

# Public Document Pack



## RUSHMOOR BOROUGH COUNCIL

### CABINET

*at the Council Offices, Farnborough on  
Tuesday, 22nd September, 2015 at 4.30 pm  
in the Concorde Room, Council Offices, Farnborough*

To:  
Councillor P.J. Moyle  
Councillor K.H. Muschamp, Deputy Leader and Business, Safety and Regulation  
Portfolio Holder

Councillor Hughes, Health and Housing Portfolio  
Councillor Sue Carter  
Councillor P.G. Taylor, Corporate Services Portfolio Holder  
Councillor R.L.G. Dibbs  
Councillor A. Jackman

Enquiries regarding this agenda should be referred to Chris Todd, Democratic Services, Democratic and Customer Services on 01252 398825 or e-mail: [chris.todd@rushmoor.gov.uk](mailto:chris.todd@rushmoor.gov.uk)

## A G E N D A

1. **MINUTES** – (Pages 1 - 8)

To confirm the Minutes of the Meeting held on 1st September, 2017 (copy attached).

2. **ALDERSHOT TOWN CENTRE PROSPECTUS - DRAFT SUPPLEMENTARY PLANNING DOCUMENT** – (Pages 9 - 76)  
(Environment and Service Delivery)

To consider the Head of Planning's Report No. PLN1539 (copy attached), which seeks agreement to publish the draft Aldershot Town Centre Prospectus Supplementary Planning Document for consultation.

3. **DRAFT RUSHMOOR BIODIVERSITY ACTION PLAN 2016 - 2021** – (Pages 77 - 94)  
(Environment and Service Delivery)

To consider the Head of Planning's Report No. PLN1545 (copy attached), which seeks agreement to publish the updated Rushmoor Biodiversity Action Plan for consultation.

4. **FARNBOROUGH AIRPORT COMMUNITY ENVIRONMENTAL FUND** – (Pages 95 - 100)  
(Environment and Service Delivery)

To consider the Head of Community and Environmental Services' Report No. COMM1517 (copy attached), which sets out details of applications for grants from the Farnborough Airport Community Environmental Fund.

5. **GRANTS TO VOLUNTARY ORGANISATIONS** – (Pages 101 - 102)  
(Concessions and Community Support)

To consider the Head of Community and Environmental Services' Report No. COMM1518 (copy attached), which sets out applications for grants from voluntary organisations.

6. **THE SOURCE, BOULTERS HOUSE, NO. 237 HIGH STREET, ALDERSHOT** –  
(Pages 103 - 106)  
(Corporate Services)

To consider the Solicitor to the Council's Report No. LEG1517 (copy attached), which sets out a proposal to assist the Source, following its decision to vacate the premises at Boulters House, No. 237 High Street, Aldershot.

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# RUSHMOOR BOROUGH COUNCIL

## CABINET

***Tuesday, 1st September, 2015 at 4.30 pm***  
***at the Council Offices, Farnborough***

Councillor P.J. Moyle  
Councillor K.H. Muschamp, Deputy Leader and Business, Safety and  
Regulation Portfolio Holder

Councillor Hughes, Health and Housing Portfolio  
Councillor Sue Carter  
Councillor P.G. Taylor, Corporate Services Portfolio Holder  
Councillor R.L.G. Dibbs  
Councillor A. Jackman

Apologies for absence were submitted on behalf of .

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 **15<sup>th</sup> September 2015**.

37. **MINUTES –**

The Minutes of the meeting of the Cabinet held on 14th July, 2017 were confirmed and signed by the Chairman.

38. **CONTRACTOR ANNUAL SERVICE PLANS 2015/16 –**  
(Environment and Service Delivery/Leisure and Youth)

(1) **Places for People Leisure –**

The Cabinet received the Corporate Director's Report No. CD1509 and the Places for People (PfP) Leisure Delivery Plan 2015-16. The Report advised that PfP had performed well on the contract during the previous year. PfP and the Council had continued to work in partnership on the Megarider bus ticket and £1 summer holiday swimming initiatives.

Duncan Mackay, the local Contract Manager, attended the meeting to present the Leisure Delivery Plan. There were a number of positive messages in the Delivery Plan. PfP had been named, for the third year running, UK Active's Leisure Centre Operator of the Year and had been the first organisation in the United Kingdom to receive a Quest Stretch validation in sports development. There had been an increase in attendance on the swimming lesson programmes and the number of casual swimmers had also gone up. There had been considerable investment in the leisure facilities at Farnborough Leisure Centre and Aldershot Pools, including £110,000 spent on replacement fitness equipment at Farnborough and a £60,000 refurbishment to the fitness facility at Aldershot. LED lighting had continued to be introduced at both sites. PfP's customer advisers and marketing teams had continued to produce high quality marketing material and had worked closely with the Council's Communications Team in a number of areas. Social media had been used increasingly in contacting existing and potential new customers. The price of gym membership had been cut significantly in order to compete with other local providers and this had seen a sharp increase in take-up.

The main issues for 2015-16 included continuing to enhance and improve the range of activities on offer to local residents, carrying out further improvement works at the facilities and working with the Council and other local partners to provide support to community safety initiatives and disadvantaged groups.

The Cabinet welcomed the Delivery Plan and the positive work carried out by PfP across the Borough. There was some discussion on the increased use of technology in tracking students' progress with swimming lessons and how this might be rolled out and across other types of lessons. An enquiry was also made about visitor numbers to the Aldershot Lido and whether it had been adversely affected by the recent changeable weather.

**The Cabinet RESOLVED** that the Places for People Leisure Delivery Plan 2015-16, as set out in the Corporate Director's Report No. CD1509, be endorsed.

(2) **Team Rushmoor –**

The Cabinet received the Corporate Director's Report No. CD1510 and the Team Rushmoor (Veolia) Service Plan for 2015-16. Members were reminded that the current contract was due to end in March 2017. Highlights in the Report included the continued growth of the brown bin garden waste collection scheme, the refurbishment of the Cove Green public toilets and securing the Silver Gilt award for Aldershot Town Centre in the South and South East In Bloom competition and the Gold award for the Aldershot Crematorium.

John Stockings, Veolia's Contract Manager, attended the meeting to present the Service Plan. The Cabinet was advised that there had been some issues in the winter due, mainly, to persistent strong winds which had caused litter to be spread over large areas. Whilst the Transport Industry had, generally, suffered a shortage in qualified LGV (Large Goods Vehicle) drivers, Veolia had overcome this by providing in-house driver training. Staff turnover had remained low at less than 1% of the workforce.

Issues for 2015-16 included working in partnership to reduce contamination, which continued to be a problem for the recycling service, utilising new software that had been introduced in relation to bulky waste collections and continuing to invest in renewing vehicles that were past their useful life. Preparing a comprehensive bid to retain the work at the contract retendering stage was also a key priority for Veolia in the coming year.

The Cabinet was satisfied at the level of service provided by Veolia under the contract and thanks were expressed to Mr Stockings, personally, as this was to be his final report to the Council before retirement.

**The Cabinet RESOLVED** that Team Rushmoor/Veolia's Service Plan for 2015-16, as set out in the Corporate Director's Report No. CD1510, be endorsed.

**39. FINANCIAL MATTERS –**  
(Leader of the Council)

**(1) Revenue Budget Monitoring and Forecasting 2015/16 – Position at July, 2015 –**

The Cabinet considered the Head of Financial Services' Report No. FIN1515, which set out the anticipated financial position for 2015/16, based on the monitoring exercise carried out during July 2015. The Report explained that, in the monitoring exercise, service managers had identified a net overspend of approximately £43,000 against their non-salary budgets. Corporate variances included staff salary savings, which totalled around £360,000. The Report identified the Business Rate Retention Scheme as being the cause of the greatest variances affecting the first quarter, though this was mostly down to timing issues and would not affect the Council's financial position in the longer term.

It was proposed to make three transfers to reserves to mitigate risks of fluctuations in income and expenditure, to increase the revenue contributions towards capital expenditure in respect of income generating proposals within the Council's 8-Point Plan and to cover future mercury abatement measures at the Council's crematorium. The Report listed a number of financial risks facing the Council but it was anticipated that the Stability and Resilience Reserve would offer an element of protection for the Council from these. The major risks identified included that the Council might not achieve the savings targets required, that projects would not deliver efficiency savings to timescale and that income streams might deteriorate due to the economic climate, including planning fees, parking income and rents.

Members considered the Report and expressed their satisfaction with both the current revenue budget position and the measures put in place to ensure future financial stability. The purpose and use of reserves was also discussed.

**The Cabinet RESOLVED** that

- (i) the Head of Financial Services' Report No. FIN1515 be noted;

- (ii) the virements and supplementary estimates, as set out in the Report, be approved;
- (iii) The initial estimates for the use of the Service Improvement Fund, as set out in the Report, be approved;
- (iv) the creation of a reserve for mercury abatement measures, as set out in the Report, be approved; and
- (v) the increase in revenue contributions to capital outlay, subject to the final outturn position, as set out in the Report, be approved.

**(2) Capital Programme Monitoring 2015/16 – Position at July, 2015 –**

The Cabinet received the Head of Financial Services' Report No. FIN1516, which provided the latest forecast regarding the Council's Capital Programme for 2015/16. The Report advised that the Programme, including slippages and variations, totalled £11,394,000. The recent monitoring exercise had identified a number of areas of slippage, including improvement works at the Brickfield Country Park and playground refurbishments at Manor Park and the Municipal Gardens in Aldershot.

**The Cabinet RESOLVED** that the latest Capital Programme monitoring position, as set out in the Head of Financial Services' Report No. FIN1516, be noted.

**40. CORPORATE STRATEGY AND CORPORATE PLAN 2015/16 - QUARTER ONE MONITORING –**  
(Environment and Service Delivery)

The Cabinet received the Directors' Management Board's Report No. DMB1504, which gave an update on performance management monitoring information against the Corporate Plan for the first quarter of the 2015/16 financial year.

The Chief Executive gave Members an update on strategic and performance management data on many areas, including demographics, crime, economic data and housing completions. Members also heard about key initiatives and service measures under the themes of:

- People and communities
- Prosperity
- Place
- Leadership
- Good value services

It was noted that 87.9% of the indicators were on target, 11.1% were in question as to whether they would achieve the action or indicator and 1.0% were unable to achieve elements of the target. The Chief Executive gave a summary of key projects that were ongoing and responded to Members' questions.

**The Cabinet NOTED** the Directors' Management Board Report No. DMB1504 and the performance made against the Corporate Plan in the first quarter of the 2015/16 municipal year.

41. **BUILDING CONTROL FINANCIAL STATEMENT 2014/15 AND CHARGES FOR 2015/16 –**  
(Environment and Service Delivery)

The Cabinet considered the Head of Planning's Report No. PLN1543, which set out the Building Control Financial Statement for its fee earning work for the year ended 31st March, 2015 and also reviewed the current charges for building control work. It was reported that Building Control's fee income for 2014/15 had resulted in an operating deficit of £24,709 which had increased the rolling deficit to £31,201. It was reported that, to try to improve the robustness of the service in a challenging financial environment, the Council had negotiated with Hart District Council to provide a joint Building Control Service, which had been in operation since 1st July, 2015. Whilst it was anticipated that this arrangement would provide a better service in due course, in the short term it was proving difficult to recruit additional qualified Building Control Officers. In light of these changes, it was proposed that fees should remain unaltered at the present time. It was proposed to introduce a single fee structure across the two authorities in due course.

**The Cabinet RESOLVED** that the financial statement for Building Control for 2014/15 be endorsed and the current charging structure remain unaltered for the time being.

42. **ASSET MANAGEMENT STRATEGY –**  
(Corporate Services)

The Cabinet considered the Solicitor to the Council's Report No. LEG1515, which set out a proposal to develop a three-year asset management strategy. The aim of the strategy would be to ensure better use of the Council's property assets and would include a policy of seeking to invest in the acquisition of commercial and, potentially, residential properties, with the intention of achieving additional revenue streams. The strategy could also provide direct intervention in town centre regeneration through strategic acquisitions.

It was reported that this proposal had been developed following some work by consultants, Montague Evans, in 2014. The Council had commissioned the company to assess the health of the Council's property portfolio. In the report, Montague Evans considered the following:

- The composition of the Council's portfolio
- A review of the types of assets and their potential

- The Council's key corporate plan objectives and how they link to its property portfolio
- Areas for potential change and evolution of the property portfolio through a business plan

Following receipt of the report, research had been carried out to establish whether any other local authorities, that had already developed successful asset management strategies, would be willing to assist the Council in the development of its strategy. As a result of this exercise, it was now proposed that the Council should establish an arrangement with Eastleigh Borough Council to work collaboratively to develop an approach and produce an asset management strategy that met the stated strategic objectives set out in the Montague Evans report. Eastleigh Borough Council had generated around £6.5 million per annum in additional revenue over the previous five years and was seen as a beacon of good practice in this field. The cost of the preparation of the asset management strategy would be £30,000 over a six to eight week period. This amount would be drawn from the Service Improvement Fund. Once a draft strategy had been prepared, this would be brought back to the Cabinet and would also be the subject of a Member workshop. Ongoing support would then be available from the Eastleigh Borough Council Estates Team to the Council to implement the strategy, at the rates set out in the Report.

Members considered the Report and expressed support for the approach being proposed.

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

<b>Minute Nos.</b>	<b>Schedule 12A Para. Nos.</b>	<b>Categories</b>
44	3	Information relating to financial or business affairs

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

**44. NO. 12 ARTHUR STREET, ALDERSHOT - FUTURE USE –**  
(Corporate Services)

The Cabinet considered the Solicitor to the Council's Exempt Report No. LEG1516, which set out options for the future use of the property at No. 12 Arthur Street, Aldershot. It was explained that the property had been the original office for the charity Relate until they had moved to new premises at Nos. 35 - 39 High Street, Aldershot in 2011. Since then, the property had been vacant and was currently in a poor state of repair. In light of the Council's 8-Point Plan, which required better use of property and assets, it was not considered appropriate to allow the property to deteriorate further. Various options had been considered but it was proposed that the



most appropriate course of action would be to apply for prior approval to change the use of the premises from an office to three domestic flatted units. The property could then be sold with prior approval granted for flats and this would realise a higher value than if marketed as offices. Alternatively, the Council could undertake to carry out the conversion works itself and then sell the three converted flats on the open market or, if the Council had formed a housing company, rent the properties out to gain income.

Members were advised that this option would achieve the highest possible return from the disposal of the property. It was likely that, in light of current legislation, the Council would need to set up a company if choosing this option, as the Council would be seen to be trading. It was likely that, in bringing forward its proposed asset management strategy, the Council would be requiring to set up such a company in any case.

**The Cabinet RESOLVED that**

- (i) the Solicitor to the Council be authorised to:
  - take all preliminary steps to enable a prior approval application to be submitted for the redevelopment of No. 12 Arthur Street, Aldershot as three residential flats; and
  - subject to the issue of a trading company being resolved, to take all necessary steps to convert the property to flats and, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Corporate Services, to either dispose of the flats to generate a capital receipt or hold them as a property asset for future letting; and
- (ii) that expenditure in the sum of £8,000 be authorised towards the professional fees and the prior approval application fee.

The Meeting closed at 6.12 pm.

D.E. CLIFFORD  
LEADER OF THE COUNCIL

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**CABINET**  
**22 SEPTEMBER 2015**

**Head of Planning**  
**Report No. PLN 1539**

**DRAFT ALDERSHOT TOWN CENTRE PROSPECTUS  
SUPPLEMENTARY PLANNING DOCUMENT**

**1. Purpose of Decision**

- 1.1 This report seeks Cabinet agreement to publish, for consultation purposes, the draft Aldershot Town Centre Prospectus Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) as attached in Annex 1.

**2. Background**

- 2.1 The Council has undertaken work over many years to help support and regenerate Aldershot town centre. A number of studies and strategies have been produced to guide development opportunities. The Council adopted its Core Strategy for the Borough in October 2011. This sets out an overarching strategy for the regeneration of Aldershot town centre (policy SP3). The Aldershot Town Centre SPD (adopted January 2009) sets out a detailed vision for the environmental and physical improvement of Aldershot town centre, including the identification of development opportunity sites. However, a more proactive approach is now required through partnership working to secure investment and deliver improvements and development, capitalising on the Westgate development and the Aldershot Urban Extension (Wellesley).

- 2.2 In recognition of this, Allies and Morrison has been commissioned to work with the Council to deliver a strategy for regeneration based on viable investment and development options to attract investment into Aldershot Town Centre.

- 2.3 Aldershot's identification as a 'Step Up Town' by the Enterprise M3 LEP gives rise to the possibility to access funding from the local growth fund. The Council is keen to explore how this funding could be used to address viability and delivery issues in the implementation of development schemes in Aldershot. In this context, the Council has already identified six key sites with development potential:

- The Galleries
- Union Street East
- High Street (Kings Centre/Gala Bingo)
- Hippodrome House area
- Westgate Phase 2 (Princes Hall and Police Station)
- Aldershot Railway Station

- 2.4 These sites were included as potential site allocations within the Rushmoor Local Plan Preferred Approach consultation that took place between June and July 2015.

### **3 The Aldershot Town Centre Prospectus SPD**

- 3.1 Allies and Morrison has been tasked with developing an Aldershot Town Centre Prospectus. The purpose of this document is to set out a regeneration strategy, an updated vision and objectives and a focus on key development opportunities. This document will serve a dual purpose, operating as a marketing document aimed at potential investors whilst also setting out a development framework to provide more detail to support existing planning policies.
- 3.2 The Prospectus sets out development options for all the key sites in Aldershot Town Centre (listed at paragraph 2.3). This includes two options for the redevelopment of The Galleries, including potential for the creation of a public square. It also sets out how the area known as Union Street East could be developed including the potential redevelopment of the building soon to be vacated by Marks and Spencer.

### **4 Policy Framework**

- 3.1 Following consultation and any subsequent amendments, the Aldershot Town Centre Prospectus SPD will be adopted by Cabinet, and will support the policies contained in the Council's Local Plan, in addition to having a corporate role in promoting the town centre to prospective investors. SPDs provide detail on the interpretation and delivery of national and local policies. This SPD relates specifically to policy SP3 (Aldershot Town Centre) of the adopted Core Strategy (2011) and policies TC1 (Aldershot & Farnborough Town Centres), TC2 (Shopping Core) and TC3 (Residential uses above the ground floor within the shopping cores) of the Rushmoor Local Plan Review (Saved Policies).

