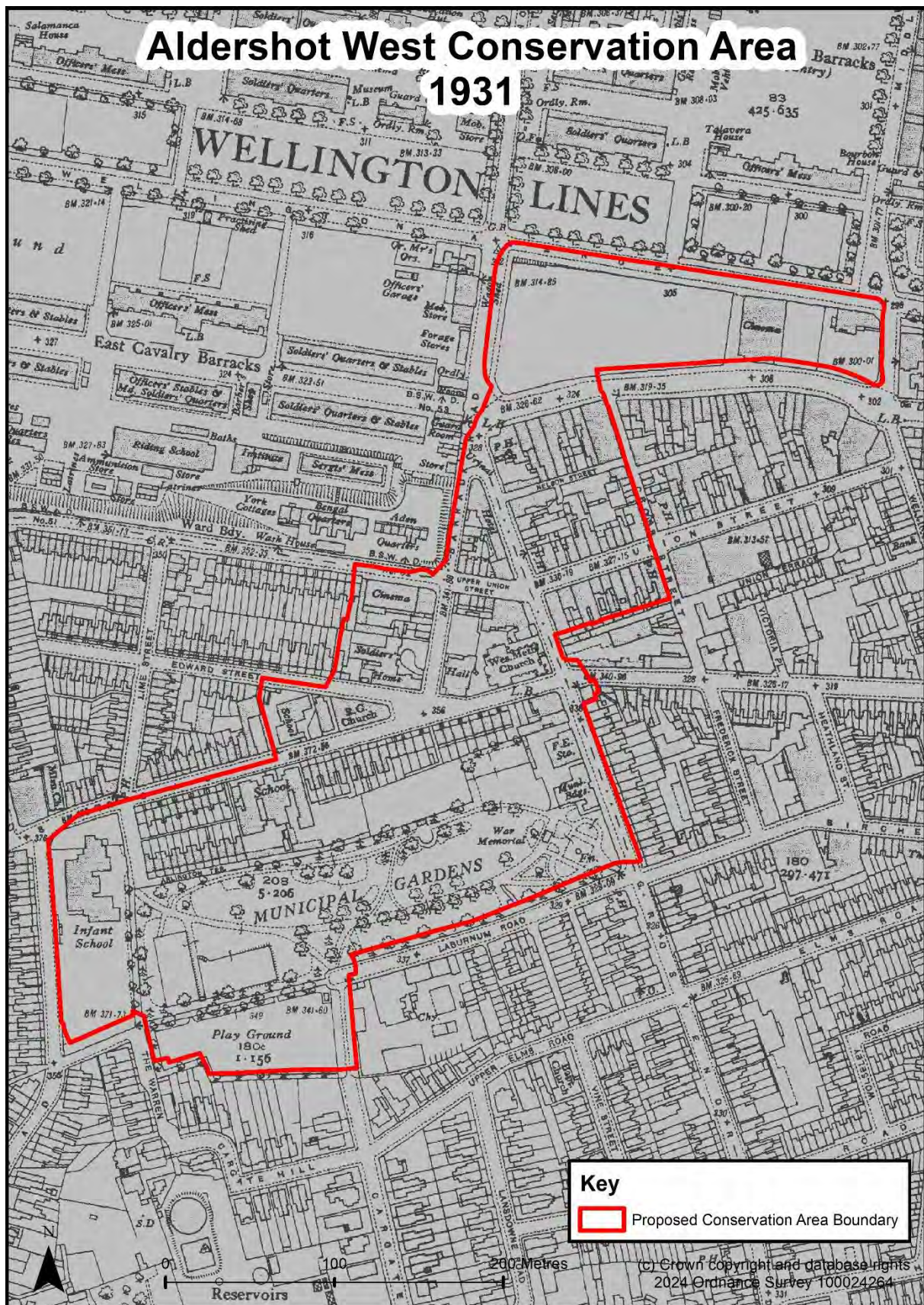


Former Ritz Cinema

7. Historic Maps







8. Listed Buildings and Structures

Name	Grade	Link to Historic England
Former Aldershot Methodist Church, Grosvenor Road	II*	https://historicengland.org.uk/listing/the-list/list-entry/1155955
26 and 28 Grosvenor Road	II	https://historicengland.org.uk/listing/the-list/list-entry/1092637
27 Grosvenor Road	II	https://historicengland.org.uk/listing/the-list/list-entry/1092636
30 Grosvenor Road	II	https://historicengland.org.uk/listing/the-list/list-entry/1155971
Aldershot Cenotaph, Municipal Gardens, Grosvenor Road	II	https://historicengland.org.uk/listing/the-list/list-entry/1464695
Aldershot Town Hall, Grosvenor Road	II	https://historicengland.org.uk/listing/the-list/list-entry/1092638
Church of St Joseph's, Queens Road	II	https://historicengland.org.uk/listing/the-list/list-entry/1092607
Queen Hotel Public House, 1 High Street	II	https://historicengland.org.uk/listing/the-list/list-entry/1339673

Locally Listed Heritage Assets⁹

Name	Reference
Alexandra Public House, Barrack Road	LL5003
Imperial House, 2 Grosvenor Road	LL5008
Wesley Hall, Barrack Road	LL5009
Masonic Hall, Edward Street	LL5025
St Joseph's Rectory, Queens Road	LL5075
West End Centre, Queens Road	LL5076
Former Wesley House, Upper Union Street	LL5081
Rowhill School, York Road	LL5180

⁹ Locally Listed Heritage Assets are available to view on the Council's website at <https://www.rushmoor.gov.uk/locallylistedbuildings>.

Name	Reference
14, 16 and 16a Grosvenor Road	LL5182
Former Empire Cinema, High Street	LL5189
Former Ritz Cinema, High Street	LL5190

9. Management Plan

Introduction

- 9.1 The Management Plan outlines a positive strategy to deal with the threats and opportunities identified in the Conservation Area Appraisal.
- 9.2 The effect of incremental small-scale change within a conservation area can be cumulatively negative, particularly when involving the loss of key features such as chimneys, boundary walls, and traditional windows and doors. Incremental change is particularly difficult to manage because it is not within the usual remit of the planning system without the imposition of special controls. Proactive and positive encouragement to good stewardship by residents and property owners can play a significant part in the preservation and enhancement of local character.

Good Stewardship

- 9.3 The active management of small-scale change within a conservation area is the responsibility of the people who live and work in the area. Community-led conservation involves guiding positive change and positive regular maintenance. The owners of properties within conservation areas are caretakers of local heritage for future generations, and commitment to good conservation practices is vital for preserving and enhancing the character and appearance.
- 9.4 Living in a well-maintained conservation area often increases property values and appreciation, as well as the general desirability of the area and its community value.
- 9.5 Historic England, the Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings (SPAB) and other heritage bodies publish specialist guidance on the suitable maintenance and repair methods for different historic buildings and buildings affecting conservation areas.

Development Management

- 9.6 Some planning controls over development within conservation areas restrict changes to external appearance and prevent buildings from being demolished without planning permission. Further information is available within the Council's [Conservation Areas Overview document](#) and on the Council's conservation areas webpage.¹⁰ However, some permitted development rights allow for certain types of development and alterations without the need for planning permission. Many of these alterations, including the introduction of uPVC windows and doors and alterations to front boundary

¹⁰ Available at <https://www.rushmoor.gov.uk/conservationareas>.

walls, can have an unintended impact and gradually erode the character or appearance of a conservation area through the loss of original building features. For example, the residential areas of the conservation area, particularly Queens Road, have lost a number of original building features over the years.

- 9.7 Further protection of key features within a conservation area can be accomplished by introducing Article 4 directions which restrict the exercise of permitted development rights. Directions are already in place in some of Rushmoor's other conservation areas to prevent the inappropriate replacement of windows and doors and the loss of chimneys and boundary walls, amongst other things. Consideration will be given to introducing a similar Article 4 direction within the Aldershot West conservation area if expedient.¹¹
- 9.8 The commercial parts of the conservation area are largely unaltered, but there are some unauthorised advertisement signs and shutters in places. The Council will resist any further changes of this nature and will investigate the possibility of taking enforcement action if expedient.
- 9.9 It is not the intention of conservation area designation to prevent new development or adaptation and alteration to suit the needs of property owners. Instead, it puts in place a process whereby proposals are more-thoroughly studied to ensure that the special architectural and historic interest of the conservation area is protected and opportunities to improve its character are identified. New development can range from entire new buildings to the introduction of new features, however small, on existing buildings. Development within the setting of the conservation area (within, views into and out of) should also be carefully managed, as it has the potential to detract from its character and appearance.
- 9.10 In summary, any development within the conservation area should seek to:
- Preserve its historic features;
 - Enhance, where possible, its special interest;
 - Contribute positively to its established character; and
 - Be of high quality.

¹¹ Further information on the Council's Article 4 directions is available at <https://www.rushmoor.gov.uk/planning-and-building-control/planning-permission-and-applications/article-4-directions-and-planning-permission/>.

Implementation and Monitoring

- 9.11 Progress on the implementation of the Management Plan and the extent to which planning policies in the Local Plan are complied with or effective in protecting the character and appearance of the conservation area will be monitored through the Council's annual Authority Monitoring Report.
- 9.12 Such assessments can be used to review and, if necessary, modify the planning policies as part of the five-year review of the Local Plan. The assessments can also be used to review and, if necessary, modify this Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan.

10. Review of the Conservation Area Boundary

- 10.1 Aldershot West is a coherent, if mixed, conservation area. It contains some high-quality Victorian terraced housing, together with a number of distinctive civic and public buildings. Cargate conservation area adjoins Aldershot West conservation area to the south and has a different, entirely residential character.

Aldershot Town Centre

- 10.2 Located to the east of the conservation area, the retail core of Aldershot Town Centre has been altered substantially through post-war development, including the Wellington Centre indoor shopping centre and the Union Yard redevelopment. Moreover, the original features of the shop fronts on Union Street outside the conservation area have been lost. It is therefore not considered appropriate to extend the conservation area eastwards.

Rowhill School

- 10.3 Located to the west of Arlington Terrace, Rowhill School is an attractive Victorian building and is locally listed. Built in 1889 by the Aldershot School Board, but with later additions, the building shares a common palette of materials, style and form with the wider conservation area and is of historic interest as a school built in response to the 1870 Education Act. The school would make a positive contribution to the conservation area, and it is therefore proposed to include it within the boundary.

Sub-Area 4: Gardens and Cinemas

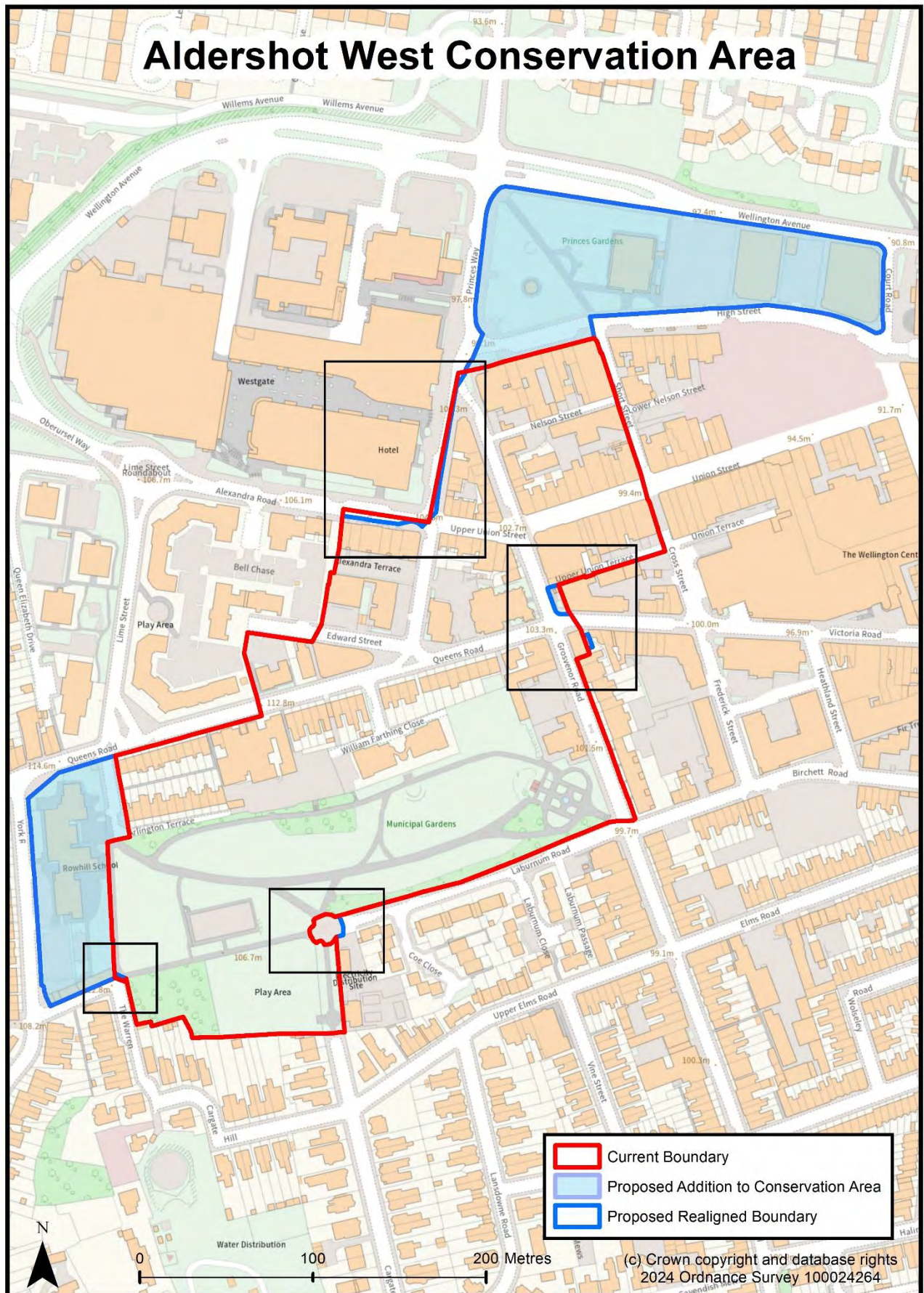
- 10.4 Located to the north of the conservation area adjacent to the existing commercial sub-area (Sub-Area 3), this proposed sub-area is occupied by Princes Gardens and two large 1930s buildings, both of which were formerly in cinema use (the Ritz and the Empire) and are locally listed.
- 10.5 Although parts of the area are a little run down and unloved, with the presence of a hand car wash, a modern GP surgery building and a surface car park, the area as a whole is of local historic interest. The gardens are worthy of inclusion within the conservation area as they form a commemorative open space which unites the civilian and army populations of Aldershot. The space has historic associations with the Royal Engineers and positively contributes to the neighbouring conservation area. The Empire and Ritz are also landmark quality buildings, both by design and by architect. Despite their run-down appearance, both buildings retain their architectural form and features and reflect the cinema-going

habits of the 1930s. It is therefore proposed to incorporate the area within the conservation area as a separate sub-area.

Minor Boundary Adjustments

- 10.6 It is proposed that a slight adjustment be made in some places to realign the boundary with existing property and highways extents. A reflection of extensions to buildings which have taken place since the last review of the conservation area, the existing boundary on Grosvenor Road to the east cuts through 27 Grosvenor Road and a small part of 23 Grosvenor Road, the majority of which lies outside the conservation area. It is therefore proposed to realign the boundary to incorporate all of 27 Grosvenor Road and to remove the entirety of 23 Grosvenor Road from the conservation area. It is also proposed that a small adjustment be made to the western boundary on Barrack Road and to the north-western boundary on Alexandra Road to align the boundary with the pavement. Further boundary adjustments include small re-alignments to the pavement and paths within the Municipal Gardens (see Figure 3). These changes will ensure that the position of the conservation area boundary is more easily defined and identified on the ground and are consistent with Historic England advice on the location of conservation area boundaries.

Figure 3: Map of Proposed Boundary Changes





Conservation Area

appraisal and management plan



Farnborough Street



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1. Introduction

- 1.1 This document should be read alongside the Council's [Conservation Areas Overview document](#) which sets out the context in which conservation areas in Rushmoor have been designated. This includes the legislative and planning policy framework, as well as the geographic and historic setting of the Borough.¹ The Overview document also explains what requires planning permission in a conservation area.
- 1.2 A conservation area is a place of special architectural or historic interest, the character or appearance of which it is desirable to conserve or enhance. Building groups, walls, trees and hedges, open spaces, views and historic settlement patterns all combine to create a sense of place. It is this character, which is required, rather than simply individual buildings, that the designation of conservation area status seeks to protect. The location of the boundary for a conservation area is a qualitative decision relating to character. It is essential for the protection of conservation areas that only areas which are heritage assets are designated so that 'the concept of conservation is not devalued'.²

Appraisal and Management Plan

- 1.3 This Appraisal document sets out the special architectural and historic interest of Farnborough Street conservation area, the character or appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance. The Appraisal identifies the features of the conservation area that make a positive or negative contribution to its significance and is accompanied by a Management Plan which sets out how change can be managed to conserve and enhance the area.
- 1.4 Conservation area appraisals and management plans provide a framework and guide to enable planning decisions to be made on a site-specific basis, within the context of national planning policy and the adopted Local Plan. This Appraisal has also been prepared having regard to [Historic England Advice Note 1 \(Second Edition\)](#).³

¹ Available to view at <https://www.rushmoor.gov.uk/planning-and-building-control/conservation-and-heritage-assets/conservation-areas/>.

² National Planning Policy Framework (2023), para. 197.

³ Available to view at <https://historicengland.org.uk/images-books/publications/conservation-area-appraisal-designation-management-advice-note-1/>.

- 1.5 Every effort has been made to include or analyse elements that are key to the special character of the conservation area. However, where buildings, structures or features have not been specifically highlighted, it does not necessarily follow that they are of no visual or historic value.

2. Overview of Farnborough Street Conservation Area

Designation History

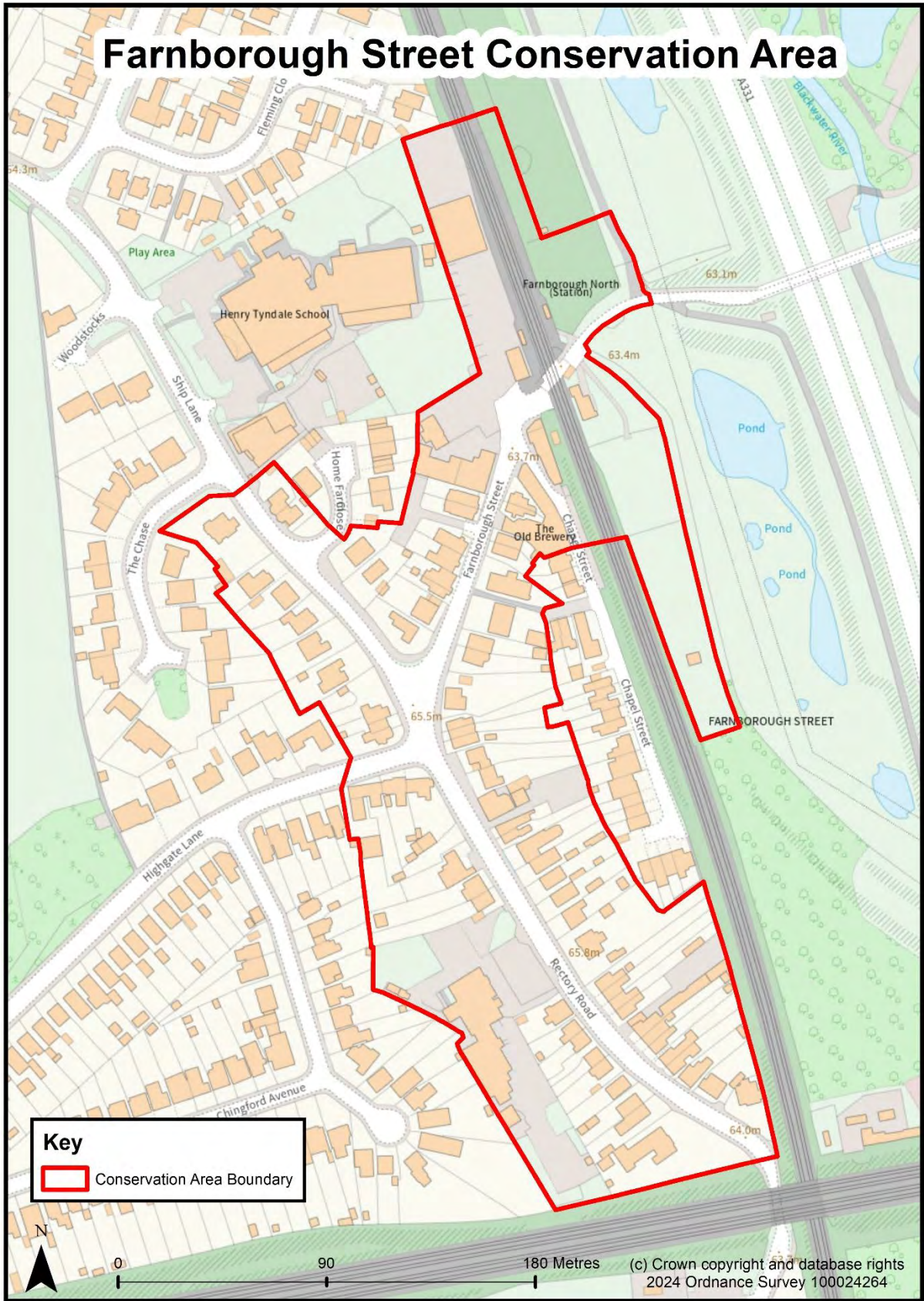
- 2.1 Farnborough Street conservation area forms part of an area first designated as the Farnborough Hill conservation area in 1977, which was subsequently reviewed in 1989. As part of the process of reviewing and appraising the Farnborough Hill conservation area, the Council decided in 2022 that it should be split into two parts. The appraisal process had identified two areas of very different character which would no longer be joined following proposed boundary changes.
- 2.2 In 2024, following two rounds of public consultation in 2021 and 2023, the Council designated a new [Farnborough Hill conservation area](#), which is predominantly centred on Farnborough Hill school and its grounds.⁴ It also designated the Farnborough Street conservation area, the subject of this Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan, and subsequently de-designated the original Farnborough Hill conservation area. The result of these changes is that several areas within the original Farnborough Hill conservation area are no longer covered by conservation area designation, as set out within the Appendix.

