

# Public Document Pack



## RUSHMOOR BOROUGH COUNCIL

### CABINET

*at the Council Offices, Farnborough on  
Tuesday, 12th January, 2016 at 4.30 pm  
in 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

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## AGENDA

1. **MINUTES** – (Pages 1 - 4)

To confirm the Minutes of the Meeting held on 15th December, 2017 (copy attached).

2. **COUNCIL TAX SUPPORT SCHEME 2016/17** – (Pages 5 - 66)

(Concessions and Community Support)

To consider the Corporate Director's Report No. CD1601 (copy attached), regarding responses to the public consultation and the recommendation to the Council of an amended Scheme for the 2016/17 financial year.

3. **GRANTS TO VOLUNTARY ORGANISATIONS** – (Pages 67 - 68)  
(Concessions and Community Support)

To consider the Head of Community and Environmental Services' Report No. COMM1601 (copy attached), which sets out applications for grants from voluntary organisations.

4. **HART LOCAL PLAN - CONSULTATION ON REVISED OPTIONS FOR STRATEGIC NEW HOMES GROWTH AND SITE ALLOCATIONS** – (Pages 69 - 78)  
(Environment and Service Delivery)

To consider the Head of Planning's Report No. PLN1601 (copy attached), which provides a summary of the content and issues that have been identified with Hart District Council's 'Refined Options for Strategic New Homes Growth and Site Allocations' document and a draft Local Plan Vision and Strategic Priorities document, with regard to their potential impact on Rushmoor.

5. **ALDERSHOT TOWN CENTRE PROSPECTUS SUPPLEMENTARY PLANNING DOCUMENT** – (Pages 79 - 364)  
(Environment and Service Delivery)

To consider the Head of Planning's Report No. PLN1602 (copy attached), which sets out responses to the Council's recent consultation exercise and seeks adoption of the Aldershot Town Centre Prospectus Supplementary Planning Document.

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# RUSHMOOR BOROUGH COUNCIL

## CABINET

***Tuesday, 15th December, 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 Councillor Sue Carter.

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 **31st December, 2015**.

69. **MINUTES –**

The Minutes of the meeting of the Cabinet held on 17th November, 2015 were confirmed and signed by the Chairman.

70. **TREASURY MANAGEMENT OPERATIONS MID-YEAR REPORT 2015/16 –**  
(Corporate Services)

The Cabinet received the Head of Financial Services' Report No. FIN1522, which set out the main activities of the treasury management operations during the first half of 2015/16 and provided an update on the current economic conditions affecting treasury management decisions. The appendix to the Report showed the actual prudential indicators relating to capital and treasury activities for the first half of 2015/16 and compared these to the indicators which had been set in the Annual Treasury Management Strategy for the year, which had been approved by the Council in February, 2015.

The Cabinet was informed that the Council's existing treasury management advisers, Arlingclose Limited, had been successful in a recent tendering exercise and would, therefore, continue to provide advice for a further contract period. It was noted that the current year had remained challenging in terms of treasury management. Following the previously agreed changes to the Strategy, the Council's treasury team had continued to concentrate on the security of investments but had diversified the range of counterparties used to maximise returns, following guidance from its advisers. In particular, investment activity had been extended further into pooled funds, which had provided higher returns than investments that had been favoured previously. It was noted that the capital value of some pooled fund investments had fallen, although income returns were still performing well. Those funds which had fallen in value would be retained until the capital value was greater than the initial investment, meaning that no loss would be recognised. Members heard how losses on capital value were only recognised on sale of the fund or at such time that the reduction was material and sustained. It was normal for these assets to fluctuate in value. Arlingclose had compiled a benchmarking list of its clients and the Council's return on its total investment portfolio during the previous six months had been 1.7%, which compared favourably against the average of 0.87% of 122 local authority clients. The Cabinet was informed that it was not proposed to alter the treasury management strategy at the present time.

It was confirmed that the Council had complied with its Treasury and Prudential Indicators for 2015/16.

**The Cabinet NOTED** the Council's treasury management operations in the first half of 2015/16, as set out in the Head of Financial Services' Report No. FIN1522.

71. **REVIEW OF FEES AND CHARGES –**  
(Leisure and Youth / Environment and Service Delivery / Health and Housing)

The Cabinet considered the Head of Community and Environmental Services' Report No. COMM1522, which recommended new charges for the Aldershot Crematorium, cemeteries, halls and pavilions, allotments, football, cricket, Princes Hall, waste management and Environmental Health and Housing services.

The Cabinet noted that the core prices for the Farnborough Leisure Centre, Aldershot Pools and Southwood Golf Course would be subject to increases in line with the contracts, linked to the January Retail Price Index, which would be available from March, 2016. It was proposed to raise the cremation fee from £797 to £817.50. The results of benchmarking indicated that this fee remained competitive but towards the upper end of the scale, reflecting the high quality of service provided.

The new fees and charges would be introduced on 1st April, 2016, with the charges for football pitches being increased for the 2016/17 season and allotments from 1st April, 2017, as a year's notice had to be given.

The additional annual income resulting from the increase in fees and charges was estimated at £35,000, which would form part of the 2016/17 draft budget.

**The Cabinet RESOLVED** that the fees and charges, as set out in the Head of Community and Environment Services' Report No. COMM1522, be approved.

72. **RUSHMOOR LOCAL PLAN WORK PROGRAMME –**  
(Environment and Service Delivery)

The Cabinet considered the Head of Planning's Report No. PLN1558, which provided an update the future work programme for the preparation for the new Rushmoor Local Plan. It was explained that it was necessary to make some changes to the work programme due to changes to the plan making process, as set out in the National Planning Policy Framework and supporting National Planning Practice Guidance, in particular as they related to cross boundary working on key strategic planning issues. Also, the Housing and Planning Bill was, currently, making its way through Parliament and the implications of this would also need to be considered. It was confirmed that the Council did have an adopted Core Strategy in place, which many other local authorities did not have at this point. The delays described meant that the timescale for the production of a new Local Plan would slip by around a year. It was noted that this extra time would allow for new staffing arrangements, agreed by the Cabinet in November, 2015, to become established.

Members heard how consultation on the new plan, originally scheduled for January, 2016, would now take place in October, 2016. Adoption of the new Plan would now be scheduled for December, 2017. If agreed, these changes to the work programme would be published on the Council's website with effect from 1st January, 2016. Members were assured that the new work programme would enable the Council to produce a Local Plan that was robust and sound. There were still some risks due to uncertainty relating to the evolution of the Housing and Planning Bill and it was possible that the timetable would need to be adjusted again, once the implications of the Bill had become clearer.

**The Cabinet RESOLVED** that

- (i) the revised timetable for the next steps in the preparation of the Rushmoor Local Plan, as set out in paragraph 5.2 of the Head of Planning's Report No. PLN1558, be approved;
- (ii) an updated Rushmoor Local Development Scheme 2016 – 2019, incorporating the timetable changes agreed at resolution (i) above, be approved for publication on the Council's website, with effect from 1st January, 2016; and

the Head of Planning, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Environment and Service Delivery, be authorised to make any necessary minor amendments to the Local Development Scheme.

The Meeting closed at 4.53 pm.

D.E. CLIFFORD  
LEADER OF THE COUNCIL

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CABINET  
12<sup>th</sup> January 2016

CORPORATE DIRECTOR & HEAD OF FINANCE  
Report No: CD1601

## Council Tax Support Scheme 2016/17

### 1 Introduction

1.1 This report is to:

- a) Consider the outcome of the recent public consultation exercise in respect of potential changes to the Council Tax Support Scheme (CTSS)
- b) Consider the recommendations and comments from the Council's Welfare Reform Task and Finish Group
- c) In light of a) and b) above, agree the recommendations for the CTSS for the 2016/17 financial year to be put forward to a special meeting of Council on the 27<sup>th</sup> January 2016

### 2 Background

2.1 As Members will be aware, since the 1<sup>st</sup> April 2013, local authorities have developed their own CTSS to replace the previous national Council Tax Benefit Regulations.

2.2 In Rushmoor, we are currently in our third year of operating our local scheme, which seeks a minimum 8% contribution from those of working age, treats income from child maintenance or child benefit as real income within the scheme calculations, disregards all income from War Widow Pensions but in all other respects, mirrors the previous Council Tax Benefit Regulations.

2.3 This local scheme has proved effective, has been implemented successfully and the Council Tax collection rates have remained stable whilst scheme costs have steadily reduced alongside claimant numbers. Government funding for the scheme was reduced by around 10% at the time of the transfer of responsibility and has subsequently been wrapped up in the formula funding regime and Business Rate Retention Scheme and subject to further reduction since. At present a total allocation is not visible as a single line within the funding settlement. Consequently, direct comparisons between total scheme costs and offset funding available are not possible for local authorities. This is a matter that the Local Government Association (LGA) has called upon the Government to redress "in order that councils can design their schemes and consult their residents each year in full possession of the facts".

2.4 The overall scheme design and effectiveness continues to be overseen by the cross Member Welfare Reform Task and Finish Group (WRTFG).

2.5 In the 8<sup>th</sup> July 2015 budget announcement, the Chancellor set out further plans to extend the Government's Welfare Reform programme. Some of the detailed announcements made at that time, gave rise to reconsider the Council's own CTSS. This was set out to Cabinet in report CD1513 at its meeting on the 20<sup>th</sup> October 2015. At that meeting, Cabinet agreed that a public consultation be undertaken on options for change to be effective from

1<sup>st</sup> April 2016. The suggested options for change had been carefully considered by the WRTFG taking into account lessons from others, our own experience of running CTSS for 2 and a half years and a thorough examination of a broad base of data and evidence. (Appendix 1 shows an example of other local authority CTSS that the Group used to give a context).

### 3 Feedback on Public Consultation Exercise

3.1 Following the Cabinet's decision on 20<sup>th</sup> October 2015 to undertake a consultation exercise a six week consultation period ran from 9<sup>th</sup> November 2015 – 21<sup>st</sup> December 2015. In summary:

- 3,000 Council Tax payers selected at random were sent the consultation
- All 2,565 working age CTS claimants were sent the consultation
- An on-line survey was made available on the Council's website throughout the six week period
- 791 surveys were completed, the results presented reflect those who answered the question and exclude those who selected 'I don't know'
- In total there were 290 surveys returned from those on council tax support (273 paper surveys and 17 online surveys) and 501 surveys returned from those not on council tax support (433 paper surveys and 68 online surveys)
- Due to the specific personal nature of this consultation, the only specialist response sought was from Citizen' Advice (attached at Appendix 2). Registered Social Landlords were generally made aware of the exercise.

3.2 Attached at Appendix 3 is the detailed consultation report in full and attached in Appendix 4 is the graphic representation for easy reference of the 11 questions considered around the nine options for scheme design and funding arrangements.

- Options for scheme design consulted on were:**
  1. Increase minimum contribution from 8% to either 10% or 12%
  2. Removal of the family premium for either all or new claimants
  3. Reducing the savings threshold from £16k to £6k
  4. Limiting support at the Band D level
  5. Reducing backdate periods to a maximum 4 week period
  6. Option to keep the scheme the same
- Additional consultation questions on how the scheme could be funded:**
  1. General increase in council tax
  2. Reducing or stopping other services
  3. Using Council reserves

3.3 The need for additional questions around funding options have become evident since the outcome of the Supreme Court hearing in October 2014 in the Stirling / Moseley v The London Borough of Haringey case. The Court found that Haringey had acted unlawfully in its consultation on its CTSS in that it had "misleadingly failed to provide alternative options for meeting the

shortfall resulting from the 10% cut in Government funding for CTS, other than a reduction in the support available”

- 3.4 Clearly to demonstrate good practise and avoid any legal challenge around process any recommendations for change should centre around the issues consulted upon and there needs to be demonstrable evidence that any recommendations for change do take into account the responses to the consultation received.

#### 4 Consideration by the Welfare Reform Task & Finish Group

- 4.1 The WRTFG have continued to meet this calendar year (27/1/15, 23/6/15, 11/8/15, 5/10/15, 12/10/15 and 22/12/15) monitoring the impact that the Scheme has had on our residents and particularly this year has focused on the changing environment around welfare and the reduced funding available to support such schemes.
- 4.2 The Group has specifically considered the CTSS and spent the majority of its meeting time at the two October meetings considering an approach to change and the associated necessary consultation. The Group’s meeting on 22<sup>nd</sup> December 2015 focussed on the detailed consultation responses and preparation of a series of recommendations as a result.

#### 5 Recommendations and Associated Rationale from the Welfare Reform Task & Finish Group

Recommendations	Rationale
<p><b>Increase the minimum contribution from 8% to 10%</b></p>	<p>This was supported by 52.7% of all valid respondents to the consultation as opposed to 35.4% who disagreed; the remainder remaining silent or neutral on the question. There was strong support for this option amongst residents generally and even a level of acceptability proffered amongst those in receipt of CTS. This response contrasts quite starkly to the response to the 12% option, which had a majority against that option and was much more strongly opposed amongst recipients of CTS. Financially the WRTFG considered this presented a potentially affordable option for residents, leaving those in Band C properties (most typical in Rushmoor) facing minimum payments of around £2.54 per week equating to around £132.45 annually as opposed to £1324.52 for a full rate (thus retaining an annual discount of around £1,000).</p>
<p><b>Remove the Family Premium for new working age claimants</b></p>	<p>This option was supported by 52% of all valid respondents to the consultation as</p>

	<p>opposed to 32.3% who disagreed; the remainder remaining silent or neutral on the question. There was strong support for this option amongst residents generally and also a level of acceptability amongst those in receipt of CTS. This response contrasts with the response to the option to remove the Family Premium for all working age claimants which carried less support generally, although was much more strongly opposed amongst recipients of CTS. The WRTFG considered this a viable option, as this would mirror the arrangements from 1<sup>st</sup> April 2016 for Housing Benefit (HB) applicants (many applicants in Rushmoor access both HB and CTS via a single application process currently). The approach of removing the premium for new claimants only was seen as offering a way of phasing in this change over time.</p>
<p><b>Reduce the amount of savings from £16,000 to £6,000 before claiming CTS</b></p>	<p>This option was supported by 63.2% of all valid respondents to the consultation as opposed to 27.9% who disagreed; the remainder remaining silent or neutral on the question. There was a majority in favour of this option amongst residents generally and also amongst those in receipt of CTS (where it was actually the most strongly supported of all the options for change). The WRTFG considered this a viable option as this would affect relatively few people (estimated less than 50), would serve the principle of trying to focus support to “the most vulnerable” which this group seemed somewhat at odds with and this change seemed to strongly resonate with residents (receiving strong support and attracting some 179 freeform additional comments - the most of any of the specific proposed changes other than the general % increase proposals).</p>
<p><b>Limit support at the Band D level for those living in properties banded higher than D</b></p>	<p>This option was supported by 63.4% of all valid respondents to the consultation as opposed to 21.2% who disagreed; the remainder remaining silent or neutral on the question. There was a majority in favour of this option amongst residents generally and also amongst those in</p>



	receipt of CTS. The WRTFG considered this a viable option as this would affect relatively few people (estimated less than 50), would still provide a degree of support to those living in the higher banded properties and seemed to strongly resonate with residents (receiving strong support and attracting some 147 freeform additional comments – with a focus on fairness and options to move to smaller properties being common themes).
<b>Reduce the limit of backdated claims to four weeks</b>	This option was supported by 67.5% of all valid respondents to the consultation as opposed to 20.2% who disagreed; the remainder remaining silent or neutral on the question. There was a majority in favour of this option amongst residents generally and also amongst those in receipt of CTS. The WRTFG considered this a viable option as this would mirror the arrangements from 1 <sup>st</sup> April 2016 for Housing Benefit (HB) applicants (many applicants in Rushmoor access both HB and CTS via a single application process currently). Furthermore the change was not considered likely to affect a significant number of people (it would have affected a maximum number of 78 in the previous year). The proposal also seemed to strongly resonate with residents (receiving the strongest support and attracting some 145 freeform additional comments – with a focus on 4 weeks being a reasonable amount of time and some sense that the Council should be able to make provisions for “exceptions”).

**6 Options considered in the consultation but not recommended for adoption by Welfare Reform Task & Finish Group along with the associated rationale**

<b>Recommendations</b>	<b>Rationale</b>
<b>Increase the minimum contribution from 8% to 12%</b>	This was supported by 38.2% of all valid respondents to the consultation as opposed to 51.4% who disagreed; the remainder remaining silent or neutral on the question. This contrasted to the more acceptable option of an increase to 10% as explained in the table above.

<p><b>Remove the Family Premium for <u>all</u> working age claimants</b></p>	<p>This was supported by 48.7% of all valid respondents to the consultation as opposed to 35.6% who disagreed; the remainder remaining silent or neutral on the question. So whilst more were in favour of this option than against respondents gave a stronger preference for the gradual removal of Family Premium suggested in the option in the table above.</p>
<p><b>Keep the current CTSS exactly the same</b></p>	<p>This was supported by 44.92% of all valid respondents to the consultation as opposed to 40.9% who disagreed; the remainder remaining silent or neutral on the question. In many respects this was the most finely balanced of all the opinions obtained.</p> <p>The WRTFG did not consider this a viable option however as there was not a clear majority position and several of the other options (5, 6 and 7 for example) had given clear preference for changes amongst all residents thus creating a clear inconsistency with this view.</p>
<p><b>Seek to fund the CTSS specifically by a general increase in the Council Tax</b></p>	<p>This was supported by 17.72% of all valid respondents to the consultation as opposed to 67.4% who disagreed; the remainder remaining silent or neutral on the question. This was the suggestion that respondents most clearly disagreed with. The WRTFG did not consider this a viable option due to the level of general unacceptability – both CTS recipients and general residents alike taking a majority position against this option.</p>
<p><b>Seek to fund the CTSS specifically by reducing other services</b></p>	<p>This was supported by 18.7% of all valid respondents to the consultation as opposed to 64.1% who disagreed; the remainder remaining silent or neutral on the question. So, whilst slightly more acceptable than the previous option respondents were clearly not in favour of CTSS being funded at the expense of a loss of service elsewhere. Again, the WRTFG did not consider this a viable option due to the level of general unacceptability – both CTS recipients and general residents alike taking a majority position against this option.</p>
<p><b>Seek to fund the CTSS specifically by using reserves</b></p>	<p>This was supported by 24.4% of all valid respondents to the consultation as</p>

	<p>opposed to 56.8% who disagreed; the remainder remaining silent or neutral on the question. So, whilst more acceptable than the previous two alternate funding options respondents were not in favour of CTSS being funded by the use of reserves. Once again, the WRTFG did not consider this a viable option due to the level of general unacceptability – but did note the difference in view regarding this option in that CTS recipients were more inclined to favour this funding option whilst general residents were strongly opposed.</p>
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## **7 Other Considerations from the Welfare Reform Task & Finish Group**

- 7.1 In addition to the specific Scheme recommendations, the WRTFG further recommended that should a basket of changes be introduced to the CTSS with effect from the 1<sup>st</sup> April 2016, Cabinet and subsequently Council should endorse the principle that an exceptional Hardship Fund be continued to assist residents adversely affected by the changes whilst they work through a period of transition.
- 7.2 The WRTFG also noted the an Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) should accompany any changes ultimately recommended to Council.

## **8 Financial Implications**

- 8.1 Attached at Appendix 5, is a table showing the potential financial impact for customers of increasing the minimum contribution from 8% to 10% or 12% and using the assumption that all preceptors will seek to increase their Council Tax charges for the 2016/17 financial year. Whilst, clearly there are several potential variables here, hopefully this paints a “worst case scenario” for customers for context.
- 8.2 The overall scheme financial implications are always difficult to be specific about due to a whole range of variables such as increasing charges, changes to the numbers on both the Council Tax list and of those claiming support and general changes in liability. However, the current Scheme costs are running at around £4.2m which is in essence a charge against the collection fund for all preceptors and borne as “revenue foregone”.
- 8.3 If the five recommendations for change had been implemented during the current year, the impact on Scheme costs is estimated as follows:
- 10% minimum contribution - £53,257 cost reduction
  - Removal of family premium (new) - £6,000 cost reduction
  - Reducing savings threshold - £21,748 cost reduction
  - Limiting support at Band D - £10,613 cost reduction
  - Limiting backdate period – between £0 and £10,000 cost reduction

- 8.4 The sum of the changes set out in 8.3 equates to around £100,000 in cost reduction against the current Scheme cost of £4.2m, which is roughly 2.5%. If preceptors increase their Council Tax charges for 2016/17, this will increase the total amount of Council Tax collected but will also in turn, increase Council Tax Support awarded.