### **5. Consultation**

- 5.1 To date, Allies and Morrison has engaged with the local community through a Community Workshop. This has informed the draft version of the SPD. It is proposed to undertake formal public consultation on the draft SPD for a period of 6 weeks. Consultation is scheduled to begin on Wednesday 30 September and end on Wednesday 11 November and will be undertaken in accordance with the Council's Statement of Community Involvement (2013).

5.2 Public consultation will include publishing information on the Council's website, which will be promoted via traditional and social media, with the opportunity to complete response forms. Exhibition boards summarising the proposals will also be on display in Aldershot Town Centre. In addition, Allies and Morrison will support the Council at two staffed public exhibitions setting out the proposals, and will attend a number of stakeholder meetings.

## **6. What happens next?**

6.1 Following completion of public consultation, all the comments received will be evaluated and the SPD updated, as appropriate. A further report to Cabinet will summarise the outcome of public consultation, outline subsequent changes to the Aldershot Town Centre Prospectus and seek approval to adopt it as SPD. Once adopted it will be used as a regeneration strategy to guide investment and development proposals by developers, the Council and other stakeholders.

## **7. Recommendation**

7.1 **It is recommended that the draft Aldershot Town Centre Prospectus SPD be approved for consultation for a period of 6 weeks.**

**Keith Holland**  
**Head of Planning**

## **Annex**

### **Annex 1: Draft Aldershot Town Centre Prospectus SPD for public consultation**

#### **Contacts:**

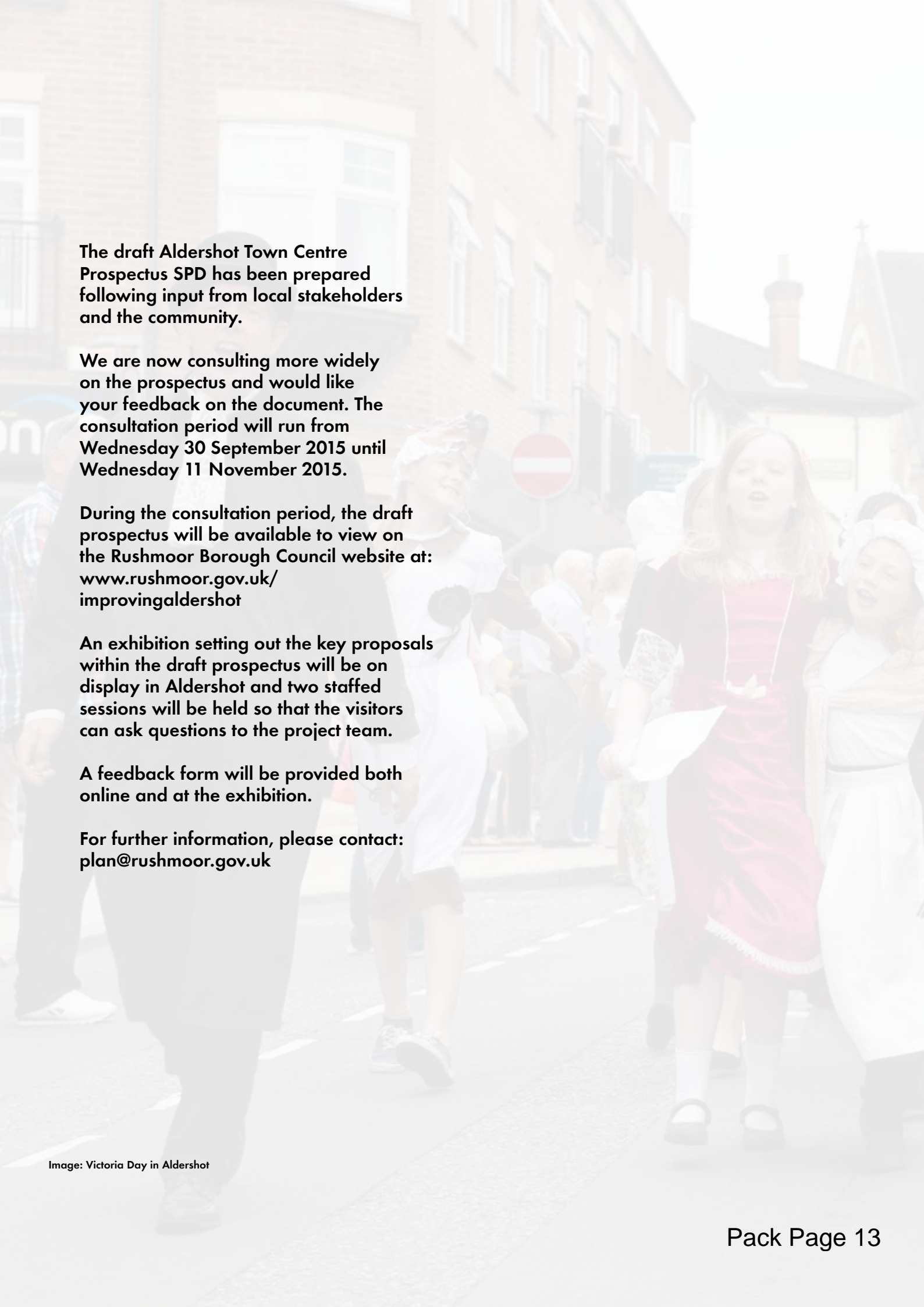
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# ALDERSHOT TOWN CENTRE PROSPECTUS

Supplementary Planning Document

DRAFT FOR CONSULTATION

September 2015



**The draft Aldershot Town Centre Prospectus SPD has been prepared following input from local stakeholders and the community.**

**We are now consulting more widely on the prospectus and would like your feedback on the document. The consultation period will run from Wednesday 30 September 2015 until Wednesday 11 November 2015.**

**During the consultation period, the draft prospectus will be available to view on the Rushmoor Borough Council website at: [www.rushmoor.gov.uk/improvingaldershot](http://www.rushmoor.gov.uk/improvingaldershot)**

**An exhibition setting out the key proposals within the draft prospectus will be on display in Aldershot and two staffed sessions will be held so that the visitors can ask questions to the project team.**

**A feedback form will be provided both online and at the exhibition.**

**For further information, please contact: [plan@rushmoor.gov.uk](mailto:plan@rushmoor.gov.uk)**



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# INTRODUCTION

The Aldershot Prospectus sets out a strategy for regeneration based on viable investment and development options to attract and support investment in Aldershot Town Centre.

The prospectus has been developed as a Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) and will be a material planning consideration for future planning applications in the town centre. The SPD will replace the Aldershot Town Centre SPD (2009) and further develops the Council's strategic approach to regeneration.

Drawing on Aldershot's key assets and addressing challenges faced by the town, the prospectus sets out a high level approach to the town's future identity whilst drawing out specific development and investment projects at key sites in the town.

The prospectus is designed to identify investment and development priorities and to supplement planning guidance in the Rushmoor Plan Core Strategy that exists for development in the town.

Rushmoor Borough Council is not in a position deliver the proposals set out in the prospectus alone but will use its powers and resources in a proactive way to enable development and investment in the town.

# A CLEAR POLICY CONTEXT

## National policy

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) outlines that planning should promote the vitality of our main urban areas (para 17). Planning policies should be positive, promote competitive town centre environments and set out policies for the management and growth of centres over the plan period (para 23).

Where town centres are in decline, local planning authorities should plan positively for their future to encourage economic activity and recognise that residential development can play an important role in ensuring the vitality of centres and set out policies to encourage residential development on appropriate sites (para 23).

Rushmoor Borough Council is developing its Local Plan in line with these key policies, to plan positively for Aldershot's future and provide clarity on investment priorities.

## Local policy

The key objective for Aldershot town centre is to improve its vitality and viability. The policy approach set out in policy SP3 of the Core Strategy is to permit development that contributes to this objective. Aldershot town centre is in a vulnerable state following the withdrawal of a number of 'High Street' retailers and therefore a proactive approach to the regeneration of the town centre is required.

Development proposals will be permitted which maintain the vitality and viability of Aldershot Town Centre and contribute to the strategy of regenerating the town centre.

**Policy TC1** of the Rushmoor Local Plan Review (Saved Policies) seeks to maintain and enhance the diversity, vitality and viability of Aldershot town centre. The Council will seek to protect, and where possible strengthen, the retail function of the centre whilst facilitating or maintaining an appropriate level of diversification.

**Policy TC2** of the Rushmoor Local Plan Review (Saved Policies) identifies the 'shopping core' of Aldershot Town Centre and seeks to protect the retail function of these areas. In each frontage, the number of non-A1 units will not exceed 30% and visually prominent sites with an A1 use will be protected.

**Policy TC3** of the Rushmoor Local Plan Review (Saved Policies) outlines that the Council will support proposals for residential uses above the ground floor within the shopping cores, subject to other policies of the plan.

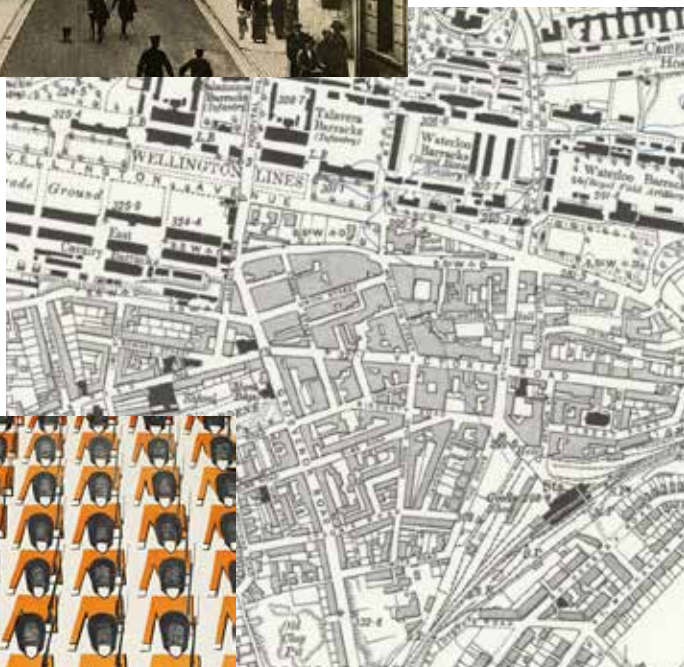
In addition to these town centre specific policies the Rushmoor Core Strategy and Rushmoor Local Plan Review (Saved Policies) set out a comprehensive range of policies against which planning applications will be assessed.

# PROUD PAST



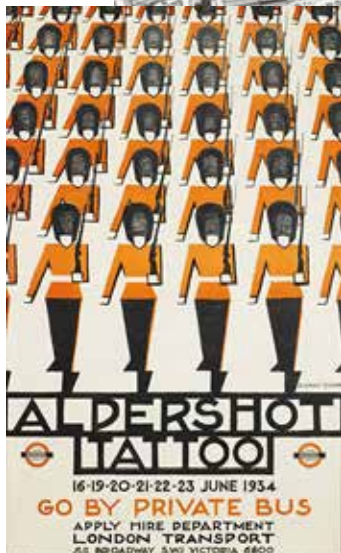
Union Street pre 1920

Aldershot has a strong tradition of independent shops and services, with market town status dating back until at least 1607. The buzz of activity was focused on Union Street and Wellington Street, with shops below, homes above, and advertising hoardings decorating buildings' upper storeys.



Aldershot map from 1909

By 1900, Aldershot was already 'home of the British military', and had benefited from a rail station for 30 years. Both of these developments led to the rapid growth of the town. The garrison town was located to the north of Aldershot town centre, though Victorian villas on generous plots still existed close to this.

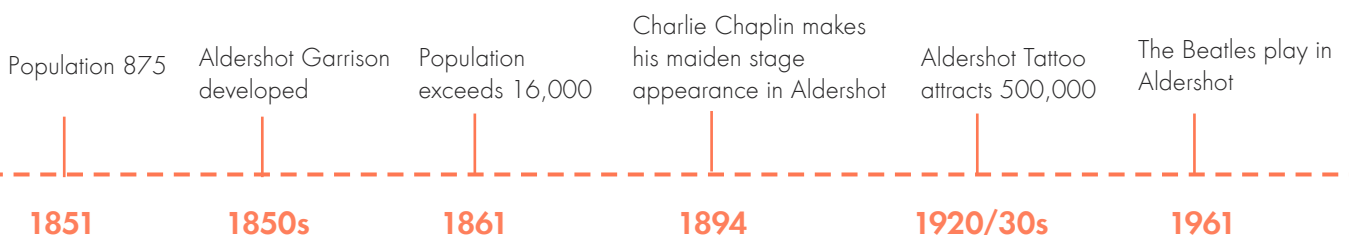


Aldershot Tattoo poster 1934



Flyer for Beatles Concert

Aldershot's military Tattoo dates back to 1894 and, in its heyday of the 1920s and 1930s, attracted 500,000 visitors to see formation performances lit by flame torches. Aldershot's military history and Victorian heritage continue to be celebrated through regular events, including the Military Festival and Victoria Day.



# CONFIDENT FUTURE

Aldershot has evolved throughout its history and the town's evolution continues with the Wellesley development to the north of the centre, providing 3,850 homes and two new primary schools. These family homes will bring new life to the town and help to support additional uses and activities in the centre.

Improvements in the town centre are already under way with new trees and paving in Union Street, funded in part through the Local Economic Partnership.

Aldershot is a diverse and growing town and the prospectus sets out the key investment priorities for the town's future evolution - drawing on its strengths and addressing challenges. It is now time to consider revitalisation of the town centre with homes above shops.

Development and investment opportunities have been identified at a number of key locations in the town centre which are set out from page 40 onwards.



**Refurbished Cambridge Military Hospital**



**Artist's impression of new homes at Wellesley**



**Artist's impression of refurbished Princes Hall**



# A GOOD PLACE FOR INVESTMENT

## Enterprise M3 LEP step-up status

The Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP), Enterprise M3, covers the area from the M25 down to Southampton and has identified Aldershot as a Step-up Town for the sub-region.

A growth package has been developed, with investment of £54-63 million in the town up until 2021, of which, £7.3-£8.3 million will be funded by the LEP<sup>1</sup>. The package includes new town centre homes, transformation of the rail station area, £3 million investment in streets, spaces and shop fronts and development at four key sites in Aldershot town centre.

The programme of investment will create an estimated 1,200-1,460 jobs in construction, service jobs and other employment directly related to development.

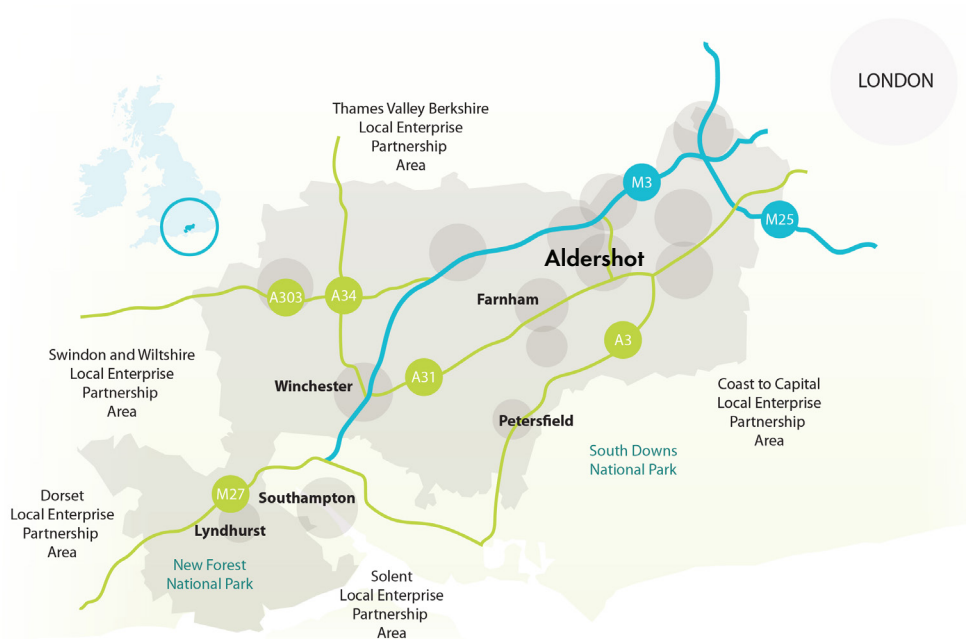
<sup>1</sup> Working for a Smarter Future: The Enterprise M3 Delivery Plan - 2014-2020

## A changing demographic

The Borough of Rushmoor has a relatively young population and great demand from young professionals who want to move to the area. In addition, Aldershot currently has a price differential with surrounding areas that makes properties relatively affordable for a desirable part of the country. These characteristics result in an increasingly healthy market, with new two-bedroom properties recently selling very quickly.

The development of 3,850 homes at Wellesley will add 10,000 new residents to Aldershot over the next few years, who fall into MOSAIC categories 'new homemakers' and 'careers and kids', both with solid incomes and spending power.

Rushmoor Borough Council's Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA) has identified a significant requirement for new homes in the town beyond this, which presents opportunities for town centre living.



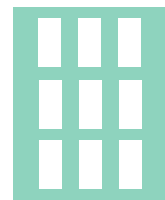
Aldershot is located central to the Enterprise M3 Local Economic Partnership

## TOWN CENTRE OPPORTUNITIES FOR.....

NEW HOMES



OFFICE SPACE



LEISURE USES



RETAIL SPACE

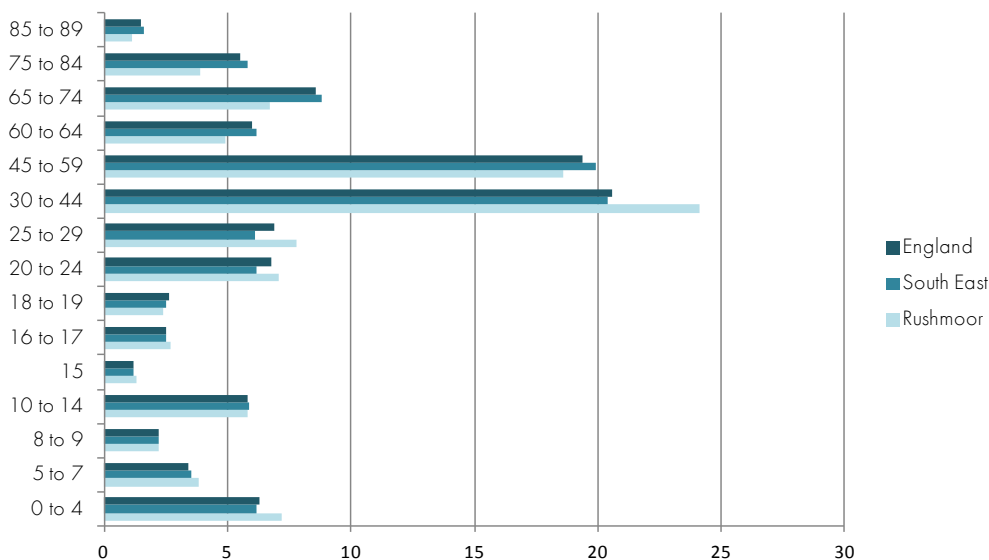


### A pro-active town centre approach

Like many towns across the UK, Aldershot has struggled recently to maintain healthy town centre retail provision in the face of stiff competition from online retailers and retail parks. Closures have been due to retailers' national strategies in many cases but the Council is committed to taking a pro-active approach to address vacancies and bring life into the town centre through new homes and activity, so that existing and new businesses are supported.