Location

- 2.3 Located in north-east Farnborough, Farnborough Street conservation area is centred on the crossroads where Farnborough Street meets Rectory Road, Ship Lane and Highgate Lane. Bounded to the south by the South West Main Line and to the east by the North Downs Line railway lines and incorporating Farnborough Street to the east of the crossroads, Rectory Road to the south, and parts of Ship Lane and Highgate Lane to the north and west respectively, the conservation area comprises the location of the original village of Farnborough, from where the town of today developed from the mid- to late nineteenth century.

⁴ The Farnborough Hill Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan is available to view at <https://www.rushmoor.gov.uk/planning-and-building-control/conservation-and-heritage-assets/conservation-areas/farnborough-hill-conservation-area/>.

Figure 1: Map of Farnborough Street Conservation Area



Area Development

- 2.3 The oldest part of Farnborough can be traced to the area around Farnborough Street. The original village, recorded in the Domesday Book in 1086 as *Ferneberga*, meaning ‘hill of ferns’, developed around the crossroads formed by Highgate Lane, Ship Lane, Rectory Road and Farnborough Street. Somewhat isolated in north-eastern Hampshire, and located in the midst of a large heath, the village developed very little over the centuries and was largely unaffected by outside influences until the arrival of the railway in the mid-nineteenth century. Prior to that point, the village had changed very little since the Domesday survey. The main occupation was farming, although a small pottery industry had developed in the area as early as the mid-fourteenth century. Much of the land within the village was owned by the Lord of the Manor, who lived nearby in the Manor House, now St Peter’s Junior School, at Farnborough Park or Place. The population in 1811 was 360 and was still only 477 in 1851.⁵
- 2.4 The main road between Reading and Guildford ran through the village at Farnborough Street and met Highgate Lane at the crossroads. Until 1917, when it was felled by the District Council, the crossroads had been home to a large, pollarded ancient elm tree, known locally as ‘the Old Pollard’ or ‘the Old Elm’. A key feature of village life for many years, the tree was a meeting place; a seat there is recorded in parish records as having been repaired in 1797. Contemporary accounts record that it was also the scene of an annual pig-killing ceremony at Christmas and that children played around its trunk and climbed its branches. Iron railings were erected around the tree by the local blacksmith in the late nineteenth century to prevent people from sleeping within its almost-hollow trunk. Its felling attracted much consternation from the local community, as it resulted in the loss of an historic link to the past when Farnborough lay within Windsor Forest.⁶
- 2.5 The railway arrived in Farnborough in 1838, when the main line from London, part of the London and South Western Railway, reached the village. Although the village centre was in and around Farnborough Street, a small station was constructed about a mile away to the south east near to the old London to Winchester turnpike road (Farnborough Road). With the expansion of the line to the south coast and an associated increase in station traffic, the station was soon enlarged, and

⁵ J. Gosney (2001) *Farnborough Past*, Phillimore & Co. Ltd; J Gosney (2005) *Farnborough: A Pictorial History: One Hundred Years under the Flight Path*, Phillimore and Co. Ltd; C. Woodward (2001) *Farnborough: A Photographic History of Your Town*, Black Horse Books.

⁶ J. Challacombe (1922) *Jottings from a Farnborough Note Book: A Story of an Old World Village*, Gale and Polden Ltd; J. Gosney (2001) *Farnborough Past*, Phillimore & Co. Ltd; C. Woodward (2001) *Farnborough: A Photographic History of Your Town*, Black Horse Books.

purpose-built royal waiting rooms were added for Queen Victoria, who became a regular user of the station. She would often travel to the station from Windsor by horse and carriage to join the train on her journey to Osborne House on the Isle of Wight, and following the government's decision in 1853 to establish a permanent military garrison in nearby Aldershot, she would disembark at the station to inspect her troops, as Aldershot did not gain a train station until 1870.⁷

- 2.6 The railway arrived in the village centre in 1849 with the opening of a station at Farnborough Street on a different railway line built by the South Eastern and Chatham Railway. The line followed the course of the River Blackwater and was intended to link the north and west with ports on the English Channel. The station was initially given the same 'Farnborough' name as the South Western station to the south east of the village, and there was sometimes much confusion, particularly during the Crimean War when large numbers of soldiers embarking for overseas duty often marched to the wrong station. The station was later renamed 'Farnborough North' in the 1920s.⁸
- 2.7 The arrival of the railway and the establishment of the military camp in Aldershot in 1854 had a profound impact on the village and rural community. Shops and businesses were established within the vicinity of the railway stations and spread towards Cove and Aldershot, and many villagers found work in the construction of the camp to the south. The camp was built as the North Camp and South Camp and divided by the Basingstoke Canal. Whilst the South Camp was located within Aldershot, the North Camp lay within the parish of Farnborough, and many businesses were established on its northern boundary to serve the military, with many large houses also built to accommodate officers. A period of rapid expansion followed, and by the late nineteenth century Farnborough was divided into North and South Farnborough. By 1922, North Farnborough was only about a third of the size of South Farnborough, with the original village dwarfed by the rapid developments.⁹
- 2.8 Increased prosperity and railway access also attracted wealthy people into the area from the cities in search for healthier countryside living. For example, a large house built at Windmill Hill in 1806 was purchased by the London-based publisher Thomas Longman in 1860, who demolished the building

⁷ J. Gosney (2001) *Farnborough Past*, Phillimore & Co. Ltd; J Gosney (2005) *Farnborough: A Pictorial History: One Hundred Years under the Flight Path*, Phillimore and Co. Ltd; C. Woodward (2001) *Farnborough: A Photographic History of Your Town*, Black Horse Books.

⁸ J. Gosney (2001) *Farnborough Past*, Phillimore & Co. Ltd; J Gosney (2005) *Farnborough: A Pictorial History: One Hundred Years under the Flight Path*, Phillimore and Co. Ltd.

⁹ J. Gosney (1997) *Farnborough: A Second Selection*, Sutton Publishing Ltd; J. Gosney (2001) *Farnborough Past*, Phillimore & Co. Ltd; J Gosney (2005) *Farnborough: A Pictorial History: One Hundred Years under the Flight Path*, Phillimore and Co. Ltd; C. Woodward (2001) *Farnborough: A Photographic History of Your Town*, Black Horse Books.

and built a substantial new mansion on the site, which became known as Farnborough Hill. As well as providing employment for the villagers, Longman and his family were known for their generosity and benevolence; they took an active interest in village affairs and gave land to build a village school, which opened in 1868, they distributed clothes to the poor and held parties for school children, and villagers were invited up to the house at Christmas to receive gifts of food. Upon Longman's death in 1879, the property was purchased by Empress Eugénie, the widow of Napoleon III of France, and it became her home in exile from 1880 until her death in 1920. The Empress was well respected and often visited the village in her carriage; she was also very charitable and took a great interest in the welfare of the village children. Following her death, the Farnborough Hill estate was broken up in 1927, with much of the land sold for redevelopment.¹⁰

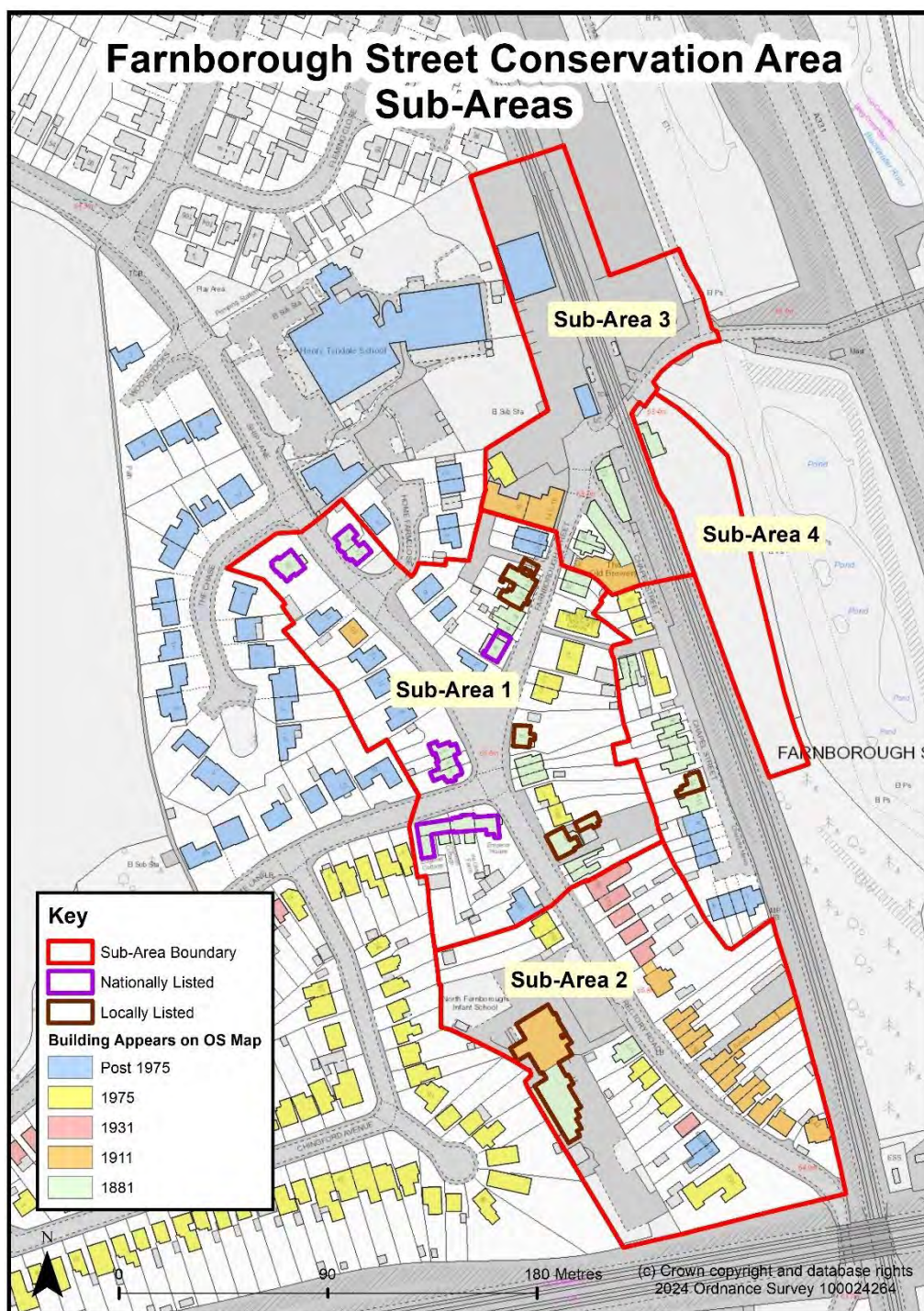
Area Summary

- 2.9 Today, the area which forms Farnborough Street conservation area is a compact and predominantly residential village situated within the wider conurbation of modern Farnborough, much of which was built and developed in the twentieth century on land which had formed part of the manorial estate. Centred around the crossroads at the heart of the old village, the area has an informal quality, with nineteenth- and early-twentieth-century infilling and expansion.
- 2.10 The historic form of the village is consolidated by a few notable buildings which stand out by virtue of their distinctive character, architectural quality and prominence at key points in the street scene. Some elements of the formerly mixed character of the historic village, which included shops, farms, inns and small-scale commercial premises, are still apparent in surviving buildings and their features, most noticeably along Farnborough Street.
- 2.11 The conservation area has four areas with distinct character:
- Sub-Area 1: Farnborough Street and Ship Lane;
 - Sub-Area 2: Rectory Road;
 - Sub-Area 3: Railway and Industrial Buildings; and
 - Sub-Area 4: Station Master's House and Grounds.

¹⁰ J. Challacombe (1922) *Jottings from a Farnborough Note Book: A Story of an Old World Village*, Gale and Polden Ltd; J. Gosney (2001) *Farnborough Past*, Phillimore & Co. Ltd; C. Woodward (2001) *Farnborough: A Photographic History of Your Town*, Black Horse Books.

2.12 Further detail about the special characteristics of each sub-area is set out in the following sections.

Figure 2: Map of Sub-Areas¹¹



¹¹ This map depicts when buildings first appeared on the 1881, 1911, 1931 or 1975 Ordnance Survey (OS) map of the area (see Chapter 7). It does not show the definitive age of the buildings. For example, a building which first appeared on the 1931 OS map would have been built in the period between the publication of the 1911 and 1931 maps.

3. Sub-Area 1: Farnborough Street and Ship Lane

- 3.1 This predominantly residential area includes the crossroads between Farnborough Street, Ship Lane, Highgate Lane and Rectory Road, an historic focal point and meeting place where a large pollarded ancient elm tree once stood. A distinctive feature is the openness of the crossroads, which is framed by several substantial historic buildings, some of which are statutorily or locally listed. The sub-area retains a vernacular village aesthetic despite its urban surroundings.

Building Form and Detail

- 3.2 Most buildings have an individual historic style, owing to the organic vernacular development of the area. Materials are primarily red brick, with some houses having white render. Some, by virtue of their age, may be timber-framed internally. The majority of roofs are gabled, with material varying between clay tiles and slate, and several original chimneys are visible. There are some wooden front doors, some with half lights, but most are modern replacements. Windows are predominantly sash, some of which have been replaced.

Streetscape and Boundaries (Public Realm)

- 3.3 The road and paving are tarmac, with some traditional lamp posts. Farnborough Street gives the appearance of being narrow and enclosed, creating a constrained street scene. The road widens around the crossroads, where there is a traditional fingerpost road sign as well as standard road signs. The varied gaps between the buildings illustrate how the area has developed informally over time. Early photographs of the area suggest a mix of boundary treatments, including walls, fences and hedges, which remains the case.

Open Spaces, Parks and Gardens, and Trees

- 3.4 The majority of the dwellings along Farnborough Street have well-maintained small front gardens, with larger gardens on Ship Lane. There are a number of prominent trees within the sub-area, although several trees depicted in historic photographs are no longer present. Behind the ridge line of the street, the backdrop is very green, with trees visible in gaps between buildings.

Views

- 3.5 The area is relatively flat, and views are mainly contained within the street. The crossroads offers a focal point for views and is a defining feature of the conservation area. The view down Farnborough Street is straight, but Ship Lane curves gently, providing a gradually unfolding view to those passing along it.

Alterations

- 3.6 A distinctive character of the public realm is the division between public and private space in front of the dwellings. In some cases, the front-boundary treatment has been lost, but these semi-private spaces frame the buildings and provide important settings. There are also phone lines across the street in multiple places which affect views.
- 3.7 A large number of windows within the sub-area have been replaced, with varying levels of sensitivity to the historic context. Front doors also appear to have been replaced, but several are traditionally styled and wooden and are consistent with the character of the area.
- 3.8 As noted above, it is apparent from historic photographs that a number of large trees which framed the crossroads are no longer present. Removing established trees should be discouraged, and consideration should be given towards new and replacement planting.

Sub-Area 1: Farnborough Street and Ship Lane



Oriel Cottage, 23 Ship Lane (Grade II listed)



Emperor House; Empress Cottage; Eugenie Cottage; and Ye Olde Farm, Highgate Lane (Grade II listed)



View of Crossroads



14 Ship Lane; and Rose Cottage, 12 Ship Lane (Grade II listed)



Elm Tree House, 9 Farnborough Street (locally listed)



Yew Tree Cottage, 4 Farnborough Street (Grade II listed)



6 and 8-10 Farnborough Street



Empress Cottages, 1, 3 and 5 Ship Lane; and 2 Highgate Lane (Grade II listed)

4. Sub-Area 2: Rectory Road

- 4.1 This sub-area comprises housing on Rectory Road, as well as North Farnborough Infant School, which is locally listed.

Building Form and Detail

- 4.2 The general scene is characterised by mainly Victorian and Edwardian housing, with some later infill development. Buildings along the eastern side of Rectory Road are medium in scale, increasing in height towards the southern end. The terraced and semi-detached form of the dwellings creates the impression of an almost-continuous façade.
- 4.3 The building material is predominantly red brick, with canted bay windows and slate gabled roofs. Embellishments include decorative tiles, brickwork and masonry. There are some decorative chimney pots and stacks, which are an important feature of the roofline. Doors are set within recessed arches, with skylights above. In some places, traditional wooden sash windows have been replaced with modern units, with varying degrees of success and sympathy to the historic fabric and design.

Streetscape and Boundaries (Public Realm)

- 4.4 The sub-area is comprised of a series of formal spaces. The street is relatively wide, flat and mainly straight, with a curve towards the southern end. Historic boundary treatments at the front of the dwellings have been hard-surfaced in places to provide off-street parking. There are also a number of modern street and traffic signs located along the road, as well as contemporary street lighting.

Open Spaces, Parks and Gardens, and Trees

- 4.5 The road is lined by private and semi-private spaces. North Farnborough Infant School is set back from the street, creating a more open form. There are several dominant trees within the area which provide visual interest. Combined with the green backdrop of the railway embankment to the south, they provide a green setting within the urban area.

Views

- 4.6 Focal points include several prominent trees in both the public and private realm, as well as the North Farnborough Infant School building and grounds. The views are mainly urban, with a green backdrop of vegetation along the railway line visible behind the dwellings on the east side of the

road. The imposing façades of the buildings provide interesting views along the street, particularly the red-brick dwellings on the eastern side towards the south.

Alterations

- 4.7 Although windows appear to retain their original openings, many along the road have been replaced over the years with varying, and sometimes insensitive, units.
- 4.8 A distinctive characteristic of the dwellings is a brick front-boundary wall. However, many have been removed over time, to the detriment of the area's character.
- 4.9 There are also numerous satellite dishes, television aerials and associated wiring visible from the street scene which interrupt the façade of the dwellings and the rooflines.

Sub-Area 2: Rectory Road



North Farnborough Infant School, Rectory Road (locally listed)



150 and 148 Rectory Road



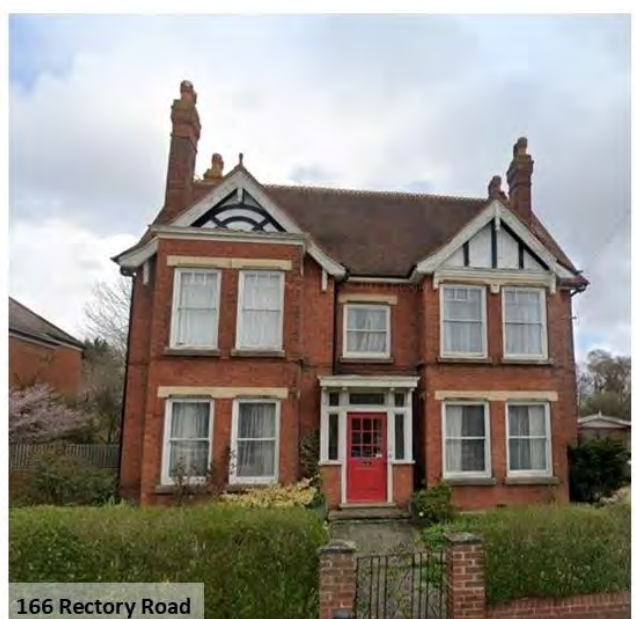
183 and 185 Rectory Road



146 Rectory Road



164, 162 and 160 Rectory Road



166 Rectory Road

5. Sub-Area 3: Railway and Industrial Buildings

- 5.1 This sub-area is characterised by Farnborough North railway station, the railway itself and several industrial buildings. The area became a hub of commercial activity from the mid-1800s following the development of the railway and the opening of the station.

Building Form and Detail

- 5.2 Located adjacent to the railway, the sub-area contains three industrial buildings which date from the mid- to late nineteenth century. The buildings remain in an employment use, although one has been partially converted to residential use, and they retain form and features which reflect their industrial history. The name of one of the buildings, 'the Old Brewery', which is situated on the corner with Chapel Street and wraps around residential dwellings at numbers 27 and 29 Farnborough Street, betrays its history as a former bottling plant or warehouse for the Reading-based brewer H. & G. Simmonds Ltd, which opened its stores adjacent to the station in about 1867 to serve the nearby military camps. The building directly opposite (no. 33/33a) was also used by the brewery, with raw materials unloaded directly from the railway.¹²
- 5.3 Materials are primarily red brick with clay-tiled roofs, which are either gabled or hipped. The historic fabric of the workshops and storage buildings is evident in their layout and appearance. Their factory origins are reflected in wooden-slatted doors and a variety of unusually shaped sash windows.
- 5.4 Immediately adjacent to the station lies a builders' merchant, which occupies the former goods yard. The original station building has long disappeared and has been replaced by a smaller red-brick, two-storey modern building in use as a trade counter.

Streetscape and Boundaries (Public Realm)

- 5.5 Reflecting their industrial heritage and dominating the streetscape, the buildings open directly on to the pavement, and there are no front-boundary treatments. The street furniture includes a number of signs relating to the current businesses which occupy the buildings, several traditional lamp posts and a wall-mounted post box.