## **9 Conclusions**

- 9.1 Rushmoor's current CTSS has proved effective since its implementation on the 1<sup>st</sup> April 2013. The Government's announcements to continue the Welfare Reform programme as well as generally reducing financial support to local authorities, suggest that the time is right to re-examine our current offer for CTSS.
- 9.2 The WRTFG have carefully considered a range of options for potential change and following Cabinet endorsement, these have been tested by a robust public consultation.
- 9.3 The public consultation indicates a broad range of support for some modest changes to Rushmoor's CTSS. The consultation also provides a very clear view in respect of alternate funding options for the CTSS which are not acceptable.
- 9.4 The WRTFG have put forward a package of recommended changes for Cabinet consideration that takes into account the views of the consultation, alongside a carefully balanced view on affordability and impact.
- 9.5 The changes recommended strike a balance between seeking to harmonise with other changes in the Welfare Reform programme, recognising the financial challenges to be faced over the medium term whilst still providing a significant level of support to local residents.

## **10 Recommendations**

- 10.1 The Cabinet are recommended to:
- a) Note the information contained in the report and associated appendices and the outcome of the public consultation exercise in respect of potential changes to Rushmoor's Council Tax Support Scheme (CTSS)
  - b) Consider the work of the Council's Welfare Reform Task and Finish Group (WRTFG) and their recommendations following the public consultation exercise
  - c) Agree a final proposed CTSS for 2016/17 to be recommended to Council for consideration at its meeting on the 27<sup>th</sup> January 2016

**Ian Harrison**  
Corporate Director

**Amanda Fahey**  
Head of Finance

# CTS - Neighbours

Local Authority	Min payment	Min Level	Savings Limit	2 <sup>nd</sup> adult rebate reduced or abolished	Support restricted to a particular CT band	Min weekly CTS payment	Taper rate	Hardship Fund
<b>Guildford</b>	No	0.0%	6,000	Yes	D	£10.00	0.2	Yes
<b>Hart</b>	No	0.0%	16,000	No	N/A	£0.00	0.2	No
<b>Rushmoor</b>	Yes	8%	16,000	No	N/A	£0.00	0.2	Yes
<b>Surrey Heath</b>	Yes	30%	6,000	Yes	D	£5.00	0.2	Yes
<b>Waverley</b>	No	0.0%	16,000	Yes	D	£5.00	0.2	No

# CTS – Audit Family

Local Authority	Min payment	Min Level	Savings Limit	2 <sup>nd</sup> adult rebate reduced or abolished	Support restricted to a particular CT band	Min weekly CTS payment	Taper rate	Hardship Fund
Broxbourne	Yes	20%	16,000	Yes	E	£0.00	0.25	No
Cherwell	No	0.0%	16,000	No	N/A	£0.00	0.2	No
Colchester	Yes	20%	6,000	Yes	N/A	£1.00	0.2	No
Dartford	Yes	18.5%	16,000	No	N/A	£0.00	0.2	No
East Staffordshire	Yes	25%	10,000	Yes	D	£0.00	0.2	Yes
Gloucester	No	0.0%	16,000	No	N/A	£0.00	0.2	No
Gravesham	Yes	18.5%	16,000	No	N/A	£0.00	0.2	No
High Peak	No	0.0%	16,000	No	N/A	£0.00	0.2	No
Kettering	Yes	25%	16,000	Yes	N/A	£0.00	0.2	No
North Hertfordshire	Yes	25%	16,000	No	N/A	£0.00	0.2	NO
Rugby	Yes	15%	10,000	Yes	N/A	£1.00	0.2	No
Rushmoor	Yes	8%	16,000	No	N/A	£0.00	0.2	Yes
South Ribble	Yes	17%	16,000	No	N/A	£0.00	0.2	Yes
Wellingborough	Yes	20%	16,000	Yes	N/A	£1.00	0.2	No
Worcester	No	0.0%	6,000	Yes	D	£5.00	0.2	Yes



## Citizens Advice Rushmoor

### *Response to Consultation on Changes to Council Tax Support December 2015*

#### 1. Background and Context

- 1.1. Current and forthcoming changes to welfare benefits, within the overall welfare reform agenda, continue to create serious problems for clients of Citizens Advice Rushmoor. The issues particularly focus around under-occupancy rules, conditionality, claimant commitment and sanctions; alongside general delays and difficulties with administration and making claims. This has led to increasing levels of crisis seen by clients, who are left with no income, resulting in growing reliance upon foodbanks and charitable sources of help.
- 1.2. Increasing cuts to the public sector present further challenges to all public services, particularly affecting support available for vulnerable people, and the overall service provision.
- 1.3. There are well recognised challenges for people in relation to managing money and budgets, which will inevitably be increased following implementation of Universal Credit in February 2016.
- 1.4. The overall vulnerability and difficulties for clients are illustrated for people in different circumstances below.

#### 2. Case Studies the following case studies are from a small trawl of recent cases, illustrating the challenges for people living on low incomes in different circumstances.

##### 2.1. Case Study 1

Client lives alone in a mobile home and is in receipt of Council Tax Support. Her only income is Employment and Support Allowance (Work Related Group) – receiving just over £106 per week for all her food, fuel and day to day living expenses. This has resulted in her accruing a number of debts, which she is struggling to maintain payments on, including on her energy and water bills. She has long term mental health conditions and is very distressed.

A reduction in Council Tax support will have a negative impact on the client's financial situation as well as exacerbating her anxiety and overall mental health deterioration.

##### 2.2. Case Study 2

Couple without children have multiple disabilities, including hearing impairments, multiple sclerosis and learning difficulties. They currently receive Council Tax Support and Discretionary Housing Payment - as they live in a 2 bedroom property and are subject to the under-occupancy charge (bedroom tax). After deducting expenditure from their overall income, including disability benefits, net funds available are just £7.20 per week.

An increase in their Council Tax contribution may result in these very vulnerable clients being unable to meet other basic expenses. This is also likely to have a negative impact on their physical health if they are unable to meet their basic needs.

### **2.3. Case Study 3**

Client in her 50s, lives with her son, who is now 21. Her ex-partner and father of her son died suddenly about a year ago, and her son is now suffering from depression. The client is claiming Jobseekers Allowance of £73 per week, with deductions for rent and Council Tax arrears. She also has a £7 per week non dependant deduction for her Council Tax support, as her son has failed to comply with his claimant commitment (due to depression) and has been sanctioned. He was trying to get this resolved, but poor communication with Jobcentre Plus was proving a real challenge. The client is therefore trying to support the whole household on reduced benefit. Energy costs are being deducted from her pre-pay meters working out at nearly £40 per week. She is worried about her new Council Tax bill for April 2016 and how this will affect her situation.

Rushmoor has been very supportive in rescheduling the debt and making allowances; but ultimately there is very little room for improvement based on the current income, which is way below the household needs. Fuel, water and rent arrears continue to accrue: the client hopes to find work, and is seeking help for her son's difficulties. We are continuing to work with her on options, and have referred her for food parcel help.

Any reduction in Council Tax support will clearly be unmanageable for this household.

### **2.4. Case Study 4**

Client in her late 50s lives alone in 4 bedroom house following her children leaving home. As a result she incurred the under-occupancy charge (bedroom tax) and no longer qualified for Local Housing Allowance (Housing Benefit). Her social landlord (not First Wessex) will not let her move until the rent arrears have been cleared. She is employed for 15 hours per week, earning £100 per week as her sole income, with liability for £147.85 per week rent and no support from benefits.

After Citizens Advice intervention, rent and council tax arrears are currently on hold, pending application for a Debt Relief Order. Once this has been obtained, the client will be able to move to a smaller property, with the agreement of the landlord, as the rent arrears will be part of the DRO.

As the client is barely able to manage on her current income, the impact of any increases in the Council Tax contribution in this case would result in her not being able to apply for a Debt Relief Order, and therefore being unable to move. Ultimately this would result in her becoming homeless, due to her inability to cover the rent and consequent eviction from social housing tenancy.

## **3. Conclusions**

We recognise the severe financial challenges faced by Rushmoor Borough Council and local authorities. In view of the hardship faced by our clients, Citizens Advice Rushmoor is not in a position to make recommendations on the choices outlined in the consultation.

We hope, however, that the above examples will prove useful in guiding decision making processes, by illustrating clearly the impact of reductions in support to people in a variety of circumstances and households.

*Alex Hughes*  
*Chief Officer, Citizens Advice Rushmoor*  
18/12/15



DRAFT

# Council Tax Support Scheme 2016/17

Consultation report by Strategy, Engagement and Organisational  
Development

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## Executive summary

The survey took place in November and December 2015 and consulted on six options which could be implemented independently or together to increase funding for the Council Tax Support Scheme:

- **Option one – increase the minimum contribution from 8% to either 10% or 12%**
- **Option two – removing the family premium for all or new working age claimants**
- **Option three – reduce the amount that people can have in savings capital and investments from £16,000 to £6,000 before they can claim for council tax support**
- **Option four – Limit council tax support for higher council tax band properties**
- **Option five – Reduce backdated claims to four weeks**
- **Option six – No changes to the current council tax scheme**

Of the options option five had the greatest support with 66.5% agreeing that backdated claims should be reduced to 4 weeks. Option three (reduce the amount that people can have in savings capital and investments from £16,000 to £6,000 before they can claim for council tax support) and four (Limit council tax support for higher council tax band properties) also had clear support. More people agreed than disagreed with options one (increase the minimum contribution from 8% to 10%) and two (removing the family premium for all or new working age claimants)

Option six (no changes to the current council tax scheme) had more agreement (44.9%) than disagreement (40.9%) for this option, this was largely down to those chose receiving council tax support agreeing it shouldn't change (70.5% agreed) compared to 30.9% agreeing of those not receiving council tax support.

In addition to these six options, other ways of help paying for the council tax support scheme were suggested, including raising council tax, reducing funding to other services and using council tax reserves. The majority of respondents disagreed with all these suggested options.

The majority of questions provided the opportunity for free text comment. Common themes included expressions of agreement with options overall and concerns regarding how the changes would affect people already struggling financially.

## Introduction

Council tax support is a means tested discount that Rushmoor provide for people on low income. People of working age who qualify under the current scheme receive up to a 92% discount on their council tax, and are required to pay a minimum contribution of 8% of their council tax. Pensioners receive a discount of 100%. Rushmoor, like other councils is facing significant reductions in its funding from central government and this includes funding for the council tax support scheme. The Council therefore consulted residents on options to reduce the cost of its Council Tax Support Scheme

The Council Tax Support Scheme survey consulted on six options:

- **Option one – increase the minimum contribution from 8% to either 10% or 12%**
- **Option two – removing the family premium for all or new working age claimants**
- **Option three – reduce the amount that people can have in savings capital and investments from £16,000 to £6,000 before they can claim for council tax support**
- **Option four – Limit council tax support for higher council tax band properties**
- **Option five – Reduce backdated claims to four weeks**
- **Option six – No changes to the current council tax scheme**

In addition to these six options, other ways of help paying for the council tax support scheme were suggested, including raising council tax, reducing funding to other services and using council tax reserves.

## Methodology

The Council initially consulted on the Council Tax Support scheme in Autumn 2012 before the scheme was first introduced in April 2013. This consultation took the form of an online survey, with letters were sent to all the 3,800 residents at that time receiving either council tax benefit or a discount informing them of the survey. We received an overall response of 167 surveys from residents.

With a view to increasing response rates for this consultation, a colour coded paper survey (Appendix) with covering letter was used in conjunction with an online version. This was issued to a random sample of 3,000 residents not in receipt of council tax support, and 2,565 of the 2,740 residents of working age currently receiving Council Tax Support who would be affected by the changes. A link to the online survey was also advertised via the Council website, Facebook and Twitter during the consultation period. In addition there was also an article in the Council's Christmas edition of Arena magazine.

The consultation period ran from 9<sup>th</sup> November until Monday 21<sup>st</sup> December.

An equality impact assessment will be prepared based on the selected options.

## Response rate

Overall 791 surveys were filled in, with 433 paper surveys returned from those not on Council Tax Support (14.4 % response rate) and 273 paper surveys returned from those on Council Tax Support (10.6% response rate). In addition, 85 surveys were filled in on line, of which 68 identified themselves as not receiving Council Tax Support and 17 identifying themselves as receiving Council Tax Support.

There were also a small number of residents who phoned for a paper survey after seeing the article in Arena magazine. These have been incorporated into the responses identified above dependent on whether the respondent identified that they were or were not in receipt of CTS.

For the purpose of analysing the survey, the response rate for those receiving council tax support has been taken as those respondents who returned a paper survey sent to individuals receiving council tax support (whether they indicated in the survey that they were or not, plus those who identified themselves as receiving council tax support in the online survey (a total of 290 people).

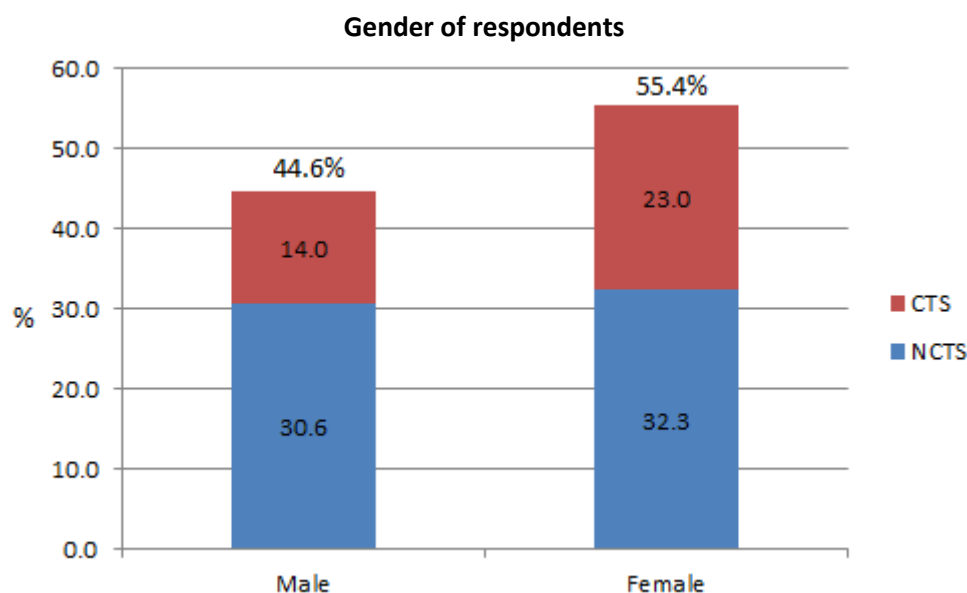
Respondents not receiving council tax support are those who returned a paper survey sent to those not receiving council tax support and those who identified themselves as not receiving council tax support in the online survey (a total of 501 people).

Due, perhaps, to the technical nature of the questions many respondents answered that they don't know whether they agreed or disagreed with the options. The survey results used in the charts below include all valid responses and exclude 'I don't know'. The number of these responses have been included for information.

## Characteristics of respondents

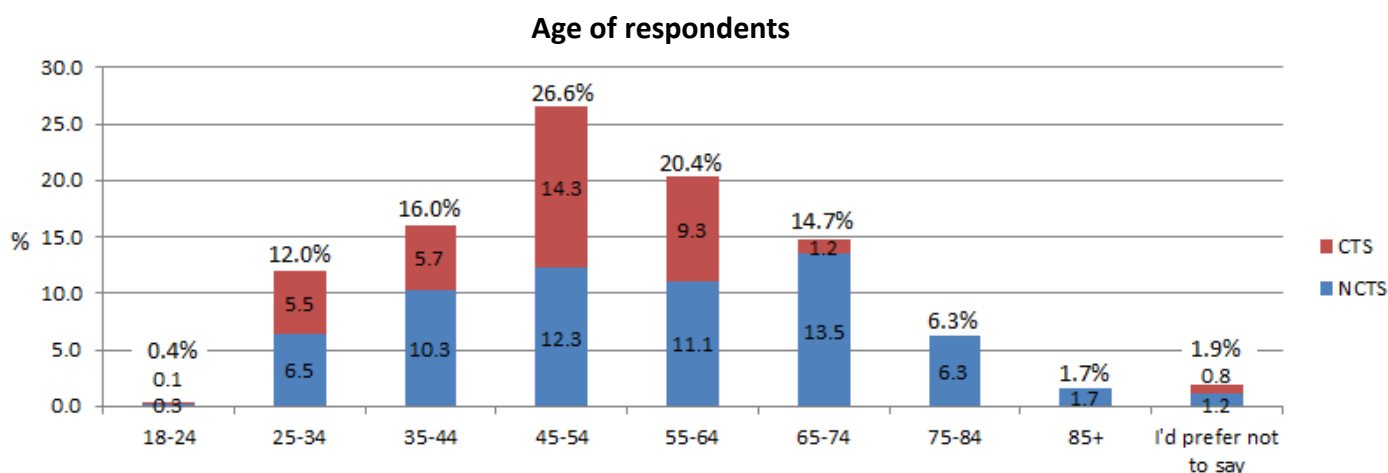
### Gender

Overall, 55.4% of respondents were female and 44.6% male. However, 51.4% (244 respondents) of those not receiving council tax support were female, compared with 62.1% (174 respondents) of those receiving council tax support.



### Ages

Respondents in receipt of council tax support were, overall, younger than those not on council tax support. This is as expected due to the surveys issued to those on council tax support were to those of working age and not the wider population.

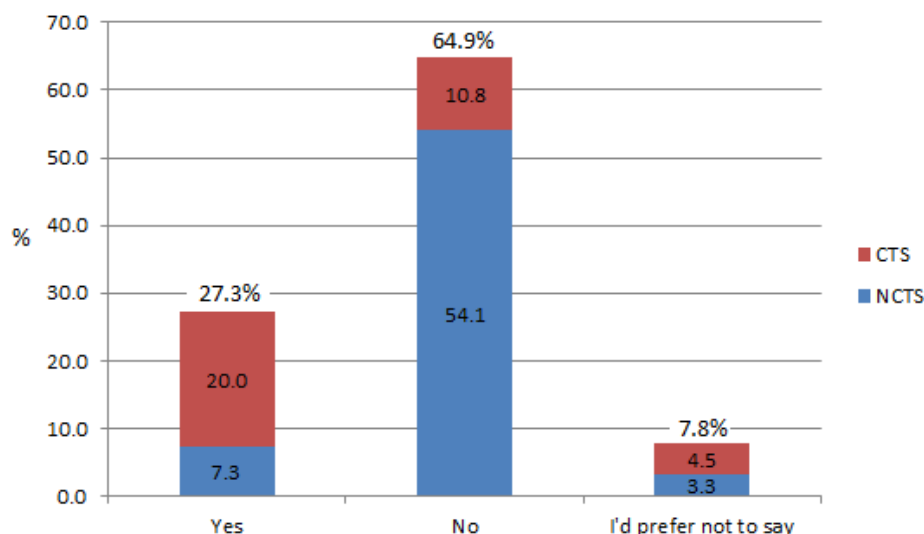


### Conditions or disabilities

Overall, 27.3% of respondents identified themselves as having a condition or disability which limited their daily activities. 11.2% (53 respondents) of those not receiving council tax

support identified themselves as having a condition or disability which limited their daily activities, compared to 56.6% (146 respondents) of those receiving council tax support.