Sites identified through the prospectus study demonstrate potential capacity for new homes in the centre, along with office space, leisure uses and retail space.

The Council will promote these development opportunities and explore all delivery options for bringing forward key sites in the town centre, including seeking delivery partners and acquisition of sites through compulsory purchase if alternative delivery options do not prove possible.



Rushmoor Borough has a relatively young population with a particularly high proportion of 30-44 year olds (Source ONS)

## Well connected

Aldershot is well connected to both the rail and road networks. The town is close to the A3 and M3, both of which connect easily with the M25, and the M4 is also easily accessed.

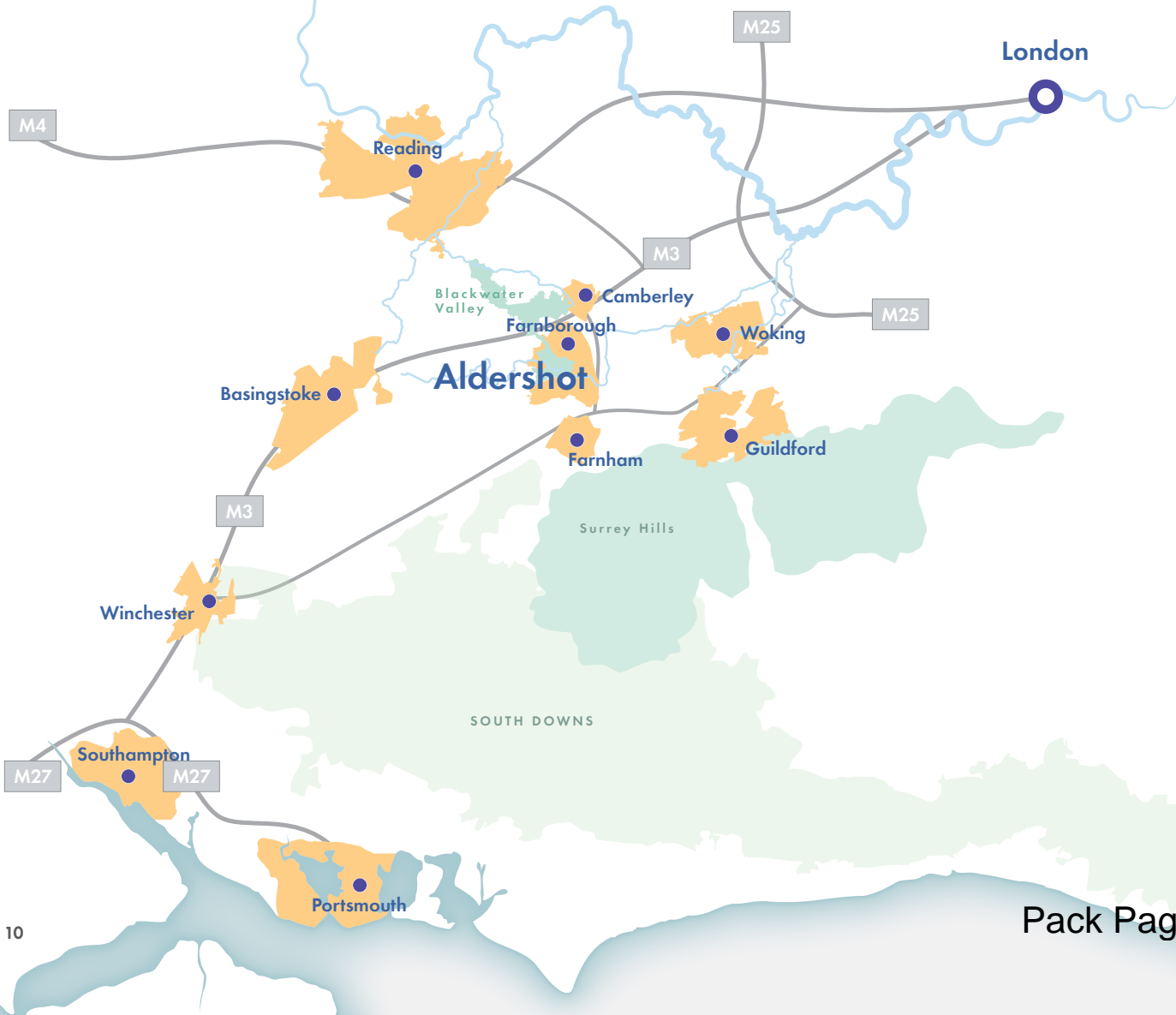
The town is on the South West Trains network which connects Aldershot to London Waterloo and Guildford and nearby stations connect to North Camp, Reading, and Gatwick.

**London Waterloo: 53 minutes**  
**Camberley: 14 minutes**  
**Guildford: 17 minutes**  
**Reading: 23 minutes**

## A beautiful landscape setting

In addition to its parks - Manor Park, Municipal Gardens, Princes Gardens and Aldershot Park - Aldershot occupies an attractive location surrounded by green and open space. Basingstoke Canal is nearby; the Surrey Hills Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) and the South Downs National Park are to the south; and the Blackwater Valley runs through the area from the north. The Council will seek to strengthen links to these natural assets, and to routes such as the North Downs Way, through better signage and path widening and maintenance as funding permits.

Aldershot is also just an hour from the coast, with Hayling Island, the Witterings and port towns within easy reach.







## A growing community

The new Wellesley development on part of the former Aldershot Garrison site north of the town centre will provide a mix of home sizes and tenures along with two new primary schools, 110 ha of managed green space, including Wellesley Woods, and the refurbishment of six listed buildings. The first 228 homes are now under construction.

Pedestrian and cycle links between the new homes and the town centre will be very important and the routes on Hospital Hill, Middle Hill, Gun Hill and Ordnance Road will be improved with greening and signage.



A new home at Wellesley



Links to the Aldershot Town Centre from Wellesley

# THE VISION FOR ALDERSHOT

## **We want to see the heart back in Aldershot.**

The town will be a place where everyone is welcome and where families want to be, focused around a thriving leisure and retail hub. Easy to get to, park and get around, the town will become increasingly vibrant with new residents from Wellesley joining Aldershot's community and new high quality urban homes in the town centre.

Businesses, old and new, will thrive and support the town, and residents will shop in a unique mix of independent and high street shops. Aldershot's Victorian and military heritage will be celebrated and protected. Families and friends of all ages will meet up in a choice of coffee shops, cafés and restaurants, be active or relax in quality open spaces. Aldershot will come alive with the buzz from Westgate and a revitalised Princes Hall, new leisure facilities and the concerts, shows, arts and family events taking place across the town.

Aldershot town centre will be a place local people want to be.

# THEMES OF THE VISION

## 1 A revitalised town centre offer

Aldershot's retail core faces challenges and is not expected to compete with regional towns nearby. However, the town centre has an important role to play in meeting the convenience and local shopping needs of a growing and affluent population. The Council will welcome new retailers, support the specialist retailers that provide an alternative offer to other centres, and seek to bring homes, leisure and office uses into the centre to support shops.



## 2 Town centre living

Aldershot has a significant requirement for new homes in the area and demand from young professionals who wish to move to the area. Combined with the relatively affordable but increasing values of homes, the area is 'up and coming'. To meet this need, town centre living will be promoted, with homes to cater for young people starting out, families and older people wishing to downsize.



## 3 A family-friendly town centre

Aldershot is appreciated by residents as a safe and family-friendly town centre that serves its community well. With the Wellesley development under construction, the Council will seek to enhance this offer with additional activities such as town centre leisure facilities and new public spaces. An afternoon in the centre can appeal to all the family.





## 4 An improved cultural offer

Westgate brought a new multiplex cinema to Aldershot town centre, along with a number of high street restaurant names. The Council is reviewing opportunities to add to this offer, such as the transformation of Princes Hall Theatre and the extension of the successful events programme in the town.



## 5 Investing in streets and spaces

The Activation Aldershot programme has brought a series of improvements to the town's streets and spaces that help to connect Westgate back to Union Street and to better connect early phases of the Wellesley development into the town centre at Court Road. Further investment priorities are identified to create a central public space for Aldershot and improve entrances into the town centre.



## 6 Affirming the Victorian heritage

One of Aldershot's frequently overlooked assets is the quality of the Victorian buildings which remain throughout the town centre. As many towns across the UK begin to look similar in terms of character and shops, Aldershot can maintain a distinctiveness and attractiveness that reflects its heritage. The Council is committed to maintaining and enhancing this heritage, to complement new buildings in the town centre.

# 1 A REVITALISED TOWN CENTRE OFFER

Whilst the retail environment has been challenging for Aldershot in recent years, significant potential exists for the town to provide the convenience and local shopping offer that a growing young community with decent income levels will require.

Aldershot has a catchment area of close to 500,000 people, with 28% of these coming from the most affluent MOSAIC demographic groups ([www.aldershotretail.co.uk](http://www.aldershotretail.co.uk)) - people with substantial wealth and experienced professionals with financial comfort.

Rushmoor Borough Council recognises the need to take action to support shops in the town centre. A clear strategy is set out in local policy for consolidating new retail in the centre of the town as part of the primary retail frontage. The masterplan sets out opportunities for providing new homes and bringing leisure uses into the centre, both of which will support the town's shops and add to the vitality and viability of the area.

The Council has recently taken the management of Aldershot Market in-house, with the intention of improving the offer and layout to maximise the market's appeal and success and to reflect the town's diverse community.

The Activation Aldershot programme has secured LEP funding for a shop front improvement scheme which is enabling retailers to improve the profile and appearance of their shops. Opportunity is being explored for this to be expanded to include building facade improvements for historic buildings in the town with shops at ground floor.

With a growing community that will have solid incomes and spending power, the potential for future retail provision has been considered for Aldershot and the masterplan demonstrates that retail space could be accommodated, should it be required.



Current land uses plan with retail in red. New retail will be focused in the core town centre, to consolidate the retail offer.

Example of shop front improvements



### Supporting independent businesses

Aldershot has a decent range of independent businesses that will play an important role in meeting the convenience needs of a growing population. LEP funding has supported a shop-front improvement scheme to help local businesses improve the appearance and profile of their shops.



### A thriving market

Rushmoor Borough Council has recently taken the management of the market in-house to improve the offer and optimise the spatial layout so that the stalls have maximum appeal to the local community and beyond.



### A clear retail hierarchy

Local policy sets out clear town centre and shopping core boundaries designed to concentrate retailers in the core of the town centre. Smaller and independent shops in less central areas such as Station Road will support the core retail.



# 2 TOWN CENTRE LIVING

## Homes for all ages

The role of town centres is changing, with shopping habits diversifying and other uses filling the space left behind by vacated shops. This shift is happening at the same time as the need for new homes has increased sharply, particularly in the south of England.

Aldershot has a number of suitable town centre sites that can provide homes, ranging from those for young people starting out to older people wishing to downsize. In each case, high quality apartments and news houses in the town centre can provide shops and services in easy reach, proximity to the rail station and a sociable environment.

The Town Centre Prospectus study has identified potential for new homes in the town centre from the key sites set out on page 41. The Council is not able to bring all of these homes forward itself but is committed to working with developers to deliver new homes through an approach that responds to Aldershot's historic character and Victorian market town scale.

The Council would expect a number of car parking spaces to be provided to match the scale of residential development\*. We also recognise the accessibility of residential development in town centres within a short walking distance to local facilities and public transport. Car ownership will still be required by most residents and there is a high vacancy of town centre car parking in the town, in particular the High Street multi-storey car park (built in association with the development of The Galleries) which could provide the capacity needed to serve the new residential development within the central part of the town. An assessment of the parking needs for the retail capacity of the town alongside an analysis of the parking needs for the residential development will determine the allocation from the existing town centre off street parking stock.

\*Rushmoor Car and Cycle Parking Standard SPD



Highbury Square, Arsenal



St Andrew's, Bow



New town centre family homes in Barking Riverside

Homes above shops and new town centre residential development can support Aldershot's shops and services





# 3 A FAMILY FRIENDLY TOWN CENTRE



The Council is keen to encourage a focus for family activities in the north of the town centre, focusing on Westgate, and the Empire (former Kings Centre), the former petrol station site and the Gala Bingo building.

The Kings Centre is being refurbished as a centre for community events and activities. The former petrol station site could be re-designed as an urban sports park with climbing, parkour (free running, ground based acrobatics) and other activities. In the longer term, the Gala building could be a trampoline activity centre or similar.

It would also be possible to re-establish the historic connection from the High Street to Union Street here, with replacement smaller footprint shops and homes above.



Aldershot has an impressive range of sports facilities and activities, including the football club, dry ski-slope, gymnastics centre and swimming pool. These are valuable assets for the town and the council will explore the potential for establishing leisure facilities in the town centre, to improve accessibility.

Connections to the walking routes that surround the town are to be improved in the longer term, with better signage and communication to raise the profile of these resources and path maintenance and enhancement, as funding becomes available. The Wellesley Heritage Trail is one examples of this initiative.



The Council will seek to improve linkages to natural assets in and around Aldershot through wayfinding, and enhancement and maintenance of pathways



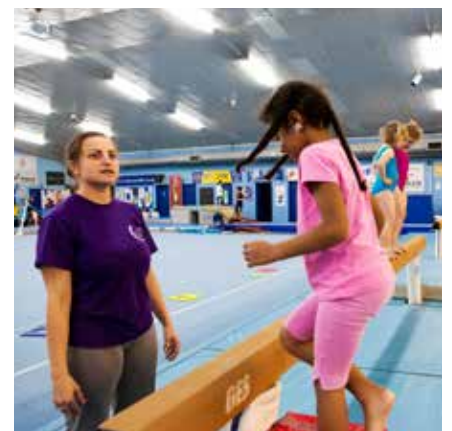
**Sports on the doorstep**

Aldershot has an array of sports and activities including Aldershot Football Club, the ski slope, gymnastics training and facilities and the bowling alley. In addition to this, the army sports pitches mean that families are spoilt for choice for weekend activities and opportunities to learn new skills.



**The great outdoors**

Aldershot is surrounded by walking and cycling routes, including those in the Blackwater Valley and along the Basingstoke Canal; and trails out to the Surrey Hills AONB. Popular cycle routes such as the Hogs Back are close to hand.



# 4 AN IMPROVED CULTURAL OFFER





### A refurbished Princes Hall

Princes Hall theatre has served Aldershot well for the last 40 years, with popular shows appealing to a range of audiences.

With the anticipated closure of the Police Station and potential for new homes, the council is exploring the opportunity for refurbishing the theatre so that it can serve audiences for another 40 years.



### New restaurants and cafes

Westgate brought a multiplex cinema to Aldershot town centre, along with a number of high street name restaurants. Potential also exists for new cafes - at Princes Hall as part of a refurbishment, and at key sites on Union Street and Wellington Street.



### Expanding the events programme

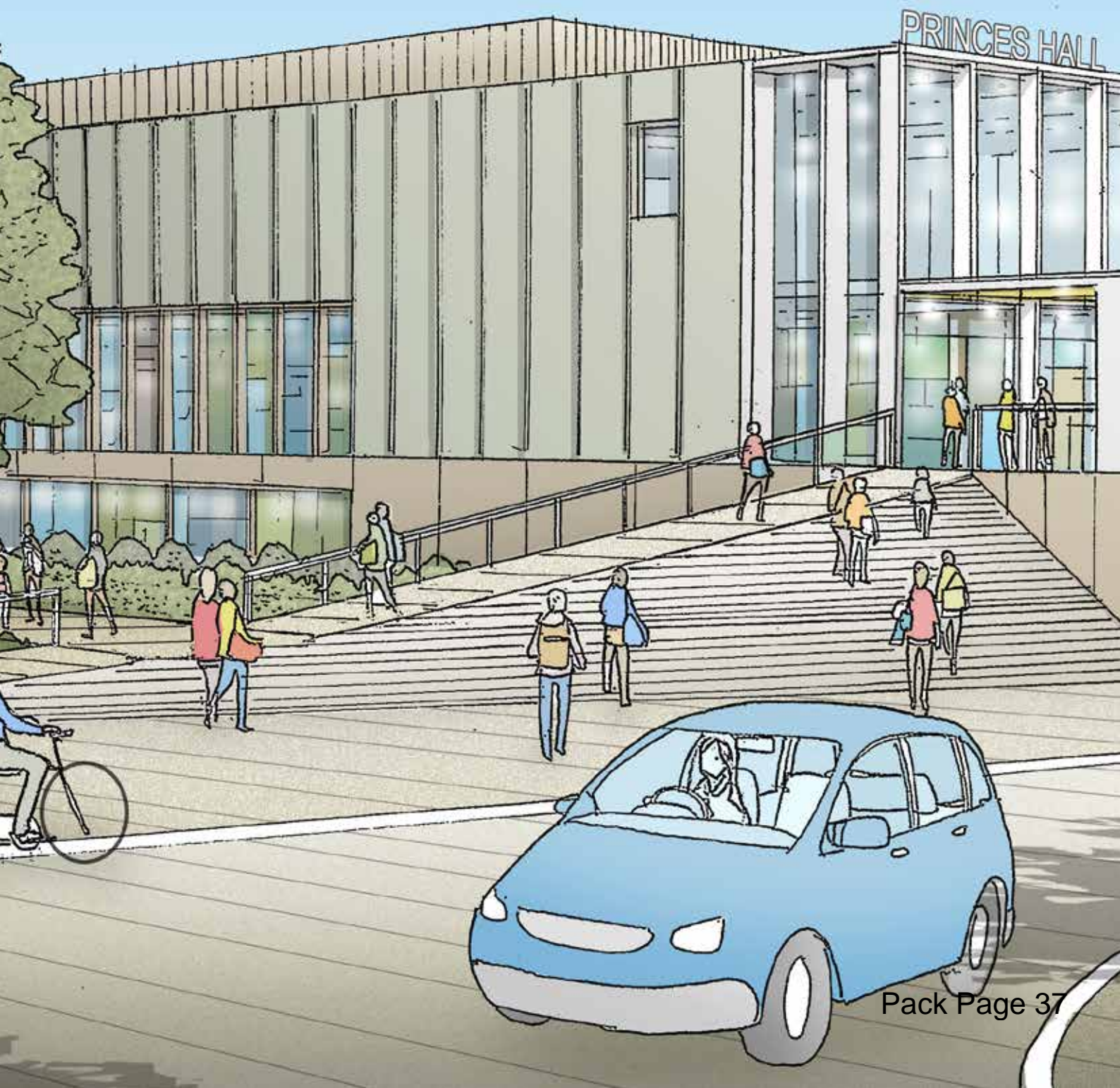
Aldershot has a full programme of events that celebrate the town's heritage, its diversity and its talent and creativity. The Council will continue to support and promote events in the town centre that animate public spaces and reflect the town's growing community.