¹² J. Gosney (1997) *Farnborough: A Second Selection*, Sutton Publishing Ltd; J. Gosney (2001) *Farnborough Past*, Phillimore & Co. Ltd; J. Gosney (2009) *Farnborough through Time*, Amberley Publishing.

Open Spaces, Parks and Gardens, and Trees

- 5.6 Although there is a lack of trees and greenery within the sub-area, a number of prominent and mature tree specimens are visible on the other side of the railway line to the north and east, as well as behind the builders' merchant yard towards Henry Tyndale School to the north and the modern residential development at Home Farm Close to the west.

Views

- 5.7 The area is generally flat, but interest is added by the gentle curve of the street, which reveals views towards the station and the railway crossing. The traditional white railway crossing gate with a red plate at the end of Farnborough Street is a key focal point, as is the imposing two-storey former brewery building (no. 33/33a) immediately adjacent to the railway.
- 5.8 From the station car park area, there are views across the railway to the former Station Master's house, as well as into the builders' merchant yard next to the station on the former goods yard. Views within this area are short, with glimpses of yards behind workshops, against a backdrop of greenery.

Alterations

- 5.9 There are numerous street signs related to the station and current business activity.
- 5.10 The builders' merchant yard adjacent to the station on the former goods yard remains in commercial use and attracts associated goods vehicles. Whilst it has a negative impact on the character and appearance of the conservation area, its retention within the conservation area boundary will ensure that any future proposal for redevelopment or re-use can be considered against the requirement to preserve and enhance the surrounding character.

Sub-Area 3: Railway and Industrial Buildings



33 and 33a Farnborough Street



The Old Brewery, Farnborough Street



Corner of Farnborough Street and Chapel Street



14 and 16 Farnborough Street



33 Farnborough Street



Rear of The Old Brewery on Chapel Street

6. Sub-Area 4: Station Master's House and Grounds

- 6.1 This sub-area comprises the old Station Master's house and grounds adjacent to Farnborough North railway station at 37 Farnborough Street, on the east side of the railway. The house and grounds are currently in a community use.

Building Form and Detail

- 6.2 A red-brick, two-storey building constructed in the mid-nineteenth-century, 37 Farnborough Street is a comparatively large dwelling which was formerly occupied by the Station Master at Farnborough North railway station. Long vacated by the Station Master and unoccupied for many years, the house and its grounds are now in a community use. The building faces Farnborough Street from the other side of the railway and fronts on to the railway line and railway crossing. It has a gabled slate roof and appears to retain traditional wooden windows; interestingly, there are no windows on the upper floor of the rear elevation. A decorative brick band between the ground and first floor adds visual detail on the front elevation, as do brick lintels above the windows and decorative brick quoins on the corner of the building.

Streetscape and Boundaries (Public Realm)

- 6.3 There is limited public realm within this sub-area. Modern close-board fencing separates the Station Master's house and grounds from the public highway and the railway station located on the other side of the road.

Open Spaces, Parks and Gardens, and Trees

- 6.4 The Station Master's house is set in extensive grounds, which are currently in use as a community garden. Open to members of the public at certain times of the day and enclosed from the outside world by modern fencing and the façade of the house, the garden is an oasis of tranquillity away from the hustle and bustle of the nearby railway station. The garden is mainly laid to lawn and contains several mature tree specimens and well-established shrubs, as well as informal seating. Beyond a picket fence lies a community allotment area comprised of raised planters.

Views

- 6.5 Views within the grounds of the Station Master's house are relatively short. Focal points include several prominent trees beyond the picket fence and the Station Master's house itself. On account of the enclosed space, views out of the sub-area are fleeting, although there are views of the railway line and Chapel Street if one ventures beyond the picket fence into the heart of the garden.

Alterations

- 6.6 Immediately adjacent to the Station Master's house to the north and adjoining the level crossing lies a modern single-storey modular building which was granted temporary planning permission in May 2021 in connection with the neighbouring railway use.¹³ Whilst this building has a detrimental impact upon the character and appearance of the area, the planning permission requires its removal and the restoration of the land before May 2026.

¹³ Planning Reference Number: 21/00212/FULPP. Available to view at <https://publicaccess.rushmoor.gov.uk/online-applications/>.

Sub-Area 4: Station Master's House and Grounds



Station Master's House (37 Farnborough Street)



Rear of Station Master's House



Rear of Station Master's House

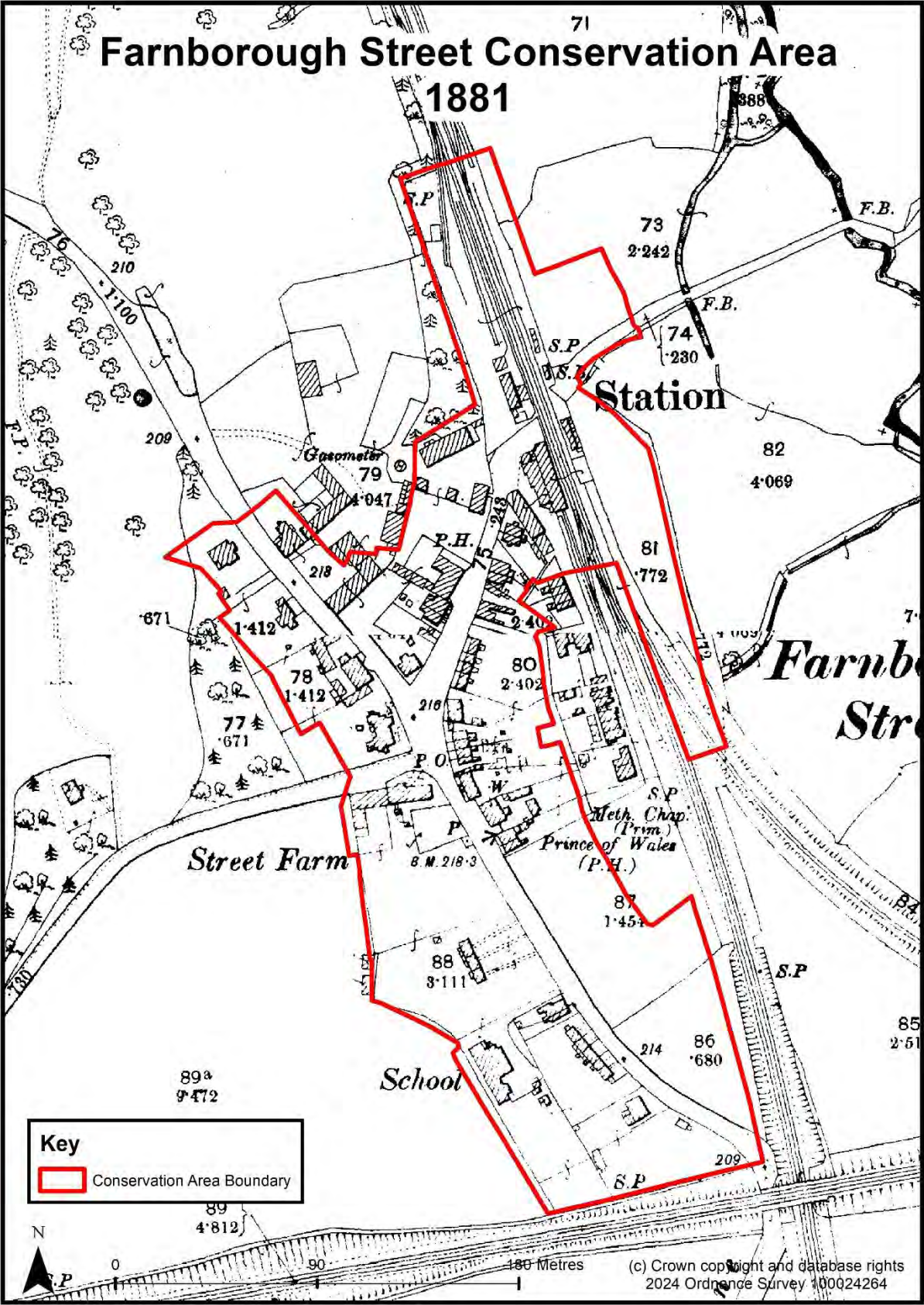


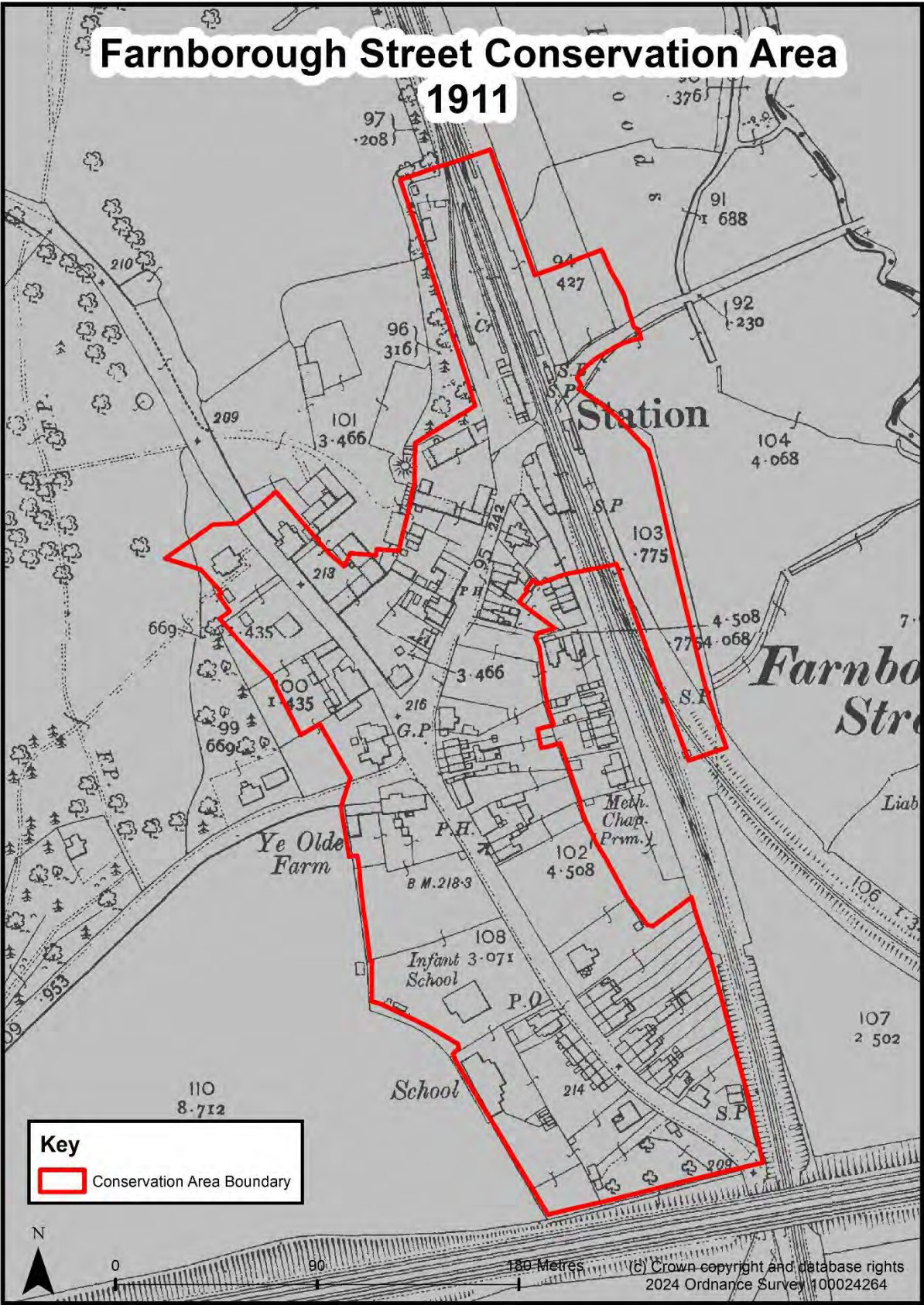
Grounds of Station Master's House

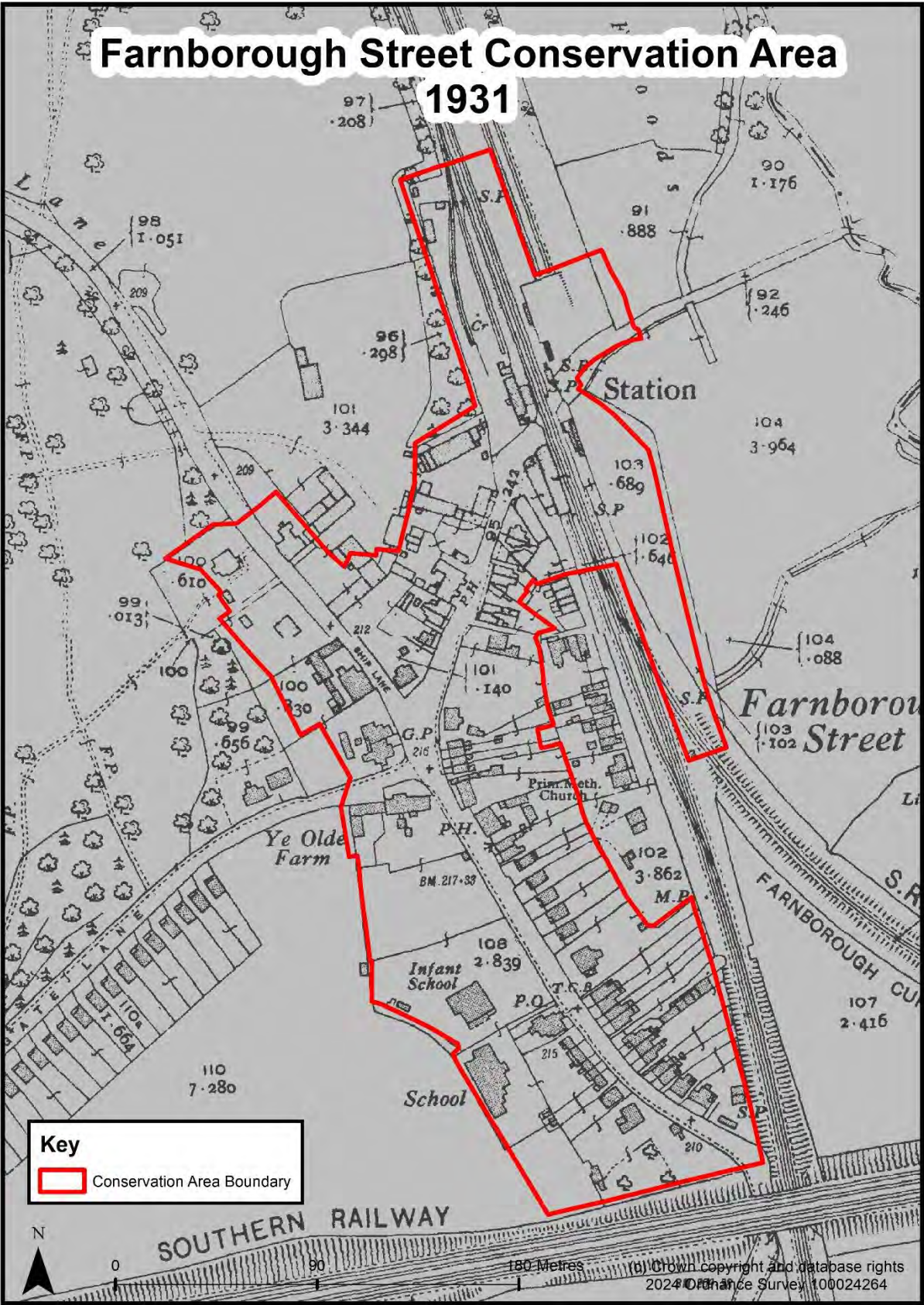


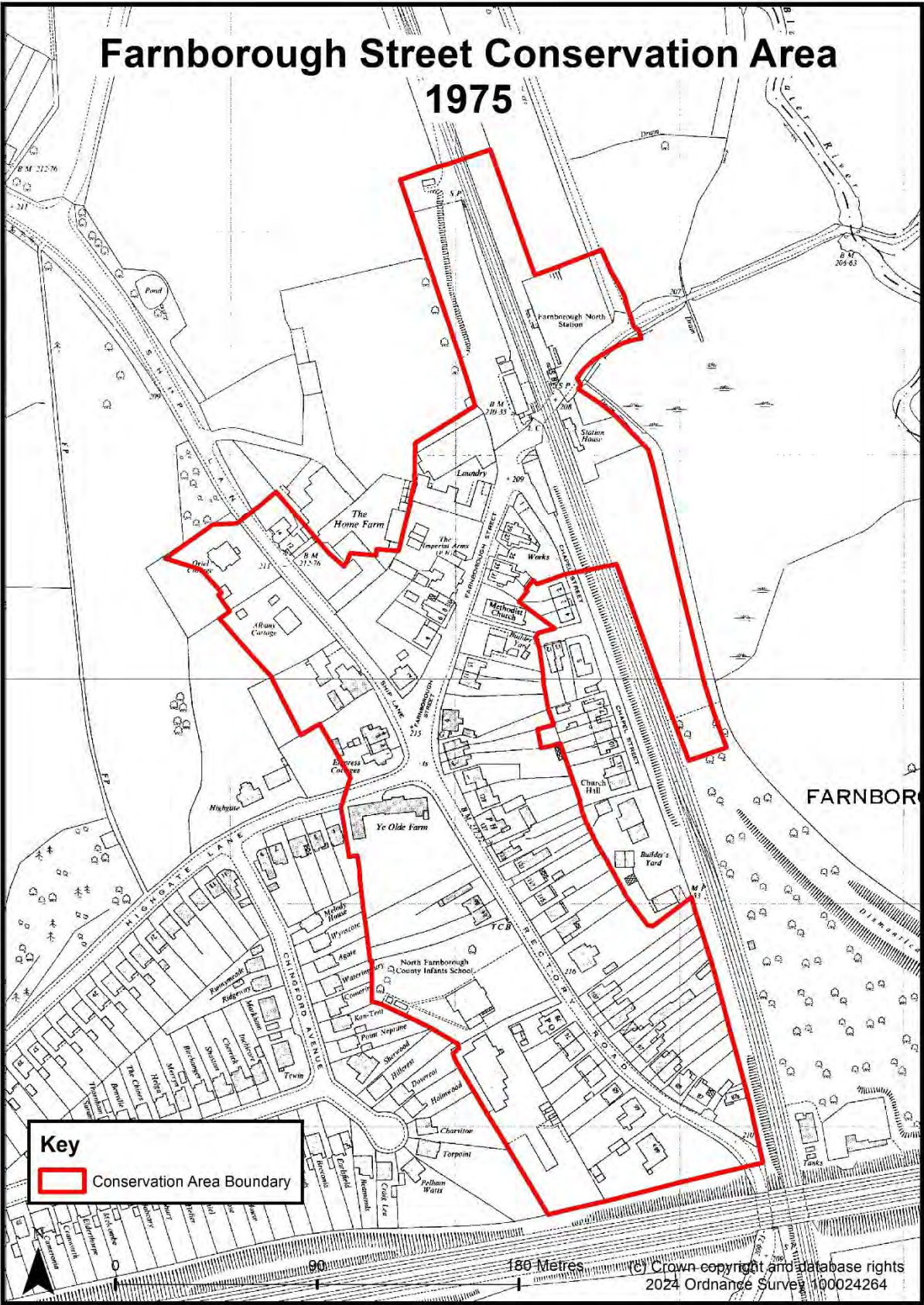
Grounds of Station Master's House

7. Historic Maps









8. Listed Buildings and Structures

Nationally Listed

Name	Grade	Link to Historic England Record
14 Ship Lane; and Rose Cottage, 12 Ship Lane	II	https://historicengland.org.uk/listing/the-list/list-entry/1339699
Emperor House; Empress Cottage; Eugenie Cottage; and Ye Olde Farm, Highgate Lane	II	https://historicengland.org.uk/listing/the-list/list-entry/1092639
Empress Cottages, 1, 3 and 5 Ship Lane; and 2 Highgate Lane	II	https://historicengland.org.uk/listing/the-list/list-entry/1092609
Oriel Cottage, 23 Ship Lane	II	https://historicengland.org.uk/listing/the-list/list-entry/1156289
Yew Tree Cottage, 4 Farnborough Street	II	https://historicengland.org.uk/listing/the-list/list-entry/1092634

Locally Listed Heritage Assets¹⁴

Name	Reference
Elm Tree House, 9 Farnborough Street	LL5116
12 and 12a Farnborough Street (Former Imperial Arms)	LL5117
North Farnborough Infant School Rectory Road	LL5135
The Prince of Wales, 184 Rectory Road	LL5137
Outbuilding to the Prince of Wales, 184 Rectory Road	LL5153

¹⁴ Locally Listed Heritage Assets are available to view on the Council's website at <https://www.rushmoor.gov.uk/locallylistedbuildings>.

9. Management Plan

Introduction

- 9.1 The Management Plan outlines a positive strategy to deal with the threats and opportunities identified in the Conservation Area Appraisal.
- 9.2 The effect of incremental small-scale change within a conservation area can be cumulative and negative, particularly when involving the loss of key features such as chimneys, boundary walls, and traditional windows and doors. Incremental change is particularly difficult to manage because it is not within the usual remit of the planning system without the imposition of special controls. Proactive and positive encouragement to good stewardship by residents and property owners can play a significant part in the preservation and enhancement of local character.