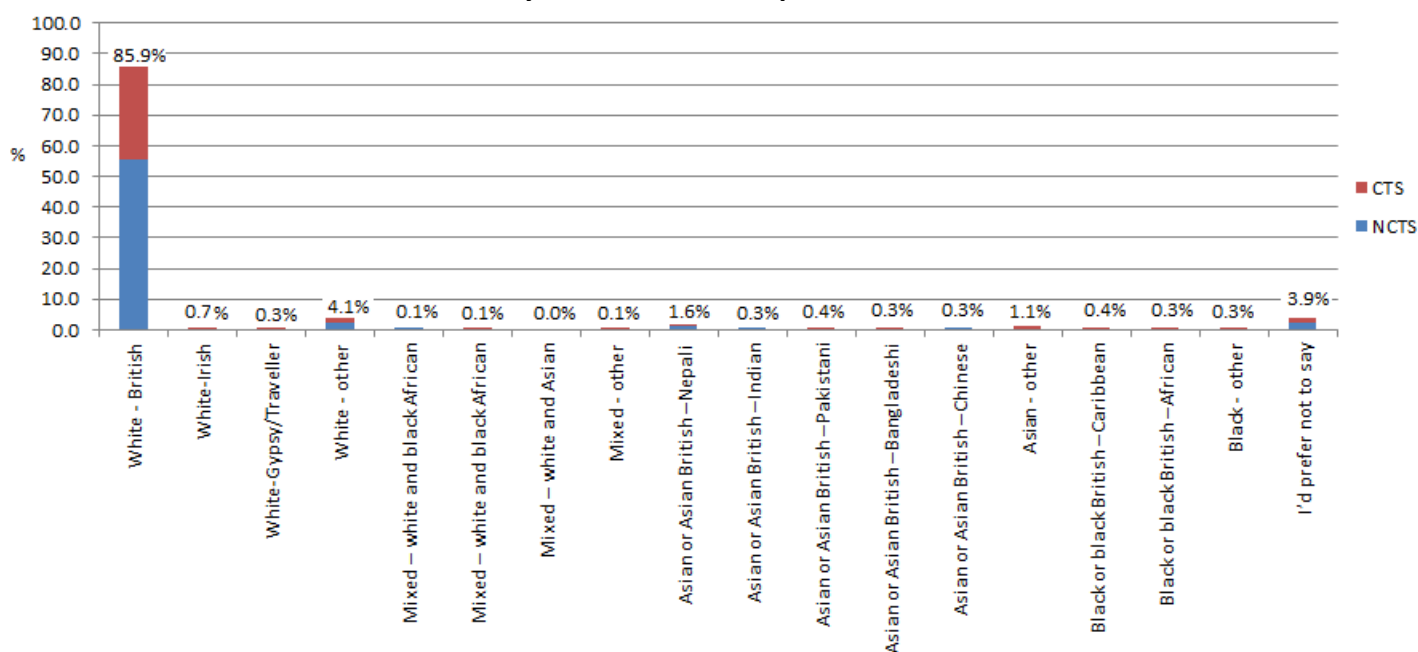
### Percentage of respondents with a condition or disability which limited their daily activities



### Ethnic group

Overall, 85.9% of respondents (647) identified themselves as white-British, the next biggest group was those who identified themselves as white – other (4.1% 31 respondents), followed by those preferred not to say (3.9% 29 respondents) followed by those who identified themselves as Asian or Asian British – Nepali (1.6% 12 respondents). There was no significant difference between those not receiving council tax support (87.6% identified themselves as white-British) and those receiving council tax support (83.0% identified themselves as white-British).

### Ethnicity breakdown of respondents



Of the 18 respondents that added their own ethnic group in the 'Any other background' box, 5 respondents identified themselves as White English, the other identified themselves as:

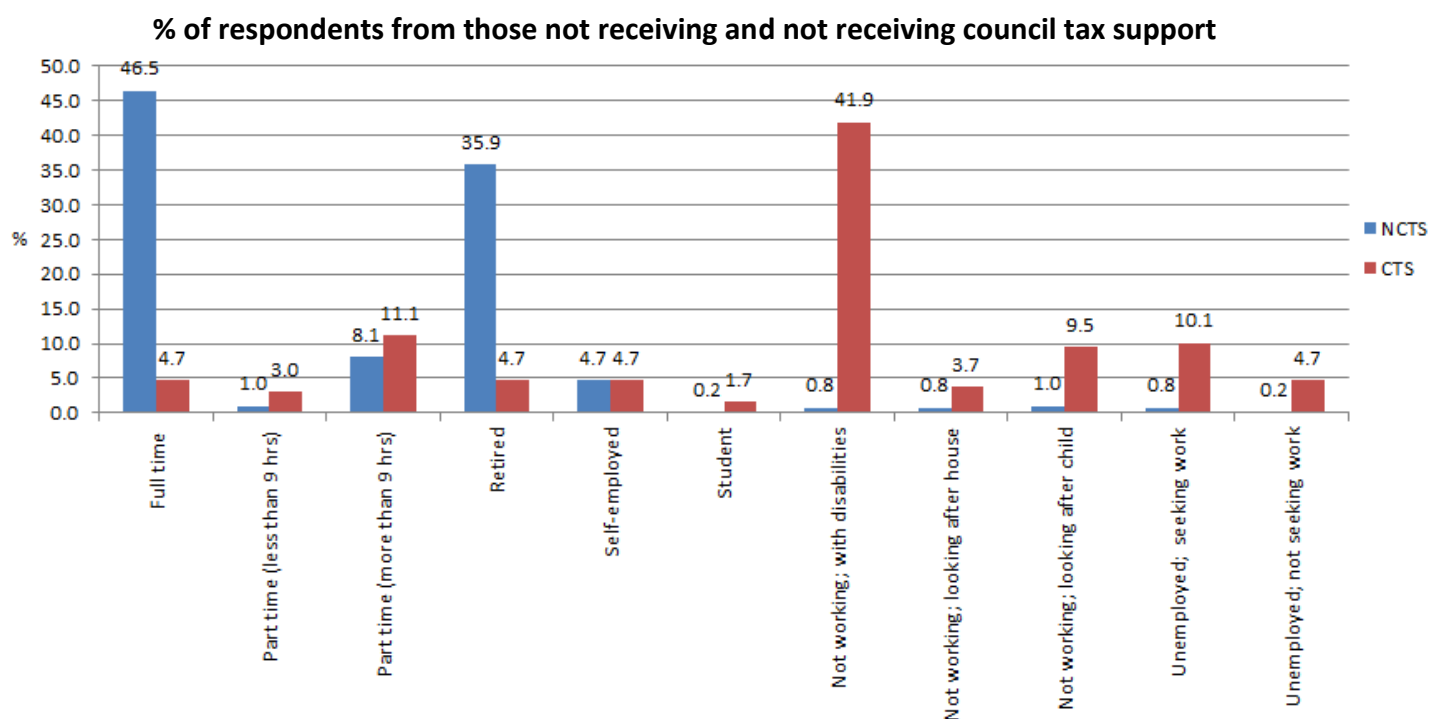
- Irish and Chinese
- Kurdistan (Iraq)
- Mediterranean White
- Nepalese
- Romanian
- Sri Lankan
- White Turkish
- Anglo-Arabian
- Asian - Filipino - Philippines
- Estonian
- Mixed Caribbean Chinese
- White -Welsh
- White Scottish

## Children in households

There were 223 children in 136 households (27.1%) not receiving council tax support, compared with 205 children in 108 households (37.2%) receiving council tax support.

## Economic activity

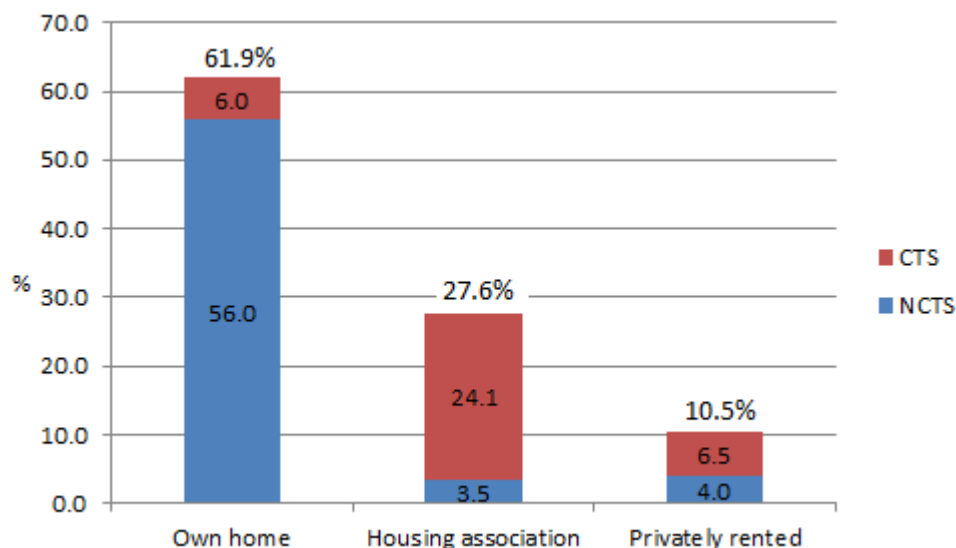
As expected there is a difference in the economic activity between respondents receiving and those not receiving council tax support. Those not receiving council tax support tended to be in full time work (46.5%) or retired (35.9%). Those receiving council tax support tended to be not working; either with disabilities (41.9%) or part time - more than 9 hrs (11.1%), unemployed seeking work (10.1%) and not working looking after child(ren) (9.5%).





## Housing Tenure

Overall, 61.9% of respondents owned their own houses (this was 88.2% of those not receiving Council tax benefits compared to 16.3% of those receiving Council tax benefit). 27.6% of respondents had a housing association property (this was 5.5% of those not receiving Council tax benefits compared to 66.0% of those receiving Council tax benefit).



Some characteristics of respondents receiving council tax support stood out as significantly different to those not receiving council tax support. Those on council tax support were more likely be women (62.1%), and/or with condition or disability which limited their daily activities (56.6%), and/or not working because of disability (41.9%) and/or living in housing association homes (66.0%). They were also younger than those not receiving Council tax support, but as previously reported this is as expected due to the surveys only being sent to those of working age receiving council tax support.

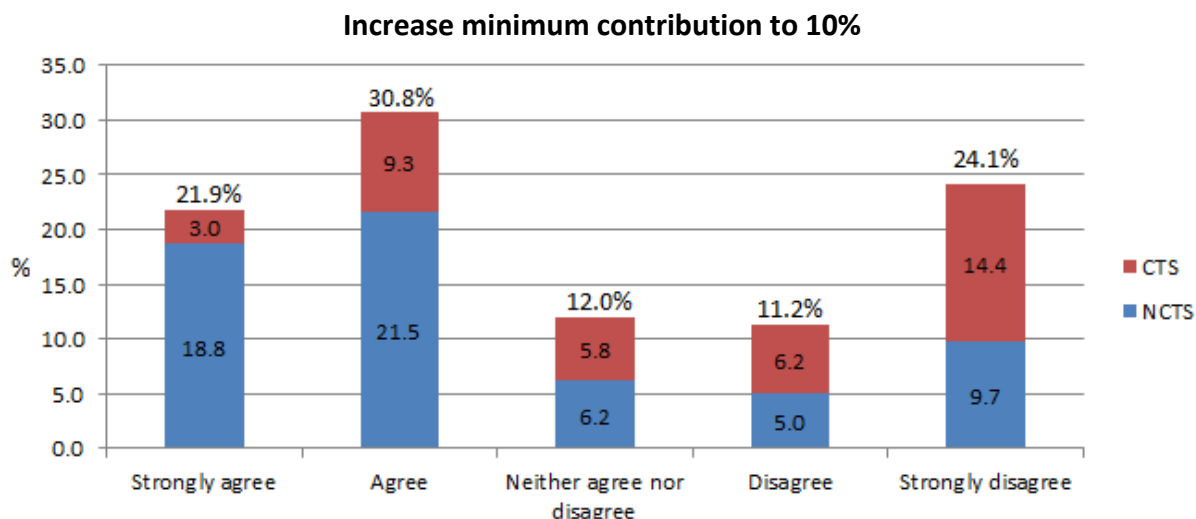
The equality assessment being undertaken alongside this work will assess the impact of any changes to the council tax support scheme on those with a condition or disability which limits their daily activities.

## Responses to Council Tax Support Scheme Questions

### Option one – increase the minimum contribution from 8% to either 10% or 12%

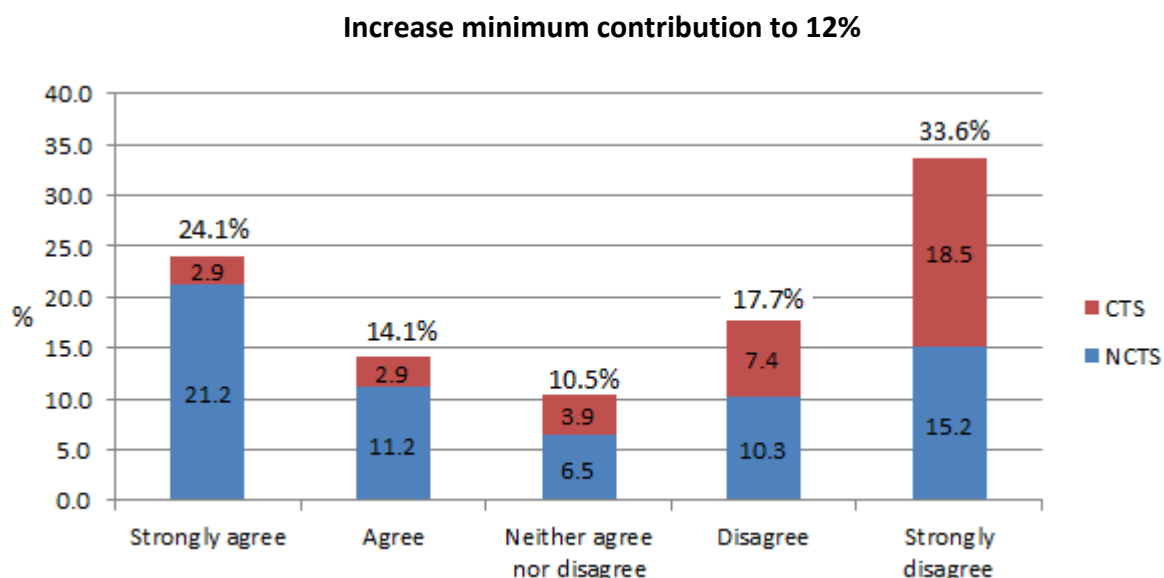
#### Question 1 – increase to 10%

659 valid responses (excluding 33 'I don't knows'). In total 52.7% of respondents agreed with this and 35.4% disagreed.



#### Question 2 – increase to 12%

660 valid responses (excluding 39 'I don't knows'). In total 38.2% of respondents agreed with this option and 51.4% disagreed.



Overall there was more support for a rise to 10% (52.7% agreed) than a rise to 12% (38.2% agreed). Option one also had a suggestion box for if respondents thought it should be a different amount than 10% or 12%. In total 214 respondent filled this in, 209 used individual

numbers or wrote it should stay the same. The range of the number went from 0%-100%, with a mean of 6.8%, median of 8% and a mode of 8%.

There were 238 comments in relation to option one. The main themes from were around the effect of an increase resulting increased hardship and poverty and that the contribution should stay the same or be increased, for example:

“I think that the government/council should remember that people who need council tax support are already struggling to find extra income/pay their bills. An increase in council tax contribution will only hurt those who are already financially worse off”

“leave it as it is people who qualify for council tax support are already struggling to pay the current amount to increase what someone on benefits would have to pay, may put them in a situation whereby they couldn't pay council tax and that would incur costs for the council having to try to get money from someone who doesn't have enough to pay it”

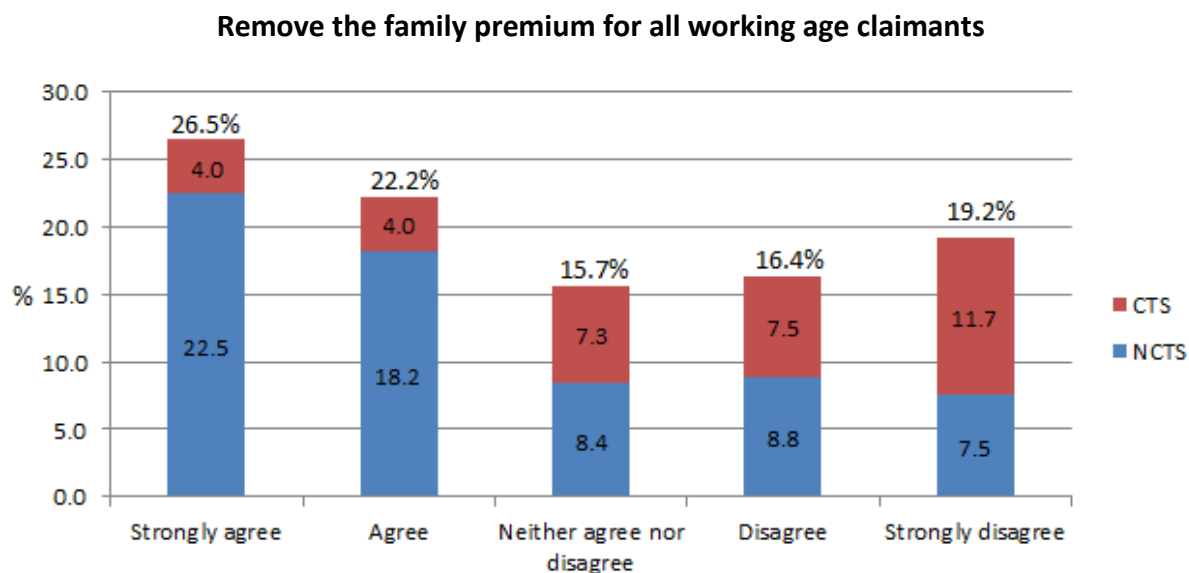
“I think it should be increased. The current minimum seems quite low in comparison to the total council tax value.”

“Even 12% is low, 20% is still only a 1/5 of the bill and is much more reasonable increasing the minimum seems that best idea”

## Option two – removing the family premium for all or new working age claimants

### Question 3 – for all working age claimants

702 valid responses (excluding 75 'I don't knows'). In total 48.7% of respondents agreed with this and 35.6% disagreed.



62.2% of those not receiving council support agreed with removal of the premium compared to 23.1% those receiving council tax support.

There were 160 comments for this question. The main themes of these comments included concerns about the effect of an increase resulting in increased hardship and poverty for affected families and children, that the premium should be kept, that the premium should be removed and that it should be in line with government/housing benefit changes for example;

“I believe this amount should remain for families. Bringing up children is very expensive and just a little extra support is very welcome”

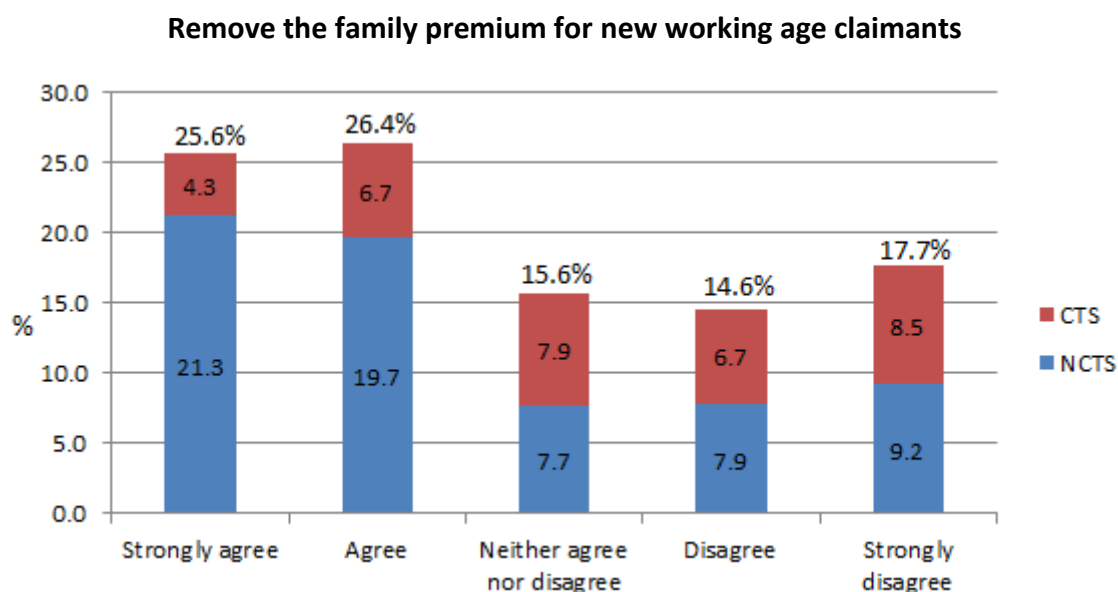
“It should be brought in line with the government changes”

“Having children is a choice, so if you can't afford them then you shouldn't be having them. This should also be removed for those claiming any support from the council”

“Feel very poor working families may suffer”

#### Question 4 – for new working age claimants

671 valid responses (excluding 78 'I don't knows'). In total 52.0% of respondents agreed with this option and 32.3% disagree.



Overall there was support for this option with 62.2% of those who not receiving council tax support agreeing and 32.3% of those receiving council tax support agreeing.