# PRINCES HALL: POTENTIAL FOR TRANSFORMATION

With surrounding development in the pipeline, opportunity exists to refurbish and extend Princes Hall at the front, to provide a stronger relationship with Princes Gardens and Westgate.

A single-storey front development at ground floor could establish active frontage and a 'front door' to the street, leading to the box office. Steps would be re-provided leading up from Princes Way, with an accessible ramp from Westgate. A new first floor terrace would provide space for events and ceremonies overlooking Princes Gardens and a cafe could be incorporated at ground or first floor.



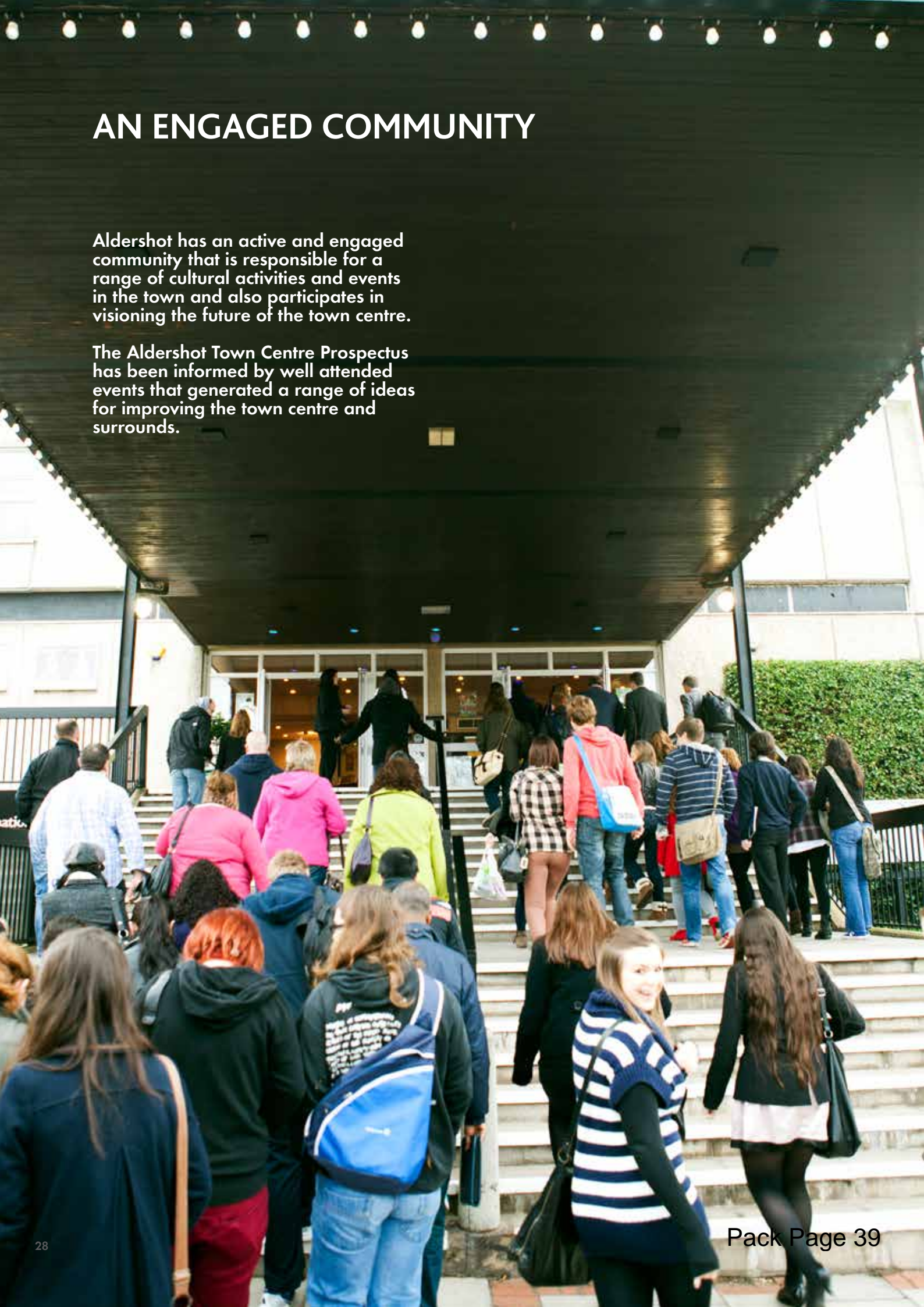




# AN ENGAGED COMMUNITY

Aldershot has an active and engaged community that is responsible for a range of cultural activities and events in the town and also participates in visioning the future of the town centre.

The Aldershot Town Centre Prospectus has been informed by well attended events that generated a range of ideas for improving the town centre and surrounds.





*"We need to improve the shop fronts - and to look up beyond the shop fronts - it's surprisingly good!"*

*"Aldershot's culture and community are what makes its identity"*



*"We should have a Nepalese food festival or Gurkha Day"*



*"Get rid of the unattractive buildings in the town centre!"*



Photos from an early consultation event held to inform the Aldershot Town Centre Prospectus

# 5 INVESTING IN STREETS AND SPACES

Some of Aldershot's streets and spaces have been enhanced during 2015 through the Activation Aldershot programme following a successful LEP funding bid. Union Street has been re-paved and trees replaced with species more suitable for the space available. Landscaping has also improved in the areas between Westgate and Union Street, linking these two important centres for Aldershot more effectively. Lastly, interactive wayfinding totems have been put up in the town centre, to help people find their way around more easily.

Aldershot Town Centre Prospectus SPD sets out further improvements for streets and public spaces. These will be planned, designed and delivered over the coming years as funding becomes available. Projects include:

- Enhanced landscaping, rationalisation of the road layout and a new multi-storey car park to improve the experience of arriving in Aldershot by train and to avoid conflict between cars, buses and pedestrians in the area.
- Improvements to connections to and from the new Wellesley development, with pedestrian crossings on the High Street and potential new and improved links between the High Street and Union Street.
- The active review of possibilities for establishing a public square in Aldershot town centre, through the sites that have been identified in the masterplan.

In the longer term, the Council will also explore opportunities such as:

- Enhanced landscaping at key locations such as in front of the library to provide a stronger visual marker of the town centre from Wellington Avenue.
- Landscape enhancements to improve the setting of Aldershot's most attractive historic buildings, many of which are at crossroads on Victoria Road.





**Improvements already under way**

The Activation Aldershot programme has seen the transformation of Union Street, with re-paving and re-planting of trees. The area between Westgate and Union Street has been re-landscaped and wayfinding totems have been installed throughout the town centre.



**An enhanced setting for the rail station**

The station approach and car park area are identified for enhanced landscaping and improvements, so that pedestrians can access the station more easily and the attractive historic building is given a more appropriate setting.



**A new public space for Aldershot**

Opportunity exists to establish a central public space for Aldershot, through the development of key sites that have been identified including the former Galleries shopping centre and vacant buildings on Union Street. This will provide more space for people to sit outside and to host events.






# PUBLIC REALM INVESTMENT OPPORTUNITIES

Improvements to Barrack Road to strengthen the links from Wellesley

A potential re-establish link between the High Street and Union Street, with small shops fronting the route

Longer term improvements at key crossroads with historic buildings to enhance the setting of these

-  Improvements under way or complete
-  Potential new pedestrian connections
-  Potential landscape enhancements



The plan below sets out the improvements to Aldershot Town Centre's public realm which are complete or under way as part of the LEP-funded Activation Aldershot programme or highways works, along with further opportunities that have been identified through the development of the Aldershot Town Centre Prospectus SPD



# 6 AFFIRMING THE VICTORIAN HERITAGE

With the role of UK town centres shifting away from a retail focus towards a leisure focus, the character and environment within towns and cities is becoming increasingly important. People are naturally drawn to places which are attractive and provide a comfortable environment in which to spend free time.

Aldershot is well placed for this trend, with a collection of often overlooked historic buildings, including a clutch of Grade II Listed buildings and the Grade II\* Listed Wesley Chambers church building. Many others are locally listed, however, other still-intact historic buildings are not and the Council intends to provide protection to additional key buildings such as the Natwest Bank building on Victoria Road.

Many of the finer historic buildings in the town centre are located at crossroads and the Council will seek to improve the public realm at these points in the future to reveal the attractive heritage, with improvements being made as funding becomes available. Key locations for this are illustrated indicatively in the plan below.

Shop front improvements are planned for historic buildings on key streets such as Station Road and Union Street, with funding having been successfully secured from the Enterprise M3 LEP through the Activation Aldershot programme. Many of these buildings would also benefit from up-lighting in the evenings to highlight their architectural qualities.



Clusters of historically significant buildings at crossroads



A composite photo showing building facades along Wellington Street





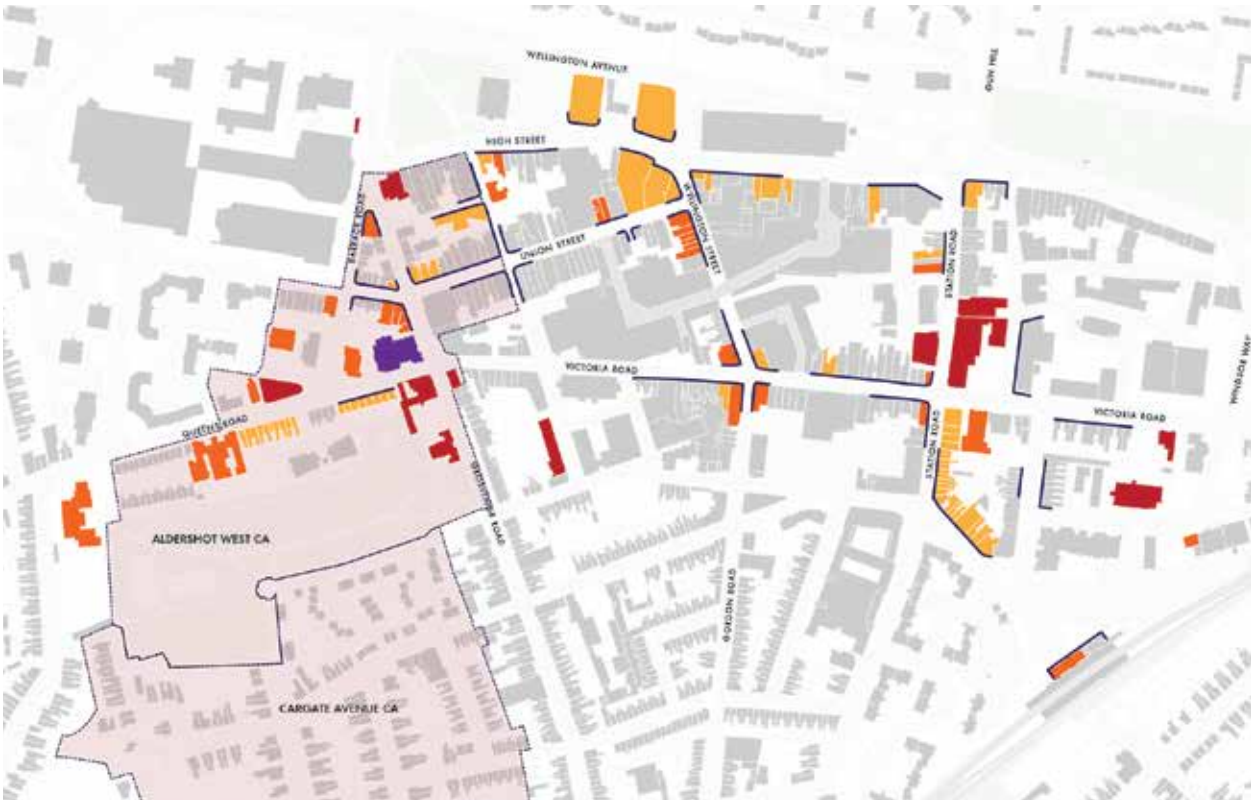


Aldershot's rapid growth as a Victorian Military town has left the town with a legacy of gridded streets populated by confident and striking Victorian buildings. These use a mix of materials including stone and yellow stock brick among the more common soft reds. This confident character continued into the early twentieth century in Edwardian and early interwar buildings, maintaining a consistent attractive character. Many of the best buildings occupy corner sites and are visible as landmarks, making them especially important.

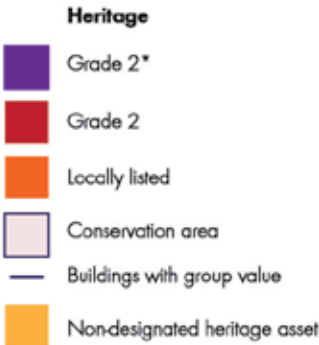


# RAISING THE PROFILE OF HISTORIC BUILDINGS

Aldershot has a number of listed and locally listed buildings, identified in red and orange in the plan below. In addition to these, the town has other buildings of importance that are non-designated heritage assets. These are identified in yellow.



Plan indicating Aldershot town centre's conservation areas, statutorily listed buildings, locally listed buildings and non-designated heritage assets





# PRESERVING VIEWS

Aldershot has retained a strong relationship between the town centre and the surrounding landscape, so that from a number of key points within the town centre, framed views exist of green space in the distance. Within the town centre there are also a number of views to key buildings such as the view along Victoria Road to Wesley Chambers former church building. Some views of importance are shown below. The Council will seek to retain these views when considering future development opportunities.



Plan indicating some of Aldershot town centre's significant views

## Key views

1. Alexandra Road looking west to landscape
2. Barrack Road looking north to landscape
3. Queen's Road looking west to St Joseph's Church
4. Grosvenor Road looking south to landscape
5. Victoria Road looking west to Wesley Chambers
6. Wellington Street looking north to the Gala building
7. Gordon Road looking south to landscape
8. Station Road looking north to the Post office and landscape
9. Victoria Road looking east to landscape



View of Wesley Chambers east along Victoria Road

# THE MASTERPLAN FOR ALDERSHOT

**Princes Hall area:**

Remodelling of the Princes Hall with infill residential development to establish new street frontage

**Former Kings Centre:** established as The Empire community and events venue

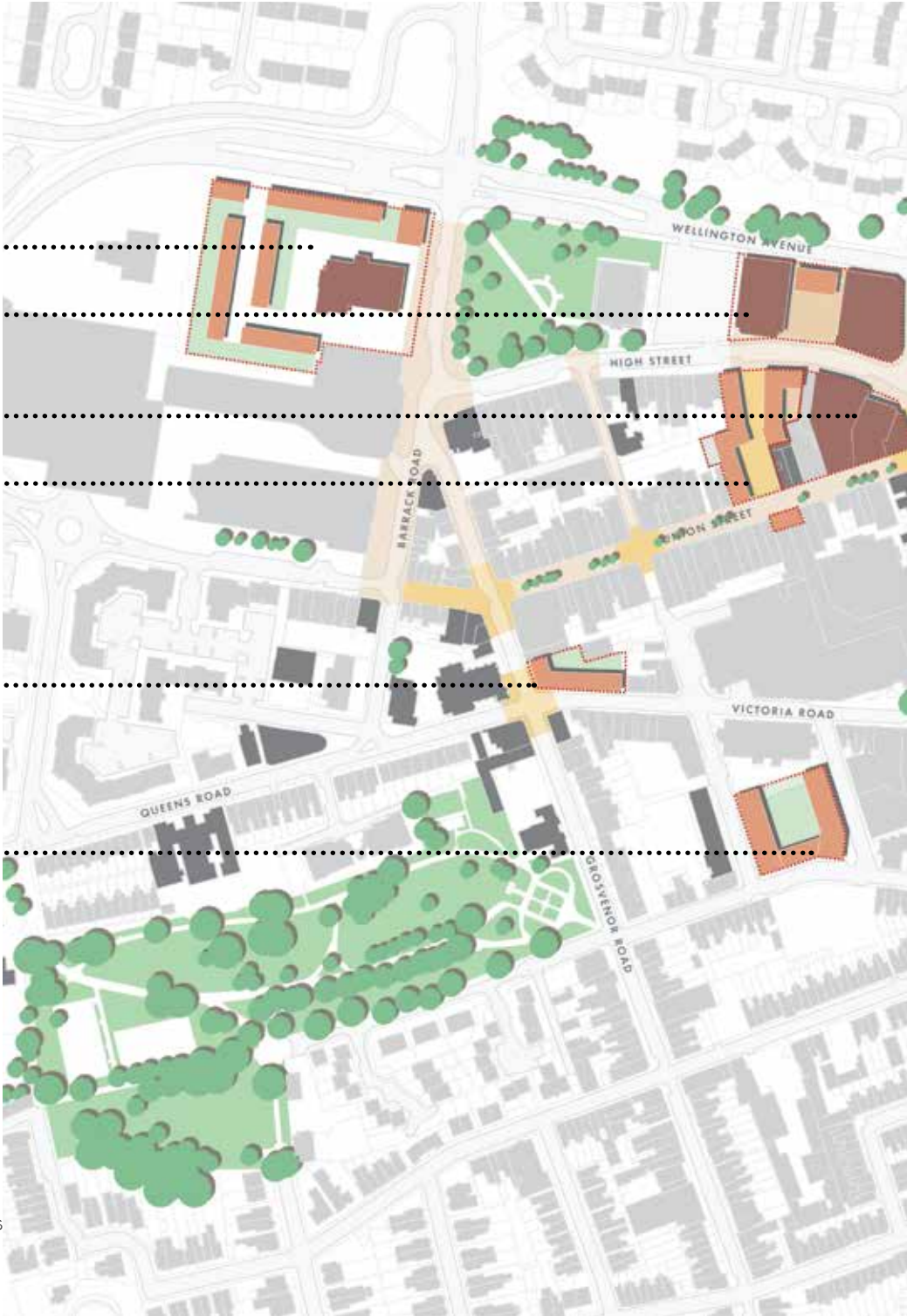
**Union Street:** Regeneration of the Union Street block

**Marks and Spencer building:** Potential re-use or redevelopment of the former Marks & Spencer building

**Victoria Road:** Corner infill development opportunity

**Birchett Road:** Redevelopment of the former warehouse as a residential site

- Proposed development
- Potential refurbished existing buildings



The plan below sets out development and refurbishment opportunities identified through the Aldershot Town Centre Prospectus SPD. These vary in scale and the timeframe in which they are likely to come forward. However, Rushmoor Borough Council has identified a number of priority sites, which are:

1. The Galleries site linking Wellington Street with the High Street car park
2. The Union Street group of building that also front Wellington Street and the High Street
3. The Rail Station area, including improved access and parking
4. The area around Princes Hall, including refurbishment of the theatre



**Library area:** Corner infill development opportunity

**Galleries site:** Retail and residential redevelopment of the Galleries site with the option to include new leisure facilities

**Hippodrome House:** Options for refurbishment and possible infill development on Victoria Road

**Windsor Way:** Corner infill development opportunity

**Rail Station:** Proposals for a new station square, providing better arrangements for buses, taxis and parking

## The Galleries

The Galleries has remained almost vacant for many years now and its redevelopment is a high priority for the Council. The centre was built in the 1990s, but a major redevelopment project being planned in 2007 was a victim of the recession and so the site has remained unoccupied.