Good Stewardship

- 9.3 The active management of small-scale change within a conservation area is the responsibility of the people who live and work in the area. Community-led conservation involves guiding positive change and positive regular maintenance. The owners of properties within conservation areas are caretakers of local heritage for future generations, and commitment to good conservation practice is vital for preserving and enhancing the character and appearance.
- 9.4 Living in a well-maintained conservation area often increases property values and appreciation, as well as the general desirability of the area and its community value. Conservation areas are valued for their distinctiveness, visual appeal and historic character.
- 9.5 Historic England, the Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings (SPAB) and other heritage bodies publish specialist guidance on the suitable maintenance and repair methods for different historic buildings and buildings affecting conservation areas.

Positive and Negative Attributes

- 9.6 The Conservation Area Appraisal has identified the following positive attributes of the conservation area. To preserve the character of the conservation area and to ensure that it has lasting value, it is considered important that these features are retained:
- Trees and greenery in both the public and private domain;
 - Original chimneys and pots on the roofline;

- Boundary walls at the front of properties;
- Areas of private garden of varying sizes between the boundary walls and properties;
- Original decorative features of properties;
- The large plot sizes of properties towards the south of the conservation area.

9.7 The Conservation Area Appraisal has also identified that the character of the conservation area has been adversely affected by gradual and cumulative changes and negative attributes, including:

- Satellite dishes visible from the public domain;
- The loss of boundary walls and the hard-surfacing of front gardens;
- Properties which have had their brick and/or masonry painted;
- Infill extensions or developments between properties;
- Phone lines and related items visible from the public domain;
- The replacement of original windows with windows of an inappropriate design and materials;
- The replacement of original doors with doors of an inappropriate design and materials;
- Advertising signs in residential roads;
- The removal of trees.

Development Management

9.8 Some planning controls over development within conservation areas restrict changes to external appearance and prevent buildings from being demolished without planning permission. Further information is available within the Council's [Conservation Areas Overview document](#) and on the Council's conservation areas webpage.¹⁵ However, some permitted development rights allow for certain types of development and alterations without the need for planning permission. Many of these alterations, including the introduction of uPVC windows and doors and alterations to front-boundary walls, can have an unintended impact and gradually erode the character or appearance of a conservation area through the loss of original building features.

¹⁵ Available at <https://www.rushmoor.gov.uk/conservationareas>.

- 9.9 Further protection of key features within a conservation area can be accomplished by introducing Article 4 directions which restrict the exercise of permitted development rights. The purpose of an Article 4 direction is to encourage the retention and good stewardship of high-quality architectural features and to preserve and enhance character and appearance. Directions are already in place in some of Rushmoor's other conservation areas to prevent the inappropriate replacement of windows and doors and the loss of chimneys and boundary walls, amongst other things. Consideration will be given to introducing a similar Article 4 direction within Farnborough Street conservation area if expedient.¹⁶
- 9.10 It is not the intention of conservation area designation to prevent new development or adaptation and alteration to suit the needs of property owners. Instead, it puts in place a process whereby proposals are more-thoroughly studied to ensure that the special architectural and historic interest of the conservation area is protected and opportunities to improve its character are identified. New development can range from entire new buildings to the introduction of new features, however small, on existing buildings. Development within the setting of the conservation area (within, views into and out of) should also be carefully managed, as it has the potential to detract from its character and appearance.
- 9.11 In summary, any development within the conservation area should seek to:
- Preserve its historic features;
 - Enhance, where possible, its special interest;
 - Contribute positively to its established character; and
 - Be of high quality.

Implementation and Monitoring

- 9.12 Progress on the implementation of the Management Plan and the extent to which planning policies in the Local Plan are complied with or are effective in protecting the character and appearance of the conservation area will be monitored through the Council's annual Authority Monitoring Report.

¹⁶ Further information on the Council's Article 4 directions is available at <https://www.rushmoor.gov.uk/planning-and-building-control/planning-permission-and-applications/article-4-directions-and-planning-permission/>.

- 9.13 Such assessments can be used to review and, if necessary, modify planning policies as part of the five-year review of the Local Plan. The assessments can also be used to review and, if necessary, modify this Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan.

Appendix. Areas No Longer Covered by Conservation Area Designation

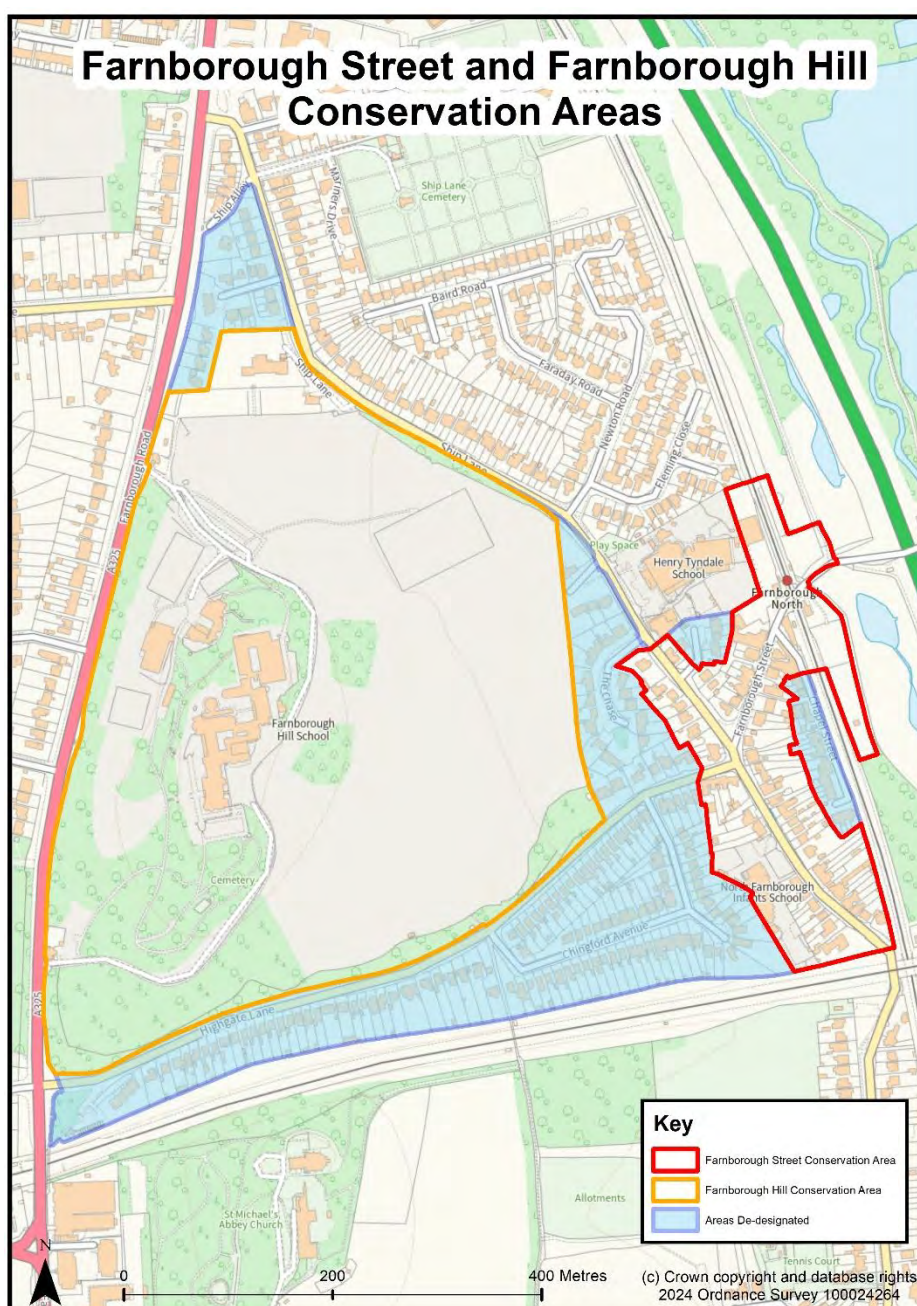
- A1 Conservation areas are intended to recognise areas of historic or architectural character and to assist in their preservation and enhancement. The location of the boundary for a conservation area is a qualitative decision. National planning policy is clear that only areas which are heritage assets should be designated so that ‘the concept of conservation is not devalued’.¹⁷
- A2 Farnborough Street conservation area forms part of an area which was first designated as the Farnborough Hill conservation area in 1977. As part of the process of reviewing and appraising the conservation area, and following a public consultation which took place in November and December 2021, the Council decided in 2022 that the conservation area should be split into two parts, with two new conservation areas being designated in place of the original: one would be centred on Farnborough Hill school and its grounds and become the new Farnborough Hill conservation area, whilst the other would be centred on the crossroads where Farnborough Street meets Rectory Road, Ship Lane and Highgate Lane and become the Farnborough Street conservation area. A further round of public consultation followed between August and October 2023 on a draft Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan for Farnborough Street conservation area, which set out the proposed boundary for the conservation area.
- A3 It was proposed during the public consultations in 2021 and 2023 that a number of areas within the original Farnborough Hill conservation area would no longer be covered by conservation area designation. Whilst objections to the removal of the conservation area designation were received, none provided sufficient evidence to justify the retention of these areas within the new Farnborough Hill or Farnborough Street conservation areas. The areas were subsequently de-designated in 2024.
- A4 Trees in a conservation area that meet [specified criteria](#) are protected by legislation, requiring the Council to be notified of any works to a tree.¹⁸ When areas are de-designated and are no longer part of a conservation area, trees are no longer afforded such protection, although existing Tree Preservation Orders (TPOs) are unaffected. A review of all trees within the areas no longer covered by conservation area designation has been undertaken, and Tree Preservation Orders have been made where necessary to ensure that trees worthy of protection continue to receive protection.

¹⁷ National Planning Policy Framework (2023), para. 197.

¹⁸ Available to view at <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/tree-preservation-orders-and-trees-in-conservation-areas#Protecting-trees-in-conservation-areas>.

- A5 A review of buildings and structures within the areas no longer covered by conservation area designation has also been undertaken to determine whether any are worthy of local listing based on their architectural and historic interest.
- A6 The map below depicts the areas that previously formed part of the original Farnborough Hill conservation area which are no longer covered by conservation area designation, as well as the boundaries of Farnborough Street conservation area and the new Farnborough Hill conservation area. The following section summarises why these areas were considered inappropriate for inclusion within a conservation area.

Figure 3: Areas No Longer Covered by Conservation Area Designation



Woodland Crescent and the North of Ship Lane

- A7 Built in the late twentieth century and early 2000s, the residential dwellings at Woodland Crescent and on Ship Lane to the north are relatively modern properties which do not warrant inclusion within a conservation area. However, an exception is 2 Woodland Crescent, which was constructed in the late nineteenth or early twentieth century; the building is locally listed and has existing protection against inappropriate development.



Woodstocks and The Chase

- A8 Built in the late 1970s or early 1980s on land adjacent to the Grade II listed Oriel Cottage (23 Ship Lane), the residential cul-de-sacs at Woodstocks and The Chase are comprised of modern detached and semi-detached properties which do not warrant inclusion within a conservation area. There are no clear views or linkages to the historic core of the village, and the dwellings do not add to the historic character of Farnborough Street conservation area.



Home Farm Close

- A9 Built in around the 1980s to the rear of the Grade II listed building at 14 Ship Lane and Rose Cottage, 12 Ship Lane on the site of the former Home Farm, the residential cul-de-sac of Home Farm Close is comprised of modern detached and semi-detached housing which does not warrant inclusion within the conservation area.



Highgate Lane and Chingford Avenue

- A10 The dwellings on Highgate Lane and Chingford Avenue were built in around the 1920s and 1930s. Whilst the houses have been finished to a high standard, they have little or no intrinsic architectural or historic interest and are very different in appearance to the historic character of Farnborough Street conservation area.



Chapel Street

- A11 Chapel Street contains a terrace and a pair of semi-detached nineteenth-century railway cottages. Whilst they have some modest local interest for their association with the railway, they have been so altered and had numerous additions and changes over the years, including extensions, rendering, porches and uPVC windows, that their architectural interest has been substantially eroded. The terrace of dwellings includes 11 Chapel Street, which appears to have retained its original brickwork and form; the building is locally listed and therefore has existing protection against inappropriate development. The attached dwelling to the south (11a Chapel Street) is believed to be a former Methodist Chapel; whilst it has some local interest, the building has been altered over the years, with the addition of modern windows, a porch, rear extensions and render to the front first floor.
- A12 There are also four modern infill dwellings along Chapel Street which were built in the 1950s or early 1960s; comprising a terrace of three dwellings and a bungalow, they have no architectural or historic merit and do not warrant inclusion within the conservation area.



Charlotte Mews

- A13 Located to the south of Chapel Street, Charlotte Mews is a modern development of eight dwellings, comprising two terraces, which was constructed in the early 2000s. Whilst the dwellings have been finished to a high standard and are relatively attractive, they have no architectural or historic interest and do not warrant inclusion within the conservation area.





Conservation Area appraisal and management plan



South Farnborough



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1. Introduction

- 1.1 This document should be read alongside the Council's [Conservation Areas Overview document](#) which sets out the context in which conservation areas in Rushmoor have been designated. This includes the legislative and planning policy framework, as well as the geographic and historic setting of the Borough.¹ The Overview document also explains what requires planning permission in a conservation area.
- 1.2 A conservation area is a place of special architectural or historic interest, the character or appearance of which it is desirable to conserve or enhance. Building groups, walls, trees and hedges, open spaces, views and historic settlement patterns all combine to create a sense of place. It is this character, which is required, rather than simply individual buildings, that the designation of conservation area status seeks to protect. The location of the boundary for a conservation area is a qualitative decision relating to character. It is essential for the protection of conservation areas that only areas which are heritage assets are designated so that 'the concept of conservation is not devalued'.²

Appraisal and Management Plan

- 1.3 This appraisal document sets out the recognised special architectural and historic interest of the South Farnborough conservation area, the character or appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance. The Appraisal identifies the features of the conservation area that make a positive or negative contribution to its significance and is accompanied by a Management Plan which sets out how change can be managed to conserve and enhance the area.
- 1.4 Conservation area appraisals and management plans provide a framework and guide to enable planning decisions to be made on a site-specific basis, within the context of national planning policy and the adopted Local Plan. This Appraisal has also been prepared having regard to [Historic England Advice Note 1 \(Second Edition\)](#).³
- 1.5 Every effort has been made to include or analyse elements that are key to the special character of the conservation area. However, where buildings, structures or features have not been specifically highlighted, it does not necessarily follow that they are of no visual or historic value.

¹ Available to view at <https://www.rushmoor.gov.uk/planning-and-building-control/conservation-and-heritage-assets/conservation-areas/>.

² National Planning Policy Framework (2023), para. 197.

³ Available to view at <https://historicengland.org.uk/images-books/publications/conservation-area-appraisal-designation-management-advice-note-1/>.

2. Overview of South Farnborough Conservation Area

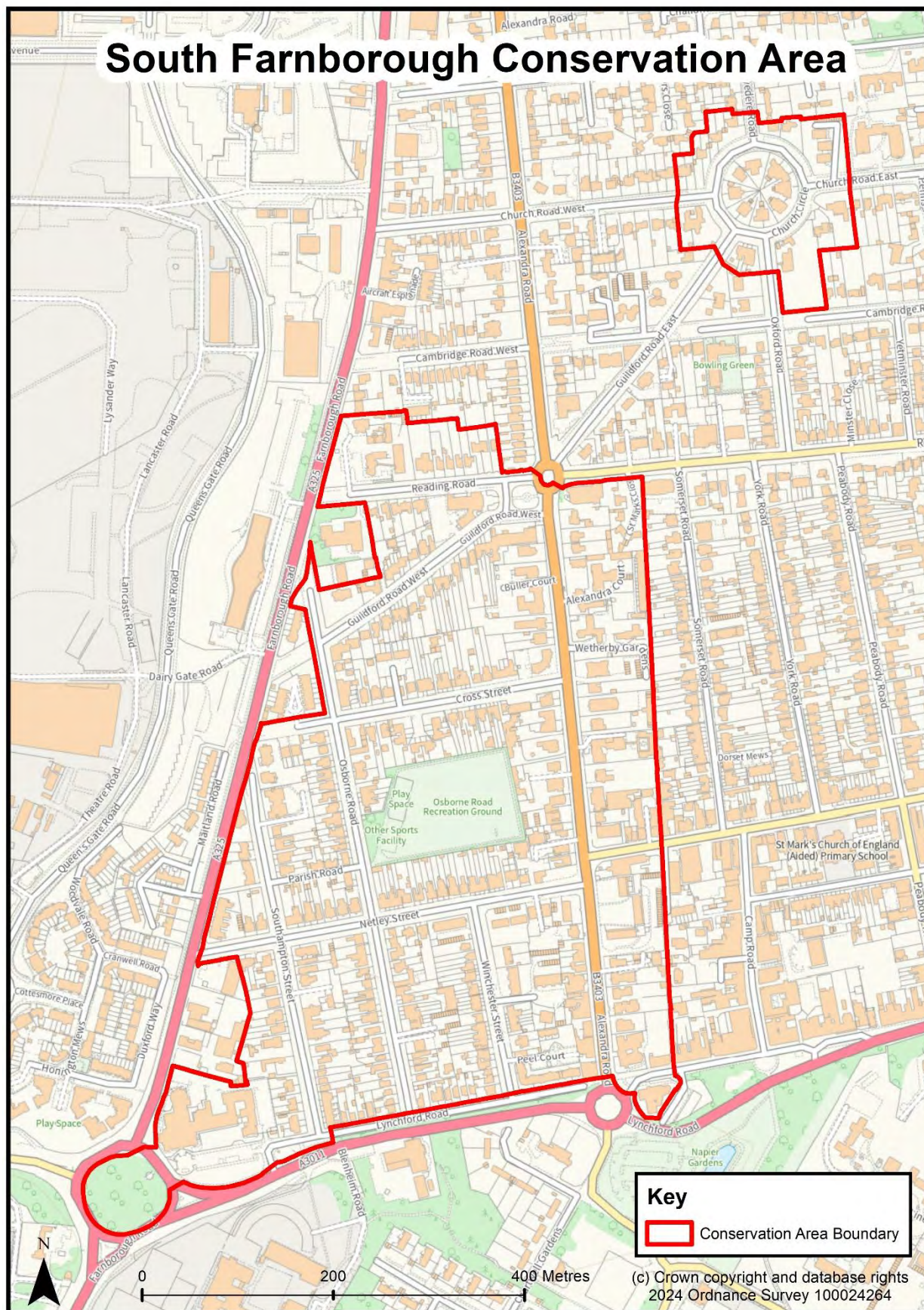
Designation History

- 2.1 South Farnborough conservation area was first designated in 1987 and has since been reviewed in 2006 and 2024. Proposals to review and amend the boundaries of the conservation area in 2006 did not proceed to designation. Following the 2024 review and adoption of this document, a number of areas were removed, or de-designated, from the conservation area, as set out in the Appendix.

Location

- 2.2 South Farnborough conservation area covers an area of level ground to the south of the town. Prior to development there were a number of gravel pits on the surrounding heathland, the most obvious sites being the substantial dip at the northern-most end of Somerset Road, the Osborne Road recreation ground and the lower ground level of the site occupied by the bowls club to the south of Cambridge Road East. The conservation area is bounded by Farnborough Road to the west and properties on the east side of Alexandra Road to the east, Lynchford Road to the south and Reading Road to the north. Church Circle is a separate element to the north west. Although Church Circle is physically separate, it is designated as part of a single conservation area and is linked to the larger element by Guildford Road East.

Figure 1: Map of South Farnborough Conservation Area



Area Development

- 2.3 The name Farnborough is thought to derive from the old English *Ferneberg* or *Ferneberga*, or 'hill of ferns', and refers to areas of undulating heathland. Three prehistoric tumuli in the area of Albert Road and Cockadobby Hill (now within Queen's Roundabout) are the first recorded evidence of human occupation in the area.
- 2.4 The Manor of Farnborough is mentioned in the Domesday Book as part of the Hundred of Crondall, in the shire of Southampton. In 1230, Stephen de Farnborough was acknowledged to be a 'true patron of the Church'. The Church of St. Peter is believed to occupy a Saxon site.
- 2.5 The history and development of the conservation area is linked to the arrival of the army. The North Camp at the southern end of Farnborough was established in 1854 and became the first major military training establishment in the country. With the advent of the Crimean War, the Camp expanded rapidly, as did the civilian workforce and services. At that time, the land now within the conservation area formed part of an expanse of lightly wooded heath to the south of the Farnborough Park estate and the earlier village which now lies within the Farnborough Street conservation area.
- 2.6 The sale of the heathland for residential development in the 1860s opened up opportunities for speculative investors to develop housing for the influx of army officers and their families. Although the principal roads were set out by 1874, construction proceeded gradually. In 1881, a second significant phase in the development of the military camp began with the replacement of basic wooden huts with new permanent brick barracks. Civilian entrepreneurs were thereby assured of a long-term and expanding military population in the area. In 1865, there was a recorded military population of 8,965, which had increased to 14,248 by 1901.
- 2.8 Two property companies were formed to purchase land and build houses to be leased to the military: the Farnborough and Aldershot Freehold and Ground Rent Society Ltd was formed in 1862, and the Farnborough Cottage Company was established in 1863. Three shareholders in the Farnborough Cottage Company were Edward Chatfield, Henry Curry and William Knell. Jo Gosney, in her book *Farnborough Past*, attributes the planning and layout of the area to Edward Chatfield, in his capacity as agent for the company, and Henry Curry, as architect. Curry had previously worked in the coastal resort of Eastbourne, and this possibly influenced his adoption of wide tree-lined avenues as the basis for subsequent development.
- 2.9 The developers were entrepreneurs with backgrounds in other businesses. Henry Jesty Brake, an auctioneer, and William Knell, formerly involved in the cotton industry, were responsible for much of the housing in the area. Brake developed 150 acres of the settlement; he built houses primarily to let

to army officers at the southern end of Alexandra Road and in Netley Street, Southampton Street and Osborne Road.