There were 130 comment for this question, the main themes of these comments were mainly around the fairness of different approaches, that everyone should be treated equally, and it should be for all not just new. There was also concern about the effect this would have on families and children, for example:

“Equal treatment. Don’t change the rules for some not the rest”

“As my previous comment. Why penalise new claimants? This could be argued to be discriminatory”

“The family premium should be removed from all claimants not just new ones”

“It should be all otherwise it costs more to administer and would be unfair”

“Removing the family premium brings some people closer to hardship”

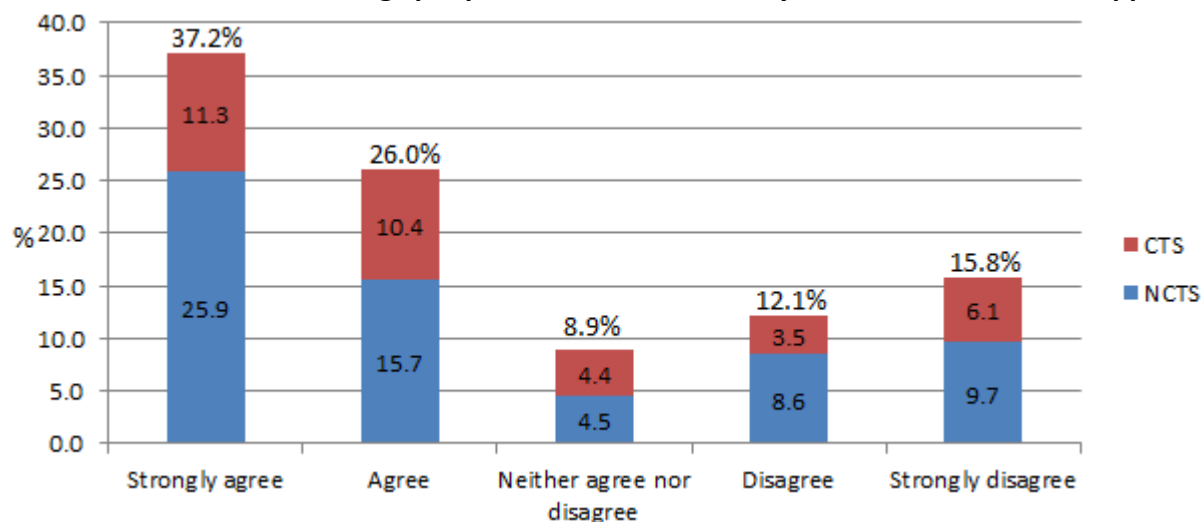
“I don’t think family premium for new claimants should be removed if it is going to make people worse off”

## Option three – reduce the amount that people can have in savings capital and investments from £16,000 to £6,000 before they can claim for council tax support

### Question 5

734 valid responses (excluding 40 'I don't knows'). In total 63.2% of respondents agreed with this option and 27.9% disagreed.

#### Reduce the amount of savings people can have before they can claim council tax support



There was overall support for this option from respondents both not receiving council tax support and those receiving council tax support.

There were 179 comments for this option. The main themes of the comments were that £6,000 was a significant sum of money for savings and people should pay for their council tax compared with those who felt that £6,000 was not much money and this may discourage saving, for example:

“I agree that if you have that much money in the bank, then you don’t need help paying council tax”

“If people have between £6000 and £16000 they don’t need council tax support”

“£6,000 is nothing when you are running a home, bringing up children. Kept the ceiling at £16,000 is right”

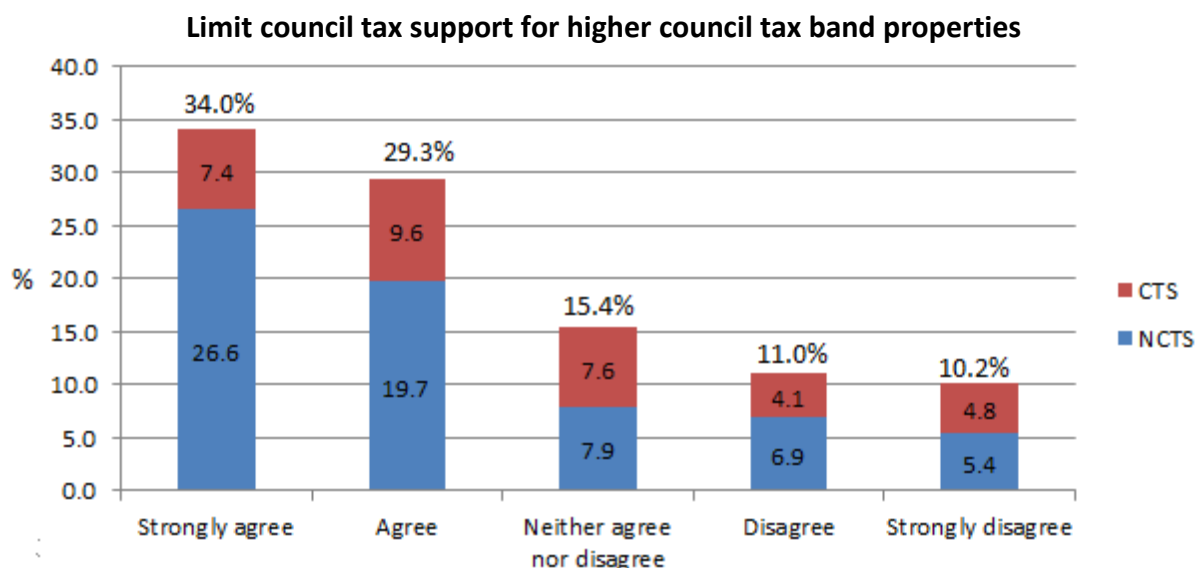
“I do not think £6000 in savings is a lot these days and could easily be swallowed up with just one emergency in a household. People should be encouraged to have some savings”

“This idea penalises those who want to save to improve their lives. It completely removes any incentive to save more than £6000 and keeps people who went to buy a house for example from being able to save for a deposit”

## Option four – Limit council tax support for higher council tax band properties

### Question 6

726 valid responses (excluding 52 'I don't knows'). In total 63.4% agreed with this option and 21.2% disagreed.



There was overall support for this option from those not receiving council tax support and those receiving council tax support.

There were 147 comments for this option. The main themes were agreement with the option and a feeling that people can always move to a smaller property, fairness and people's ability to move, for example:

"If they can afford to live in a higher band house, they can afford to pay full council tax like the rest of us"

"Feel if people live in higher bands than D and need to claim Council Tax Support they should consider downsizing"

"People in higher tax bands should pay more in council tax. If they can't afford it then they should down size"

"Treat people equally regardless of property types, spread relief across all claimants"

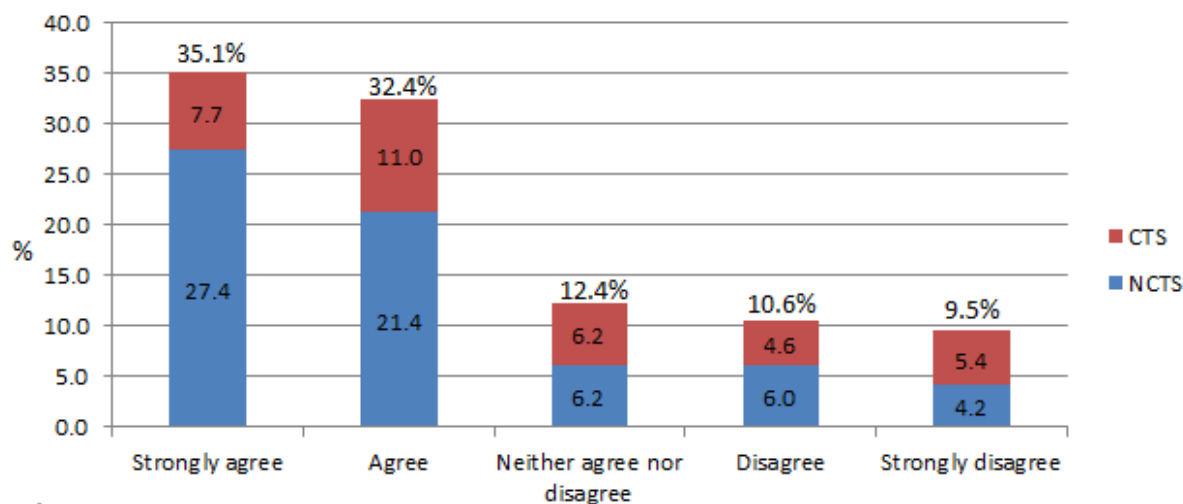
"Having a large house does not mean that you use more council services"

"I would only agree to this, if those people were helped to find suitable smaller properties, which, as we all know, in the Rushmoor area, is pretty difficult!"

## Option five – Reduce backdated claims to four weeks

### Question 7

744 valid responses (excluding 36 'I don't knows'). In total 67.5% agreed with this option and 20.2% disagreed.



There was support for this option from those not receiving council tax support and those receiving council tax support.

There were 145 comments for this option, the main themes of the comments were in support of the change and removing backdating claims and identifying there may be some valid reasons why people didn't claim in time.

"I agree with this as I think backdating for 4 weeks is fair"

"There is no need to be waiting 3 months. If the help is really required then should be requested as soon as possible"

"Three months seems excessive but one month maybe not long enough. As long as the rules are clear to residents 4 weeks could work"

"If you needed the support you would claim for it. 4 weeks is enough time"

"It annoys me that a lot of people are late claiming due to their own disorganised life styles. I would hope the Council could make allowances when someone's claim has been legitimately been delayed and that they would be dealt with sympathetically"

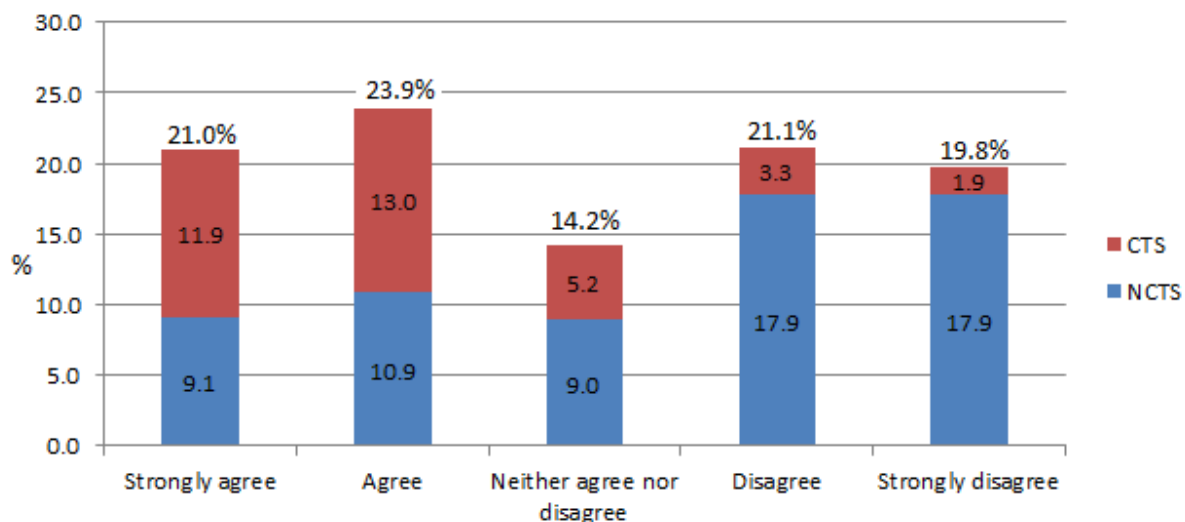
"This should be a case by case scenario for example – if someone was in hospital for weeks/months they would be unable to make a claim as soon as they were entitled"



## Option six – No changes to the current council tax scheme

### Question 8

733 valid responses (excluding 36 'I don't knows'). In total 44.9% of respondents agreed with this option and 40.9% disagreed.



There was more agreement than disagreement for this option with 70.5% of those receiving council tax support agreeing it shouldn't change compared to 30.9% of those not receiving council tax support.

There were 137 comments for this option, The main theme from the comments was that change was needed, for example:

"The Council obviously cannot keep it the same if the government cut their grant"

"Disagree. Changes should be made"

"Government policy has changes, local policy should follow"

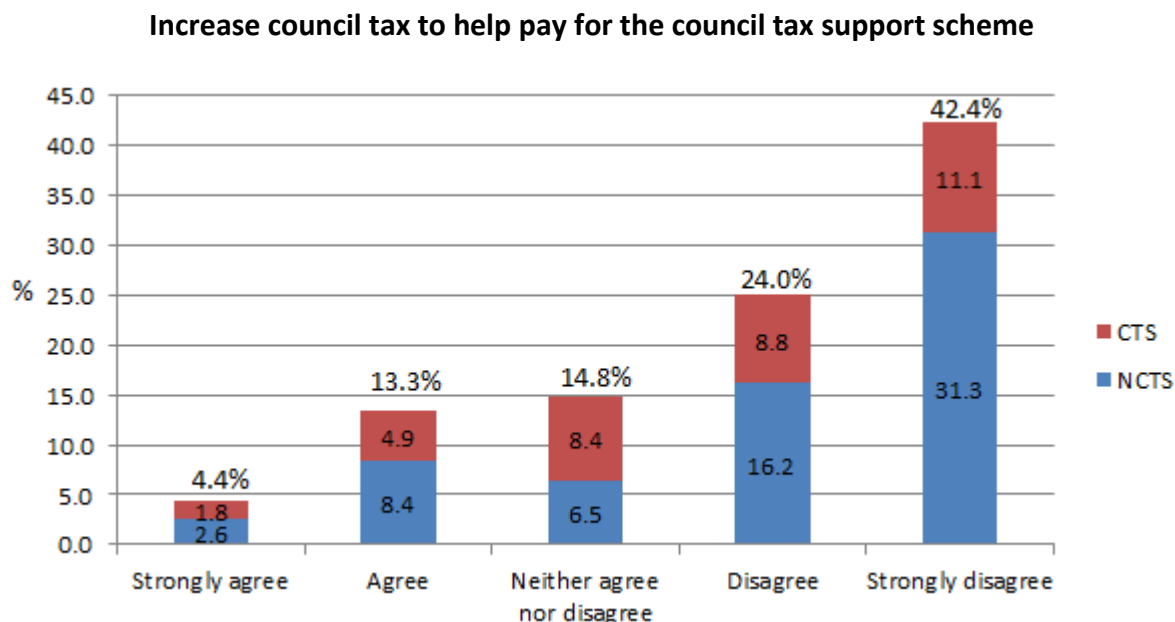
"Just because a system worked in the past, doesn't mean that it will in the future"

"Savings have to be made and I think a small monthly increase would not cause too much hardship to most people in the borough"

## Other ways of funding the council tax support scheme

### Question 9 – increase council tax to help pay for the council tax support scheme

728 valid responses (excluding 42 'I don't knows'). In total 17.7% of respondents agreed with this option and 67.4% disagreed.



Overall respondents did not want an increase to their council tax to help pay for the support scheme. There were 166 comments for this question the main themes were disagreement with a rise and that respondents already pay enough, for example:

“The council tax is high anyway”

“I feel people in general pay a lot for their council tax should go up. People who currently only pay 8% and get support with this I feel could pay a little extra towards this”

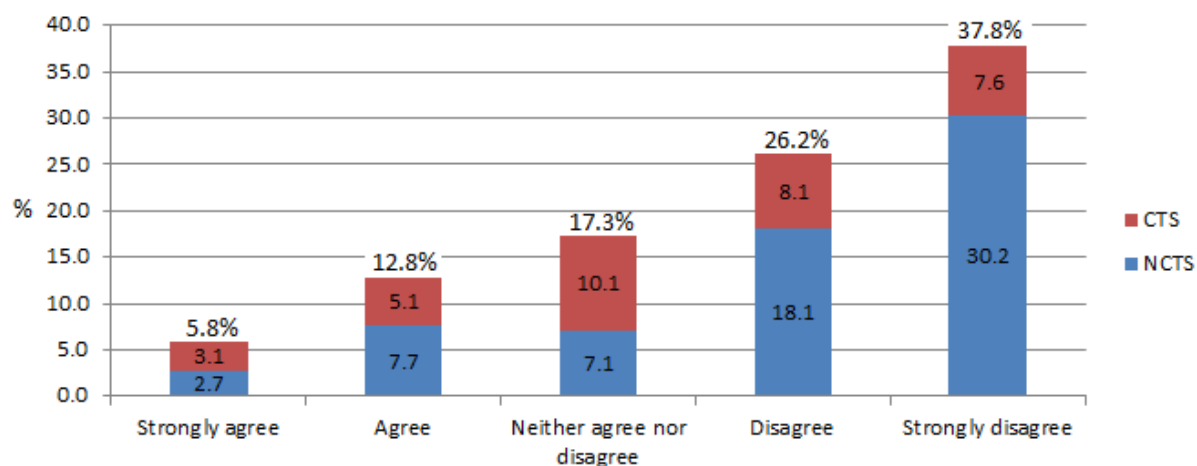
“I don't think it is fair for the general workforce to pick up the shortfall”

“You may not be eligible for support buy that doesn't mean we can afford to pay more for people who may not warrant it”

**Question 10 – reducing funding or stopping other services to help pay for the council tax support scheme.**

701 valid responses (excluding 65 'I don't knows'). In total 18.7% of respondents agreed with this and 64.1% disagreed.

**Reducing funding or stopping other services to help pay for the council tax support scheme**



Respondents did not feel the Council should reduce funding or stop other services to help pay for the council tax support scheme. There were 160 comments and the main themes were disagreement with the option and identifying that it would depend on what services would be affected, for example:

“Services have already been scaled back too far”

“The council tax support scheme needs to change, not other services.”

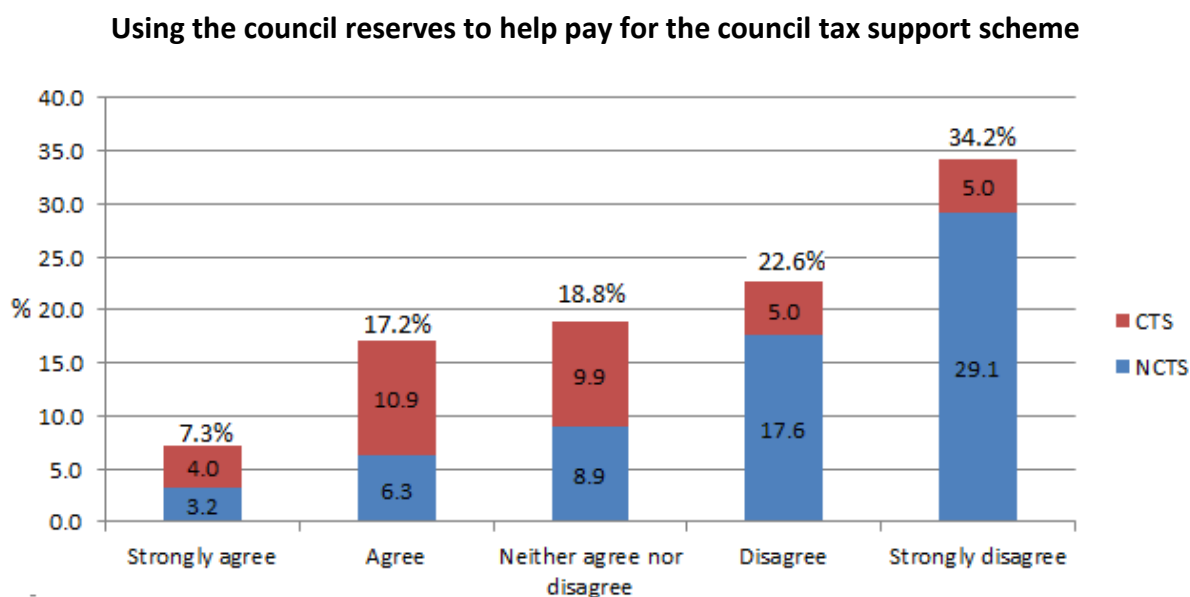
“Too generic – what are “other services”? This could be a strongly agree if you could at least show/evidence a plan of services affected”

“Its really depend on what services you are thinking of cutting. Without that information, it is difficult to say”

“These services are needed and should not be cut or stopped”

### Question 11 – using council reserves to help pay for the council tax support scheme

717 valid responses (excluding 56 'I don't knows'). In total 24.4% of respondents agreed with this option and 56.8% disagreed.