The site is unusual as the main internal arcade is at an upper level, connected to the Wellington Centre via a bridge over Wellington Street and with a cascade of escalators required to return shoppers to street level on to the High Street. This configuration makes it difficult to redevelop as a gradual, organic process and is likely to require a more comprehensive approach.

The bridge itself is a major imposition on Wellington Street. It blocks views to the Art Deco cinema building at the northern end of the street and to the late Victorian bank on the corner of Victoria Road. The street level is also artificially lowered to create headroom on the street, creating a gloomy space. The opportunity created by the removal of the bridge would be a new street-level entrance into the Wellington Centre facing across Wellington Street to new shops around a public space created on the site of the Galleries. This would create a street-level route through to the High Street car park and deliver new town centre housing above shops.

The eastern part of the site provides the opportunity for a larger use fronting onto the new square. This could provide a suitable location for new retail development and new residential development. It also offers a site which could accommodate new leisure facilities for Aldershot. Visitors would be able to make use of the existing car parking capacity in the High Street car park and the facility itself would act as an important anchor for the town centre, drawing people in from a wide area throughout the day, seven days a week.

The Arcade block to the south of the Galleries could be usefully redeveloped or remodelled to take advantage of the new public space and create additional active frontage. If this option is not pursued then a new slim block of development should be provided to ensure that active frontages are created onto the square.



Proposed development

Top: Option for the Galleries site incorporating a large footprint block to accommodate new leisure facilities for Aldershot

Bottom: A retail and residential led scheme for the Galleries

## Key information and delivery approach

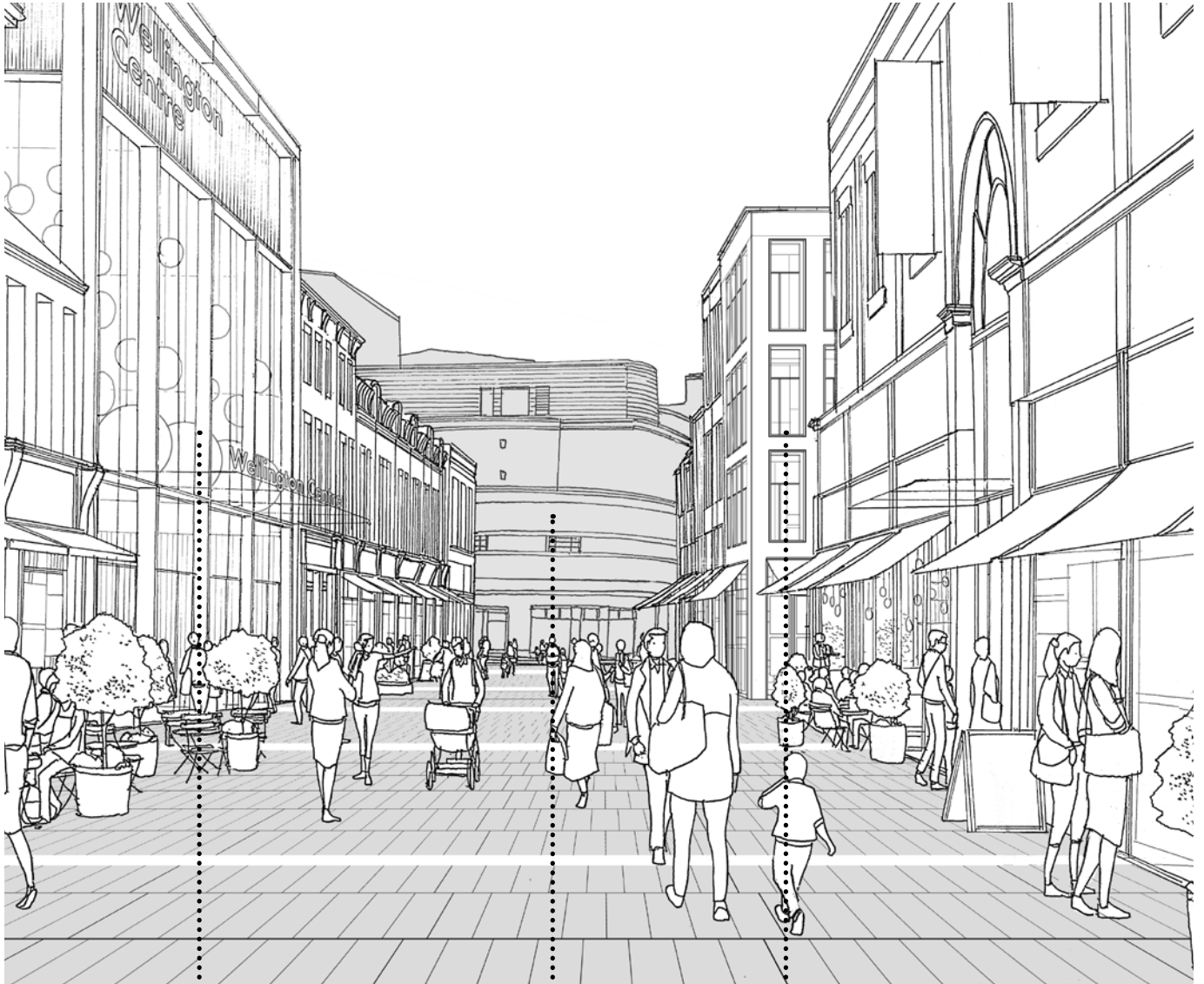
<b>Project Description</b>	Redevelopment of vacant Galleries shopping mall for either: Option 1: As mixed use retail/active town centre uses/residential scheme Option 2: or mixed use retail/leisure/residential scheme, including new leisure facilities
<b>Potential uses</b>	Option 1 – 3,815 sqm retail, 12,581 sqm residential (est. 121 units). Option 2 – 2,356 sqm leisure, 2,618 sqm retail; 5,562 sqm gross residential (est. 54).
<b>Current Uses</b>	Vacant shopping mall.
<b>Ownership</b>	Private ownership (Threadneedle)
<b>Delivery Approach</b>	Option 1: Private sector led delivery Option 2: Public sector led developer procurement
<b>Delivery Timeframes Phasing</b>	Option 1: 0-5 years Option 2: 0-10 years



Existing view of Wellington Street towards the Gala Bingo building



Potential improvement to Wellington Street with redevelopment of the Galleries site



The removal of the bridge would allow the development of a new entrance to the Wellington Centre fronting onto the new square

Views could be opened up in both directions, revealing historic buildings

New development on The Galleries site should include a mix of shops, active town centre uses and homes, and could also provide a site for new leisure facilities

## Union Street and former Marks and Spencer building

The eastern end of Union Street contains a number of large buildings which have proved difficult to adapt and have gradually fallen into low value use or vacancy over the last few years. The sloping site and the need to have frontages onto both Union Street and the High Street means that they are not best suited to modern retail requirements.

Another important aspect of the Union Street block is that it contains several attractive historic buildings. Retaining and refurbishing these to bring them back into active use is an important part of the Council's preferred strategy for Aldershot's future.

Marks & Spencer's former building is a large modern structure which is located in the middle of the block. In the shorter term it is hoped that the building will be re-occupied. In the longer term it would be difficult to re-model for residential use in its current form, but its scale does provide an opportunity to open up a new pedestrian route through the block, providing a direct link from High Street to the Wellington Centre and creating the kinds of buildings which would be better suited to smaller scale retail or business and town centre living.

Active ground floor town centre uses would be expected at these sites. Potential might exist to create a town square as part of redevelopment plans.

The buildings of the Union Street / High Street block include elements of high quality historic fabric, particularly above the shop fronts



- Proposed development
- Refurbish existing building



## Key information and delivery approach

<p><b>Project Description</b></p>	<p>Two significant development/refurbishment opportunities for mixed retail, active town centre uses, leisure and residential purposes. Retail, leisure, service, cafe, restaurant or other active town centre use at ground floor with residential on upper floors.</p> <p>Union Street East (54-62). Mixed retail/other active town centre uses/leisure with residential above.</p> <p>Former Marks &amp; Spencer. Two options considered:  Re-configuration/reuse of retail space  Redevelopment of former Marks &amp; Spencer building with a ground floor active town centre use and residential above.</p>
<p><b>Potential uses</b></p>	<p>Union Street East – 4,983 sqm residential (est. 48 units); 1,785 sqm retail/leisure space refurbished.</p> <p>Former M&amp;S:  4,490 sqm reconfigured retail and 4,490 office  3,474 sqm residential (est. 33 units); retail/active town centre use/leisure service</p>
<p><b>Current Uses</b></p>	<p>Union Street East – Unit retail, with significant vacancies  Former M&amp;S – Retail/cafe (Department/Variety Store)</p>
<p><b>Ownership</b></p>	<p>Union Street East - complex privately owned multi-owned block with sub interests.</p> <p>Marks &amp; Spencer: private ownership.</p>
<p><b>Delivery Approach</b></p>	<p>Site A: Public sector led developer partner procurement  Site B: Private sector developer</p>
<p><b>Delivery Timeframes / Phasing</b></p>	<p>Union Street East – 0-5 years  Marks &amp; Spencer – 0-2 years (assuming reuse of building)</p>

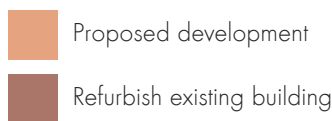
## The Rail Station

Aldershot station is an attractive Victorian building, strongly symmetrical except for later additions and canopies. The area around the station, including the parking, bus stands and highways does little to enhance the setting of the building, presenting the opportunity for sensitive infill and remodelled road structure to create a high quality environment.

The existing access and movement in the area is complex, including buses, taxis, pick up and set down for private cars, and access to the station for parking. The aim of the proposals is to create a simpler, clearer environment to minimise the impact of vehicle movements and to establish a more legible and comfortable approach to the station for pedestrians.

A funding bid has been submitted to the Enterprise M3 Local Economic Partnership (LEP) by Rushmoor Council in partnership with Network Rail, South West Trains, Stagecoach, Hampshire County Council plus private landowners.

The proposals within the bid include a new area for taxis and buses directly in front of the station, framed by new buildings on either side. This will help to provide clear pedestrian connections to the station with the minimum of crossing points. A new decked car park on part of the existing parking area would allow for that short-stay parking for set down and pick up can be provided to the east of the station, close to the forecourt, but away from the buses and taxis. The development of the decked car park could also be integrated with improvements to the pedestrian bridge over the tracks, helping to deliver an accessible connection through a shared stair and lift for both projects. There is an active Network Rail proposal to deliver this element.



**Top: Proposals for a new station square, including revised bus and taxi provision and new decked car park**

**Bottom: The existing Victorian Station building**



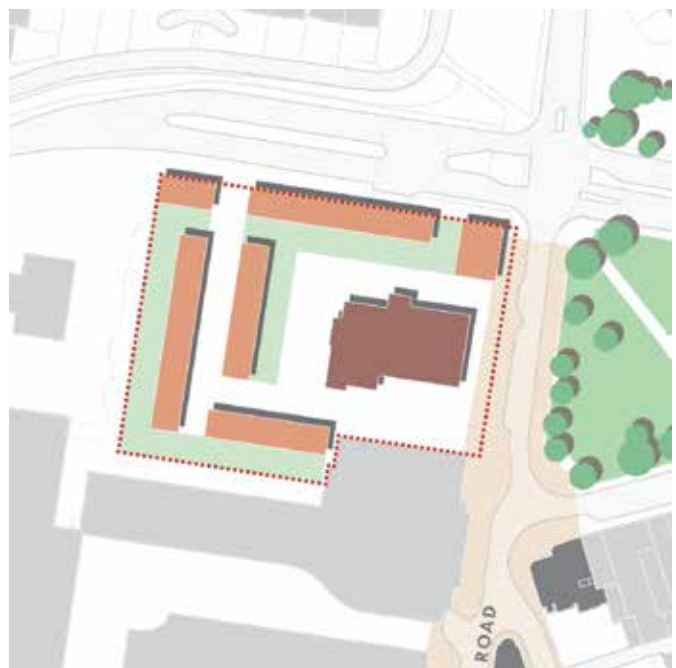
## Key information and delivery approach

<b>Project Description</b>	<p>A number of projects focussing on improvements to the train and bus station, comprising:</p> <p>Refurbishment of the train station and associated facilities.          Decked car park          Reconfigure bus station and raise pick up/drop off area.</p>
<b>Project Outputs</b>	<p>9,260 sqm car park (est. 320 cps)          5,366 sqm gross residential (est. 52 units); small scale/ancillary retail or service uses</p>
<b>Current Uses</b>	<p>Train and bus stations and associated facilities</p>
<b>Ownership</b>	<p>Principally in ownership of Network Rail (station and car park) and Stagecoach (bus station)</p>
<b>Delivery Approach</b>	<p>Public Sector led (Network Rail/Train Operating Company/South West Trains) contractor procurement</p> <p>Public Sector led (Network Rail/Train Operating Company/South West Trains) contractor procurement</p> <p>Private sector developer</p>
<b>Delivery Timeframes / Phasing</b>	<p>Assumes to be delivered as separate phases:</p> <p>Train station refurbishment: 0-5 years          Decked car park: 0-5 years          Reconfigured bus station/drop off: 5-10 years</p>

## Princes Hall and Police Station

The Princes Hall, Police Station and Magistrates Court were part of a suite of civic buildings all developed in the early 1970s. The Hall is an important part of Aldershot's community and cultural life. With development coming forward, potential exists to invest in the existing building to refurbish it, creating an impressive new entrance terrace overlooking Princes Gardens and to improve the ground floor of the building. The new entrance approach will also help the building to integrate better with the Westgate development as part of Aldershot's growing evening economy.

The Police Station is anticipated to close as part of a wider strategy for policing. However, the Magistrates Court is expected to remain in use, with the addition of the County Court. A phased approach is proposed to the development of the site. The initial scheme would create new frontage onto Wellington Avenue and Princes Way including establishing an attractive corner presence at the junction – one of the key gateways into the town centre. The plans leave an opportunity for later residential development to infill the remainder of the block in the event that the Magistrates Court is ever relocated.





Top: Initial approach to development including remodelling of the Princes Hall, new infill residential development to create street frontages and retention of the Magistrates Court

Bottom: Potential later phases of development to replace the Magistrates Court

Left: Proposals for the remodelling of the Princes Hall

## Key information and delivery approach

<b>Project Description</b>	Redevelopment of the vacant police station site, with refurbishment and investment in Princes Hall theatre following this. Separate redevelopment of the Magistrates Court in the longer term.
<b>Potential uses</b>	Princes Hall – 3,897 sqm refurbished theatre. Police Station – 3,764 sqm gross residential (est. 36 units) Magistrates – 5,276 sqm gross residential (est. 51 units)
<b>Current Uses</b>	Theatre, police station and magistrates court.
<b>Ownership</b>	All sites in public ownership (Council, Police, Magistrates)
<b>Overarching Delivery Approach</b>	Princes Hall – Public Sector led contractor procurement Police – Private Sector developer Magistrates – Private Sector developer Each development plot is expected to be delivered separately
<b>Delivery Time frames / Phasing</b>	Princes Hall: 0-5 years Police Station: 0-5 years Magistrates: 10-15 years+

-  Proposed development
-  Refurbish existing building



## Birchett Road

The former warehouse on the north side of Birchett Road between Frederick Street and Heathland Street provides the opportunity for town centre living, and planning permission has previously been granted on this site. Development would restore active frontage to the street, which is particularly important given the site's prominent location on a slight bend in the road, making it prominent in views from both east and west. The four-storey listed terrace of Culdrose House to the west provides some guidance on scale, but buildings to the south and east are lower. For example, frequent front doors onto the street will be an important part of helping a new building to integrate with the prevailing Victorian character of the area.



 Proposed development

Top: Proposals for new development on Birchett Road

Middle: The existing warehouse building

Bottom: How new homes could look at the site

## Key information and delivery approach

<b>Project Description</b>	Development opportunity with strong residential potential on the north side of Birchett Road. Planning permission has been granted previously for a scheme but so far no development has been progressed.
<b>Potential uses</b>	5,168 sqm gross residential (est. 50 units)
<b>Current Uses</b>	Vacant warehouse
<b>Ownership</b>	Private ownership
<b>Delivery Approach</b>	Private sector developer
<b>Delivery Time frames / Phasing</b>	Short term 0-5 years

## High Street

The old cinemas on the High Street, now the King's Centre and Gala Bingo are two of Aldershot's largest and most distinctive buildings, each with their own unique character. The Council would encourage schemes which promote retention and re-use of these, given their important contribution to the character of Aldershot town centre, provided suitable uses can be identified.

The King's Centre has recently been acquired by a private investor and is proposed to be refurbished and given a new lease of life as an events venue. Its accessible location and large internal space makes it ideal for this use and retains the spirit of the original design for the building as a place of assembly.

The Gala Bingo building remains in current use, and forms an important leisure use as part of Aldershot's leisure economy. If the building is vacated in the longer term the Council would be keen to see it retained in its current form or some other leisure use. The large volumes of the building mean that it could be suitable for a number of indoor sports or leisure activities, particular modern pursuits such as free running / parkour or skateboarding or alternatively as a soft play centre.

The space between the buildings is an important site in itself. There are opportunities to create elements of infill development which could support the use of the adjoining buildings. The area could also provide useful outdoor activity/play space including elements such as bouldering/climbing walls using a lightweight roof to provide shelter from the elements.