- 2.10 William Knell acquired land over a twenty-year period in his own right and on behalf of the Farnborough Cottage Company. His developments were characterised by large, detached villas, such as those on Alexandra Road. His name is also noted on a plan of sale of the Knellwood Estate (the area to the east of Canterbury Road) in 1875 as having reserved the circus on Church Road (now Church Circle) as the site of a church, in addition to the land which is the site of the present St Mark's Church.
- 2.11 No church was constructed in Church Circle and a significant empty plot within the inner ring remained undeveloped until the 1980s. A reminder of the original intention survives in the east and west arms of Church Road which radiate from the circle, although Church Road has never contained a church.
- 2.12 The formal plan comprised street blocks created by the intersection of straight roads forming a grid aligned to the compass points. This is linked to Church Circle by a diagonal road which cuts across the geometry (Guildford Road). Once the roads had been set out, the avenue trees planted, and the lots allocated, the process of development was piecemeal. In general, the main north-south thoroughfares of Alexandra Road and Southampton Street were developed with larger detached villas, whilst the east-west streets accommodated more modest terraces and semi-detached cottages.
- 2.13 Five buildings, four of which survive and have the appearance of substantial villas at the southern end of Alexandra Road on the east side, are shown to have been first constructed as pairs of semi-detached properties and named 'Alpha Cottages'. Together, with four three-storey terraced houses at 23-27 Southampton Street (now forming the central section of Bywater Court), Alma Square, another pair of cottages at 2-4 Cross Street (now much altered) and one building at 18 Farnborough Road, which survives as the office of a car dealership, they are the only buildings within the conservation area boundary which appeared on an 1871 Ordnance Survey map.
- 2.14 By the time of the next Ordnance Survey in 1894, published in 1897, the Methodist Chapel at the junction of Lynchford Road and Alexandra Road was in place, together with the police station to the west and St Mark's Church at the corner of Alexandra Road and Reading Road. Numerous small properties were beginning to fill the grid of streets, and larger substantial villas had been constructed on both sides of Alexandra Road between Netley Street and Reading Road.
- 2.15 The majority of the street block to the north of the police station, formed by Lynchford Road, Alexandra Road, Netley Street and Winchester Street, was developed in the 1890s with a single substantial property, Tredenham House, the home of Colonel Carlyon. As the settlement grew, shops and houses gradually took up parts of the curtilage. The lodge house, which flanked the gated

entrance from Alexandra Road, survives and until recently accommodated Wings restaurant. By the 1930s, the house had been sub-divided into two properties and was surrounded by other buildings; it was also used for a period as a school. In the 1950s, it became the Tredenham House Hotel.



2.16 By the 1970s, the building had been demolished and its site redeveloped with two blocks of townhouses (Tredenham Close). The original two-tone brick, buttressed boundary wall of its kitchen garden remains at the corner of Winchester Street and Netley Street. It encloses the 1930s blocks of Alexandra Close, which were built on the site of the garden itself. The wall is now locally listed.



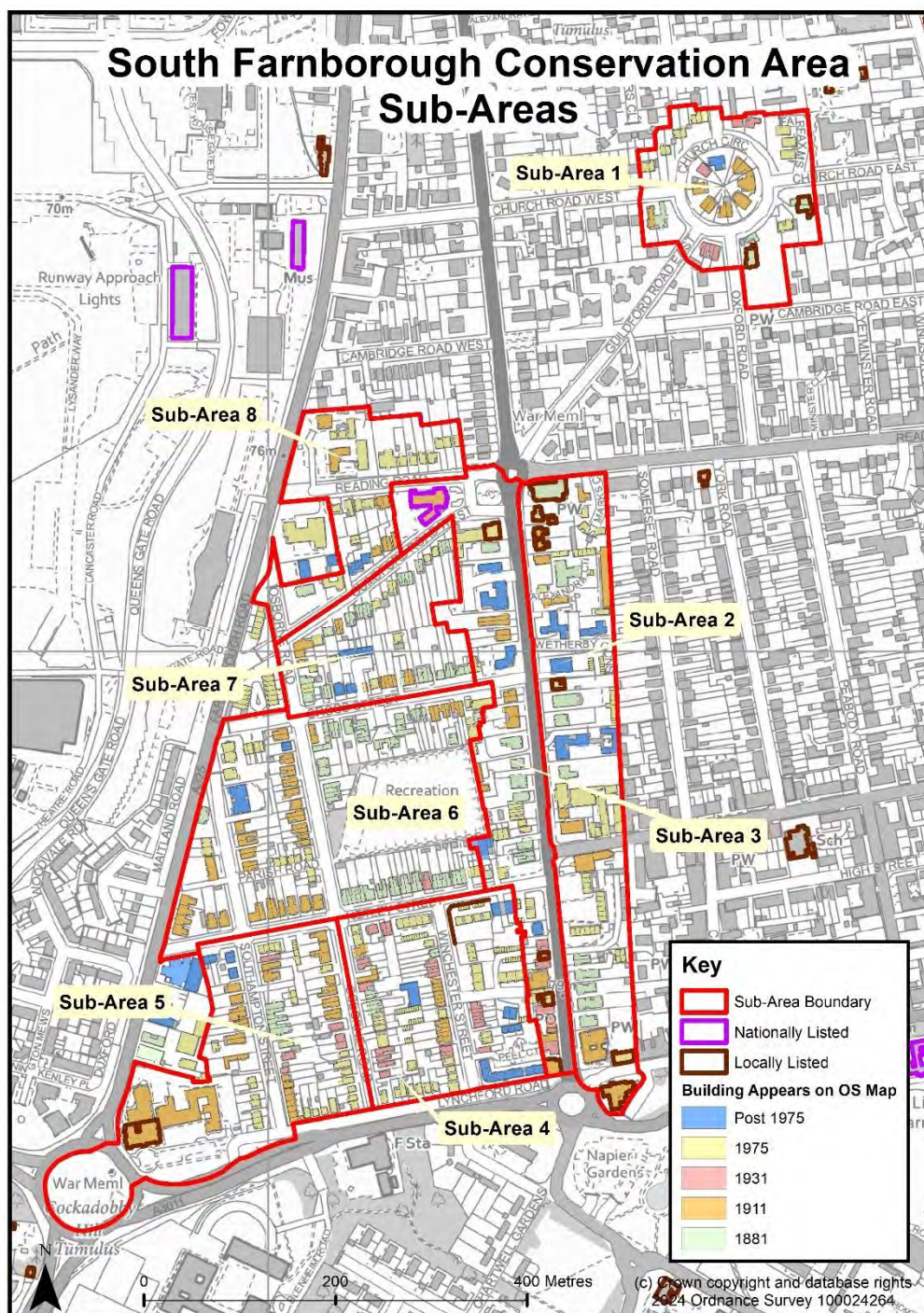
- 2.17 The 1871 Ordnance Survey shows only three detached villas in the south, outer periphery of Church Circle. By 1909, six pairs of semi-detached houses comprised a unified development of three quarters of the inner area. Between the First World War and 1930, a further detached property was added in the north-west section, whilst the northern-most area remained undeveloped until it was occupied by a block of flats following a 1987 permission.
- 2.18 By the time of conservation area designation in 1987, the wider surroundings were at a mature stage of development, and change has continued since that time. Original Victorian and Edwardian residential, institutional and public buildings have been replaced or put to different uses, and infill and replacement developments from all periods of the twentieth century are evident, as is the incursion of commercial uses in places.

Area Summary

- 2.19 The character of the conservation area is primarily residential and suburban. The speculative and developer-led project is a unifying theme which overlays and strongly influences the form, appearance and arrangement of buildings. The original architecture is characterised by replicated house types, features and materials. Subtle variations in detail and arrangement add variety to the streetscape. A prominent feature is the grid of wide, tree-lined streets which offer long uninterrupted views.
- 2.20 South Farnborough conservation area has eight areas with distinct character:
- Sub-Area 1: Church Circle
 - Sub-Area 2: Alexandra Road – East Side
 - Sub-Area 3: Alexandra Road – West Side
 - Sub-Area 4: Alexandra Road West to Osborne Road (South of Netley Street)
 - Sub-Area 5: Osborne Road to Farnborough Road (South of Netley Street)
 - Sub-Area 6: Alexandra Road West to Farnborough Road (Between Netley Street and Cross Street)
 - Sub-Area 7: Alexandra Road West to Farnborough Road (Between Cross Street and Guildford Road West)
 - Sub-Area 8: North of Guildford Road West/Reading Road

2.21 These sub-areas have been assessed against their identifiable character, architectural qualities and historic development and for the contribution that they make to the conservation area, providing an insight into the shifting social and cultural development of the area.

Figure 2: Map of Sub-Areas⁴



⁴ This map depicts when buildings first appeared on the 1881, 1911, 1931 or 1975 Ordnance Survey (OS) map of the area (see Chapter 11). It does not show the definitive age of the buildings. For example, a building which first appeared on the 1931 OS map would have been built in the period between the publication of the 1911 and 1931 maps.

3. Sub-Area 1: Church Circle

- 3.1 The character and appearance of this smaller area is defined in large part by the group of two-storey houses that line the inner circumference of Church Circle. These buildings are of a similar design and appearance, typically featuring a central pedestrian entrance flanked by full-height bay features. There is consistency within this group of buildings in terms of the use of materials and detailing. This includes the fenestration, which comprises timber-framed sash windows in the principal elevations. Because of this consistency of form and detail, combined with their spatial relationship around the inner circumference of Church Circle, these buildings comprise a strong, distinctive and cohesive group which, both individually and collectively, make a positive contribution to the character and appearance of the conservation area.
- 3.2 Between 1897 and 1911, six pairs of semi-detached houses comprised a unified development of three quarters of the inner area. Between the First World War and 1930, a further detached property was added in the north-west section.
- 3.3 By 1874, three substantial detached villas (the Chestnuts, Crowthorne House and Durdham House) had been constructed on sites around the south side of the outer ring. Crowthorne and Durdham are included on the Local List. A terrace of four properties followed on the site between Guildford Road East and Oxford Road in the early twentieth century. Plots in the outer circle to the north of Church Road were developed, and in some cases redeveloped with infill, in the latter part of the twentieth century. The buildings, comprising houses and flats, in this area are architecturally undistinguished but retain important mature trees within their sites, which make a significant contribution to the character of the circle.
- 3.4 The final plot in the north part of the inner circle was developed with a block of six flats following the grant of planning permission on appeal in June 1987. The building attempts to make some reference to the architectural character of the surrounding properties, but its poor detailing, creation of three storeys over the same height as the two storeys of the original buildings, and incongruous tilt-opening uPVC windows have a negative impact on the character and appearance of the area. The conservation area was designated shortly after the appeal decision.

4. Sub-Area 2: Alexandra Road – East Side

- 4.1 Alexandra Road was named to commemorate a visit to the North Camp by Alexandra, Princess of Wales, wife of the future King Edward VII. The section between Lynchford Road and Reading Road became the civic and administrative core of the newly expanded Farnborough. At its Junction with Lynchford Road, it was flanked to the west by the impressive bank and police station buildings, and to the east by the Methodist Church. On the south side of Lynchford Road, the Church Institute building was constructed. This was expanded and now forms the Studio 40 complex.



Church Institute Building

- 4.2 At the Reading Road junction, opposite the Town Hall and postal sorting office, is St Mark's (CoE) Church. The wide, tree-lined road extends north towards the railway connections with the main railway line and the branch line at the older settlement of Farnborough.
- 4.3 The east side of Alexandra Road saw the earliest development within the estate in the form of the Wesleyan Methodist Church at the corner of Lynchford Road, its minister's house to the north and five pairs of semi-detached houses (Alpha Cottages). Four of these survive, adapted and amalgamated into single buildings in office use. The first of these bears a plaque erected by the Farnborough Society identifying it as the home of the aircraft designer and test pilot Geoffrey De Havilland between 1910 and 1913. Their regular spacing, rooflines and cream render set the tone of substantial plots on the east side. They sit opposite the main shopping parade of Alexandra Road; when viewed from the south, the road beyond them extends to a vanishing point flanked by avenues of mature street trees.

- 4.4 Immediately to the north, the 1960s/1970s redevelopment of Queen's Court is unprepossessing but is set back behind an attractive lawn.
- 4.5 To the north of Queen's Road, the pattern of some retained villas punctuated by late-twentieth century blocks of flats continues. The larger redevelopments of Wetherby Gardens and Alexandra Court occupy the site of the early-twentieth century National Childrens' Home and Orphanage. Some of the institutional buildings survive on the frontage and in Charlie Mews to the rear.
- 4.6 The sub-area ends with three retained and locally listed villas (103, 105 and 107 Alexandra Road) and St Mark's Church at the corner of Reading Road.

5. Sub-Area 3: Alexandra Road – West Side

- 5.1 The west side of Alexandra Road developed incrementally from the end of the nineteenth century, starting with the entrance lodge to Tredenham House, which survives as the recently closed Wings Cottage restaurant building at 32 Alexandra Road, and a run of detached and semi-detached villas between Netley Street and Reading Road. In the first decade of the twentieth century, the first two shops to the north of the bank building appeared. The Grade II listed Town Hall dates from 1897, and the adjacent postal sorting office was completed in the late 1930s.
- 5.2 As with the east side of the road, the original pattern of villas on large plots has been interrupted by infills and redevelopments dating from the 1930s to the 1990s.
- 5.3 In addition to the bank building and the postal sorting office, the west side of Alexandra Road features locally listed buildings at numbers 20-26 and 38-40. These are shops with elaborate mock Elizabethan half-timbered facades and intricate leaded windows.
- 5.4 The Grade II listed Ferneberga House, formerly the Town Hall, is the only statutory listed building within the conservation area. The foundation stone was laid in 1896, the same year as the former Parish Council officially became the Farnborough Urban and District Council. The Town Hall continued in this function after the amalgamation of Farnborough and Aldershot Councils to form Rushmoor Borough Council following local government reorganisation in 1972. The expanded Council also occupied the former National Childrens' Home and Orphanage buildings on the opposite side of Alexandra Road before the move to its current location on the site of the former Forest Lodge, south of Pinehurst Corner, close to the town centre.



Town Hall—Ferneberga House (c. 1923)

6. Sub-Area 4: Alexandra Road West to Osbourne Road (South of Netley Street)

- 6.1 This sub-area is typical of the mature developed state of the wider area. Its visual and historic significance is apparent in the wide streets with significant street trees. It contains many retained buildings from the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, including red-brick or white-rendered cottages, small villas and terraces, and attractive inter-war housing. Notable examples include the named and dated house at 91 Osbourne Road with a stone porch header and unusual sash window configuration.
- 6.2 The Netley Street/Winchester Street corner features the locally listed kitchen garden wall of Tredenham House and 63 Osbourne Road, a former stable building which retains decorative barge boarding on the gables and dormers, a feature which appears in several locations and variants within the conservation area. Later developments, such as the 1980s Peel Court and the 1970s redevelopments of Tredenham Close, Elm Court and Osbourne Court, are incongruous in style and appearance.



7. Sub-Area 5: Osborne Road to Farnborough Road (South of Netley Street)

- 7.1 This sub-area continues the grid street pattern until it encounters the angled line of Farnborough Road. Notable building detail can be seen in the barge-boarding and porches of 76-78 Osborne Road, the lantern bay window and tile-hanging of 35 Southampton Street, and the rustic timber-framing of 17 Southampton Street.



- 7.2 In the south-west corner of the sub-area lies the neolithic bowl barrow Cockadobby Hill within the Queen's Roundabout, which is a scheduled Ancient Monument, and the adjacent locally listed Queen's Hotel. This is a substantial Edwardian building constructed in the early twentieth century after fire damaged an earlier structure dating from the 1860s. The first building was a large wooden structure with verandas overlooking the camp to the south. In the early part of the twentieth century, the Queen's Hotel and Sanatorium Ltd. advertised beer taps, stables, a roller-skating rink and pleasure gardens.



- 7.3 The barrow is partly cut away by the surrounding road and on the north side by a memorial fountain, with a balustrade and plaque inscribed 'To One Who Fell'. The hotel is currently operated as the Holiday Inn. Prior to the expansion of Lynchford Road and the construction of the roundabout, the hotel was flanked to the south east by an officers' mess complex (now the site of Wavell School) which, together with the barrow, formed the northern limit of the open parade and sports grounds to the south. The hotel has incongruous and architecturally undistinguished extensions to the east and north.



- 7.4 The residential elements continue the patterns and styles of Sub-Area 4. There are less-attractive later houses at the southern end of Southampton Street on the west side and fronting Netley Street to the east of its junction with Southampton Street. The western corner of Southampton Street and Netley Street features more-successful modern infill development which addresses and respects the surrounding architectural features, with elaborately roofed bay windows and contrasting string courses in red brickwork.

8. Sub-Area 6: Alexandra Road West to Farnborough Road (Between Netley Street and Cross Street)

- 8.1 The largest sub-area of the conservation area sits to the west of the Alexandra Road buildings, some of which have adapted or redeveloped structures behind them. Cross Street, Netley Street and a section of Osborne Road surround the Osborne Road recreation ground which is on the site of one of the pre-development heathland gravel pits in this area.
- 8.2 The tight grain, common ridge height and continuous building line of properties on the north side of Netley Street create a long, straight frontage of red-brick and white-rendered houses, single, paired and in terraces. This strong formal character continues beyond Osborne Road and Southampton Street to the junction with Farnborough Road. Notable terraces and buildings that contribute to the detailed character of this group include Pemberton Villas, with its decorative paired porches, wall plaque, corbelled soffits and barge-boarded dormers; numbers 40 and 42, with decorative terracotta tile-hanging and ornamental joinery features; larger villas at numbers 54-58; and the contrasting brickwork detailing, decorative shared porch awnings and ridge tiles of numbers 60-66.



Pemberton Villas

- 8.3 The east side of this section of Osborne Road, marked at the southern junction by a former shop building, contains an impressive range of street trees and the hedge boundary and entrance of the recreation ground. The terrace (numbers 37-43) to the north features well-preserved decorative barge-boarding on the end gables and perforated terracotta ridge decoration. Further to the north, the distinctive white-render, contrasting grey quoins and half-hipped gables of the pair of buildings at numbers 33-35 give way to a site at the corner of Cross Street containing a collection of buildings in light-industrial use which, in part, were formerly stables. This site has been redeveloped with new housing.



Osborne Road Recreation Ground showing buildings on Alexandra Road



Decorative barge boards at 41 Osborne Road

- 8.4 The south side of Cross Street between Osborne Road and Alexandra Road features a more varied group of house styles, at the centre of which lies Alma Square, one of the oldest developments in the conservation area. The distinctive modest gabled frontage of the three well-maintained terraces of cottages survives, although the character of the square is diminished by car parking.



- 8.5 Further west, the south side of Cross Street displays the decorative barge-boarding of the paired houses at 30-32 Osborne Road. The west side of Osborne Road continues south, with a combination of architectural styles, including infill from the 1960s and 1980s. The street block to the west is completed by a section of Southampton Street, meeting Cross Street at the angled Farnborough Road. On its east side, it features modest paired houses, some larger villas, several of which are converted to flats, and a 1980s infill development, Commodore Court.
- 8.6 The remaining triangle of land between Southampton Street, Netley Street and Farnborough Road contains, at the southern end, the western-most houses on Netley Street and a well-preserved terrace (numbers 36-46) fronting Farnborough Road. To the north is the pedestrian Parish Road and the adjacent street block emerging opposite the entrance to Osborne Road Recreation Ground. This originally formed an access route to service, stabling and ancillary buildings and now serves a short row of cottages to the west of Osborne Road.
- 8.7 The remainder of the triangle to the north of Parish Road was originally occupied by two properties, 40 Southampton Street and Stephen Gould House. Between them is now a later pair of 1960s semi-detached properties. 40 Southampton Street is the smaller of the two properties but was nevertheless of some status. It has a small coach house to the side, now altered with a modern garage door. Stephen Gould House is a large red-brick villa with gabled slate roofs. The scale of the building is noticeable. There is a two-storey flat roofed projection topped by an ironwork balcony rail on the west elevation, and a number of mature deciduous trees surround the building. When originally

constructed, the west elevations, windows and balconies of these large villas would have commanded views across the open common, which subsequently became Farnborough Airport. They are now fenced off from the adjacent busy Farnborough Road.



9. Sub-Area 7: Alexandra Road West to Farnborough Road (Between Cross Street and Guildford Road West)

- 9.1 This sub-area follows the triangular road alignment produced by the convergence of Guildford Road West and Cross Street as they extend west towards Farnborough Road. This results in a stepped pattern of development on the south side of Guildford Road West characterised by pairs and terraces of modest cottages and some later infill properties. Notable examples are numbers 11-13, which have the characteristic decorative barge-boarded gables, and the unusual blue brickwork of numbers 27 and 29.



- 9.2 The north side of Cross Street features varied architectural styles from some of the older and much-altered cottages at the eastern end through modest red-brick villas, a property at number 16, with a distinctive arched carriage door, and the well-detailed modern pairs of houses to the west of the entrance to Hawthorn Court. The short section of Osborne Road which joins the two streets contains, on the east side, the development formed by the conversion of a former print works, two other houses and the corner shop building at the angle of Guildford Road West.



10 Sub-Area 8: North of Guildford Road West/Reading Road

- 10.1 This sub-area comprises land to the west of the listed Old Town Hall building, bounded by the angled Guildford Road West and Farnborough Road, extending to include a group of properties on the north side of Reading Road. In its original developed state, this part of the conservation area contained six substantial individual villas which, like those to the south, had their main aspect and views across the common to the west, together with an attractive group of inter-war villas on the north side of Reading Road and a group of houses on the south side adjacent to the Town Hall.