Overall residents didn't want the council reserves to be used to help fund the council tax support scheme. For respondents currently receiving council tax support 42.8% agreed, compared to 28.8% disagreeing. There were 131 comments for this question the main theme being that council reserve should be kept for emergencies, for example:

"I disagree to using council reserves"

"Council reserves should not be used to plug a gap as they will be needed somewhere along the line and won't be there"

"Reserve should be used for unexpected situation. It should not be used for a current and long term problem"

"Unless the reserves are excessive then these should be retained for unforeseen emergency one off items of expense. Reserves should not be used for routine, ongoing expenditure"

## Any other comments

There were 108 any other comments. The comments were varied but broadly in agreement with the options for change. Other themes included views that the council shouldn't provide benefits at all, and contrastingly concerns relating to potential of hardship of the people the proposed changes will affect, for example:

"Increase the contribution to 12 %. Eliminate the savings rule of £6k, remove family premium, no backdating past 4 weeks, save the rest of us having to pay more yet again"

"Council tax support scheme should be reduced ., particularly for higher band households. Council tax should not be raised for everyone when other measures (reducing support) can be put in place"

"I appreciate the help I receive with council tax benefit it makes a difference but keeping the benefit at its lower is preferable however I think an increase of 10% satisfactory"

"People live above their means, why should the rate payers kept helping them"

"I understand that some people have to claim benefits through no fault of their own but some people are just lazy or do not have their priorities right. We work really hard and budget well going without luxuries so we can afford to pay our bills and not claim benefits. By putting council tax up that may change. It is really annoying when people on benefits are going out or on holiday as we don't because we can't afford to. You need to consider the fact that by putting it up to subsidise this scheme, you might be increasing the bill as others can't afford to pay it"

"With people so desperate that they have to use food banks. Any support to reduce council tax support should be maintained – if at all possible. I do not envy the very hard decisions that you must make!"

"Benefits have been frozen, reduced, scrapped. You are asking those on the smallest incomes already in poverty to pay less. Please make savings from 'Rushmoor in Bloom' and care more about people than plants"

## Appendix – copy of the letter and survey

Dear resident,

### **Council tax support scheme 2016/17 – please give us your views**

We provide help to people on a low income who need a hand paying their council tax bill by reducing the amount they have to pay. This is known as council tax support.

We are currently reviewing our council tax support scheme and would like to hear the views of our residents about how much support we should offer in future.

**Because everyone pays for the council tax scheme through their council tax bill and any changes may affect other services, your views matter, whether or not you receive council tax support.**

Our current scheme has been in place for nearly three years, but because of benefit changes and financial pressures on us, we felt now was the right time to review it.

We have considered a number of possible options, including keeping council tax support as it or reducing the amount of support we provide. We have also looked at what we could do instead if we chose not to change the level of council tax support, including options that could affect all households.

Enclosed with this letter, you will find a survey setting out the different options we are considering and asking for your views on them. We have sent this survey to all our working age residents who currently receive council tax support, as pensioners receive full support under a slightly different scheme and are not affected by these changes. We have also sent the survey to a similar number of randomly selected households, so we get a cross-section of views.

I would be grateful if you could spare a few minutes to complete the survey and send it back to us in the pre-paid return envelope – no stamp needed. The closing date for the consultation is Monday 21 December.

If you would prefer, you can also fill in the survey online on our website, [www.rushmoor.gov.uk/counciltaxsurvey](http://www.rushmoor.gov.uk/counciltaxsurvey).

If you have any queries or would like help filling out the survey, please contact our Customer Services team on 01252 398080.

Thank you for your time.

Councillor Adam Jackman



Cabinet member for Concessions and Community Support

नेपालीमा सूचना

यदि तपाईं नेपाली हुनुहुन्छ र यो सर्बेछन को लागि मद्दत चाहिन्छ भने, कृपया हाम्रो ग्राहक सेवा टिमको सम्पर्क नम्बर ०१२५२ ३९८०८० मा फोन गर्नुहोला ।

# Council Tax Support Scheme 2016/17

## Have your say

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We provide help to people on a low income who need a hand paying their council tax bill by reducing the amount they have to pay. This help is known as council tax support.

We've had the same council tax support scheme in place for nearly three years now and because of benefit changes and financial pressures on the council, we've been looking at whether the scheme needs to change.

We've considered a number of possible options, including keeping council tax support as it is or reducing the amount of support we provide.

We have also looked at what we could do instead if we choose not to change the level of council tax support, including options that could affect all households.

Because everyone pays for the council tax support scheme through their council tax and any changes may affect other services, your views matter, whether or not you receive council tax support.

You can give your views by filling in this survey and sending it back to us using the enclosed pre-paid envelope (no stamp needed). You can also fill in our survey on our website, [www.rushmoor.gov.uk/counciltaxsurvey](http://www.rushmoor.gov.uk/counciltaxsurvey).

**Please return your completed questionnaire by  
Monday 21 December**

**RUSHMOOR**  
BOROUGH COUNCIL



## About our council tax support scheme

Council tax support is a means-tested discount that we provide for people on low incomes who need help paying their council tax. We don't pay any money to the people who claim it. Instead, we reduce their council tax bill by the amount of support they are entitled to.

Around 5,200 of our residents claim council tax support, of whom 47% are of working age and 53% are pensioners. The cost of our council tax support scheme is around £4.24 million a year.

We introduced our current council tax support scheme in 2013 when the government ended the national council tax benefit scheme. At the time, the government made councils responsible for funding council tax support, but reduced the amount of money available by 10%.

On principle, we felt that everyone should pay something towards council tax, as we all use the services it pays for.

So, under our current scheme, everyone of working age, who receives council tax support, must pay a minimum of 8% towards their council tax bill. This means that the most council tax support people can receive is 92% of their council tax bill. Pensioners receive up to 100% support.

## About this consultation

Like all councils, we have faced reductions in our funding, including for our council tax support scheme, and this is putting pressure on our local services. As these reductions are likely to continue, we need to make sure we offer a council tax support scheme that is affordable and fair – not only for those who receive support, but also for everyone who depend on council services.

In addition, the government is making changes to the benefits system as part of its welfare reforms, such as how it calculates housing benefit entitlement. Up until now, we have kept our council tax support scheme in line with the government's system, so we need to consider if we carry on doing that, or not.

This survey puts forward a number of options to change our council tax support scheme, by reducing the amount of support we provide, from April 2016. We could choose one - or a number - of these and we'd like your views on each of them.

We also ask for your views on how we could meet the shortfall in funding if we choose not to reduce the amount of council tax support we provide. These options range from putting up council tax to reducing spending on other council services or using the council's reserves.

## Council tax support scheme - options

### Option 1 - Increase the minimum contribution from 8% to either 10% or 12%

We could increase the minimum amount people have to pay towards their council tax from 8%. The options we have considered are to increase the minimum contribution to either 10% or 12%. This would affect just over 2,700 residents.

If we were to increase the minimum to 10% a year, this would save just over £53,000.

If we were to increase the minimum to 12% a year, this would save just over £106,000 a year.

#### How much people would have to pay in council tax

The tables below show how much people currently pay a month if they pay the minimum 8% contribution and what this would be if we were to increase it to 10% or 12%. This is based on this year's council tax bill.

##### Based on a full council tax bill

Minimum payment per month	Council tax band							
	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H
8% (current)	6.40	7.47	8.54	9.60	11.74	13.87	16.01	19.21
10%	8.01	9.34	10.67	12.01	14.67	17.34	20.01	24.01
12%	9.60	11.21	12.81	14.41	17.61	20.81	24.01	28.81

##### Based on the current council tax bill with 25% single person discount

Minimum payment per month	Council tax band							
	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H
8% (current)	4.80	5.60	6.40	7.20	8.80	10.40	12.01	14.41
10%	6.00	7.00	8.00	9.00	11.00	13.00	15.00	18.00
12%	7.20	8.40	9.60	10.80	13.21	15.61	18.01	21.61

## Option 1 continued

### Question 1

**How much do you agree or disagree that the council should increase the minimum contribution someone should pay?**

**Increase to 10%** (*tick one box*)

Strongly agree    Agree    Neither agree nor disagree

Disagree    Strongly disagree    Don't know

**Increase to 12%** (*tick one box*)

Strongly agree    Agree    Neither agree nor disagree

Disagree    Strongly disagree    Don't know

### Question 2

**If you think the minimum contribution should be a different amount - either higher or lower - please tell us what you think it should be.**

 %

**Comments**

## Option 2 - Removing the family premium for all or new working age claimants

The government sets out how much it thinks people need as a minimum to live on when it calculates housing benefit entitlement. If you have at least one dependent child or young person, this amount includes £17.45 a week for that child. This is known as a family premium. From April 2016, the government is removing the premium from its calculations.

One option would be for us to do the same thing for council tax support. We could do this for all claims, or new claims only.

Doing so would bring our council tax support scheme in line with the housing benefit changes the government is making. This would also help off-set some of the increased costs of the council tax support scheme, also as a result of government changes.

This would affect people of working age, but it wouldn't affect people who claim Universal Credit, Income Support, Income-Related Employment and Support Allowance or Income-Based Jobseeker's Allowance.

If we were to remove the family premium for all working age claimants with dependents, it would affect around 380 people and would save about £60,000 a year.

They would get about £3.50 a week less in council tax support.

If we were to remove the family premium only for new working age claimants with dependents, it would affect about 40 people and would save around £6,000 a year.

### Question 3

**How much do you agree or disagree that we should remove the family premium amount for all claimants when we calculate council tax support entitlement?**

Strongly agree    Agree    Neither agree nor disagree

Disagree    Strongly disagree    Don't know

### Comments

## Option 2 continued

### Question 4

How much do you agree or disagree that we should remove the family premium amount for new claimants when we calculate council tax support entitlement?

Strongly agree    Agree    Neither agree nor disagree

Disagree    Strongly disagree    Don't know

### Comments

**Option 3 - Reduce the amount that people can have in savings, capital and investments from £16,000 to £6,000 before they can claim council tax support**

At the moment, if you have more than £16,000 in savings, capital and investments, you can't claim council tax support. If you have between £6,000 and £16,000, you can get some support – this is on a sliding scale.

One option we are looking at would be to remove support from anyone who has more than £6,000 in savings, capital and investments.

This would mean that if you have more than £6,000 in savings, capital or investments, you would not receive any council tax support and there would be no sliding scale.

This would apply to all working age claimants, whatever benefits they receive, but only affect those with more than £6,000 in savings, capital and investments.

This would affect 115 residents and would save just under £21,750 a year.

**Question 5**

**How much do you agree or disagree that the council should only give support to claimants who have less than £6,000 in savings, capital and investment?**

Strongly agree    Agree    Neither agree nor disagree

Disagree    Strongly disagree    Don't know

**Comments**

## Option 4 - Limit council tax support for higher council tax band properties

There are eight council tax bands – from A to H and at the moment, you can get council tax support whatever council tax band your home is in.

The mid-range council tax band is Band D and we could use this as a limit for council tax support.

This would mean that if your home is in council tax bands E, F, G or H, we'd calculate your council tax support as if you lived in a Band D home.

The benefits of doing this would be that it could be seen as fairer scheme, with people living in more expensive properties having to pay more. It would, however, mean that anyone of working age living in a home with a council tax band higher than D, would receive less support.

Limiting council tax support for higher council tax band properties would affect 46 people and would save just over £10,600 a year.

### Question 6

**How much do you agree or disagree that the council should limit council tax support for higher council tax band properties?**

- Strongly agree    Agree    Neither agree nor disagree  
 Disagree    Strongly disagree    Don't know

**Comments**

## Option 5 - Reduce backdated claims to four weeks

At the moment, we can backdate claims by up to three months if a person can prove there is a good reason why he or she didn't claim earlier.

From April 2016, the government is reducing this to four weeks for housing benefit claims and we could do the same for council tax support.

The benefit of doing this is that it's a simple change and it would simplify our administration. It would however, affect the amount new claimants receive if they don't claim on time.

Last year, we awarded backdated claims to 78 people. We can't say how many people might be affected in the future and therefore, how much this would save.

### Question 7

**How much do you agree or disagree that we should reduce backdated claims from a maximum of three months to a maximum of four weeks?**

- Strongly agree    Agree    Neither agree nor disagree  
 Disagree    Strongly disagree    Don't know

**Comments**



## Option 6 - No change to the current council tax support scheme

Currently, if you are of working age, you pay a minimum contribution of 8% towards your council tax bill. We could continue with this and make none of the changes proposed in this consultation. This would mean that as long as claimants' circumstances don't change, their support would stay the same.

If we were to keep the minimum contribution at 8%, we would need to look at other ways of making savings.

The tables below show how much people currently pay a month in council tax if they pay the minimum of 8% of their bill.

Around 2,740 people of working age currently claim council tax support.

### Based on a full council tax bill

	Council tax band							
	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H
Monthly payment	6.40	7.47	8.54	9.60	11.74	13.87	16.01	19.21

### Based on the current council tax bill with 25% single person discount

	Council tax band							
	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H
Monthly payment	4.80	5.60	6.40	7.20	8.80	10.40	12.01	14.41

### Question 8

**How much do you agree or disagree that the council should keep its current council tax scheme for 2016/17?**

- Strongly agree  
  Agree  
  Neither agree nor disagree  
 Disagree  
  Strongly disagree  
  Don't know

### Comments

## Summary table

To help you, this is a summary of the options we are considering.

Option	Scheme	Numbers affected	Total cost of the scheme for this option	Savings
1	Increase the minimum contribution from 8% to 10%	2712	£4,185,668	£53,257
	Increase the minimum contribution from 8% to 12%		£4,132,538	£106,387
2	Remove the family premium for all working age claimants	378	£4,179,983	£58,942
	Remove the family premium for new working age claimants	Estimate 40 new claims		£6,000
3	Reduce the amount that people can have in savings, capital and investments from £16,000 to £6,000 before they can claim council tax support.	115	£4,217,177	£21,748
4	Limit council tax support for higher council tax band properties	46	£4,228,312	£10,613
5	Reduce backdated claims to four weeks	In 2014/15, 78 people had their claim backdated between 12 weeks and one week	Data not available	No estimate
6	No change to the current council tax support scheme	5200 – Pensioners and working age	£4,238,925	N/A

## Other ways of funding the council tax support scheme

If we don't reduce the help we provide through our council tax support scheme, we will need to look at other ways of meeting the shortfall in funding.

Our options are to:

- Increase council tax
- Make savings from other council services
- Use council reserves

We would like your views on these options.

### Increase council tax

We aim to provide a fair balance between supporting people who need more – and sometimes targeted – help, and providing our general services to council tax payers.

If councils increase their council tax by 2% or more, they have to hold a local referendum to ask residents for their views.

If we were to keep our council tax support scheme at the same level, we could look at increasing the council tax to fund the additional costs of the scheme instead. Everyone who pays council tax would be affected by this option.

#### Question 9

**How much do you agree or disagree that we should increase council tax to help pay for the council tax support scheme?**

- Strongly agree    Agree    Neither agree nor disagree  
 Disagree    Strongly disagree    Don't know

#### Comments

## Making cuts to other services

Another alternative to changing our council tax support scheme would be to cut spending on services in other areas. These savings would be in addition to those we are already making.

### Question 10

**How much do you agree or disagree that we should reduce funding to other services or stop providing a service altogether, to help pay for the council tax support scheme?**

Strongly agree    Agree    Neither agree nor disagree

Disagree    Strongly disagree    Don't know

#### Comments

## Using council reserves

We maintain a sensible level of financial reserves so we are able to respond to unexpected pressures. We could use some of those reserves for a limited time to help fund the council tax support scheme. This is, however, a short-term solution, as once the reserves have been spent, they are spent.

### Question 11

**How much do you agree or disagree that we should use our council reserves to help pay for the council tax support scheme?**

Strongly agree    Agree    Neither agree nor disagree

Disagree    Strongly disagree    Don't know

#### Comments

## Any other comments

If you have any further comments or suggestions to make on the council tax support scheme, please let us know.

## What happens next

Because of the timescales involved and legal requirements, we must adopt our 2016/17 council tax support scheme by 31 January at the latest. The scheme will then run from 1 April.

After the consultation closes on Monday 21 December, we will analyse the results and prepare a report for our councillors to consider at a meeting of the full council on Wednesday 27 January.

The report will also include other evidence and information so the council can make a final decision on the scheme to adopt. Once the council has made a decision, we will publish the results of the consultation on our website, [www.rushmoor.gov.uk/counciltaxsurvey](http://www.rushmoor.gov.uk/counciltaxsurvey).

## About you

**Question 12** Do you receive council tax support?

Yes  No  Don't know

**Question 13** What is your gender?

Male  Female

**Question 14** Which one of the following age bands do you belong to?

- 18 - 24 years    25 - 34 years    35 - 44 years    45 - 54 years    55 - 64 years  
 65 - 74 years    75 - 84 years    85 + years    I'd prefer not to say

**Question 15** Do you consider yourself to have any conditions or disabilities, which limit your daily activities?

- Yes    No    I'd prefer not to say

**Question 16** What is your ethnic group?

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> White - British                    | <input type="checkbox"/> White - Irish                        |
| <input type="checkbox"/> White - Gypsy/Traveller            | <input type="checkbox"/> White - other                        |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Mixed - white and black Caribbean  | <input type="checkbox"/> Mixed - white and black African      |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Mixed - white and Asian            | <input type="checkbox"/> Mixed - other                        |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Asian or Asian British - Nepali    | <input type="checkbox"/> Asian or Asian British - Indian      |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Asian or Asian British - Pakistani | <input type="checkbox"/> Asian or Asian British - Bangladeshi |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Asian or Asian British - Chinese   | <input type="checkbox"/> Asian - other                        |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Black or black British - Caribbean | <input type="checkbox"/> Black or black British - African     |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Black - Other                      | <input type="checkbox"/> I'd prefer not to say                |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Any other background               | <input type="text" value="Please specify"/>                   |

**Question 17** How many children do you have in your household?

- Under 6 years old    Between 6 and 9 years old   
Between 10 and 15 years old    Between 16 and 24 years old

**Question 18** What is your working status?

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Full time                         | <input type="checkbox"/> Part time (less than nine hours)  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Part time (more than nine hours)  | <input type="checkbox"/> Retired                           |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Self-employed                     | <input type="checkbox"/> Student                           |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Not working (with disabilities)   | <input type="checkbox"/> Not working (looking after house) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Not working (looking after child) | <input type="checkbox"/> Unemployed (seeking work)         |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Unemployed (not seeking work)     |  |

**Question 19** What type of property do you live in?

- Own home    Housing association    Privately rented

**Question 20** What is your postcode?

**Sign up to receive email news from the council  
or to take part in future online surveys**

From time to time, we email our residents information and news about the council, our services and what's happening locally. We also invite residents to take part in occasional surveys, which are usually online.

If you would like to receive news or take part in occasional surveys, please let us know.

Email address

- I would like to receive email news and information from the council  
 I would like to take part in the council's surveys

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Thank you for taking part in this survey. We will only use the information you give us to help decide on our future council tax support scheme and, if you have given us your email details, to provide you with local news and information and/or invite you to take part in occasional surveys.