Bottom: Proposals for the new use of the former Empire Cinema as a community events space

Left: Options for urban sports which could feature in the project

## Key information and delivery approach

<b>Project Description</b>	<p>Site comprising three separate plots:          King's Centre - Reuse and refurbishment for events          Car Wash – A leisure use will be sought in the first instance.          If this proves unviable then residential infill will be considered          Gala Bingo - Longer term alternative leisure uses.</p>
<b>Potential uses</b>	<p>King's Centre – 3,932 sqm refurbished space (estimate 983 sqm over 4 floors)          Car Wash – 780 sqm leisure          Gala Bingo – 5188 sqm refurbished space (estimate 1297 sqm over 4 floors)</p>
<b>Current Uses</b>	<p>King's Centre – community/events space          Other plot uses as per description</p>
<b>Ownership</b>	<p>All sites in private ownership. King's Centre has recently been sold.</p>
<b>Delivery Approach</b>	<p>All sites expected to be private sector led delivery, with each site delivered separately.</p>
<b>Delivery Time frames / Phasing</b>	<p>King's Centre (A) – 0-1 years          Car Wash (B) – 0-5 years          Gala Bingo (C) – 10-15 years +</p>



-  Proposed development
-  Refurbish existing building

## Hippodrome House area

The Victoria Road block bounded by Gordon Road, Birchett Road and Station Road has several distinct aspects to its character. Along the Victoria Road frontage there are good historic buildings, separated by a postwar infill development occupied by the Co-operative. Gordon House on the south-west corner of the block is being refurbished and is to be converted to residential development. Hippodrome House on the south eastern corner of the block was identified in the consultation workshops as one of the buildings which people most wish to see improved, although the ground floor frontage forms part of the vibrant retail scene on Station Road.

An element of active frontage can be created onto Birchett Road with limited infill development, retaining but screening the car park to improve the street scene. This scheme would involve the refurbishment and re-cladding of Hippodrome House to enhance the arrival to the town centre from the station.



-  Proposed development
-  Refurbish existing building

Middle: Infill and refurbishment options for the Victoria Road block

Bottom: Example of a recent building remodelling illustrating a potential approach to Hippodrome House



## Key information and delivery approach

<b>Project Description</b>	Redevelopment/refurbishment of blocks fronting Birchett Road Infill site plus refurbishment of Hippodrome House
<b>Project Outputs</b>	1,870 sqm gross new residential (est. 18 units) plus 4,840 refurbished/ converted space for residential (est. 47 units); 1,206 sqm retail/leisure.
<b>Current Uses</b>	Mixed: parking, retail, offices, leisure
<b>Ownership</b>	Two key private owners, with sub interests
<b>Delivery Approach</b>	Private Sector delivery
<b>Delivery Timeframes / Phasing</b>	Hippodrome House refurbishment (0-2 years); Birchett Road infill (0-5 years)



POST OFFICE

# MAKING IT HAPPEN

## Overview

The Aldershot Town Centre Prospectus SPD contains a series of physical (development) projects that will shape the centre over the next 15-20 years and beyond. It is intended to be visionary, yet flexible to ensure that it can meet changes in circumstances, especially economic and property related.

## Delivery mechanisms

There is unlikely to be a one size fits all delivery mechanism for projects – the choice should reflect the size, scale and nature of the individual masterplan initiatives. In the description of individual masterplan projects, broad delivery approaches are suggested together with key delivery actions. Delivery mechanisms include:

- Public sector led
- Private Sector led
- Public Private partnerships

## The Council's role

There is a strong case (and probably necessity) for considerable strategic intervention by the Council to achieve the aims of the masterplan. Town centres are challenging development environments – and more so with the demise of the High Street retail market. Arguably, many town centres are undergoing a revolution, rather than evolution. This is likely to be far more crucial for Aldershot town centre where some sites are particularly complex – and therefore the role of the Council in facilitating delivery is likely to be greater, in part through de-risking opportunities (e.g. site assembly, securing SANGS and funding).

SANGS is green space that is of a quality and type suitable to be used as mitigation within the Thames Basin Heaths Planning Zone. Its role is to provide alternative green space to divert visitors from visiting

the Thames Basin Heaths Special Protection Area (SPA). SANGS are intended to provide mitigation for the potential impact of residential development on the SPA by preventing an increase in visitor pressure on the SPA. Where new residential development is proposed in the masterplan this must be offset by having a sufficient supply of SANGS to provide alternative green space to divert visitors from visiting the Thames Basin Heaths Special Protection Area (SPA).

The Council currently has a supply of SANGS land to offset residential development in the Borough, though the supply will need to be increased if a substantial amount of new residential development is to come forward. Securing more SANGS is a critical delivery action for the masterplan – an action which the Council is already progressing. The Council is committed to identifying SANGS sites to facilitate residential development.

The Rushmoor Core Strategy (adopted 2011) provides detailed policy guidance (policy CP13) on mitigation measures, comprising SANG land and also contributions towards Strategic Access Management and Monitoring measures.

Typically, Council's land ownership has been a driver for change in town centres. A clear example of this is Westgate leisure development. Presently, however, the Council's ownership in the key intervention areas in Aldershot is limited and its ability to influence, drive and accelerate change is therefore more limited too. An overarching strategy the Council could look to employ is the acquisition of strategic interests in the town.



## Other delivery agencies

While the Council is expected to play a leading role in delivering the masterplan, the expectation is that it will need the active involvement of developers and other agencies – both public and private. Otherwise, the masterplan will not come to fruition. A range of agencies will need to be involved with enabling, funding and delivering the projects. This could include, among others:

- M3 LEP
- Hampshire County Council
- Landowners
- Developers
- Businesses
- Utility Suppliers
- Historic England
- Higher Education establishments
- Private & Philanthropic Sponsors
- Registered Providers
- Community organisations
- Possible Business Improvement District (BID)
- Hampshire Chamber of Commerce
- Other public sector organisations - including the Police and NHS
- Transport bodies - such as Network Rail and bus operators

Other organisations may also be identified – or be founded during the lifetime of the masterplan – which can assist in the delivery of projects.

## Funding the masterplan's delivery

Not all of the proposals contained in the masterplan are commercial in nature. Project delivery is fully expected to be secured using a combination of public and private sector investment, with the balance of need for funding varying depending on the type, nature, cost and commercial viability of the project.

Funding pots and mechanisms that might be expected to contribute to financially supporting masterplan project delivery include:

- LEP Funds
- Prudential Borrowing
- S106 Agreements / developer contributions
- Rolling Investment Funds
- Rushmoor and Hampshire Councils' Capital Programme
- Lottery Funding
- Transport Funds

Crucially, funding opportunities continue to evolve and will undoubtedly do so over the lifetime of the masterplan. Any funding strategy must be refreshed and reviewed as time progresses.

## Viability testing

The Council is testing the viability of the development schemes in the masterplan based on the identified areas of development and types of uses. These will be – cashflowed (and where appropriate phased), residual development appraisals based on the high level schemes.

# HOW TO COMMENT

The Draft Aldershot Town Centre Prospectus Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) will be available for comment from:

Wednesday 30 September 2015 to Wednesday 11 November 2015.

The document may be inspected at:

- Aldershot Library, High Street, Aldershot (during opening hours); and
- Rushmoor Borough Council's offices at Farnborough Road, Farnborough, GU14 7JU between the hours of 8.30am - 5.00pm Monday to Thursday and 8.30am - 4.30pm on Fridays.

An exhibition of the proposals will also be on display in Aldershot and two staffed sessions will be held so that visitors can ask questions to the project team. These will be publicised shortly.

Alternatively, you can view the documents on-line at [www.rushmoor.gov.uk/improvingaldershot](http://www.rushmoor.gov.uk/improvingaldershot)

Comments relating to the Draft SPD should be e-mailed to: [plan@rushmoor.gov.uk](mailto:plan@rushmoor.gov.uk)

Comments may alternatively be sent to:  
Aldershot Town Centre Prospectus Draft SPD Consultation  
Planning  
Rushmoor Borough Council  
Council Offices  
Farnborough Road  
Farnborough  
GU14 7JU

To arrive by Wednesday 11 November 2015.

Any comments may be accompanied by a request to be notified at a specific address of the adoption of the SPD.

For further information please e-mail: [plan@rushmoor.gov.uk](mailto:plan@rushmoor.gov.uk)







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**CABINET**  
**22 September 2015**

**Head of Planning**  
**Report No. PLN1545**

## **RUSHMOOR BIODIVERSITY ACTION PLAN 2016 – 2021**

### **1 INTRODUCTION**

- 1.1 This report seeks Cabinet's approval to go out to public consultation on the updated Biodiversity Action Plan (BAP) for Rushmoor. A copy of the text is attached as Annex 1 to this report, and the final version will be formatted for publication and presented with photographs.
- 1.2 When adopted, the new action plan will continue to provide the framework for initiatives to protect and enhance biodiversity across the borough. It will also provide the basis for joint working with the local community and the voluntary groups who will be key partners. The plan will also be a clear sign of the Council's commitment on biodiversity issues.

### **2 BACKGROUND**

- 2.1 The Rushmoor BAP 2016-21 has been produced after a key stakeholder meeting held on February 20<sup>th</sup> 2015 and identifies:
- Key habitats within the borough
  - Priority species associated with different habitats
  - Main threats to local biodiversity
  - Key actions needed to protect and enhance biodiversity

The stakeholder meeting was attended by Rushmoor staff and Members and representatives from partner organisations such as the Wildlife Trust, the Basingstoke Canal Authority, The Hampshire and Isle of Wight Wildlife Trust, local enthusiasts and members of the Rushmoor Urban Wildlife Group.

- 2.2 The updated BAP will build upon the work already undertaken during the previous plan, which set out strategic actions at a local level, and will provide a more detailed overview of the local environment and the local threats to priority habitats and species.

- 2.3 In 2006 the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act put a statutory obligation on local authorities to conserve biodiversity. Section 40 of this act sets out the duty to conserve biodiversity:

“Every public authority must, in exercising its functions, have regard, so far as is consistent with the proper exercise of those functions, to the purpose of conserving biodiversity”.

- 2.4 In addition, the Government's "Biodiversity 2020: A strategy for England's Wildlife and Ecosystem Services" document outlines a mission for the next decade:

"to halt overall biodiversity loss, support healthy well-functioning ecosystems and establish coherent ecological networks, with more and better places for nature for the benefit of wildlife and people."

- 2.5 This draft BAP sets out how the Council plans to meet this duty and mission statement through direct action and working in partnership with others in the borough, both individuals and businesses, to make biodiversity a key consideration.

### **3 PROGRAMME FOR ADOPTION**

- 3.1 The Draft BAP will be available on the council website for public consultation for six weeks and will be sent out to local environmental groups.

- 3.2 All comments made during the consultation will be recorded; a report of responses to comments will be produced and made public. Appropriate comments will be taken into account and will be included in the final BAP, which will be brought back to Cabinet for adoption. Comments will also help identify target areas for biodiversity projects over the action plan period (2016 - 2021).

### **4 RECOMMENDATION**

- 4.1 Cabinet is recommended to agree the Draft Rushmoor Biodiversity Action Plan for public consultation.

Keith Holland  
Head of Planning

Contact Officer: Paul Howe – Ecology & Biodiversity Officer – Ext. 8731



# Draft

## Rushmoor Biodiversity Action Plan

### 2016 - 2021

#### ***Introduction***

The natural environment in Rushmoor has experienced large changes over the past century, in common with most of south eastern England. However, there remains a considerable biodiversity resource in the borough in the form of heathland, woodland, watercourses and even aspects of the urban environment.

The adoption of the Rushmoor Biodiversity Action Plan (BAP) in 2009 helped translate national and regional targets into local action, whilst also identifying species and areas of local importance. This updated action plan will continue to deliver biodiversity enhancement across the borough by building on the work from the first BAP. It will be necessary for all members of the community, including the council, businesses, volunteer groups and residents, to work together to achieve the aims set out in this document.

As highlighted in the Rushmoor Corporate Plan 2015 the overall aim of the council is "...to improve the quality of life for local residents and businesses". Growing medical evidence shows that access to the natural environment improves health and wellbeing and improving the environment across the borough can only improve life for residents and businesses in Rushmoor. The Council also recognises that it should lead by example in protecting the environment and developing a sustainable environment for future generations.

#### ***Biodiversity Achievements 2009-14***

Through the period covered by the first action plan there have been many biodiversity achievements and changes across the borough. In planning terms the Aldershot Urban Extension development with its associated green space provision has involved a considerable amount of survey work and the production of detailed management plans. The opportunity to establish positive management in a number of woodland blocks as part of the development will be very beneficial for biodiversity. Rushmoor has continued to play an important role in supporting the Thames Basin Heaths Strategic Partnership which ensures our sensitive and globally important heathlands are protected.

Across the borough the monitoring of Sites of Importance for Nature Conservation (SINCs) has taken place on annual basis. While some sites have been lost through natural succession other sites, such as Rushmoor Arena and Queen's Parade in North Camp, have been newly designated. The overall biodiversity resource has remained constant.

The conservation work of partnership organisations such as the Basingstoke Canal Authority, the Cove Brook Greenway Group, Rowhill Copse Nature Reserve, Friends of Brickfields Country Park and the Blackwater Valley Countryside Partnership have ensured

that habitats and sites of high biodiversity value have been managed positively and the biodiversity value enhanced. Rushmoor has a strong background in partnership conservation work associated with the aforementioned groups and other land owners and managers such as the MOD, the Hampshire and Isle of Wight Wildlife Trust and Natural England.

Additionally numerous small projects have been carried out by conservation groups across the borough. The Rushmoor Urban Wildlife Group has been involved in pond restoration projects, the creation of wildlife gardens and wildflower meadows and putting up bird and bat boxes in various locations.

### ***The Purpose of this BAP***

This document highlights the continuing threats to biodiversity and aims to identify what can be done to protect the wildlife we have and enhance the area to increase and protect local biodiversity.

The publication of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act in 2006 makes biodiversity an important consideration for all local authorities. Section 40 of this act sets out the duty to conserve biodiversity: "Every public authority must, in exercising its functions, have regard, so far as is consistent with the proper exercise of those functions, to the purpose of conserving biodiversity".

Further to this, in 2011 the government published a "Biodiversity 2020" strategy as a framework for conserving and enhancing biodiversity across the nation in a coherent fashion. The broad aims of the strategy are to improve the condition of existing important habitats and create more protected areas to reduce fragmentation.

This updated plan will provide a framework to build upon the achievements across the borough during the first phase of the BAP by targeting the resources available into delivering achievable and tangible environmental enhancements. These will work locally towards the broader aims of the "Biodiversity 2020" UK-wide strategy.

The aims of this BAP are:

- 1) To continue protecting habitats and species within the borough and enhance existing areas for wildlife
- 2) To identify opportunities to create new areas for wildlife and to increase borough biodiversity
- 3) To raise awareness of biodiversity within the community to improve understanding and support for wildlife projects
- 4) To engage with local communities to encourage individuals to take an active part in projects, initiatives and consultations that have an effect on the borough's biodiversity
- 5) To raise awareness of biodiversity among council staff and members and work to make biodiversity a key consideration in council decision making.
- 6) To work in partnership with local businesses, landowners, environmental and community groups to improve local biodiversity
- 7) To monitor and review local biodiversity and this action plan

### ***What is biodiversity?***

The word biodiversity was first used at the Rio Earth Summit in 1992, it stands for biological diversity and is the term used to describe all variety of life on earth in all its forms. This includes variety or differences in genes and individuals of the same species, between different plant and animal species and within or between entire ecosystems. The term goes far beyond simply the number of species in a given environment or habitat.

Not all habitats are equal in biodiversity terms. Broad-leaved woodland and unimproved flower-rich lowland meadows are rich in biodiversity when compared to habitats such as intensive arable farmland or densely constructed urban conurbations. Even within the urban environment gardens, parks and allotments can all be relatively diverse.

### ***Why is the natural environment and biodiversity important?***

The natural world, its biodiversity and its ecosystems are critically important to our well-being and economic prosperity, but are consistently undervalued in conventional economic analyses and decision making (UK National Ecosystem Assessment, 2011). The government white paper “The Natural Choice: securing the value of nature” published in 2011 highlights the “services” the natural environment provides.

These services are defined as the products of natural systems from which people derive benefits. They loosely fit into four categories: Provisioning services (food, water, fuel); regulating services (pollination, water purification, flood reduction, pollution control); cultural services (spiritual enrichment, health and wellbeing, recreation); support services (soil formation, nutrient cycling).

As well as providing these services the natural environment in Rushmoor supports a wide variety of species in a variety of different habitats. These will be described in more detail in future sections.

### ***Why do we need to conserve biodiversity?***

The State of Nature Report published in 2013 and put together by 25 wildlife organisations found that 60% of the studied species in the UK had declined in the past 50 years. The reasons for the declines are many and varied but habitat loss and climate change are two major contributory factors.

Inevitably, there have been declines in species locally within Rushmoor. For example, in the early 1980's the Marsh Fritillary butterfly was abundant within the borough but it became extinct in the late eighties and has not been recorded here since. This reflects an overall decline in this species across the UK and even beyond in Europe.

By conserving biodiversity we will not only protect the diversity of species in our habitats but also maintain a healthy and interesting environment in Rushmoor for ourselves and future generations to enjoy.

### ***What are the main threats to biodiversity?***

There are a number of key factors that could have potentially detrimental effects on the

level of biodiversity in the borough. These are development, climate change, recreation, pollution, changes in land use and changes or lack of management. These factors are not limited to Rushmoor and represent the wider issues facing the environment in the UK as a whole.

### Development

Development can pose a threat to biodiversity through direct loss of habitats and indirectly through habitat fragmentation and the additional impacts of a development throughout its lifetime on the surrounding environment e.g. changes and demands on natural water systems and pressures from increased traffic and other related infrastructure. The population in the combined Rushmoor, Hart and Surrey Heath area has increased by 18% over the last 30 years, which represents an increase of around 43,000 people. There is a need for increases in future housing to meet the growing demand which can put pressure on the environment and protected sites and species. The increased impact on natural resources from a development are not only from the material required for the construction phase, but also their demand for energy and water once the development is active. Impacts on surrounding habitats also need to be considered as changes in light, wind, drainage and usage of these habitats can affect the type and amount of different species able to survive there. It is important that in setting out actions to improve biodiversity within the borough, we are mindful to reduce our negative impact on the biodiversity of other areas.

### Pollution

Air, water, light and noise pollution can all impact on biodiversity, changing local features and species found in different habitats. Different types of pollution can affect different species and habitats in different ways, e.g. light pollution can delay emergence time for bats, reducing the amount of time they have to forage insects, it can also affect natural mating and foraging behaviour in birds. Pollution can come from many different sources and activities and it is important to identify where risks of pollution are most likely and to reduce the negative impact on local wildlife.