- 10.2 Each of the six villas had separate coach houses to the rear. Occupying the corner plot of Osborne Road and Guildford Road West is 10 Guildford Road West (Grazeley Lodge), the only one of the six villas surviving in anything like its original form. It features red brickwork, with contrasting string

courses, and decorative barge-boarded gables. The coach house to the rear has been separated and adapted to use as a veterinary practice.



- 10.3 The two northern-most villas, Farren House and Baveno House, are good examples of Edwardian Queen Anne Revival detached villas, with a number of interesting architectural features, such as hung tiles, curled pedimented gables, bay windows, little balconies and interesting roof forms. Three substantial buildings were added to the site (Farren Flats, Baveno Flats and 56A and 56B Farnborough Road) in the 1970s. As with the other plots, there are substantial mature trees screening the complex from Farnborough Road.



10. Architectural Detailing and Characteristic Features

Positive Features

- Decorative barge boards; stone name plaques; stone detailing;
- Enclosed decorative and glazed porches; bay windows; street trees;
- Tile-hanging; white render; red brick with contrasting string courses;
- Decorative terracotta ridge tiles, finials and string courses;
- Arts and Crafts early-twentieth century architecture;
- Early-twentieth century half-timbering;
- Slate roofs.







Detrimental Changes

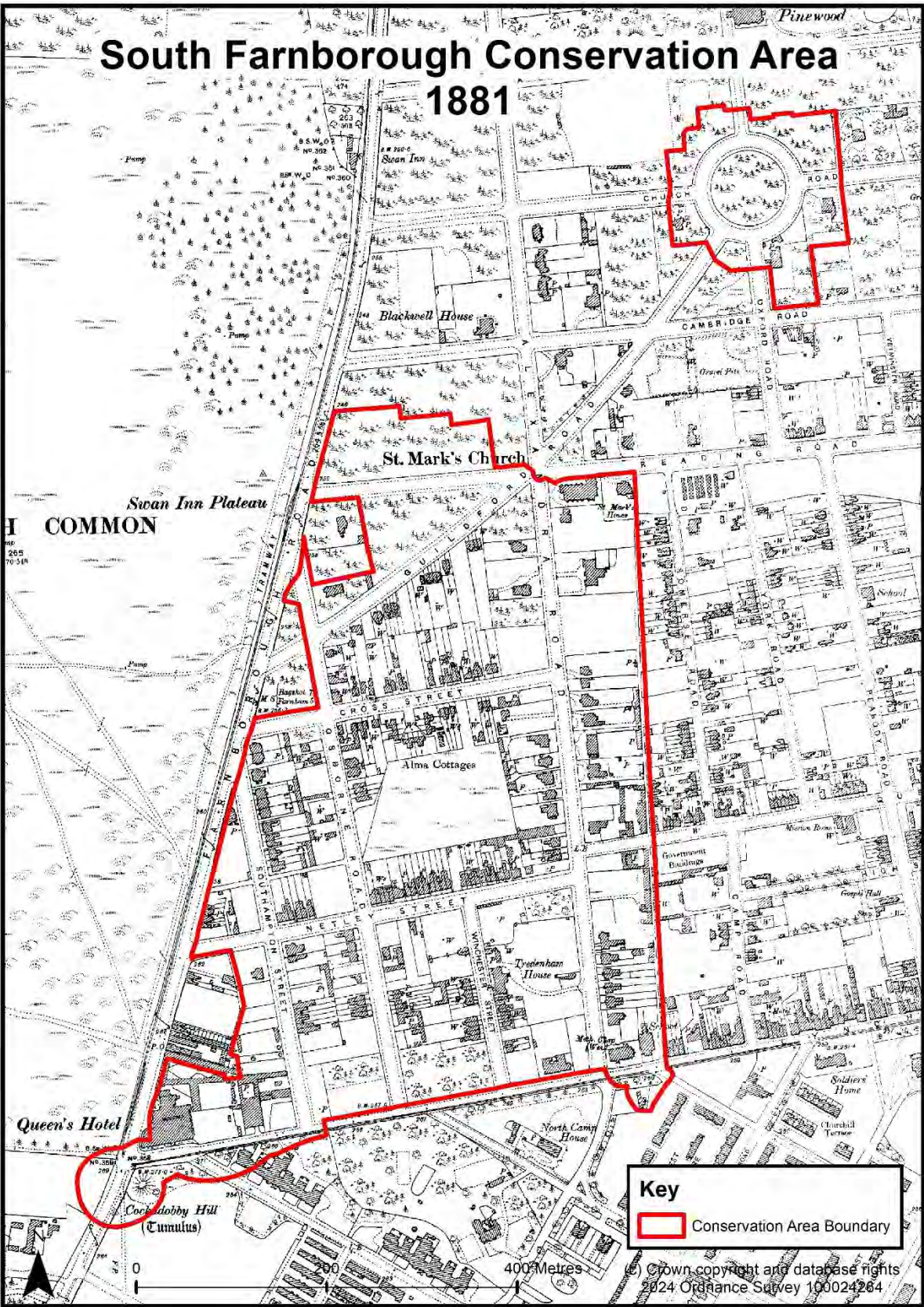
- Low quality and unsympathetic architecture in redevelopments and extensions
- Poorly located and visible satellite dishes;
- Lost boundary walls and hard-surfaced parking on front gardens;
- Painting of brickwork and masonry;
- Poorly detailed and unsympathetic replacement windows and doors;
- Inappropriate advertisements, signage and street furniture;
- Loss of or inappropriate works to trees.

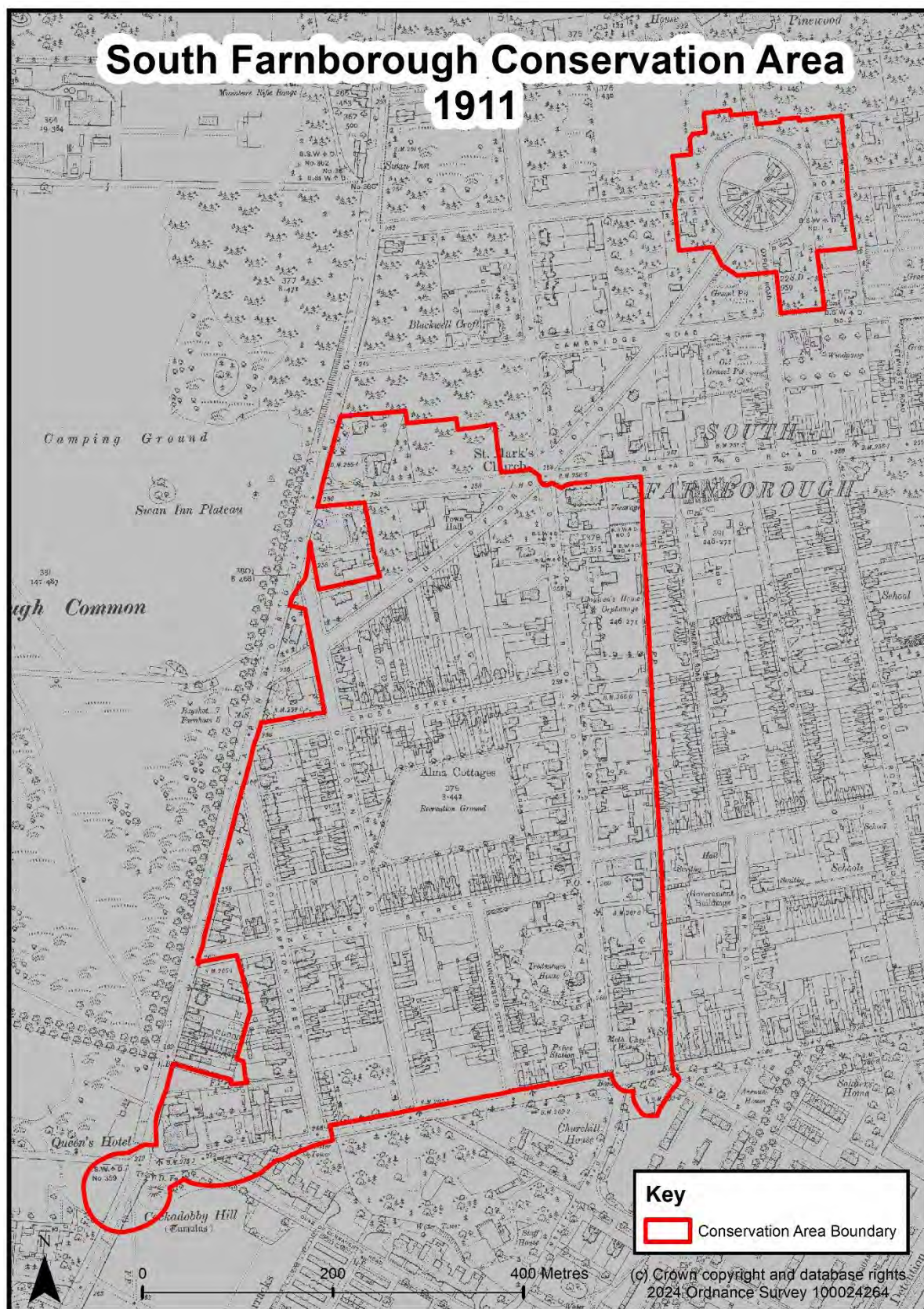
Building Materials

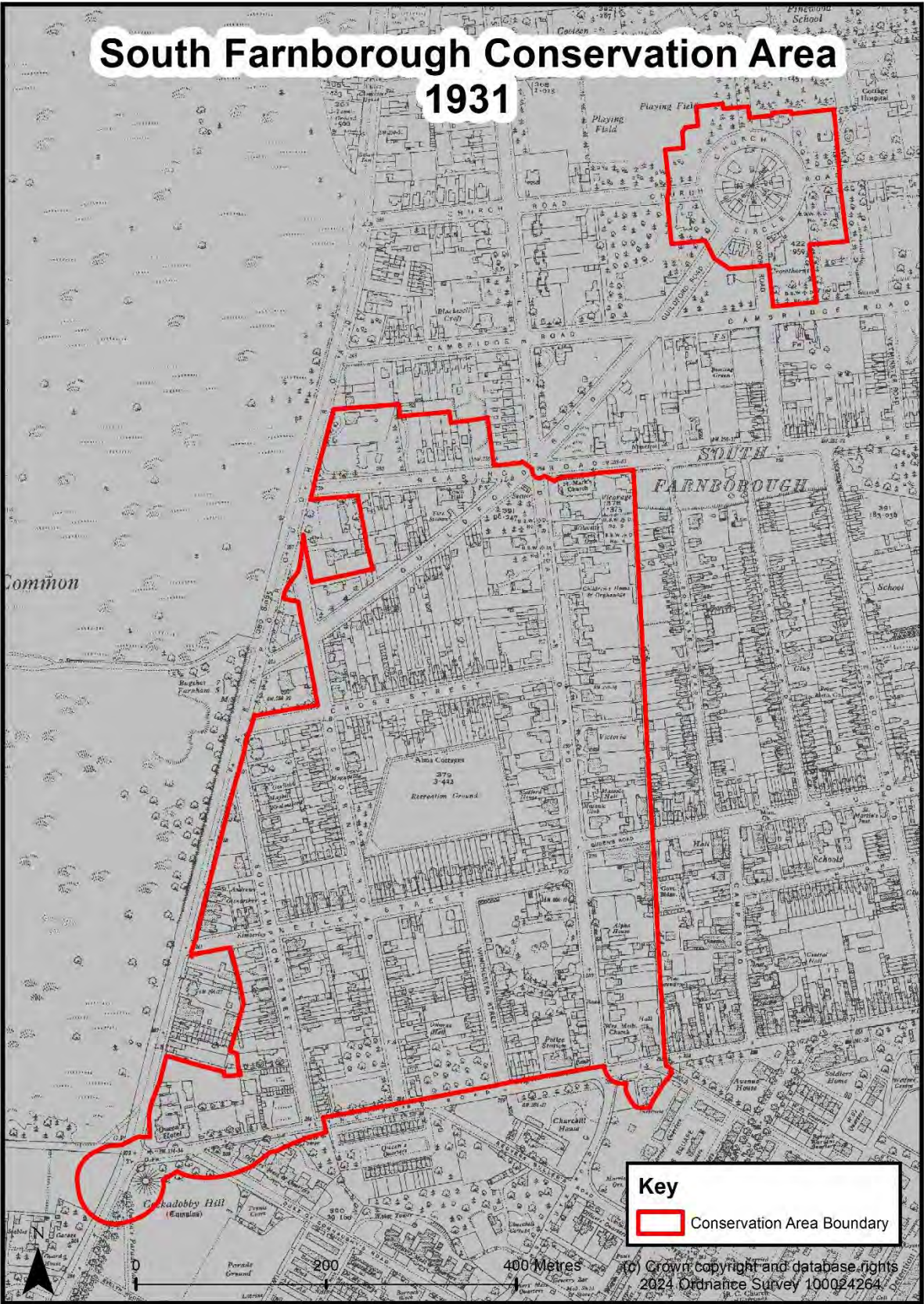
- 10.1 The most identifiable and characteristic building materials within the conservation area are red brick, with grey/blue slate or red clay-tiled roofs. Buff brickwork is used extensively as a contrasting material in string courses and chimney stacks and as a principal wall material in some larger houses.
- 10.2 Some larger buildings, such as the former Town Hall and the bank on Alexandra Road, have Bath stone detailing. The hips and ridges of slate roofs are often picked out with contrasting terracotta ridge tiles and decorative finials. The predominant orange/red brickwork interspersed with white render and twentieth-century decorative timber and tile-hanging unifies groups of buildings in the wide and regular streets.

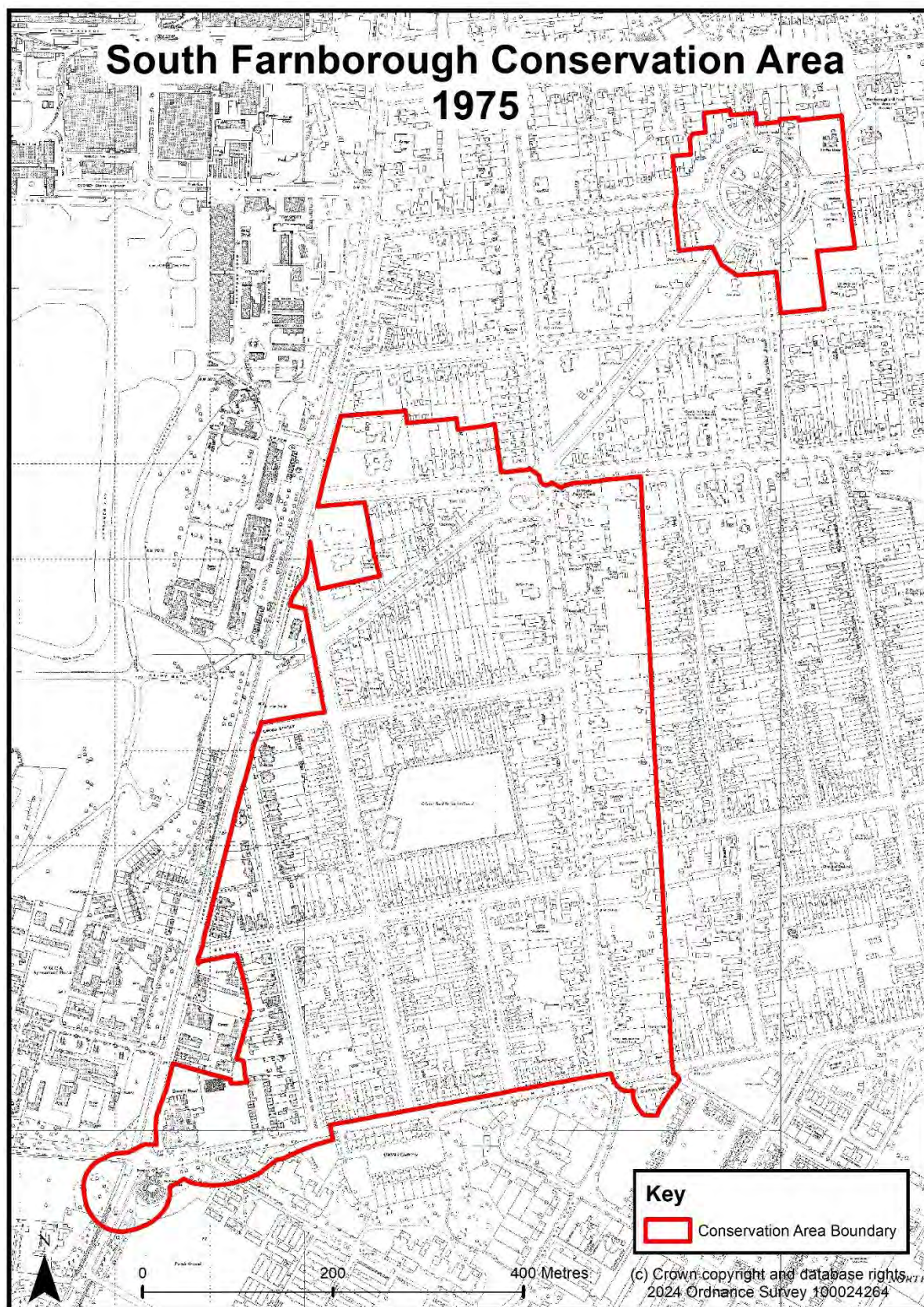
- 10.3 Some painting of brick elevations masks architectural detail and distorts the appearance of buildings in their wider context and is not reversible. The regular punctuation of the roofscape by pairs of tall, corbelled chimney stacks and the consistency of building frontages as articulated by front garden walls are important in the wider context of the streets.
- 10.4 Used as individual key features or pattern, decorative moulded brickwork and terracotta are employed extensively for architectural embellishment; their uses include string and eaves courses and prominent features, such as bay windows and doors. Most houses have double-hung timber sash windows, although some properties have more ornate Edwardian fenestration. The Domestic Revival and Queen Anne architectural styles are usually associated with casement openings often set within a mullion and transom frames. The use of vertical tile-hanging at first-floor level is similarly a feature associated with the Domestic Revival, or Arts and Crafts, influence.
- 10.5 There is a notable survival of original timber-panelled front doors and porches throughout the conservation area, and they are often elaborate and attractive.
- 10.6 Low boundary walls define the front gardens of most original properties in the area and are an important part of its character, although some have been lost to provide frontage parking.

11. Historic Maps









12. Listed Buildings and Structures, and Scheduled Monuments

Nationally Listed

Name	Grade	Link to Historic England Record
Farnborough Town Hall, Guildford Road West	II	https://historicengland.org.uk/listing/the-list/list-entry/1303102

Locally Listed Heritage Assets⁵

Name	Reference
Edward VII Post Box, Alexandra Road	LL5095
103-105 Alexandra Road	LL5096
2 Alexandra Road	LL5097
107 Alexandra Road	LL5098
38-40 Alexandra Road	LL5099
63 Alexandra Road	LL5100
20-26 Alexandra Road	LL5101
Post Office, 108 Alexandra Road	LL5102
St Mark's Church, Reading Road	LL5103
Durdham House, 2 Church Road East	LL5108
Holiday Inn 'Queen's Head Arms', Lynchford Road	LL5120
47-49 Lynchford Road	LL5121
Old School Studios, 40 Lynchford Road	LL5123
Crowthorne House, 25 Oxford Road	LL5187
Boundary Wall at 9 Netley Street	LL5201

⁵ Locally Listed Heritage Assets are available to view on the Council's website at <https://www.rushmoor.gov.uk/locallylistedbuildings>.

Scheduled Monuments

Name	Link to Historic England Record
Bowl Barrow on the Cockadobby Hill Roundabout	https://historicengland.org.uk/listing/the-list/list-entry/1012638?section=official-list-entry

13. Management Plan

Introduction

- 13.1 The Management Plan outlines a positive strategy to deal with the threats and opportunities identified in the Conservation Area Appraisal.
- 13.2 The effect of incremental small-scale change within a conservation area can be cumulative and negative, particularly when involving the loss of key features such as chimneys, boundary walls, and traditional windows and doors. Incremental change is particularly difficult to manage because it is not within the usual remit of the planning system without the imposition of special controls. Proactive and positive encouragement to good stewardship by residents and property owners can play a significant part in the preservation and enhancement of local character.

Good Stewardship

- 13.3 The active management of small-scale change within a conservation area is the responsibility of the people who live and work in the area. Community-led conservation involves guiding positive change and positive regular maintenance. The owners of properties within conservation areas are caretakers of local heritage for future generations, and commitment to good conservation practice is vital for preserving and enhancing the character and appearance.
- 13.4 Living in a well-maintained conservation area often increases property values and appreciation, as well as the general desirability of the area and its community value. Conservation areas are valued for their distinctiveness, visual appeal and historic character.
- 13.5 Historic England, the Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings (SPAB) and other heritage bodies publish specialist guidance on the suitable maintenance and repair methods for different historic buildings and buildings affecting conservation areas.

Development Management

- 13.6 Some planning controls over development within conservation areas restrict changes to external appearance and prevent buildings from being demolished without planning permission. Further information is available within the Council's [Conservation Areas Overview document](#) and on the Council's conservation areas webpage.⁶ However, some permitted development rights allow for certain types of development and alterations without the need for planning permission. Many of

⁶ Available at <https://www.rushmoor.gov.uk/conservationareas>.

these alterations, including the introduction of uPVC windows and doors and alterations to front-boundary walls, can have an unintended impact and gradually erode the character or appearance of a conservation area through the loss of original building features.