**Please return your completed survey in the brown pre-paid envelope  
(no stamp needed) by Monday 21 December at the very latest.**

If you have any queries or need help filling out this survey,  
please contact our Customer Services team by:

**Phone:** 01252 398 080 (Monday - Thursday 8.30am to 5pm; Friday 8.30am to 4.30pm)



**Email:** [customerservices@rushmoor.gov.uk](mailto:customerservices@rushmoor.gov.uk)

You can also fill in this survey on our website, [www.rushmoor.gov.uk/counciltaxsurvey](http://www.rushmoor.gov.uk/counciltaxsurvey)

**Thank you**

Council Offices,  
Famborough Road,  
Famborough,  
Hants, GU14 7JU

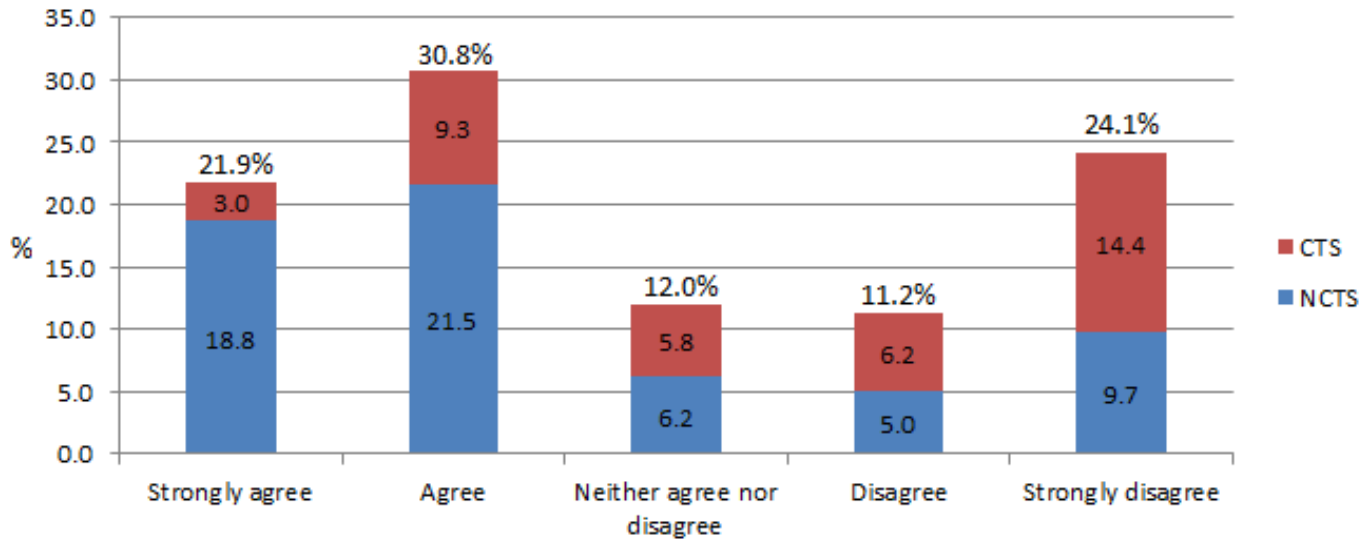
[www.rushmoor.gov.uk](http://www.rushmoor.gov.uk)  
01252 398 399  
[customerservices@rushmoor.gov.uk](mailto:customerservices@rushmoor.gov.uk)

 @rushmoorcouncil  
 Rushmoor Borough Council  
November 2015

# Option 1

## Increase the minimum contribution

Question 1 - Should the Council increase the minimum contribution to 10%?



CTS: Responses from those in receipt of CTS  
 NCTS: Responses from those not in receipt of CTS

659 valid responses  
 52.7% strongly agree/agree  
 35.4% strongly disagree/disagree

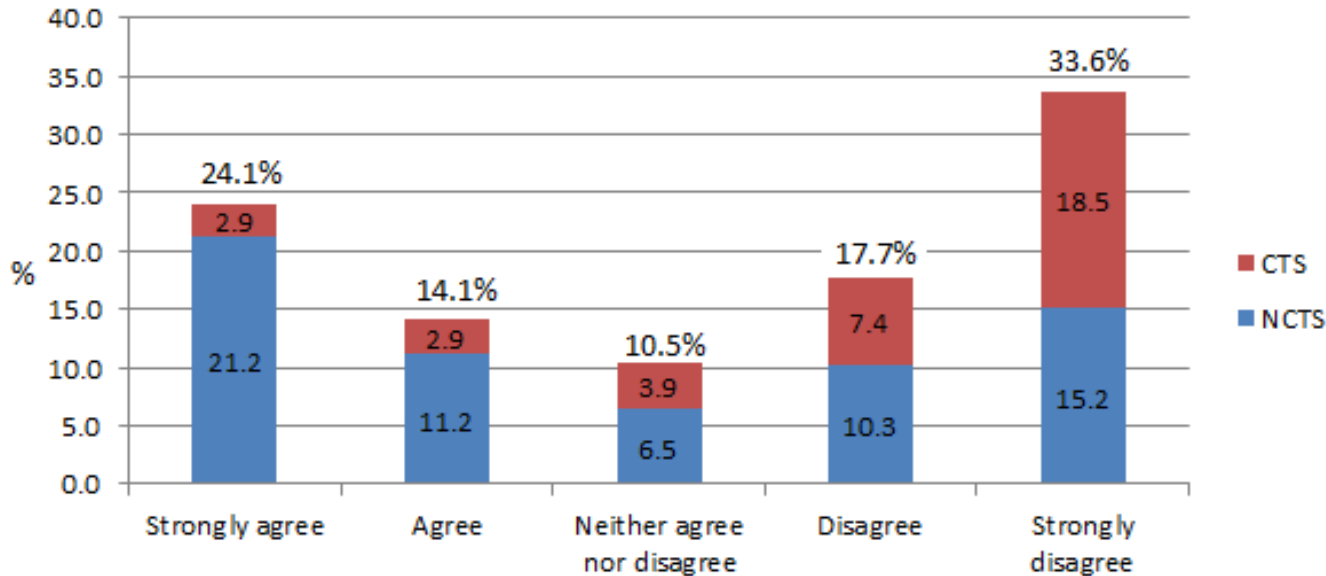
Numbers affected	Total Scheme Cost	Savings
2,712	£4,185,668	£53,257



# Option 1

## Increase the minimum contribution

Question 2 - Should the Council increase the minimum contribution to 12%?



CTS: Responses from those in receipt of CTS  
 NCTS: Responses from those not in receipt of CTS

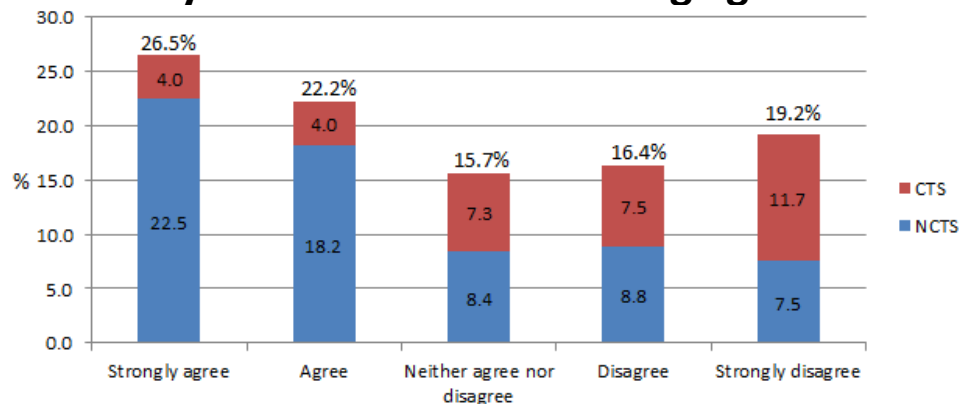
660 valid responses  
 38.2% strongly agree/agree  
 51.4% strongly disagree/disagree

Numbers affected	Total Scheme Cost	Savings
2,712	£4,132,538	£106,387

# Option 2

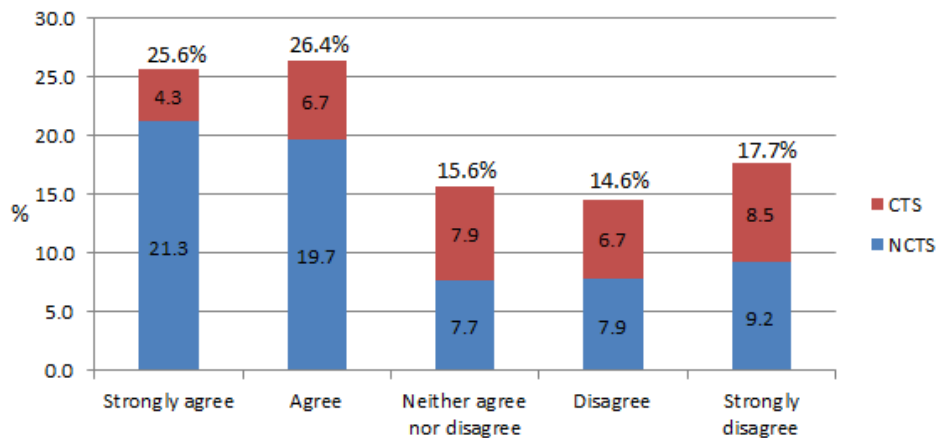
## Remove the Family Premium

### Question 3 - Should the Council remove the Family Premium for all working age claimants?



**All claimants:**  
702 valid responses  
**48.7% strongly agree/agree**  
**35.6% strongly disagree/disagree**

### Question 4 - Should the Council remove the Family Premium for new working age claimants?



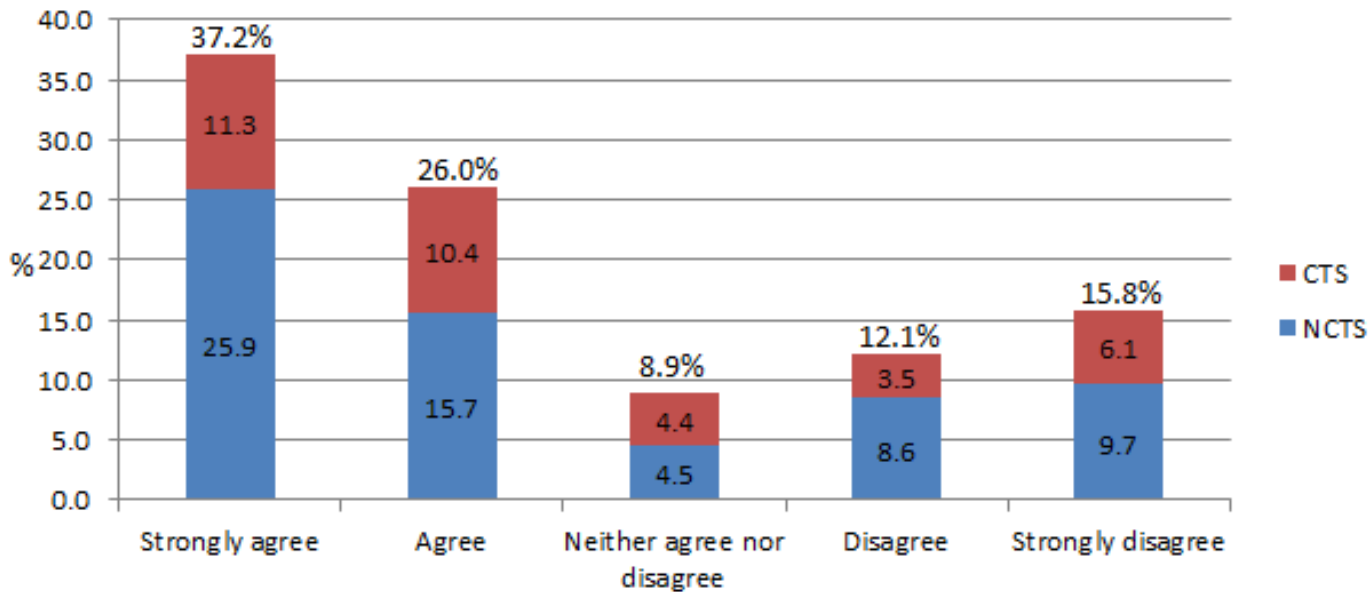
**New claimants:**  
671 valid responses  
**52.0% strongly agree/agree**  
**32.3% strongly disagree/disagree**

Numbers affected	Total Scheme Cost	Savings
<b>All:</b> 378		£58,942
<b>New:</b> Estimate 40	£4,179,983	£6k

# Option 3

## Reducing the savings threshold from £16k to £6k

**Question 5 - Should the Council reduce the amount people can have in savings capital and investments from £16,000 to £6,000 before they can claim for CTS?**



CTS: Responses from those in receipt of CTS  
 NCTS: Responses from those not in receipt of CTS

734 valid responses  
**63.2% strongly agree/agree**  
**27.9% strongly disagree/disagree**

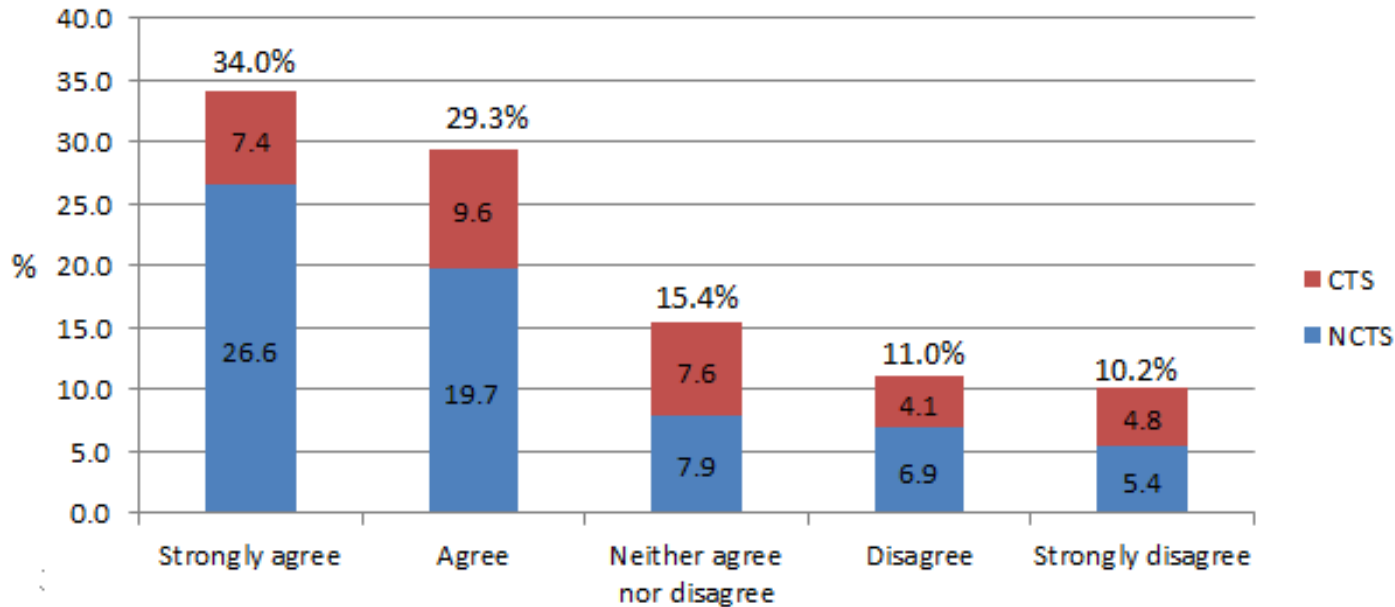
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Numbers affected	Total Scheme Cost	Savings
115	£4,217,177	£21,748

# Option 4

## Limiting support at the Band D level

Question 6 - Should the Council limit support to a maximum of a Band D property?



CTS: Responses from those in receipt of CTS  
 NCTS: Responses from those not in receipt of CTS

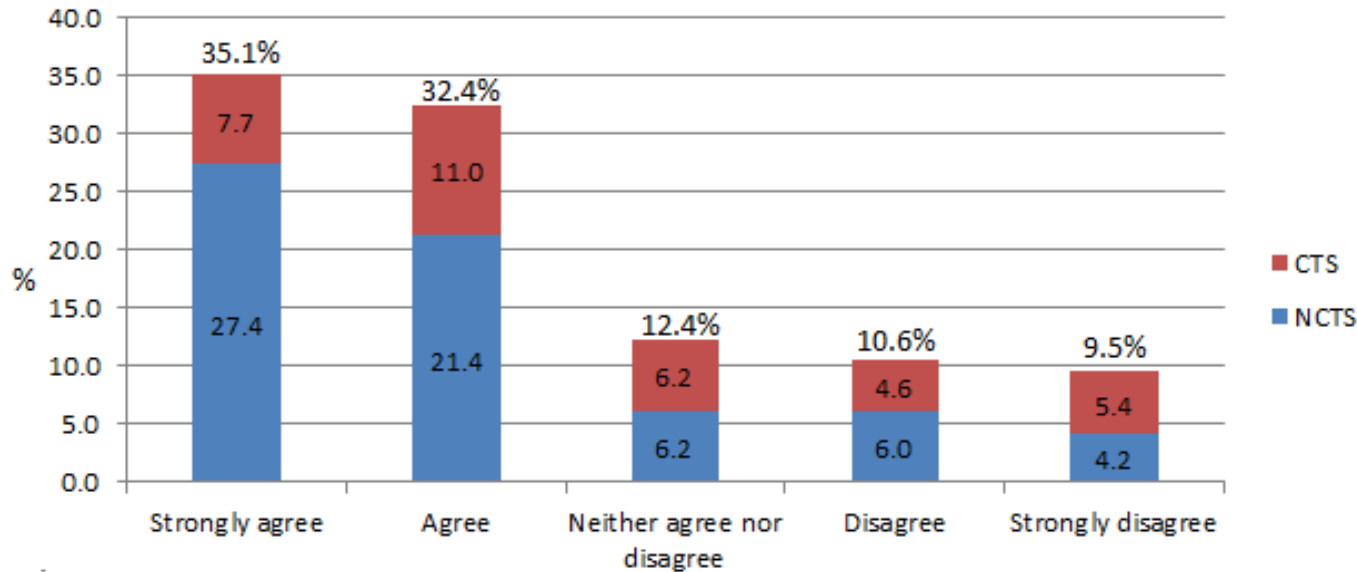
726 valid responses  
 63.4% strongly agree/agree  
 21.2% strongly disagree/disagree

Numbers affected	Total Scheme Cost	Savings
46	£4,228,312	£10,613

# Option 5

## Reducing backdate periods to a max. 4 week period

Question 7 - Should the Council reduce the limit of backdated claims to four weeks?



CTS: Responses from those in receipt of CTS  
 NCTS: Responses from those not in receipt of CTS

744 valid responses  
 67.5% strongly agree/agree  
 20.2% strongly disagree/disagree

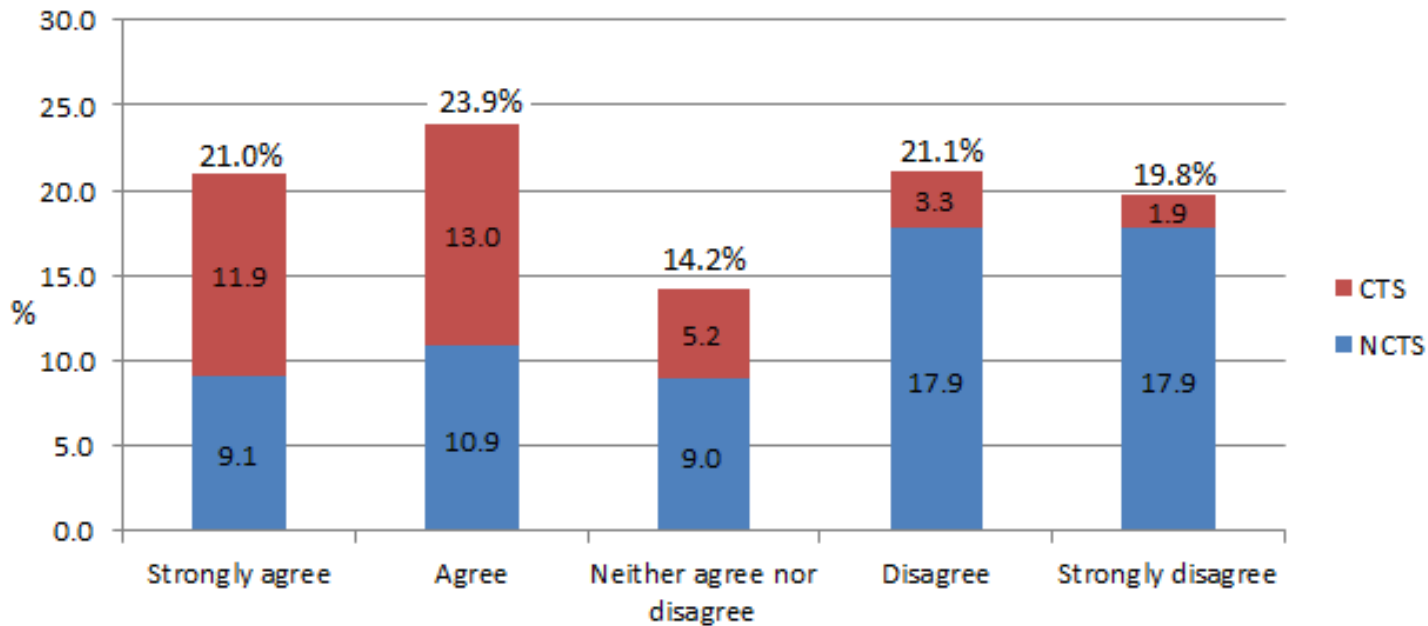
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Numbers affected	Total Scheme Cost	Savings
In 14/15, 78 people had their claims backdated between 12-1 weeks	Data not available	No estimate