### Inappropriate land management

When there are changes to how a piece of land is used or the way it is managed this can have detrimental impacts on the local biodiversity. Traditionally much of the borough's land was open heathland, a habitat that was maintained by commoners grazing their livestock, mixed with local farms and their associated grazing fields. With the arrival of the army to the area in 1854 communal grazing was stopped but it is likely that military horses would have continued to be grazed through the early twentieth century. Much of the large areas of countryside within Rushmoor are still owned by the Ministry of Defence who manage these areas of land as part of their training estate. It is important that this plan encourages local businesses and land owners to make biodiversity a high priority when planning and undertaking grounds maintenance and habitat management work. Without the correct management for biodiversity habitats can become degraded or lost entirely e.g. many unimproved grassland sites have been lost due to the use of artificial fertilisers and heavy mowing regimes.

## Climate change

One of the biggest concerns for biodiversity over the next century is likely to be climate change. Negative impacts would include extinction of species from the Rushmoor area and the UK, as conditions change and become unsuitable e.g. increased periods of drought will result in ponds drying out, leaving many amphibians with nowhere to spawn. If species are restricted from migrating as the local weather and climate changes, e.g. by developments, they may face extinction, stranded in a habitat that cannot provide them with all the resources they need to survive and reproduce. The local extinction of some species will have knock on effects on other species that rely on them for food, shelter, and breeding. Climate change may also lead to the further invasion of non-native species, which negatively interact with native species e.g. out competing native species for resources such as food, if natural predators do not migrate at the same time a non-native species can often colonise a new area quickly putting further pressure on the entire ecosystem. Biodiversity has an important role to play in the mitigation of the effects of climate change. In areas of towns and cities with a lot of green, open spaces and high tree cover, temperatures are measured at up to 2°C cooler than in parts of cities with less tree cover and natural environments, and they experience reduced flooding during storm events.

### **The Rushmoor biodiversity resource**

Before the development of Farnborough and Aldershot took place over the last century, a mixture of heathland, woodlands, grassland and wetland environments were present within the borough. Today, a large proportion of this land has been developed for housing, retail and industrial purposes and this has resulted in a mosaic of different environments including buildings, gardens, parks and roads that sit between patches of natural habitats e.g. heath/acid grassland, lakes, ponds and woodlands.

The UK Biodiversity Action Plan identified priority habitats for conservation work and attention. Those priority habitats for which there is comprehensive mapping information are detailed in the table below. They represent a total of 481 ha of habitat positively identified in Rushmoor.

<b>Priority habitat type</b>	<b>Area in Rushmoor (hectares)</b>
Lowland Grassland	98
Lowland Heathland	108
Woodland, Wood pasture, Parkland	275

In addition to these fully audited habitats there are a number of other habitat types which make a large contribution to the biodiversity resource in Rushmoor. Aquatic habitats such as the Basingstoke Canal, Blackwater River, Cove Brook and the numerous ponds and lakes are all important habitats that support numerous species. Combined together these also cover a considerable area.

While a significant portion of the borough could be considered to be urbanised it is not without biodiversity interest. Allotments, parks and gardens are all well known as habitats that can support a wide range of insects, birds, mammals and common reptiles. Railway and major road corridors are also often overlooked biodiversity resources.

The next sections provide more detail on the specially designated nature conservation sites in Rushmoor and the habitats they contain. These are linked to the specific actions in the plan in the next section of this report.

## Designated sites

Many areas of natural habitats described above have local, national and, or, international designations to protect them from further fragmentation and decline; often providing a refuge for wildlife in close proximity to the densely urban areas of Aldershot and Farnborough. These sites have been designated for the habitats present there or for the rare species they support. These areas provide the opportunity to experience an environment that is in decline in other areas. Together all areas designated at different levels form part of a semi-natural landscape and help to maintain biodiversity in the borough.

Rushmoor currently has 942 hectares of land designated for its nature conservation value (see table). Different areas are given protection at different levels, dependent upon the importance of their features at European, national and local level.

Designated Site type	Total area in Rushmoor (ha)
Local Nature reserve	2
National Nature Reserve	0
Ramsar	0
Special area of conservation (SAC)	0
Special protection area (SPA)	451
Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI)	471
Site of importance for Nature conservation (SINC)	469
	Total area = *942 ha

\* note that all designated SPA is included within SSSI land

### Thames Basin Heaths Special Protection Area (SPA)

The highest level of protection is awarded to areas of international importance, these areas are known as Special Protection Areas (SPAs) or Special Areas of Conservation (SAC). Areas designated under European law represent the best examples of habitats that are severely restricted throughout Europe or areas that support internationally rare species. Part of the Thames Basin Heaths SPA falls within Rushmoor's boundary.

The Thames Basin Heaths SPA was designated in 2005 under the EC Birds Directive and covers a total area of 8,284 hectares across land in Hampshire, Surrey and Berkshire. The areas in Rushmoor are one part of this ecosystem and over the coming years it will be important for all those involved in their maintenance to work together to ensure the heaths are restored and maintained to favourable condition for the wildlife they support.

Areas of heathland have been designated because their habitats support breeding populations of woodlark, nightjar and Dartford warbler. All three birds are listed in Annex 1 of the Birds Directive and as such these areas are covered by strict legislation. Due to the sensitivity of the Thames Basin Heaths, potential impacts through development should be avoided by providing Suitable Alternative Natural Greenspace (SANG) at a rate of 8

hectares per 1000 new residents. Additionally there is a buffer zone of 400m around the SPA within which no development can occur.

### **Sites of Special Scientific Interest**

The borough contains areas designated as Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI). These sites are designated because of their importance at a national level. Some of these areas are also designated units for the Thames Basin Heaths SPA.

There are five SSSI's that lie either wholly or partly within Rushmoor borough (present condition in parenthesis), these are:

Yateley & Hawley Common (Unfavourable recovering)

Foxlease & Ancell's Meadows (Unfavourable recovering)

Eelmoor Marsh (Favourable)

Bourley & Long Valley (Unfavourable recovering)

Basingstoke Canal (units variously unfavourable declining, unfavourable recovering, favourable)

Natural England is responsible for assessing the condition of these sites. More detail on their current condition can be found at: <https://designatedsites.naturalengland.org.uk/>. The government has committed to having 50% of SSSIs in favourable condition by 2020 while maintaining at least 95% in favourable or recovering condition.

### **Local Nature Reserves**

There is one Local Nature Reserve owned by Rushmoor Borough Council, Rowhill Copse. The Copse straddles the administrative boundary between Rushmoor and Waverley Boroughs, and although the majority of it falls outside Rushmoor's administrative boundary, it is still an important area for our residents and local wildlife, and is an important site for educating schools and local groups.

A Local Nature Reserve is a statutory designation, and these areas are protected from damaging activities. Rowhill Nature Reserve is managed by the Rowhill Conservation Volunteers and provides a good example of traditional woodland management. Funding to enable positive management at Rowhill will come through developer contributions as the site has been designated as Suitable Alternative Natural Greenspace (SANG).

### **Sites of Importance for Nature Conservation**

Locally important examples of habitats and species are protected through the designation of Sites of Interest for Nature Conservation (SINCs). The Council works in partnership with the Hampshire Biodiversity Information Centre (HBIC) to identify and designate Sites of Importance for Nature Conservation (SINCs) in the borough and then to monitor and help maintain these sites. HBIC assesses each site individually against a series of criteria drawn up by Hampshire County Council, Natural England and the Hampshire & Isle of Wight Wildlife Trust. These sites are important because they contain habitats and features that cannot be recreated or species that are rare within Hampshire.

There are 35 SINCs in Rushmoor covering 467 ha and they vary greatly in size and reason for designation, from small roadside verge sites that support nationally scarce species, to larger areas of heathland and grassland habitats. The SINC monitoring and designation program is undertaken annually. It is a dynamic system and new SINCs can be designated

or existing ones removed from year to year. SINC boundaries are also amended as new survey information becomes available.

### **Green Networks**

This framework of protected sites contribute towards a network of green spaces across the borough and region, representing a link between urban areas and the surrounding countryside in neighbouring boroughs and districts.

Networks of green spaces are important for many species to aid dispersal and migration. These networks not only include the areas identified as being of importance for particular species and habitats, but also other more common green areas such as public parks, cemeteries, road verges and domestic gardens. Road and rail corridors such as the M3 and London to Weymouth railway line are also important green links due to their extensively wooded or grassed embankments. When combined, all these green spaces can help form green corridors and stepping-stones that provide the opportunity for species to migrate.

## **The Habitats**

### **Introduction**

Rushmoor Borough supports a wide mix of habitats and species in its heathland, woodland, grassland and wetland sites and throughout the more urban areas. It is important that priority habitats are protected and that action is taken to enhance and recreate habitats to support local wildlife species. In each section National Biodiversity Action Plan species found in specific habitats in Rushmoor have been identified.

### **Woodland**

There are some areas of natural woodland within the borough. Good examples of this habitat can be seen at Rowhill Copse and Southwood Woodland, but there are also many other small pockets of woodland habitat adjacent to urban parks. Rowhill and Heron Wood would have been much larger woodlands in Victorian times, now only small patches remain. The areas of woodland present today are important and add to the diversity of habitats in Rushmoor. Although most of Rowhill lies within Surrey it is still enjoyed by the residents of Rushmoor and represents a useful resource for educating people about woodland habitats and management. Southwood Woodland supports a high number of invertebrates, in particular those that depend on dead wood environments, which is unique in the borough and important at a county level.

The secondary woodland supports species strongly associated with ancient woodlands (e.g. native bluebells) and is an important habitat for many species of bat for roosting and feeding. To increase the biodiversity of woodlands their management is very important to encourage natural regeneration. Management for other habitats may have a negative effect on woodland in the borough, e.g. removal of trees for heathland regeneration. Coniferous plantations are among the poorest for wildlife in terms of species diversity, often with greatly reduced ground flora. However, they do support some speciality species such as firecrests.



While woodland is often found in discrete blocks there is also a significant amount of tree cover along linear features such as the M3 motorway, railway corridors and the Basingstoke Canal. Much of this woodland has been unmanaged for a number of years but projects such as the Aldershot Urban Extension have created opportunities to establish positive management in some of this woodland.

**Priority species associated with woodlands:**

Lesser spotted woodpecker  
Spotted flycatcher  
Song thrush  
White admiral  
Festoon moth  
Wood ant  
Green flowered helleborine

**Grassland**

There are different types of grassland habitat present in Rushmoor, representing underlying ground conditions. Dry acid grasslands are included in the Heathlands section of this document. Management of grasslands has an impact on which species will be present and how diverse the overall habitat will be. Unimproved grasslands are the most diverse grassland habitat, this is because they have not been treated with fertilisers, herbicides or pesticides. They are now an extremely scarce habitat across the entire United Kingdom.

The practice of agriculturally improving grasslands through fertilisers, herbicides and pesticides allows only some of the plant and insect species to survive because they introduce high levels of nitrogen into the habitat. In improved grasslands the high nitrogen levels provide conditions where a few species will out compete the others and dominate the area. One of the most attractive qualities of unimproved neutral grasslands, and the reason for their high biodiversity value, is their diversity of wildflowers, which in turn attracts a large number of insects such as butterflies and bees.

Most priority grassland habitats in the borough have been included within the boundaries of designated areas and with correct management, their biodiversity can be maintained and enhanced. There are almost certainly other areas of grassland across the borough which retain a raised level of floral diversity. These can even include areas which are presently heavily mowed such as road verges or amenity spaces. In some cases there could be substantial enhancement opportunities by making relatively small changes to current management regimes.

**Priority species associated with unimproved grasslands:**

Skylark  
Grizzled skipper butterfly  
Chamomile  
Quaking grass  
Potter flower bee  
Common lizard

## Heathland

Heathland habitat is characterised by a mixture of dwarf shrubs such as heathers, gorse, acid grassland, bare sand and gravel and may include everything from parched ground to bog pools. As a habitat, it supports many species that depend upon the special conditions it provides, including protected and BAP priority species. Heathland soil is generally acidic and poor in nutrients restricting the plants that can colonise and persist in these areas. Heathlands are one of the UK's most important but threatened habitats; rare elsewhere in Europe the heathlands remaining in the South of England represent an important stronghold for this habitat. Good examples of heathland habitat are found at Hawley Commons and Bourley & Long Valley.

In the past, much of the borough area would have been heathland and this habitat was maintained by the grazing of cattle, ponies, sheep etc. on the land. The cessation of grazing, introduction of conifer plantations to the area and loss through development have caused a large decrease in the borough's heathland. In recent years cattle have been reintroduced to areas of heathland in the borough with positive effects on the biodiversity of those areas and the regeneration of heathland.

The majority of heathland in Rushmoor is MoD training land, with large areas open to the public and the MoD have been working closely with the Hampshire and Isle of Wight Wildlife Trust and Hampshire County Council to restore heathland areas to favourable condition where this does not impede upon military activity. Eelmoor Marsh is owned by QinetiQ and managed by Marwell wildlife. This site has no public access but is the subject of a long history of positive management and biological recording which is reflected in its "favourable" condition assessment.

### **Priority Species associated with heathlands:**

Silver studded blue butterfly

Grayling

Adder

Nightjar

Woodlark

A Ruby-tailed wasp

Pale heath violet

Marsh clubmoss

Nail fungus

## **Wetland Habitats**

There is great diversity of wetland habitats within Rushmoor, and these support high levels of biodiversity and a variety of important species. From rivers and streams to lakes and ponds, these habitats do not exist in isolation and are often found together with other habitats such as wet grassland and wet woodland areas.

The range of habitat structure within wetland environments is one of the reasons they can support large numbers of species, often making these areas biodiversity hotspots. The river, brooks and canal also serve as green wildlife corridors through the borough and are important in helping species migration.

The high number of invertebrate species found along the river and canal are important for attracting other species, such as bats, as they are an important source of food. There are many pressures on wetland habitats from changes in hydrology of the area, from development and water extraction, and it is important to maintain wildlife corridors in light of the expected effects of climate change and the increased likelihood of species migration.

Wetland habitats within Rushmoor borough are often within close proximity to highly urban areas which can cause conflict and make them prone to pollution events. It will be necessary for all members and groups in the community to stop pollution of the waterways and help enhance these areas for wildlife and people.

### Lakes & Ponds

Ponds can be all shapes and sizes and be manmade or natural. A variety of ponds can be found in Rushmoor from the gravel lakes along the Blackwater River, small garden ponds and larger ones e.g. Brickfields Park pond.

In 2006 a category was added to the UK BAP priority habitats list to recognise the importance of ponds in maintaining biodiversity. Priority ponds are considered those that represent over two hectares of eutrophic standing water, or if under this size they support internationally, nationally scarce species or habitats listed under Annex 1 of the Habitats Directive.

With increasing temperatures there is concern that many smaller ponds may dry out, leading to a loss of many species of invertebrates and amphibians that rely on them for food and as spawning grounds. Ponds of all sizes are important and even garden and school ponds will be colonised by locally prominent species, as well as supporting dragonflies and damselflies. There are a number of old gravel lakes on the eastern border of Rushmoor that are excellent sites for bird watching, especially throughout winter months when they host wintering and migrating wildfowl.

### Basingstoke Canal

The canal is an SSSI and has an unusual change in pH along its length, which has led to a variety of different habitats. It was designated because it supports one of the widest ranges of wetland and aquatic plants in Britain.

On the Basingstoke Canal, disused side waters provide additional habitats for increased biodiversity, examples of these are Eelmoor, Claycart and Rushmoor Flashes that are managed by the HIOW Wildlife Trust. The vegetation and species found in these areas are those adapted to occasional flooding.

### Blackwater River

Starting in Rowhill Copse in the southeast of the borough the Blackwater River runs from south to north and is an important green corridor for species migration. The river and surrounding gravel lakes provide food and shelter for many bird species, throughout winter months visiting wading birds can be seen overwintering on the lakes. A number of nationally and regionally scarce plant species are supported along the river and continued management for conservation will help maintain populations of these species.

## Cove Brook

This is an interesting and important habitat that runs through a very urban area. The Cove Brook provides residents with an excellent opportunity to interact with wildlife on their doorstep and it is important to manage this area for wildlife as well as people.

Southwood Meadow, a traditional area of water meadow, is an important area for invertebrates and amphibians, the meadow is located by Hazel Avenue in Cove. The brook and the surrounding open spaces is an area identified for priority conservation action to ensure the diversity of the grassland is maintained and increased.

### **Priority species associated with wetland habitats:**

Reed bunting

Otter

Grass snake

Common toad

Downy emerald dragonfly

6 stamened Waterwort

Hair-like pondweed

Pillwort

### **Urban Environments**

The urban environment represents at best a mosaic of habitats that provide an important refuge for many species. Relics and small patches of the habitats discussed in the previous chapters can be found within Farnborough and Aldershot, linking these patches with the wider countryside will help local wildlife populations. The urban environment is included in this plan because the range of environments within the urban landscape helps support a wide variety of species, making an important contribution to the overall biodiversity of the region, and provides the easiest opportunity for residents to access nature in their day to day lives.

The urban environment is not a priority UK BAP habitat but some UK BAP species can be found in our towns. Stag beetles are now commonly found in urban areas despite being dependent upon dead wood for larval development. Their adaptation appears to be helping the population of stag beetles in the South East flourish. Approximately 27% of urban land use is currently identified as used for gardens; in the highly developed areas of Rushmoor, gardens may provide an important resource for biodiversity. Urban gardens help aid dispersal of biodiversity by acting as green corridors and as stepping-stones for species moving between larger green spaces. Street trees not only protect our neighbourhoods from extremes of weather they are also important for urban wildlife, home to many insect and bird species.

The verges alongside roads and railway embankments create wildlife corridors through urban areas and can support rare plant species. Larger green spaces within the urban environment are often represented by parks, playing fields, cemeteries and allotments and provide the most accessible areas for local residents to access and appreciate wildlife and nature.

### Priority species associated with the urban environment:

Stag beetles  
Bats (serotine, brown long eared & pipistrelle)  
House sparrows  
Common starling  
Hedgehog  
Slow-worm

## Action Plan 2015-20

The government's Biodiversity 2020 strategy for the UK highlights that “..conserving biodiversity in England has long depended on partnership, involving statutory, voluntary, academic and business sectors”. This situation is reflected in Rushmoor where partnership work between council departments, volunteers, statutory bodies and the local business sector have all come together to deliver conservation work in the borough. In the current financial climate partnership working is only likely to become more important.

This updated five-year plan outlines a series of actions to provide a framework for the delivery of conservation and enhancement across Rushmoor until 2021. The actions are intended to make a genuine positive contribution to the borough's biodiversity while being realistic and achievable.