- 13.7 Further protection of key features within a conservation area can be accomplished by introducing Article 4 directions which restrict the exercise of permitted development rights. Such an order is already in place within the Church Circle sub-area to prevent inappropriate replacement windows and loss of chimneys and boundary walls. Consideration will be given to extending similar Article 4 control over other parts of the South Farnborough conservation area if expedient.⁷
- 13.8 It is not the intention of conservation area designation to prevent new development or adaptation and alteration to suit the needs of property owners. Instead, it puts in place a process whereby proposals are more-thoroughly studied to ensure that the special architectural and historic interest of the conservation area is protected and opportunities to improve its character are identified. New development can range from entire new buildings to the introduction of new features, however small, on existing buildings. Development within the setting of the conservation area (within, views into and out of) should also be carefully managed, as it has the potential to detract from its character and appearance.
- 13.9 In exercising its Development Management function and dealing with planning applications for redevelopment and extensions within the South Farnborough conservation area, the Council will seek the following when applying Local Plan Policy DE1 (Design in the Built Environment):
- Sympathetic and compatible use of materials and architectural detailing, using or taking inspiration from the positive features identified in Chapter 10, including where appropriate:
 - Respect for built form, building lines and patterns in the vicinity;
 - Detailing, such as barge-boarding, decorative brickwork and external porches;
 - Appropriate boundary treatments and parking arrangements;
 - Protection and enhancement of street trees and those within sites.

⁷ Further information on the Council's Article 4 directions is available at <https://www.rushmoor.gov.uk/planning-and-building-control/planning-permission-and-applications/article-4-directions-and-planning-permission/>.

Implementation and Monitoring

- 13.10 Progress on the implementation of the Management Plan and the extent to which planning policies in the Local Plan are complied with or are effective in protecting the character and appearance of the conservation area will be monitored through the Council's Authority Monitoring Report.
- 13.11 Such assessments can be used to review and, if necessary, modify planning policies as part of the five-year review of the Local Plan. The assessments can also be used to review and, if necessary, modify this Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan.

14. Background Papers and Further Reading

- J. Gosney (2001) *Farnborough Past*, Phillimore & Co. Ltd
- Planning Appeal Decision; application reference RSH04739; Land adjacent to 14 Church Circle; 15 June 1987; appeal reference: APP/P1750/A/86/054001/P5; <https://publicaccess.rushmoor.gov.uk/online-applications/>
- Enforcement Appeal Decision; enforcement reference 18/00070/CONSRV; 14 Church Circle; 30 August 2018; appeal reference: APP/P1750/C/17/3183029; <https://acp.planninginspectorate.gov.uk/ViewCase.aspx?Caseid=3183029&CoID=0>
- Church Circle Article 4 Direction (December 2019); <https://www.rushmoor.gov.uk/planning-and-building-control/planning-permission-and-applications/article-4-directions-and-planning-permission/church-circle-article-4-direction/>
- Farnborough Town Hall. Guildford Road West Statutory Listing: Grade II; List Entry Number: 1303102; Date Listed: 9 October 1981; <https://historicengland.org.uk/listing/the-list/list-entry/1303102?section=official-list-entry>
- Bowl Barrow on the Cockadobby Hill Roundabout: Scheduled Monument; List Entry Number: 1012638; date first listed: 6 September 1950; <https://historicengland.org.uk/listing/the-list/list-entry/1012638?section=official-list-entry>

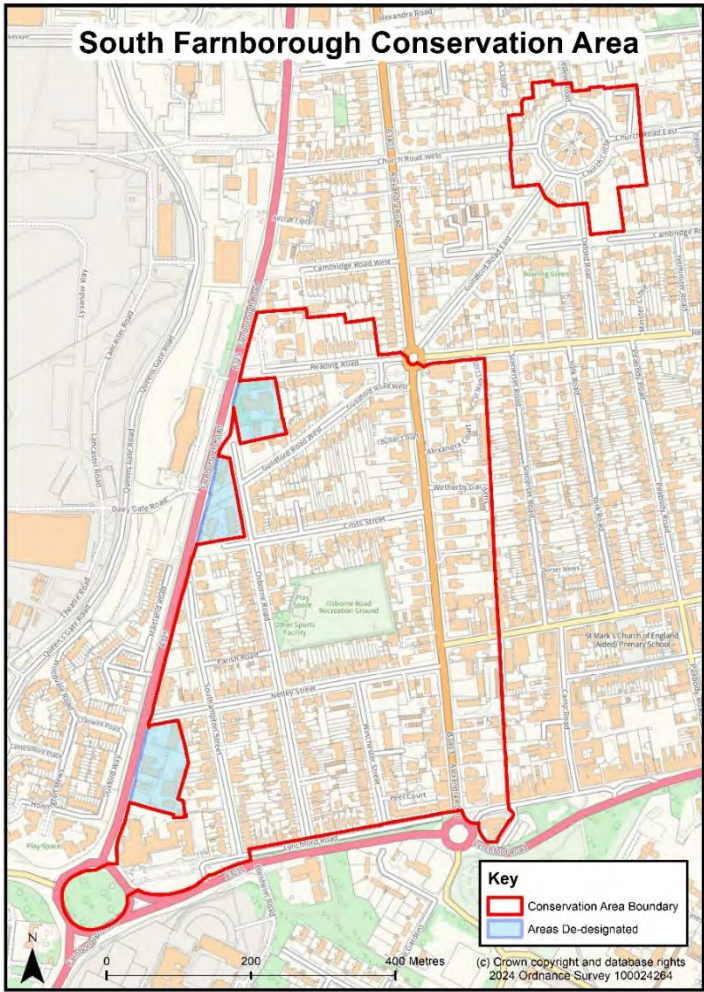
Appendix. Areas Removed from South Farnborough Conservation Area

- A1 Conservation areas are intended to recognise areas of historic or architectural character and to assist in their preservation and enhancement. The location of the boundary for a conservation area is a qualitative decision. National planning policy is clear that only areas which are heritage assets should be designated so that ‘the concept of conservation is not devalued’.⁸
- A2 During the public consultation on the draft Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan undertaken in September and October 2023, it was proposed to remove the conservation area designation from three areas. Whilst objections to the removal of the conservation area designation were received, none provided sufficient evidence to justify the retention of these areas within the conservation area. The areas were subsequently removed, or de-designated, in 2024.
- A3 Trees in a conservation area that meet [specified criteria](#) are protected by legislation, requiring the Council to be notified of any works to a tree.⁹ When areas are de-designated and are no longer part of a conservation area, trees are no longer afforded such protection, although existing Tree Preservation Orders (TPOs) are unaffected. A review of all trees within the areas no longer covered by conservation area designation has been undertaken, and Tree Preservation Orders have been made where necessary to ensure that trees worthy of protection continue to receive protection.
- A4 A review of buildings and structures within the areas no longer covered by conservation area designation has also been undertaken to determine whether any are worthy of local listing based on their architectural and historic interest.
- A5 The map below depicts the areas that are no longer covered by conservation area designation.

⁸ National Planning Policy Framework (2023), para. 197.

⁹ Available to view at <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/tree-preservation-orders-and-trees-in-conservation-areas#Protecting-trees-in-conservation-areas>.

Figure 3: Areas No Longer Covered by Conservation Area Designation



Telephone Exchange, Neelam Court and Kashmir Court

- A6 The telephone exchange building is a mid-twentieth century structure of no architectural quality or historic significance. It does not reflect the age or architectural style of the South Farnborough conservation area and does not warrant inclusion within the conservation area.



- A7 Neelam Court and Kashmir Court are two blocks of late-twentieth century flats. They have no architectural quality or historic significance and do not add to the historic character of the South Farnborough conservation area.



Ettrick Court and the Terrace between Osborne Road, Farnborough Road and Guildford Road West.

- A8 Ettrick Court and the terrace on Osborne Road are three-storey town houses, dating from the 1970s. Typical of 1970s' residential design, they are of red/brown brick, with timber-clad spandrels, horizontal-banded windows and cement-tile roofs. The dwellings are very different in appearance to the historic character of the South Farnborough conservation area.



Industrial and Commercial Buildings between the Queens Hotel, Farnborough Road, Netley Street and the Rear Boundaries of Properties on the West Side of Southampton Street

- A9 This area is occupied by industrial and commercial buildings which have no architectural or historic merit, including a vehicle servicing centre and petrol filling station, and does not warrant inclusion within the conservation area.





Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan: Boundary Review Advice Note

For Rushmoor Borough Council

August 2024



Rushmoor Borough Council

Boundary Review Advice Note

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1 Introduction

1.1 Aim and Contents of this Report

This document has been prepared by Heritage Architecture Ltd on behalf of Rushmoor Borough Council. Between 2020 and 2024, Rushmoor Borough Council undertook a review of the Borough’s Conservation Areas. Officers prepared draft Conservation Area Appraisals and Management Plans (CAAMPs) for each Conservation Area, with the following three being consulted on in 2023:

- [South Farnborough Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan \(CAAMP\)](#)
- [Aldershot West Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan \(CAAMP\)](#)
- [Farnborough Street \(Revised\) Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan \(CAAMP\)](#)

As a result of this consultation, objections and recommendations were received from the public in relation to proposed boundary changes for these Conservation Areas, these included:

- Objections to the removal of Chapel Street from the proposed Farnborough Street Conservation Area
- Suggested extension to the existing Aldershot West Conservation Area to include Rowhill School
- Suggested extension to the existing Aldershot West Conservation Area to include land from Princes Gardens to Buzz Bingo (including the Empire building and the land between them)
- Objections to the removal of the Farren and Baveno complex from the South Farnborough Conservation Area.

This advice note considers the recommendations and objections.

1.2 Policy

Section 69 of the 1990 Planning (Listed Building and Conservation Areas) Act states that:

Designation of Conservation Areas

- (1) Every local planning authority –
 - a. Shall from time to time determine which parts of their area are areas of special architectural or historic interest the character or appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance, and
 - b. Shall designate those areas as Conservation Areas.
- (2) It shall be the duty of a local planning authority from time to time to review the past exercise of functions under this section and to determine whether any parts or any further parts of their area should be designated as conservation areas; and, if they so determine, they shall designate those parts accordingly.
- (3) The Secretary of State may from time to time determine that any part of a local planning authority’s area which is not for the time being designated as a Conservation Area is an area of special architectural or historic interest the character or appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance; and if he so determines, he may designate that part as a Conservation Area.
- (4) The designation of any areas as a Conservation Area shall be a local land charge.

Historic England has published guidance on Conservation Areas entitled: *Conservation Area Appraisal, Designation and Management: Historic Advice Note 1 (Second Edition)*.

It summarises the duties of Local Planning Authorities in the following terms:

- Local planning authorities are to determine areas which it is desirable to preserve and enhance, and designate them as Conservation Areas (section 69 [1])
- Local planning authorities are to review their past activities in this area, including existing Conservation Areas, and to add more Conservation Areas (section 69 [2]);
- Local planning authorities are to formulate and publish proposals for the preservation and enhancement of Conservation Areas and consult the public in the area in questions, taking account of views expressed (Section 71 [1 & 2]);
- In the exercise by local planning authorities of planning functions within the Conservation Area, ‘special attention shall be paid to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of that area’ (Section 72 [1]).

The Guidance also states that:

“.....set out the features of the area that contribute to its special architectural interest.whether as a collection of buildings representing a range of uses that document the area’s history, that represent the impact of a particular architectural vision for the area, as a townscape or with materials and features that are special because of their contribution to local distinctiveness and identity. Surviving or former uses within the area might also have influenced plan form, urban grain and building types, for example grand terraces with mews, villas set in generous gardens, workers’ back-to-back housing or industrial buildings connected with particular activities, local trades or specialised markets”. (Paragraph 46).

Historic England has long-since devised a tool whereby it is possible to carry out an impartial assessment of a building or element’s ability to contribute positively to a Conservation Area. This tool has been in existence for over twenty years and the current version of it is now included within their guidance in the Advice Note: *Conservation Area Appraisal, Designation and Management* (2019). It comprises a checklist of questions in Figure 1 and is set out below.

The Table states that ***“A positive response to one or more of the following questions may indicate that a particular element within a conservation area makes a positive contribution, provided that its historic form and value have not been eroded”.***

<input type="checkbox"/>	Is it the work of a particular architect or designer of regional or local note?
<input type="checkbox"/>	Does it have landmark quality?
<input type="checkbox"/>	Does it reflect a substantial number of other elements in the conservation area in age, style, materials, form or other characteristics?
<input type="checkbox"/>	Does it relate to adjacent designated heritage assets in age, materials or in any other historically significant way?
<input type="checkbox"/>	Does it contribute positively to the setting of adjacent designated heritage assets?
<input type="checkbox"/>	Does it contribute to the quality of recognisable spaces including exteriors or open spaces within a complex of public buildings?
<input type="checkbox"/>	Is it associated with a designed landscape, eg a significant wall, terracing or a garden building?
<input type="checkbox"/>	Does it individually, or as part of a group, illustrate the development of the settlement in which it stands?
<input type="checkbox"/>	Does it have significant historic associations with features such as the historic road layout, burgage plots, a town park or a landscape feature?
<input type="checkbox"/>	Does it have historic associations with local people or past events?
<input type="checkbox"/>	Does it reflect the traditional functional character or former uses in the area?
<input type="checkbox"/>	Does its use contribute to the character or appearance of the area?

Figure 1: Table from Historic England’s Advice Note: *Conservation Area Appraisal, Designation and Management* (2019)

2 Boundary Review Advice

2.1 Farnborough Street CAAMP: Chapel Street

Local Authority Proposal: Remove from Conservation Area

Objections:

- 11 Chapel Street dates from 1860 and was the first house to be built on the street. At this point it was an unnamed track.
- 11A Chapel Street was a Primitive Methodist Chapel. It was relocated to a larger site by 1952.
- The houses adjacent are Victorian railway workers cottages. The roofs and chimneys are of a consistent design.

The street represents the coming of the railway to the rural, agricultural community in the Victorian period.

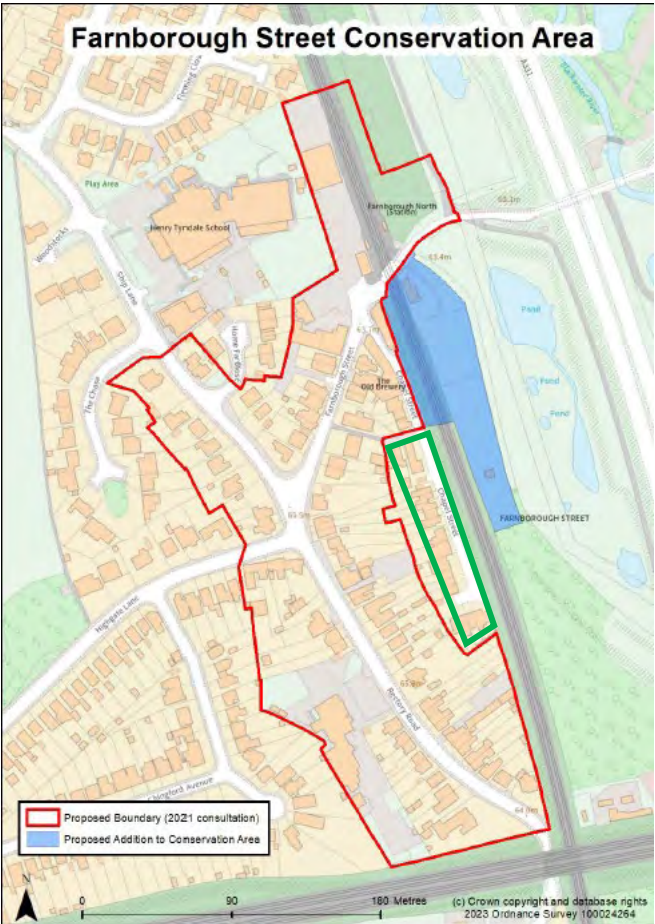


Figure 2: Farnborough Street Conservation Area in Red with Chapel Street outlined in green (Source: South Farnborough CAAMP)

Discussion:

Chapel Street sits adjacent to 'Sub-Area 3: Railway and Industrial Buildings'. This area is characterised by Farnborough North railway station, the railway itself and several industrial buildings. It was a commercial hub from the mid-19th century, and the majority of buildings still remain in a commercial use. At the end of Chapel Street sits 'the Old Brewery', which wraps around residential dwellings on Farnborough Street. This was a former bottling plant or warehouse. Overall, the area reflects its historic use, and represents industry and the coming of the railway.

Chapel Street itself is lined with housing of little architectural quality. There is a short row of much altered 19th century railway cottages. They are of some modest local interest for their association with the railway, however they have been so altered that their architectural interest has been substantially eroded, with extensions, uPVC windows, doors and porches. 11 Chapel Street is locally listed. It is a two-storey, semi-detached, red brick house, which first appears on the 1881 Ordnance Survey map as an L shaped building with an outbuilding to the rear. The attached building (which is not part of the local listing) to the south is labelled as a Primitive Methodist Chapel. These conjoined buildings are also much altered as can be seen from an artist's impression of the building at Figure 5 (compared to Figures 3 and 4), with modern windows, a porch and rear extensions, with the chapel element not being immediately identifiable as a chapel due to the alterations. The remainder of the street features late-20th century infill housing including bungalows and terraces, this includes Nos 2-4, which are not proposed for removal but should be considered within the wider scope of the street.



Figure 4: 11 and 11A Chapel Street – the Primitive Methodist Chapel and House



Figure 3: The much altered Primitive Methodist Chapel



Figure 5: An artist's impression of the Primitive Methodist Chapel and House by local artist, David Pritchard (date unknown), completed with the aid of photographs and personal memories. (Source: *Farnborough Past* by Jo Gosney)



Figure 6: Views down Chapel Street.

Chapel Street suffers from a number of townscape issues, the row of houses looks on to the railway line and utilitarian boundary fencing and scrub. The road surface is patchy and uneven, with unkept edges. Telephone posts and wires make a strong feature, and visual clutter is prolific in the form of bins, parked cars and building-mounted satellites (Figure 6).

The former railway cottages make a very limited contribution to the Conservation Area – mostly through historic association, they do not reflect a substantial number of other elements in the Conservation Area. They cannot be considered to contribute positively to the setting of any adjacent heritage assets and are too much eroded to adequately reflect their traditional use. The late-20th century housing does not contribute in any way. The most significant building – the dwelling attached to the Primitive Methodist Chapel – is locally listed, acknowledging its local historic and architectural significance, although in themselves they are too much altered to warrant inclusion. Beyond this, the street overall does not contribute to the character of the rest of the Conservation Area.

The street would not meet the criteria for a Sub-Area of its own and does not contribute positively to the setting of the adjacent designated heritage assets. While there may be some argument for keeping the street in the Conservation Area to manage future change, this is outweighed by the fact that it currently erodes the significance of the Conservation Area overall. The proximity to the Conservation Area and the impact on its setting will have to be considered for any development proposals going forward.

Recommendation:

Remove from the Farnborough Street Conservation Area, with the inclusion of Nos. 2-4.

2.2 Aldershot West CAAMP: Land from Prince’s Gardens to Buzz Bingo

Public Recommendation: Inclusion of land from Prince’s Gardens to Buzz Bingo in the Aldershot West Conservation Area to protect against future development.