# Option 6

## Option to keep the scheme the same

### Question 8 - Should the Council continue with the existing scheme?



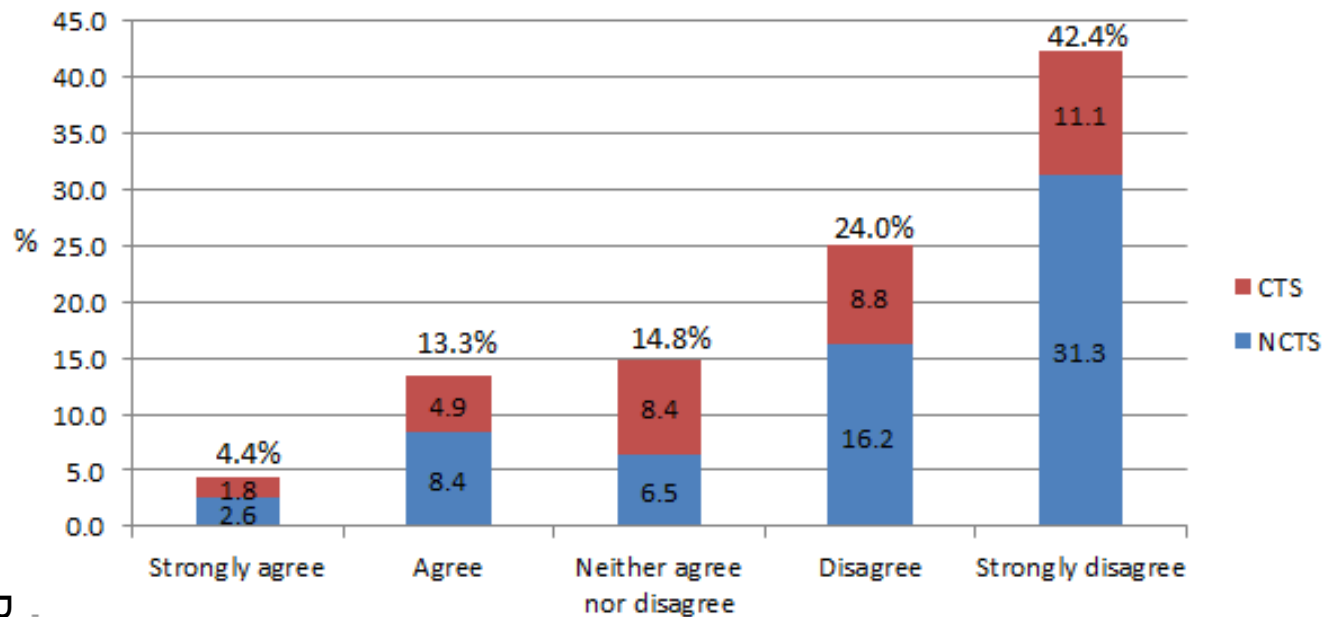
CTS: Responses from those in receipt of CTS  
 NCTS: Responses from those not in receipt of CTS

733 valid responses  
 44.9% strongly agree/agree  
 40.9% strongly disagree/disagree

Numbers affected	Total Scheme Cost	Savings
5,200 Pensioners & WA	£4,238,925	N/A

# Other ways of funding the Council Tax Support Scheme

Question 9 - Should the Council increase Council Tax to pay for the scheme?

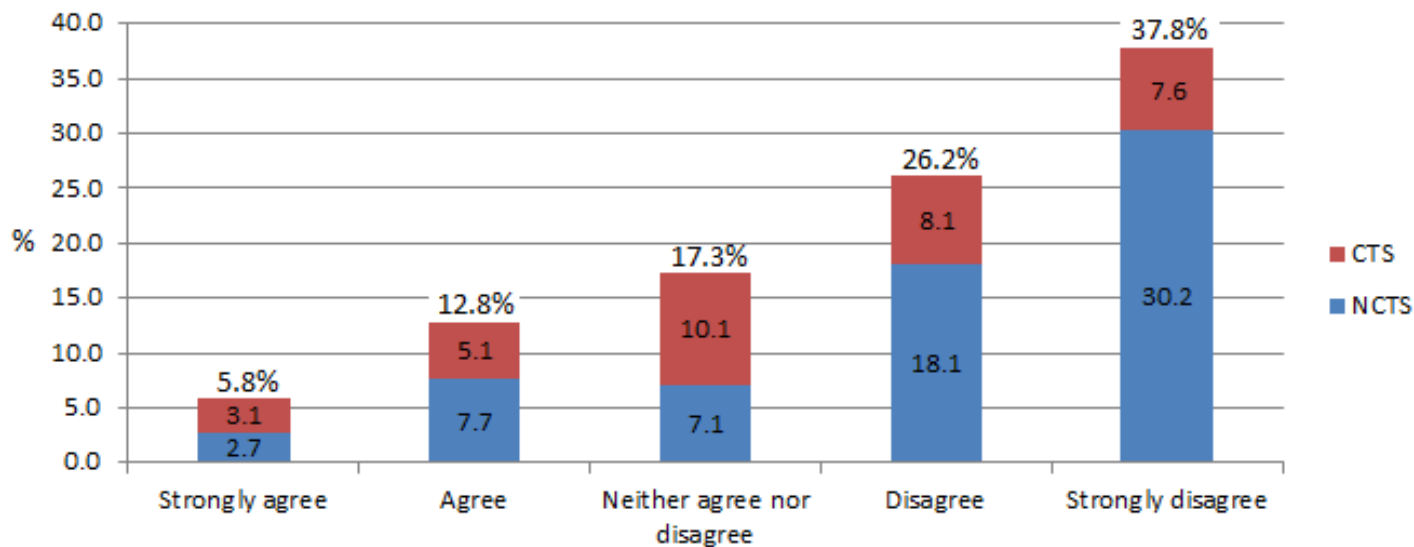


CTS: Responses from those in receipt of CTS  
 NCTS: Responses from those not in receipt of CTS

728 valid responses  
 17.7% strongly agree/agree  
 67.4% strongly disagree/disagree

# Other ways of funding the Council Tax Support Scheme

**Question 10 - Should the Council reduce funding to other services to help pay for the scheme?**



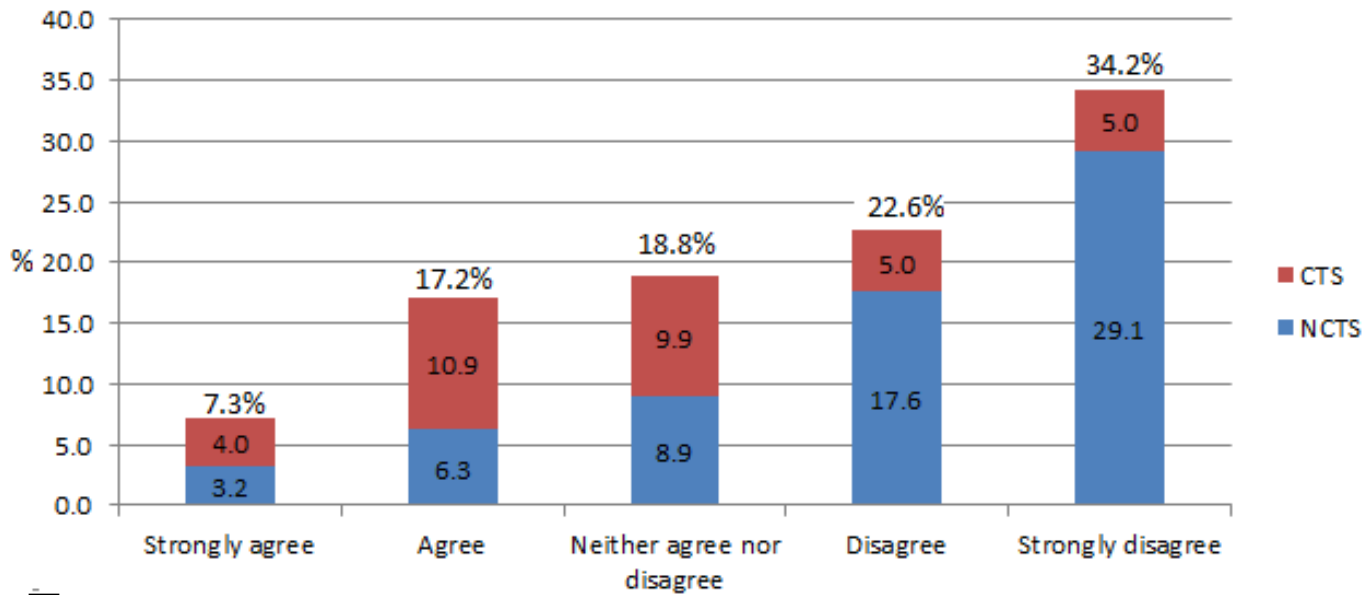
CTS: Responses from those in receipt of CTS  
 NCTS: Responses from those not in receipt of CTS

701 valid responses  
 18.7% strongly agree/agree  
 64.1% strongly disagree/disagree



# Other ways of funding the Council Tax Support Scheme

Question 11 - Should the Council use its reserves to help pay for the scheme?



CTS: Responses from those in receipt of CTS  
 NCTS: Responses from those not in receipt of CTS

717 valid responses  
 24.4% strongly agree/agree  
 56.8% strongly disagree/disagree

Indicative Impact of Changing Minimum Contribution Council Tax Precepts

Valuation Band  
Pack Page 69

D  
E  
F  
G  
H

Valuation Band	Rushmoor (£)	Rbc inc @ 1.99%	Hampshire (£)	Hants inc @ 3.99%	Police (£)	Police inc @1.99%	Fire (£)	Fire inc @ 1.99%	Total Council Tax (£)	Total Increases	Total New Council Tax	Equiv Inc Monthly Sum (10)	Equiv Inc Monthly Sum (12)	Equiv Inc Weekly Sum (52)	Overall % increase
D	122.71	2.44	691.92	27.61	104.89	2.09	40.92	0.81	960.44	32.95	993.39	3.30	2.75	0.63	3.4308
E	143.17	2.85	807.24	32.21	122.37	2.44	47.74	0.95	1,120.52	38.44	1,158.96	3.84	3.20	0.74	3.4308
F	163.62	3.26	922.56	36.81	139.85	2.78	54.56	1.09	1,280.59	43.93	1,324.52	4.39	3.66	0.84	3.4308
G	184.07	3.66	1,037.88	41.41	157.33	3.13	61.38	1.22	1,440.66	49.43	1,490.09	4.94	4.12	0.95	3.4308
H	224.97	4.48	1,268.52	50.61	192.29	3.83	75.02	1.49	1,760.80	60.41	1,821.21	6.04	5.03	1.16	3.4308
	265.88	5.29	1,499.16	59.82	227.25	4.52	88.66	1.76	2,080.95	71.39	2,152.34	7.14	5.95	1.37	3.4308
	306.78	6.10	1,729.80	69.02	262.22	5.22	102.30	2.04	2,401.10	82.38	2,483.48	8.24	6.86	1.58	3.4308
	368.14	7.33	2,075.76	82.82	314.66	6.26	122.76	2.44	2,881.32	98.85	2,980.17	9.89	8.24	1.90	3.4308

Valuation Band

A  
B  
C  
D  
E  
F  
G  
H

Valuation Band	8% Min Cont Scheme on 15/16 costs	8% Min Cont Scheme on 16/17 proj costs	Annual Increase (£)	10% Min Cont Scheme on 16/17 proj costs	Annual Increase (£)	12% Min Cont Scheme on 16/17 proj costs	Annual Increase (£)	% Increase at 10% min cont	% Increase at 12% min cont
A	76.84	79.47	2.64	99.34	22.50	119.21	42.37	29.2885	55.1463
B	89.64	92.72	3.08	115.90	26.25	139.08	49.43	29.2885	55.1462
C	102.45	105.96	3.51	132.45	30.01	158.94	56.50	29.2885	55.1463
D	115.25	119.21	3.95	149.01	33.76	178.81	63.56	29.2885	55.1463
E	140.86	145.70	4.83	182.12	41.26	218.55	77.68	29.2886	55.1463
F	166.48	172.19	5.71	215.23	48.76	258.28	91.81	29.2886	55.1463
G	192.09	198.68	6.59	248.35	56.26	298.02	105.93	29.2885	55.1463
H	230.51	238.41	7.91	298.02	67.51	357.62	127.12	29.2885	55.1463

## AGENDA ITEM NO. 3

Cabinet  
12 January 2016

Head of Community and Environmental  
Services Report COMM1601

### Grants to Voluntary Organisations

#### 1. Introduction

- This paper reports on the grants awarded by the Cabinet Member for Concessions & Community Support.

#### 2. Grants to Voluntary Organisations

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

▪ <b>Acornwood Pre-school</b>	<b>£850</b>
To purchase a mobile nappy changing unit and wheeled trolley	
▪ <b>Aldershot &amp; Farnborough Festival of Music and Dance</b>	<b>£500</b>
Towards the cost of hiring a grand piano for the piano section of the festival	
▪ <b>Fleet &amp; District Beekeepers Association</b>	<b>£1000</b>
Towards the cost of fencing an area at Aldershot Crematorium to establish a secure and productive apiary	
<b>Total</b>	<b>£2350</b>

- Awards were not made to Big Fish as they were awarded a grant in 2014 and Farnborough Street Residents Association as the council have already provided funding for a noticeboard.
- The remaining budget for voluntary organisations for 2015/16 is £20,438. Taking into account the three grants that have been awarded by the Cabinet Member for £1,000 or less in this paper will leave £18,088 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 £2,350

Peter Amies – Head of Community and Environmental Services

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**CABINET**  
12 January 2016

**HEAD OF PLANNING**  
**REPORT NO. PLN1601**

**Hart Local Plan – Consultation on Revised Options for Strategic  
New Homes Growth and Site Allocations**

**1. Purpose of Decision**

- 1.1 As part of the preparation of its new Local Plan, Hart District Council has published a “Refined Options for Strategic New Homes Growth and Site Allocations”, and a draft Local Plan Vision and Strategic Priorities, for public consultation. The purpose of the consultation is to identify the most positive way to plan for the additional growth identified in the Strategic Housing Market Assessment, 2014 (SHMA), which Hart has prepared jointly with Rushmoor and Surrey Heath Councils. The deadline for comments is 15<sup>th</sup> January 2016. For Hart, the next stage will be the publication of a draft (Preferred Approach) Local Plan for consultation in the summer of 2016.
- 1.2 The Council commented previously on Hart District Council’s consultation on its Housing Development Options, in October 2014. The Cabinet report and the minutes of this meeting are available to view on the Council’s website at <http://www.rushmoor.gov.uk/article/7211/Cabinet-meeting---7-October-2014>. The purpose of this report is to provide a response to the current round of consultation on the emerging Hart Local Plan.
- 1.3 However, it is important to note that Hart, Rushmoor and Surrey Heath Councils are at present jointly undertaking an update to the evidence base relating to housing and employment needs to inform the preparation of their respective Local Plans. The response set out in this Cabinet report is based on the context provided by the current evidence base, dated 2014. It may be that once this evidence base is updated, some of Rushmoor’s comments may change or fall away, particularly when Hart publishes a complete version of its Local Plan for consultation, based on the most up to date evidence.

**2. Context: National Planning Policy**

- 2.1 Before moving to the detail of the Hart consultation, it is useful to provide some context for Rushmoor’s interest in the preparation of the Hart Local Plan. The requirement for joint working on strategic planning matters is rooted firmly in national policy, to which all Councils are required to adhere in Local Plan preparation. Hart, Rushmoor and Surrey Heath Councils are together defined as a [Housing Market Area](#) (HMA). This definition is based on key linkages such as cross boundary commuting patterns and migration trends, and focuses on those neighbouring authorities with the strongest links in the first instance. The [National Planning Policy Framework](#) requires Housing Market Area partners to ensure that their Local Plans together meet the full, objectively assessed needs for market and affordable housing in the HMA within which they fall.

2.2 The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) provides the key policy context for Plan making. It states that in *Planning Strategically Across Boundaries*, public bodies have a duty to cooperate on strategic priorities, including the homes and jobs needed in an area. Notably, it sets out in paragraph 178 that the;

*“...Government expects joint working on areas of common interest to be diligently undertaken for the mutual benefit of neighbouring authorities.”*

2.3 Paragraph 179 goes on to note that;

*“Joint working should enable local planning authorities to work together to meet development requirements which cannot wholly be met within their own areas – for instance, because of a lack of physical capacity or because to do so would cause significant harm to the principles or policies of this framework.”*

2.4 At Examination, the authorities’ respective Local Plans will be tested for “soundness”. Paragraph 182 of the NPPF explains what is required for a Local Plan to be found sound, namely that it is;

- *Positively prepared – the plan should be prepared based on a strategy which seeks to meet objectively assessed development and infrastructure requirements, **including unmet requirements from neighbouring authorities where it is reasonable to do so and consistent with achieving sustainable development** (emphasis added)*
- *Justified – the plan should be the most appropriate strategy, when considered against the reasonable alternatives, based on proportionate evidence*
- *Effective – the plan should be deliverable over its period and based on **effective joint working on cross-boundary strategic priorities** (emphasis added)*
- *Consistent with national policy – the plan should enable the delivery of sustainable development in accordance with the policies in the Framework*

2.5 These policy requirements in the NPPF, particularly regarding the need for LPAs to work together to deliver outcomes on strategic cross boundary planning issues, are relevant to the preparation of our Local Plans. This includes addressing unmet development needs in neighbouring (HMA) authorities, where reasonable to do so. Effectively, this obligation placed on LPAs under the statutory “duty to cooperate” is a replacement for the strategic planning framework formerly provided by sub-regional plans. Where Local Plans do not conform to national policy requirements, they are at significant risk of being found unsound.

### 3. Joint working in Hart, Rushmoor and Surrey Heath

3.1 In this context, Hart, Rushmoor and Surrey Heath Councils are working jointly to deliver outcomes on strategic planning matters, including the provision of housing, as required by national planning policy. As noted in paragraph 1.1 of this report, as required by the Duty to Cooperate, the Councils have together prepared a joint Strategic Housing Market Assessment, published in 2014. The process for commissioning and preparing this Assessment has been managed through the establishment of a Joint Member Liaison Group. The Terms of Reference (ToR) for this Group include some specific objectives:

- i. To reach an informal agreement between the three authorities on what the objectively assessed housing need is across the HMA, and within each authority area, over relevant time periods;*
- ii. To informally agree whether each authority is doing all it reasonably can, consistent with policies in the NPPF and other material considerations, to meet the objectively assessed housing needs for its area;*
- iii. That in the event of any housing shortfalls arising in one authority area, to explore how cross boundary working can help address those shortfalls*

3.2 One of the specific outcomes set out in the Terms of Reference is to arrive at a position:

- Where all three authorities are satisfied that each one is doing all it reasonably can to meet its own housing needs, and that any shortfalls in one area are addressed as far as possible through joint working, so that across the HMA as a whole, needs are met as far as possible, consistent with policies in the NPPF.*

3.3 Recently, the Councils have together commissioned an update to the Strategic Housing Market Assessment, to take into account newer data on population projections and employment forecasts. This update is scheduled for completion in spring 2016. This is expected to provide a refreshed figure for housing **need**, against which the three HMA authorities will need to revisit potential sources of housing **supply**. This may result in a change to the net difference between need and supply (i.e. the unmet housing need) in all three HMA authorities.

3.4 Alongside this, mindful of the close links between housing and employment, the joint Employment Land Review of June 2015 is also being updated, and will be available alongside the revised SHMA. This way, the important linkages between protecting and providing land for both housing and employment can be planned for in the three authorities' new Local Plans.

#### 4. What is the position in Rushmoor?

4.1 The SHMA 2014 identifies an “Objectively Assessed Housing Need” of 1,180 new homes a year across the Housing Market Area of Hart, Rushmoor and Surrey Heath. Of these, approximately 470 homes a year are required in Rushmoor. This equates to a **need** for a total of 9,822 new homes in the Borough between 2011 and 2032.