The actions fall into three broad categories: protecting the existing resource, raising awareness of biodiversity in the community and within the council and enhancing biodiversity through partnership projects. The specific actions are also linked in the tables to the relevant protected sites and species where relevant. The document also has a section allowing for review of the plan as it progresses and evolves.

### *Aim 1: Protecting the existing biodiversity resource*

Action	Timescale	Potential partners	Relevant habitats/sites/species
<b>Development Management</b>			
Provide pre-application advice to developers and DC officers to ensure that biodiversity is a consideration early in the process	2016-2021	RBC, NE, EA, HCC	Potentially all habitats/species
Ensure planning applications are accompanied by appropriately detailed ecological survey work	2016-2021	Biodiversity officer	Potentially all habitats/species
Provide biodiversity comments on relevant planning applications	2016-2021	Biodiversity officer	Potentially all habitats/species
<b>Planning Policy</b>			
Continued support for the Thames Basin Heaths Strategic Partnership Board	2016-2021	Biodiversity Officer, Planning Policy	SPA/Heathland species
Preparation and implementation of relevant planning policies (including adoption of a new Local Plan)	2016-2021	Planning policy	-

Action	Timescale	Potential partners	Relevant habitats/sites/species
Investigate the possibility and value of producing a supplementary planning document (SPD) for biodiversity	2016	Biodiversity officer, planning policy	-
Ensure new SANG sites have relevant management plans to include enhancements for biodiversity	2016-2021	Biodiversity officer, various partners	Grassland/woodland and associated species
<b>Monitoring the existing resource</b>			
Maintain Service Level Agreement with Hampshire Biodiversity Information Centre (HBIC) to provide current biodiversity information for the borough	2016-2021	RBC, HBIC	SINC sites and protected species where specific surveys required
Facilitate annual monitoring scheme for existing SINC sites and surveying new areas	2016-2021	Biodiversity officer, HBIC	SINC sites
Attend HBIC partnership meetings (two per year) with rotational representation on steering group	2016-2021	Biodiversity officer	-

### ***Aim 2: Enhancing the Rushmoor Biodiversity Resource***

Action	Timescale	Potential partners	Relevant habitats/sites/species
<b>Land management opportunities</b>			
Develop wildflower planting scheme on RBC sites	One new scheme per year 2016-2021	RBC, Veolia, Rushmoor Urban Wildlife Group	Grassland and associated invertebrates
Promote biodiversity friendly management on verges and open space	Input into new management contracts as appropriate	RBC, Veolia	Grassland and associated invertebrates
Catalogue small areas of greenspace in Rushmoor, establish ownership and produce GIS mapping layer	2016	Biodiversity Officer, Rushmoor Urban Wildlife Group	Urban environment and associated species
Offer biodiversity advice to private landowners (e.g. business parks, housing associations) in the borough: develop partnership work	Ongoing 2016 - 2021	Biodiversity officer, Rushmoor Urban Wildlife Group	Urban environment and associated species
Support Parks and Open Spaces Manager in implementing biodiversity enhancement projects in Manor Park and Brickfields Country Park	2016 - 2017	Biodiversity Officer, Parks and Open Spaces Manager	Grassland and wetland habitats and associated species
SANG acquisition and management	Ongoing 2016 - 2021	Biodiversity Officer,	-

Action	Timescale	Potential partners	Relevant habitats/sites/species
		Planning Policy	
<b>Partnership work</b>			
Support and facilitate species conservation and reintroduction programmes with partnership organisations across the borough	Ongoing as projects develop	Various partners incl. HIWWT, Marwell Conservation Trust	TBC
Continue to chair Rushmoor Urban Wildlife Group and undertake small projects	Four meetings annually	Biodiversity Officer, Rushmoor Urban Wildlife Group	Potentially any habitats of value
SANG acquisition and management	Ongoing 2016 - 2021	RBC, NE	-

### ***Aim 3: Awareness, communication and education***

Action	Timescale	Potential partners
<b>Rushmoor Web Pages</b>		
Keep web pages up to date with relevant biodiversity information	Annually 2016-2021	Biodiversity officer
Provide a link to the "living record" website	2016	Biodiversity Officer
Create link to electronic version of updated BAP	2016	Biodiversity Officer
<b>Community Work</b>		
Give talks to community groups or other interested parties on biodiversity topics	At least one annually 2016-2021	Biodiversity officer and various partners
Attend events to promote biodiversity projects and encourage participation	At least one annually	Biodiversity officer, Rushmoor Urban Wildlife Group
Continue to support the wildlife gardening category for Rushmoor in bloom	Annually	Biodiversity Officer
<b>Media</b>		
Produce articles for Arena highlighting biodiversity projects and opportunities to be involved	At least one annually	Biodiversity Officer

#### ***Aim 4: Monitoring and Review***

<b>Action</b>	<b>Timescale</b>	<b>Potential partners</b>
Hold annual Biodiversity Action Plan partnership day to review all project work occurring in the borough	One Annually 2016 -2021, April	Various
Produce summary report from partnership day as an annual review	One annually 2016-2021, May	Biodiversity officer
Full five year review	2021	Biodiversity Officer



**AGENDA ITEM NO. 4**

**Cabinet  
22 September 2015**

**Head of Community and Environmental  
Services Report COMM 1517**

**Farnborough Airport - Community Environmental Fund**

**Introduction**

- This paper seeks approval to award a grant from the Farnborough Airport Community Environmental Fund to assist a local project.
- The Cabinet Member for Environment has considered the application and has recommended an award of £3,000 to the Prospect Estate Big Local (Appendix A).
- The Community Environmental Fund is currently £20,716. Taking the application recommended in this paper totalling £3,000 would leave £17,716 available for allocation.
- The guidelines for allocating the funds are attached in Appendix B

**Recommendation**

- Cabinet is recommended to approve the award totalling £3,000 to the Prospect Estate Big Local.

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Peter Amies – Head of Community and Environmental Services

Contact – Alison Nicholls – Grants and Administration Officer  
Tel 01252 398766 email [alison.nicholls@rushmoor.go.uk](mailto:alison.nicholls@rushmoor.go.uk)



<b>Environment Fund applicant bid</b>	
<b>Name &amp; address of Applicant</b>	Prospect Estate Big Local (PEBL)
<b>Grant requested (Total cost of project)</b>	£3,000 (£6,175)
<b>Purpose of grant</b>	Work with a landscape architect to develop an environmental master plan for the area to include site survey, workshops and development of options
<b>Previous grants from this fund</b>	2014 – Outdoor table tennis table (£2,500)
<b>Distance from centre of runway (within 5 kilometres (3 miles))</b>	Yes
<b>Other sources of funding for this project</b>	£3,175 (PEBL budget allocated to the Environment theme)
<b>Accounts</b>	PEBL have been awarded £1m by the lottery to allocate to local initiatives agreed with residents. They are expected to secure partnership funding to maximise the potential of the projects. They have been allocated £61,000 to staffing and pre agreed projects in the first phase of which £26,000 has been spent.
<b>Additional Information</b>	<p>Environment theme: Improving the physical environment, image and reputation of the Prospect Estate:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Improve signage around the estate and Cove Brook in areas that a statutory body is not responsible for</li> <li>• Improve the look of the estate and develop communal areas</li> <li>• Develop a Fitness Trail based on Cove Brook pathway but developed to run through the estate</li> <li>• Produce an Orienteering Map that is a permanent course that encompasses various landmarks and fitness stations as markers</li> </ul>
<b>Aim of organisation/group</b>	PEBL vision: In ten years' time, Prospect Estate will be a welcoming, safe, thriving community where individual strengths are recognised, people are involved and proud to live there
<b>Application recommendation</b>	£3,000



## Guidelines

- The Community Environmental Fund commenced in 2001. It is levied by Farnborough Airport on business aviation movements at a rate of £2 per aircraft movement and £5 per aircraft movement where the aircraft is a Boeing business jet or an Airbus A310 corporate jet.
- The fund is available to groups and organisations under the following criteria: -
  - Located within 5 kilometres (3 miles) from the centre of Farnborough Airport (taken to be halfway down the main runway)
  - Within this 5 kilometre radius, is demonstrably and regularly affected by aircrafts travelling to and from Farnborough Airport
  - Will result in the improvement or provision of an outdoor facility or area that is accessible to the public and able to be enjoyed by the community as a whole
  - Is a community or environment based bid, projects may include: -
    - Green or open spaces
    - Natural habitats
    - Environmental improvements or outdoor play
    - Community projects with an emphasis on improving the local environment or outdoor education

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## AGENDA ITEM NO. 5

Cabinet  
22 September 2015

Head of Community and Environmental  
Services Report COMM 1518

### Grants to Voluntary Organisations

#### 1. Introduction

- This paper reports on the grants awarded by the Cabinet Member for Concessions & Community Support and seeks approval to award £2,000 to the Rushmoor Gymnastics Academy.

#### 2. Grants to Voluntary Organisations

- The Cabinet Member for Concessions and Community Support has awarded two grants for £1,000 or less:
 

▪ <b>Aldershot Royal British Legion</b>	<b>£300</b>
To fund publicity aimed at increasing local membership	
▪ <b>7<sup>th</sup> Farnborough Scout Troupe</b>	<b>£500</b>
Towards the cost of purchasing new tents	
<b>Total</b>	<b>£800</b>

- The application from the Rushmoor Gymnastics Academy shown in Appendix A is recommended to receive an award of £2,000.
- Aldershot Garrison took up only £1,000 of the £2,000 awarded in July towards the Aldershot Military Festival and this has been returned to the grants fund.
- The budget for voluntary organisations for 2015/16 is £22,238. Taking into account the two grants that have been awarded by the Cabinet Member for £1,000 or less in this paper and the recommended award to the Rushmoor Gymnastics Academy of £2,000 will leave £20,438 available for allocation in the remainder of this financial year.

#### 3 Recommendations

Cabinet is recommended to:

- note the grants above for £1,000 or less totalling £800
- approve the grant to Rushmoor Gymnastics Academy for £2,000

Peter Amies – Head of Community and Environmental Services

Contact – Alison Nicholls – Grants and Administration Officer  
Tel: 01252 398766 Email: [alison.nicholls@rushmoor.gov.uk](mailto:alison.nicholls@rushmoor.gov.uk)

<b>FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE TO VOLUNTARY ORGANISATIONS</b>	
<b>SUMMARY SHEET</b>	
<b>Name of Applicant</b>	Rushmoor Gymnastics Academy
<b>Grant Requested (Total cost of project)</b>	£2,000 towards training costs of £3,000. Total cost of employing both apprentices is over £20,000
<b>Purpose of Grant</b>	Towards the training costs of two new apprentices: Level 1 training - £400 x2 Level 2 training - £500 x2 Exchange visits - £500 x2 Travel expenses - £100 x2
<b>Previous Grants in last 3 years</b>	None
<b>Rent Relief</b>	100%
<b>Rate Relief</b>	100%
<b>Membership / Rushmoor Residents Assisted</b>	Membership of 800 with many casual users
<b>Other sources of funding</b>	From club funds
<b>Accounts</b>	Income - £493,000 Expenditure - £475,000 Balances - £228,000
<b>Aims of Organisation/General Comments</b>	<p>They provide for all levels and abilities with gymnasts competing at county, regional, national and international level. The gym hosts major national and international competitions, plus international summer and Easter camps with participants coming from around the world. Also hosts Pilates, Jujitsu, Karate and ballet clubs and groups. The centre also runs a successful play gym for pre-school children.</p> <p>The two new apprentices will assist with the ever-increasing numbers. Apart from their exams, they will make use of exchanges and specialist dance training and receive regional / national coaching to increase their experience.</p> <p>The apprentices will enable them to help clear the waiting list and open new classes. Once trained, they will be employed full time and be self-funding.</p>
<b>Application recommendation</b>	£2,000



CABINET

SOLICITOR TO THE COUNCIL

22ND SEPTEMBER 2015

REPORT NO. LEG1517

KEY DECISION: NO

**THE SOURCE, BOULTERS HOUSE, NO. 237 HIGH STREET, ALDERSHOT**

**1. INTRODUCTION**

- 1.1 This report is to advise of the circumstances that have led to the Source deciding to vacate the above premises and upon the steps that have been taken and are proposed to assist the charity with their relocation

**2. BACKGROUND**

- 2.1 The Source is a charity which provides assistance to young people across North Hampshire. They operate from Boulters House at No. 237 High Street, Aldershot.
- 2.2 The services that they provide are:-  
A youth café 4 nights per week;  
Early year's hub for HCC  
All troubled family referrals  
Anger management counselling for 90 clients per year  
Anger management courses for other professionals  
Mentoring project for young people and teenagers  
Parenting courses
- 2.3 They receive funding towards these services from Hampshire County Council. The demand for their youth services has increased in recent years with 80% of referrals coming from statutory organisations, the majority via children's services.
- 2.4 They employ two part time fundraisers, one part time administrator and a full time Chief Executive. They have 4 staff on counselling placements and 1 paid counsellor.
- 2.5 The charity restructured in 2014 and having been seeking to make the organisation self-sustaining through a project called Bike Start, which seeks to refurbish, donated second hand bikes in order to sell them. They also service and repair bikes. They have a workshop supplied by Grainger Plc. This project also provides opportunities for NEET's to experience a work place environment.

- 2.6 The charity will be working with the Gaming Zone and Step Up to apply for the next round of grant funding from the various public bodies to support its work.

### **3. REASONS FOR RELOCATION**

- 3.1 The Source bought Boulters House in 2006 and the Council loaned £350k towards the purchase price, which is secured by a charge over the premises and was to be repaid over a 10 year period. The Source found itself only able to make one capital repayment of £21,875 in 2008 and repayments of interest ceased to be made after September 2010
- 3.2 In March 2010, the Council agreed to defer payment of the capital due under the loan so that the Source could sort out their finances. No payments of either capital or interest have been made since 2010. More recently, the Source has recognised that the outstanding loan and its inability to make repayments would lead to difficulties for them as a charity under the Charity Commission rules.
- 3.3 In December 2014, the Source told the Council that they were seeking to make the charity self-sustaining through their bike project but recognised the need to relocate to a smaller premises which would be affordable. They proposed selling the property and repaying the council loan with any surplus helping to fund their new premises
- 3.4 Officers therefore, with the Sources' agreement, had a survey undertaken of the properties condition in order to determine the value of the property. An earlier report some 4 years previously had suggested that there could be structural issues with the property.
- 3.5 This report has been shared with the Source and has led to the trustees decision to cease operating out of the premises and to look for alternative premises from which to provide their services. The report shows that the property will require significant investment in the medium term. It shows that there is movement between the old and the new parts of the building which would require tying the two parts of the building together. Also bowing to the Boulters Road elevation and concern that the upper parapet wall, whilst currently stable, may not remain so in the medium to longer term. There are also concerns relating to the roof. These particular defects were classified in the report as serious, needing repair, replacement or urgent investigation. These, together with other defects which are not serious or urgent, means that the building is likely to be beyond economic repair- the works required are likely to be in the order of £160K.
- 3.6 The source had the property valued in 2011 at £215k upon the basis that the premises were in good condition.

#### **4. REQUIREMENTS FOR NEW PREMISES**

- 4.1 The Source requires office accommodation for a minimum of 4 staff and counselling rooms. All staff have cloud based lap tops so hot desking and remote working is possible. The Source will be able to use church halls for youth sessions and teenager/ parent drop in sessions. The Vine and the Gaming Zone are assisting the Source with making alternative provision for such sessions where possible.

#### **5. PROPOSAL**

- 5.1 The Council has assisted the Source in its urgent search for new office premises with counselling rooms. It is proposed that they relocate to suite 3 on the ground floor of Wesley Chambers. They will take a three year repairing lease with a mutual break clause operating at 18 months. It is proposed that in order to assist the Source with the urgent relocation that the council pay the first years rent to the landlord in the sum of £20K. The Council will accept a transfer of Boulters House in consideration for the release of the mortgage debt. The property will then fall within the councils property portfolio, be boarded up and a further report will be brought to a future cabinet meeting with regard to its longer term future.
- 5.2 The Source is happy with this arrangement and with the council's continuing support. It is important however for the Source to obtain an independent valuation of the premises as they have a best duty value under the Charities Act and the Charity Commissions consent to the transfer will be needed. The Charity Commission will require such a report and in view of the urgency of the situation it is suggested that the Council refund to the Source the cost of this report.

#### **6. IMPLICATIONS**

##### **Risks**

- 6.1 Boulters House is not currently a dangerous structure under the Buildings Act. The Council will however need to secure the premises to prevent squatting or vandalism. In the longer term demolition and rebuild is likely to be the only option.

##### **Legal Implications**

- 6.2 The general power of competence in sections 1- 6 of the Localism Act enables the council to do, subject to some limitations, anything that an individual may do. Taking a transfer of Boulters House, releasing the charge and making a grant of the first year's rent and valuation fee will enable the Source to continue to provide their valuable services to the community whilst they move to financial sustainability in their new premises.

## **Financial and Resource Implications**

- 6.3 Capital outstanding under the loan and owed to the Council is £328,125. Interest from 2010 is also outstanding. The redevelopment of Boulters House should produce a capital receipt to offset against the amount due to the Council. The likely amount of such receipt is unknown as, due to the urgency of the situation, no financial viability work has been undertaken. The charge will be released upon transfer of the premises to the Council. It is not known whether any redevelopment receipt will be sufficient to clear the amount owed completely but the proposed course of action has the potential to recover monies which the Source have no means to pay. The rent of £20,000 and the valuation fee will come from reserves. Stamp duty will be payable by the Council on the value of site upon transfer of Boulters House (at 1% up to a value of £250k and at 3% over £250k up to £500k) and is part of the cost of enabling this site to be redeveloped.

## **Property Implications**

- 6.4 Boulters House will require redevelopment. This will be looked at as part of the Council's Asset Management Strategy. Redevelopment of the premises could enable the Council to recover the capital lent under the loan.

## **Equalities Impact Implications**

- 6.5 The recommendation is consistent with the Council's Public Sector Equality Duty which requires public authorities to have due regard to the need to advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not. Age is a protected characteristic and the services provided by the Source benefit young people.

## **7. RECOMMENDATION**

**That the Cabinet authorises the Solicitor to the Council to:**

- **pay the first years rent of £20,000 to the Landlord of Wesley Chambers upon granting of the lease;**
- **reimburse the valuation fee to the Source for the valuation of Boulters House;**
- **take a transfer of Boulters House in consideration of the release of the Council's legal charge over the premises; and**
- **take all steps necessary to bring Boulters House forward for redevelopment**

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