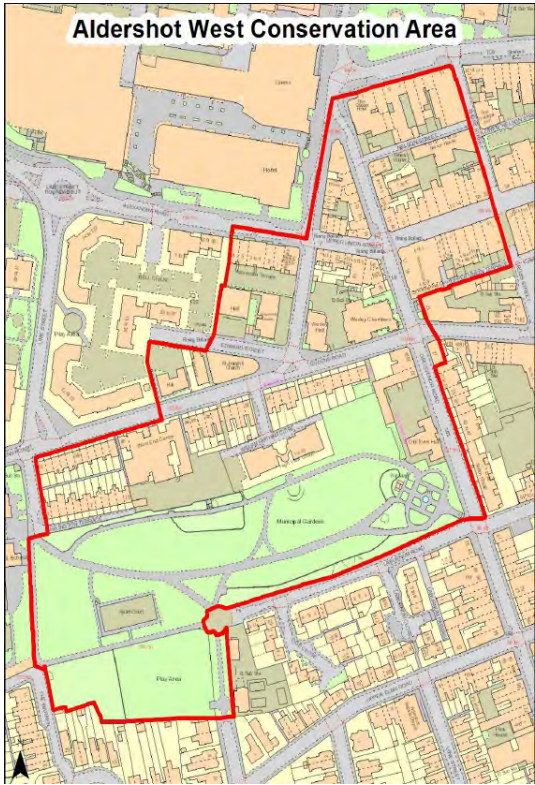


Figure 7: Aldershot West Conservation Area boundary (Source: Aldershot West CAAMP)

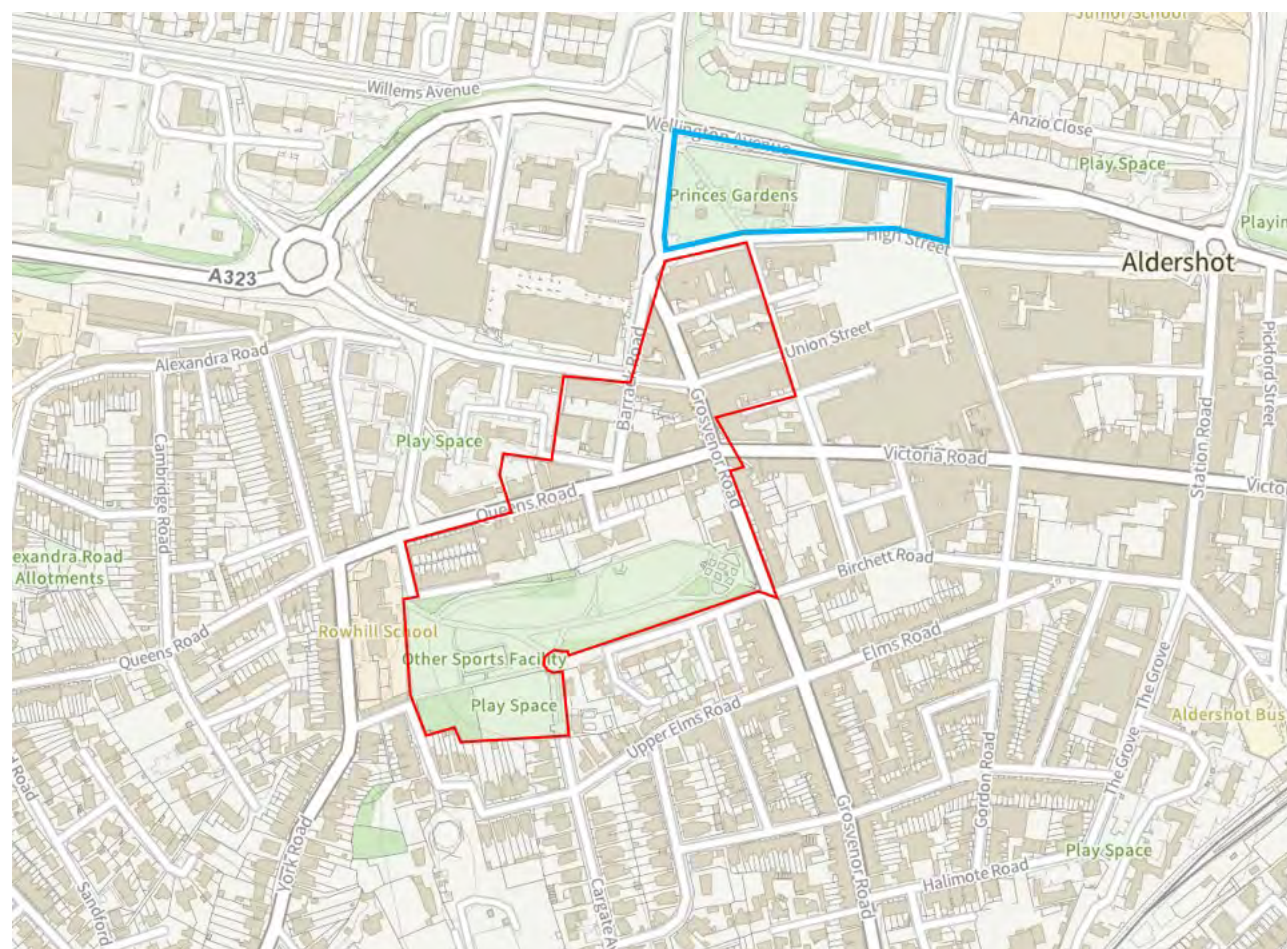


Figure 8: Proposed area for inclusion marked in blue adjacent to the Conservation Area, marked in red.

Discussion:

The area proposed for inclusion (marked in blue in Figure 8) sits beyond the northern end of the Conservation Area, adjacent to the Commercial Sub-Area, and it is within a zone which has historically marked the meeting point of the civilian and army parts of the town. There are several nearby developments which were under construction at the time of writing.

The proposed site is occupied by two large buildings which were historically cinemas, and Princes Gardens. Both the Ritz (Buzz Bingo) and the Empire are Buildings of Local Importance. The Princes Gardens is currently designated as open space under Policy DE6 of the adopted Local Plan. The surrounding area comprises of a car wash, a car park and a GP surgery.

The Empire Theatre (Figure 9), constructed for the Empire (Aldershot) Ltd, first opened its doors on the 1st August 1930, on land previously occupied by the Royal Engineers. It was designed on two levels, with stalls and a horseshoe shaped balcony, with a stage and seating for 1,599 people. The Theatre was renamed the Odeon in 1964 but closed its doors in 1981. A Christian organisation took over the building, rebranding it 'The Kings Centre', until 2015. After which it was purchased by HPS property company for use as an entertainment venue for concerts, shows and

exhibitions. The original architect, Harold S. Scott, RIBA (1883-1945) was a noted architect of cinemas throughout the 1920s and 30s.



Figure 9: The Empire Theatre (Source: Arthur Lloyd)

The Ritz Cinema (Figure 10) was built adjacent to the Empire Theatre, also on land also previously occupied by the Royal Engineers. It opened on the 15th May 1937. It was designed in an Art Deco style, with an auditorium featuring two levels, with stalls and a balcony. It closed in 1977 and was converted into a bingo hall with a triple cinema. Unfortunately, the interior was stripped out at this point. It has long been considered a landmark in the district.

The original architects - Verity and Beverley (est. 1871) - are a notable firm, most renowned for their theatres, such as the Criterion, Piccadilly (now Grade II*), and a large number of other cinemas across London. From 1920 to 1939 they designed primarily for Paramount. They are still in business today.

On the site of the current Princes Hall (not considered for inclusion, but opposite Princes Gardens), was the Cavalry Theatre, which was primarily used as a Garrison Theatre between the East and West Cavalry Barracks, until its demolition in the 1950s.



Figure 10: The Ritz, now Buzz Bingo.

The proposed area for inclusion is run down and unloved. From a townscape perspective, it suffers from a lack of engagement at ground floor level with the street, poor street surfacing, surface mounted cabling, and the presence of a hand car wash between the two buildings, a GP surgery and a car park to one side.

They are of local architectural interest – both by design and by architect, and have landmark quality - despite their run-down appearance, both the Empire and the Ritz (Buzz Bingo) retain their architectural form and features, and both have landmark quality and reflect the cinema-going habits of the 1930s when it was the most popular of activities.

They are of local historic interest – they contribute to the distinctive history of the town - a town dominated by the army, where the provision of entertainment was crucial. This area marked the meeting point of the army personnel and civilians and from the 1930s the cinema was the principal form of entertainment for people, with many often attending twice a week. Their monumental scale and extraordinary number of seats provided in both cinemas demonstrates the huge popularity of films as entertainment during this era. In addition, they were both built by notable and prolific cinema architects, which adds to their interest.

The Princes Gardens was created in 1930 by Aldershot Borough Council on land forming part of the first military camp in Aldershot and is considered to be a gateway between the military and civilian towns. Overall, the area represents a transitional point where civilians and soldiers would interact, making use of the town’s cinemas. The gardens are also on the site of the former Royal Engineers Yard, which came into being in 1853 on the arrival of a

small party of NCOs (Non-Commissioned Officers) and men of the Royal Engineers. This is commemorated on a modest plaque in the ground behind the sculpture of the Charging Horse. An ornamental fountain was unveiled in the gardens in 1954 to commemorate the 100th anniversary of the Army in Aldershot (although this is no longer in situ). More recently there has been an effort to use the space to commemorate the military and their presence in Aldershot. A number of sculptures have been erected in the last few years:

- The Airborne Soldier (unveiled 2019), on a stone base from the Falkland Islands, who stands in recognition of the association of the Parachute Regiment and Airborne Force with Aldershot from 1946 to 2000.

- A life-size bronze statue of Kulbir Thapa carrying a wounded British soldier from the Leicestershire Regiment off the battlefield during the First World War (unveiled 2021). This was commissioned by the Greater Rushmoor Nepali Community to highlight the bond between Nepal and Great Britain. Thapa won the first Victoria Cross to be awarded to a Gurkha soldier.

The inclusion of the area in the Conservation Area as its own Sub-Area would ensure these significant, landmark buildings and Princes Gardens are protected, while encouraging improvements to the public realm and further investment in the gardens themselves. While the buildings are Buildings of Local Importance, and the garden is designated as open space, their inclusion in the Conservation Area will ensure that the various planning controls and considerations used to protect the historic elements of the place are protected. Given the neighbouring development at the time of writing, the regeneration of the area will have to consider the impact on the Conservation Area and enhancement of the public space will be encouraged.

The gardens are worthy of inclusion as they form a commemorative open space uniting both the civilian and Army components of Aldershot. It has historic associations with the Royal Engineers, and positively contributes to the character of the neighbouring Conservation Area. The Empire and Buzz Bingo are landmark quality buildings, and their loss or any further erosion of their significance should be prevented. Their inclusion in the Conservation Area, creating a sub-area representing the historic transition between the Army and civilian life, is recommended.

Recommendation:

Include in the Aldershot West Conservation Area as a separate sub-area.

2.3 Aldershot West CAAMP: Rowhill School

Public Recommendation: To include Rowhill School in the Conservation Area on the basis that it was built together with the West End Centre as West End Infants and Junior School.



Figure 11: The Rowhill School site marked in blue, showing its proximity to the Aldershot West Conservation Area, marked in red, with the West End Centre marked in purple.

Discussion:

Rowhill School is immediately adjacent to Sub-Area 1: Civic and Municipal Quarter (Figure 11).

Rowhill School, now in the now extended West End Infants School, was built in 1889 by the Aldershot School Board. It is constructed in red brick in English Bond with a steeply pitched clay tile roof, retaining its original decorative features and windows. It has been locally listed as a good survival of a purpose-built Board school, still in its original use. The local list description describes it as ‘a very important and imposing building in townscape terms particularly with regard to the strongly defined gables. The cast iron boundary fence to the school and playground forms an important group with the school buildings’. It is clearly a building of distinction and has a large two-storey modern extension to the south. It was not constructed ‘together with the West End Centre’ as stated in the consultation response, but at a few years later, clearly in response to need. It relates both in style and materials to this building (built by 1881, also as a Board school), which is on the north side of the Municipal Gardens. Together these buildings demonstrate a burgeoning need for more classrooms as the population of Aldershot expanded.

The prevailing character of the Conservation Area is largely unchanged since the 19th century, with the primary building materials being red/orange and buff brick with natural slate roofs. Sub-Area 1: Civic and Municipal Quarter features a number of significant Victorian buildings, including the West End Centre, which is considered to positively contribute to the Conservation Area and is an attractive building.

Rowhill School contributes positively to the wider Conservation Area, sharing a common palette of materials, style and form and sitting amongst trees on the western side of the Municipal Gardens. It is of historic interest as a school built in response to the 1870 Education Act and associated with the Aldershot School Board, and it holds some group value with the nearby West End Centre.

The building meets a number of the Historic England requirements for inclusion and will positively contribute to the significance of the Conservation Area. It contributes to the quality of recognisable open space that is the Municipal Gardens, makes a positive contribution to the neighbouring heritage assets, and is still in its original use.



Figure 12: Rowhill School, showing the modern extension to the far right.

Recommendation:

Include within the Aldershot West Conservation Area.

2.4 South Farnborough CAAMP: Baveno House and Farren House

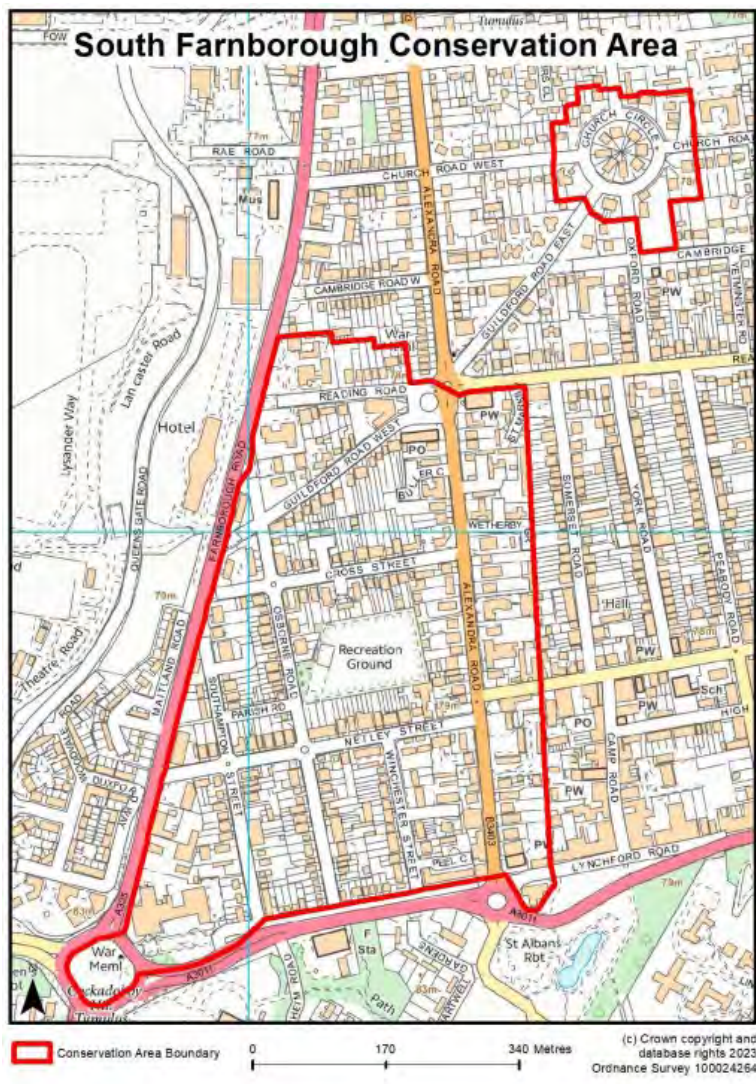


Figure 13: South Farnborough Conservation Area (Source: South Farnborough CAAMP)

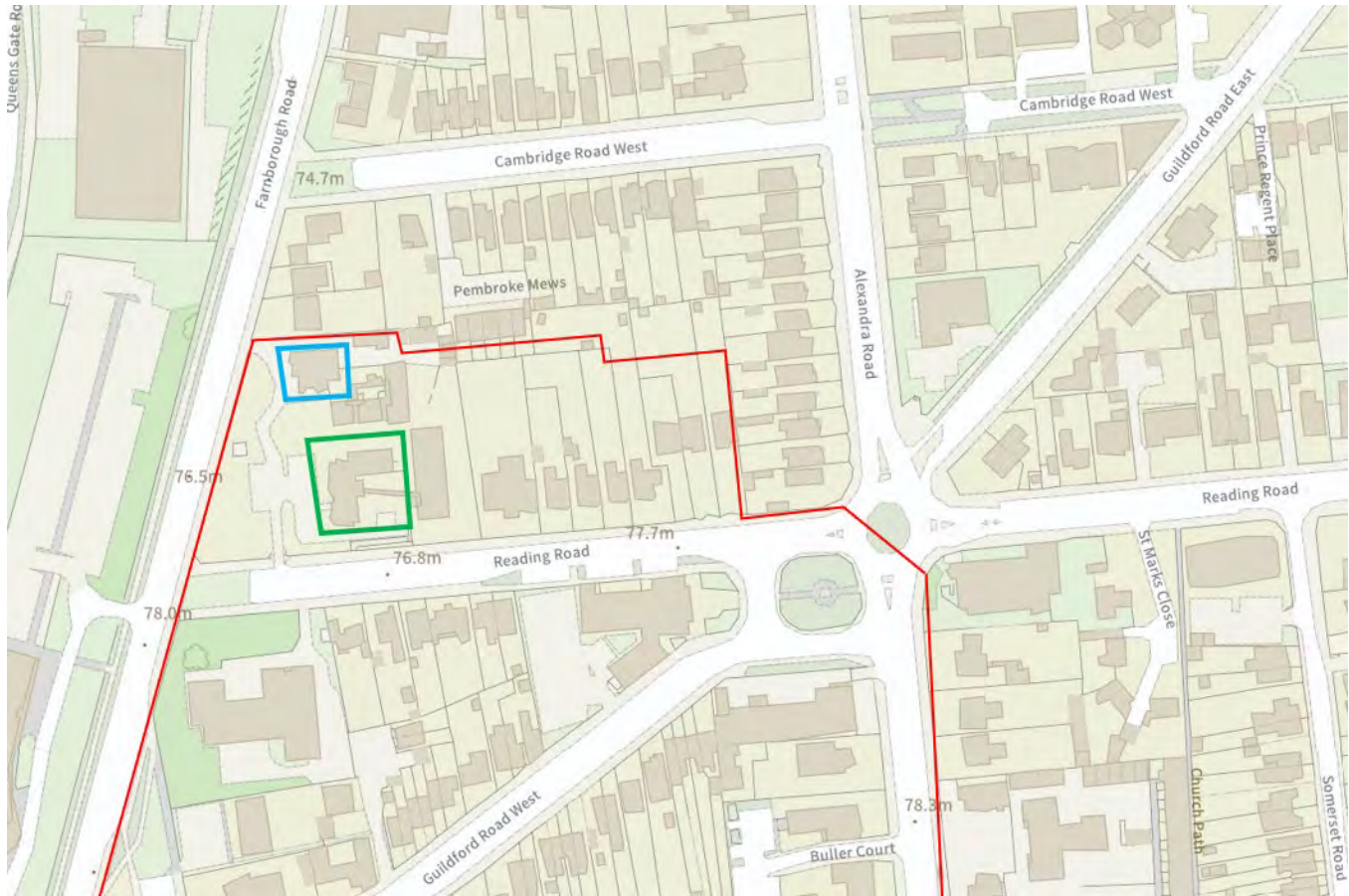


Figure 14: Baveno House shown in blue, Farren House shown in green, with the Conservation Area boundary shown in red.

Local Authority Proposal: Remove the complex from the Conservation Area.

Objections:

- Both Baveno House and Farren House should be retained within the Conservation Area to ensure that they are not redeveloped.
- They are of historic and architectural interest, despite some alteration, and sit within landscaped gardens.

Discussion:

The Draft CAAMP proposes to remove the two northernmost villas, Baveno and Farren House on the basis that they have been significantly altered, and their setting compromised by the erection of three accommodation blocks on the site, constructed in the 1970s. These 1970s buildings are of no historic or architectural interest and they sit behind the principal buildings, rather than blocking views of them. Baveno and Farren Houses have had windows altered, with poor paintwork and surface clutter – alarm boxes, wiring etc. However, as can be seen from Figures 15 and 16, they are still well presented, with a significant amount of historic design detail remaining – including barge boarding, cupola roofs, chimneys and stone/brick detail. Their architectural forms have not been altered beyond recognition, indeed they are still clearly buildings of high quality, and as a group they illustrate the development of the area.



Figure 15: Farren House, with an additional accommodation block seen to the left.



Figure 16: Baveno House

The Conservation Area is inextricably linked to the arrival of the army in 1854. In establishing the first major military training establishment in the country, a newly arrived population required housing. The land on which the Conservation Area sits was lightly wooded heathland to the south of Farnborough Village. By the 1860s this land was up for sale for army officers and their families. Two property companies were formed to purchase land and build houses to be leased to the military – the Farnborough and Aldershot Freehold and Ground Rent Society Ltd (1863), and the Farnborough Cottage Company. The principal roads were laid out in 1874, with construction then proceeding gradually. Baveno and Farren Houses are representative of this phase of Farnborough's development and have significant historic association with the late nineteenth century/early twentieth century development and road layout of the Conservation Area.

Both buildings are good examples of Edwardian Queen Anne Revival, detached villas, with a number of interesting architectural features that set them apart, such as hung tiles, curled pedimented gables, bay windows, little balconies and interesting roof forms (see Figures 15 and 16). They are rich in architectural detail which elevates

them above the more pedestrian semi-detached houses in the area, which at the same time reflecting a substantial number of other elements in the Conservation Area in age, style and materials. While it is true that their setting has been compromised by the accommodation blocks to the rear, these were already in place when the Conservation Area was designated in 1987, and as such this is not a factor for consideration. The poor alterations to the houses themselves are unfortunate, but the buildings still contribute positively to the Conservation Area and sit within their original plots.

The houses, as a group together, contribute to the character of the area, and illustrate the development of Farnborough in a period where housing development was at its peak. They are of high architectural quality, and this has not been eroded to a point where they are no longer recognisable or significant. Overall, they are considered to make a positive contribution to the wider Conservation Area.

Recommendation: Retain in the Conservation Area. An Article 4 Direction could limit further erosion of character of the buildings and it is recommended that this is introduced to restrict some permitted development rights.

2.5 South Farnborough CAAMP: Ettrick Court and Telephone Exchange



Figure 17: Map showing Ettrick Court marked out in green, the Telephone Exchange marked out in blue, with the Conservation Area boundary in red.

Proposed: Remove from Conservation Area due to lack of architectural and historic value and is not in keeping with the Conservation Area.

Objection:

- Any future redevelopment may cause harm to the Conservation Area.

Discussion:

Ettrick Court comprises two rows of three-storey terraced townhouses, dating from the 1970s, with attached front garages facing a concrete parking area (Figure 18). The development replaced a single, large villa which once would have had views across the common (now Farnborough Airport).

The development is of typical 1970s residential design – possibly by the Council or small developer - they are of red/brown brick, with timber-clad spandrels, horizontally-banded windows and cement tile-covered pitched roofs. The windows all appear to uPVC replacements. They are not associated with any known architect. The setting of the two terraces is unkempt and of low quality. Ettrick Court does not meet the requirements set out by Historic England, and while there may be justifiable concern regarding any redevelopment, the proximity to the Conservation Area and the impact on its setting will have to be considered for any development proposals going forward.



Figure 18: Ettrick Court west side.

The Telephone Exchange is a mid-20th century structure of no architectural quality or historic significance. It does not reflect the architectural age or style of the wider Conservation Area, nor does it contribute positively. While there may be some argument that its retention will enable future development to be carefully managed, the proximity to the Conservation Area and the impact on its setting will have to be considered for any development proposals going forward, as with Ettrick Court.



Figure 19: The Telephone Exchange (Source: South Farnborough CAAMP)

Recommendation: Remove both from the Conservation Area.

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of the Local Government Act 1972.

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