4.2 It is in this context that Rushmoor published its [Preferred Approach Local Plan](#) for consultation in June 2015. The contextual evidence that supports the spatial strategy, as set out in Preferred Approach Policy SP2, explains that the potential **supply** of additional houses in Rushmoor Borough over the period to 2032 is around 8,200 units. This figure is based on:

- Completions since 2011
- Supply arising from the development of Wellesley
- Other sites within urban areas identified as potentially coming forward for housing
- An allowance for small sites, the exact location of which it is not possible to predict

4.3 The difference between **need** (9,822) for new homes identified in the SHMA and the potential **supply** (8,200) leaves a shortfall of approximately **1,600** new homes in Rushmoor by 2032. Further explanation is set out in Rushmoor’s [Housing Delivery Topic Paper](#), June 2015. Of note is that paragraph 9.19 of the Topic Paper states that;

*“Through the Joint Member Liaison Group and also in response to Hart’s Housing Development Options paper [see the Cabinet report 7<sup>th</sup> October 2014], the Council has made Hart and Surrey Heath aware of its potential shortfall of about 1,600 dwellings against identified housing need, and discussions are ongoing as to how and if this shortfall can be met.”*

4.4 In response to the Preferred Approach Local Plan consultation, Rushmoor received a number of objections relating to the potential that any housing shortfall in Rushmoor’s administrative boundary be redressed through additional new homes over and above that initially indicated for Hart District in the SHMA, 2014 (see [consultation response summary document](#)).

4.5 Rushmoor will be publishing the next version of its Local Plan for consultation once the refreshed SHMA and Employment Land Review have been finalised, to enable this evidence to inform the evolution of the spatial strategy in the Plan. Further information on the timetable for the preparation of the new Rushmoor Local Plan can be found at [www.rushmoor.gov.uk/lds](http://www.rushmoor.gov.uk/lds).

#### 5. Hart Local Plan: Draft Vision and Strategic Priorities

5.1 Mindful of this context, Rushmoor has considered the contents of the Hart Local Plan [Draft Vision and Strategic Priorities](#). Key Issue 1 identified for the Hart Local Plan is;



*“The need to make provision for the new homes needed in the area”*

5.2 Table 2 sets out the Draft Strategic Priorities for the Local Plan.

- Priority 1 seeks; *“to deliver all the objectively assessed housing need for **Hart**” (emphasis added).*
- Priority 2 is; *“to continue to work with Rushmoor and Surrey Heath on meeting the objectively assessed housing need for the Housing Market Area as a whole, for example through the provision of SANG that can facilitate housing in those areas. In order to comply with statutory requirements, when it is clear what (if any) the level of unmet need is across the housing market area, **we will seek to help meet this in a way that fits into our strategy.**” (emphasis added).*
- Priority 3 seeks; *“to provide new homes of a mix of sizes and tenures to meet the current and future needs of **Hart’s** residents.” (emphasis added)*

5.3 In response to Key Issue 1, and Priorities 1, 2 and 3, Rushmoor Borough Council welcomes Hart’s commitment to work with Rushmoor (and Surrey Heath) Councils on meeting the objectively assessed housing need for the HMA as a whole. This is particularly important, mindful of the specific outcome in the agreed terms of reference of the Joint Member Liaison Group whereby, **“any shortfalls in one area are addressed as far as possible through joint working, so that across the HMA as a whole, needs are met as far as possible.”**

5.4 Priority 4 seeks to support economic growth by;

*“Protecting and providing a range of size and types of employment land and buildings...to meet future needs and to contribute to economic growth in Hart and the wider area.”*

5.5 Rushmoor Borough Council welcomes this priority, and seeks reassurance from Hart that its Local Plan will contain a clear strategy for protecting existing employment sites where they are important to the future supply of such land, particularly mindful of the fact that Hart, Rushmoor and Surrey Heath Councils together form a Functional Economic Area.

5.6 Reassurance is also sought that an appropriate balance will be struck between the need to identify land for new homes and the need to protect an adequate supply of employment land to support economic growth over the Plan period, to be determined through the refresh of the joint Employment Land Review. This is all the more important in the context of the Devolution Bid for Hampshire and the Isle of Wight, at the heart of which is a future Local Government funding structure reliant on the 100% retention of business rates. It is expected that this reassurance will be provided once Hart publishes a complete draft version of its Local Plan for consultation in the summer of

2016, wherein the overall spatial strategy for delivering new homes and ensuring an appropriate supply of employment land will be set out.

- 5.7 Priority 5 refers to the need; *“to ensure that transport, social and physical infrastructure required to support new development is delivered in a timely and coordinated manner.”* Rushmoor Borough Council suggests that this priority could be strengthened through additional wording to refer to partnership working with the highway authority (Hampshire County Council) to plan for appropriate transport infrastructure (as per the current reference in this priority to the education authority).

## 6. Hart Local Plan: Refined Options for Delivering New Homes

- 6.1 The [Refined Options for Delivering New Homes](#) focuses on the strategy for delivering new homes in Hart District. Mindful of the national planning policy context, and the evidence base, both of which are discussed above in this report, the consultation document contains a section headed; **“Helping to meet possible Rushmoor or Surrey Heath unmet need for new homes”**. Within this, paragraph 24 of the consultation document notes that;

*“We have scrutinised Rushmoor’s draft Local Plan and have raised an objection to the scale of the shortfall. We think that Rushmoor can do much more to meet its need for new homes.”*

- 6.2 Paragraph 26 goes on to state that;

*“It is still too early to draw any conclusions, but there is a strong likelihood that under Government rules Hart may be legally obliged to take up some of this unmet need for new homes.”*

- 6.3 At paragraph 27, the consultation document sets out that;

*“We think that the way forward is for Hart to plan for our own housing needs, but to review the Hart Local Plan nearer the time that any shortfall from elsewhere in the housing market area has been confirmed. In the meantime, however, our Local Plan would still need to show that there are deliverable options to draw on, should they be needed.”*

- 6.4 In response, Rushmoor Borough Council acknowledges the points raised by Hart in the consultation document, and welcomes the recognition by Hart that it may be legally obliged to accommodate some of the unmet housing need. In terms of the scale of the shortfall, Rushmoor is absolutely committed to maximising the delivery of new homes on land within its administrative area, and to that end, will be refreshing its Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (SHLAA) in early 2016. It is helpful in this context that Hart, Rushmoor and Surrey Heath Councils have all agreed to use a consistent methodology for updating their respective SHLAAs, and to that end, Hart is welcome to work with Rushmoor in looking at potential sites in the Borough that may be able to contribute to future housing delivery.

6.5 In response to Hart’s assertion that, “*We think that Rushmoor can do much more to meet its need for new homes*”, Rushmoor reiterates that the Borough is a tightly drawn urban area, with the limited land outside settlements already subject to nature conservation constraints or operating as Army training land. There are no opportunities for allocating significant additional land for new homes; the Wellesley development on surplus Army land already has planning permission to provide up to 3,850 new homes over the Plan period. Of relevance, the Hart consultation document states that;

*“In our view, we must avoid the mistakes of the past and not return to the days of “town cramming” where the only emphasis was on delivering large number of homes at the highest possible density irrespective of where it is.”*

6.6 It is important to recognise that this applies equally to Rushmoor; good planning achieves development that is sustainable within the overall policy framework provided by the NPPF, and this includes good design.

6.7 The updated Rushmoor SHLAA will be used to inform potential **supply** calculations to be incorporated into the next version of the Rushmoor Local Plan. However, until **need** arising from the update to the joint SHMA is clarified, it is not possible to determine the most up to date figure for the difference between need and supply, i.e. the potential shortfall in housing supply in Rushmoor over the plan period to 2032. In this context, the consultation on the Hart housing options reflects the current evidence base, and only once the new SHMA is finalised will all three housing market area partners be more certain as to the scale of unmet need in the HMA as a whole.

6.8 To this end, Rushmoor looks forward to continuing to work with Hart to ensure that the Authorities’ respective emerging Local Plans together help to meet housing need across the Housing Market Area, as required by paragraph 179 of the NPPF<sup>1</sup>, and reflected in the ToR of the joint Member Liaison Group.

6.9 This is all the more important, mindful of the Hampshire and Isle of Wight Devolution Prospectus, September 2015, to which all component local authorities (including Hart) have signed up. This includes a commitment to accelerate and increase housing delivery throughout Hampshire, over and above that committed in Local Plans.

### **Feedback on proposed housing options**

6.10 In the context of the issues discussed in earlier sections of this report to Cabinet, Rushmoor welcomes the opportunity to continue to work with Hart

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<sup>1</sup> Joint working should enable local planning authorities to work together to meet development requirements which cannot wholly be met within their own areas – for instance, because of a lack of physical capacity

District Council, as one of its Housing Market Area partners, on the delivery of new homes in the Borough.

6.11 The Refined Options for Housing document demonstrates that there a number of options available to Hart to help meet the housing needs of the HMA, including any unmet need from its HMA partners. Rushmoor Borough Council supports the strategy of prioritising development on brownfield land, and on land outside the zone of influence for the Thames Basin Heaths Special Protection Area. Rushmoor expects that in addition to this, the first full consultation version of the Hart Local Plan will be based on a strategy to meet housing needs that requires a combination of the options set out in in the consultation paper. This will include dispersed development, strategic urban extensions and a new settlement at Winchfield in order to help deliver the housing need identified in the SHMA.

6.12 Paragraph 27 of the consultation document states;

*“We think that the way forward is for Hart to plan for our own housing needs, but to review the Hart Local Plan nearer the time that any shortfall from elsewhere in the housing market area has been confirmed. In the meantime, however, our Local Plan would still need to show that there are deliverable options to draw on, should they be needed. For example, strategic land releases, accelerated delivery of a possible new settlement, or simply selecting additional sites.”*

6.13 At this stage in the plan preparation process, Rushmoor Borough Council considers that the most appropriate strategy and timescale for meeting housing need across the HMA can only be identified once the update to the evidence base is in place. Moreover, until the implications of the conclusions in the updated evidence base are understood, it is not possible to comment on the detail of the housing options in isolation from other strategic cross boundary issues. Key to this, the spatial strategy that will be set out in the Hart Draft Local Plan will need to reflect an appropriate balance between new homes and employment growth in the HMA and FEA over the Plan period to 2032, to help meet the future housing and economic growth needs of north-east Hampshire.

## **7. Conclusions**

7.1 Rushmoor Borough Council welcomes the opportunity to work with Hart District Council on developing a planning strategy to meet the housing needs of the HMA, within the HMA, in accordance with national planning policy, and the Terms of Reference of the Joint Member Liaison Group. It will continue to work with Hart and Surrey Heath Councils to ensure a timely update to the joint evidence base, to enable the three authorities to demonstrate positive outcomes through Plan making, as required by the Duty to Co-operate, and reflected in the tests of soundness at Examination of Local Plans.

## **8. Recommendations**

### **8.1 It is recommended that Cabinet:**

- i) Endorse the contents of this Cabinet report as Rushmoor's response to the;**
  - Hart Refined Options for Strategic New Homes Growth and Site Allocations and**
  - Draft Local Plan Vision and Strategic Priorities**

**Keith Holland**

**Head of Planning**

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**CABINET**  
**12 January 2016**

**Head of Planning**  
**Report No. PLN1602**

**ALDERSHOT TOWN CENTRE PROSPECTUS  
SUPPLEMENTARY PLANNING DOCUMENT**

**1. Purpose of Decision**

- 1.1 This report seeks Cabinet agreement to adopt the attached Aldershot Town Centre Prospectus as a Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) (Annex 1). The SPD has been revised following a period of public consultation.

**2. Background**

- 2.1 In September, and with the assistance of consultants Allies and Morrison Urban Practitioners, the Council produced a draft Aldershot Town Centre Prospectus SPD. It sets out a regeneration strategy, an updated vision and objectives and focuses on key development opportunities. The SPD will serve a dual purpose, operating as a marketing document aimed at potential investors whilst also setting out a development framework to supplement existing planning policies.
- 2.2 Consultation on the draft SPD took place for six weeks from 30 September to 11 November 2015. The SPD was available to view on the Council's website, at Aldershot Library and at the Council office. Notification letters and e-mails were sent to a range of stakeholders and consultees. The consultation was also publicised via social media.
- 2.3 A public exhibition of the SPD proposals was on display in Aldershot at three venues during the consultation period: Morrisons, the Wellington Centre and Princes Hall. Staffed exhibition days were held on 17 and 22 October. In addition, a public meeting to present and invite comment on the SPD proposals took place on 7 October.

**3 Consultation Comments**

- 3.1 A total of 180 responses commenting on the draft Aldershot Town Centre Prospectus SPD were received. These are summarised in the attached Consultation Report (Annex 2). It includes a summary of stakeholder comments, including those from the Environment Panel and the Rushmoor Labour Group, together with the Council's responses. The Consultation Report also details the changes to the SPD.
- 3.2 The key changes to the SPD as a result of the consultation are summarised below:

- Executive summary added
- Increased emphasis on accessing the town by a variety of sustainable modes of transport, including additional references to public transport in the town and reference added to improving cycle provision
- Reference to a review of the Council's parking strategy added
- Comment added about the Council investigating the potential to purchase vacant units
- Strengthened statements on the historic environment
- Deleted inaccurate reference to Willow House being of historic significance
- Reference added to the importance of integrating Westgate with the rest of the town centre
- Added explicit reference to refurbishment of Princes Hall
- Clearer reference to the potential to create a town square as part of the redevelopment of the Union Street and former Marks and Spencer site added
- Information added on potential funding sources

3.3 All these changes are reflected in the updated Aldershot Town Centre Prospectus SPD (Annex 1).

#### **4 Recommendation**

**It is recommended that:**

**i) Cabinet adopts the Aldershot Town Centre Prospectus Supplementary Planning Document (Annex 1);**

**ii) agrees that any minor changes made to the Aldershot Town Centre Supplementary Planning Document prior to its publication be delegated to the Head of Planning in conjunction with the Portfolio Holder for Environment and Service Delivery.**

**Keith Holland  
Head of Planning**

**Annexes:**

**Annex 1: Aldershot Town Centre Prospectus SPD**

**Annex 2: Consultation Report**

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# ALDERSHOT TOWN CENTRE PROSPECTUS

Supplementary Planning Document

January 2016





Image: Victoria Day in Aldershot

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# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Aldershot Prospectus Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) sets out a strategy for regeneration in Aldershot Town Centre for the coming 10-15 years. The SPD provides a framework to guide future development in the town centre and identifies investment opportunities to establish a clear set of funding priorities for Rushmoor Borough Council. The document supplements planning policy in the Rushmoor Plan Core Strategy and will be a material planning consideration for future planning applications in the town centre.

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.

A strategic vision statement provides the overarching approach for future development and investment in Aldershot town centre. A number of key themes are then set out for the town centre, each with a review of Aldershot's existing assets and a number of initiatives and projects identified to help enhance the town's offer. These are:

## **1. A revitalised town centre offer**

to support existing retail businesses in the town centre and encourage others to open. This includes the shopfront improvement initiative and suggestions for bringing vacant units back into use. The Core Strategy's retail hierarchy for the town centre is supported.

## **2. Town centre living**

to bring more residents into the town centre through more effective use of vacant upper floors in existing buildings and through appropriate new residential development on key sites identified in the SPD

## **3. A family-friendly town centre**

drawing on the town's great parks and open spaces and its sports and leisure facilities. Opportunities to enhance these facilities are identified and improving accessibility - on foot, by bike, by public transport and by car - is highlighted as a priority.

## **4. An improved cultural offer**

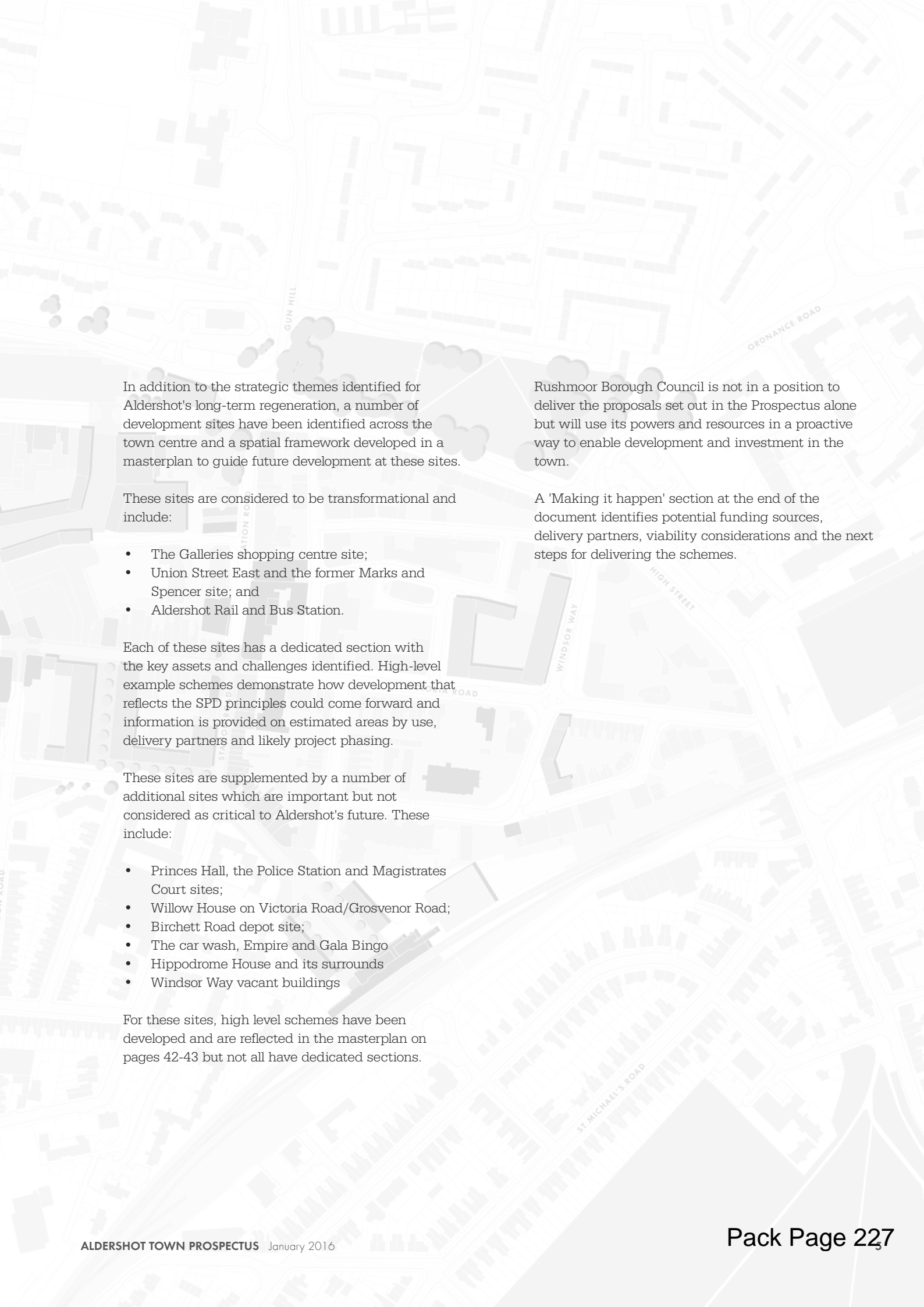
sets out ideas for refurbishing and expanding Princes Hall Theatre, in coordination with other development in the town centre. This is coupled with suggestions for raising the profile of town centre venues and collaborating with artists to bring vacant buildings back into use.

## **5. Investing in streets and spaces**

highlights some of the investments made in the town centre in recent years and identifies future funding priorities. A plan is provided, identifying key spaces and opportunities.

## **6. Affirming the Victorian heritage**

showcases the fantastic historic built fabric in the town centre and sets out the Council's intention to promote, protect, enhance and preserve this. Key buildings are identified, along with important views and possible initiatives to celebrate Aldershot's heritage.



In addition to the strategic themes identified for Aldershot's long-term regeneration, a number of development sites have been identified across the town centre and a spatial framework developed in a masterplan to guide future development at these sites.

These sites are considered to be transformational and include:

- The Galleries shopping centre site;
- Union Street East and the former Marks and Spencer site; and
- Aldershot Rail and Bus Station.

Each of these sites has a dedicated section with the key assets and challenges identified. High-level example schemes demonstrate how development that reflects the SPD principles could come forward and information is provided on estimated areas by use, delivery partners and likely project phasing.

These sites are supplemented by a number of additional sites which are important but not considered as critical to Aldershot's future. These include:

- Princes Hall, the Police Station and Magistrates Court sites;
- Willow House on Victoria Road/Grosvenor Road;
- Birchett Road depot site;
- The car wash, Empire and Gala Bingo
- Hippodrome House and its surrounds
- Windsor Way vacant buildings

For these sites, high level schemes have been developed and are reflected in the masterplan on pages 42-43 but not all have dedicated sections.

Rushmoor Borough Council is not in a position to 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 'Making it happen' section at the end of the document identifies potential funding sources, delivery partners, viability considerations and the next steps for delivering the schemes.

# INTRODUCTION

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

The Prospectus has been adopted as a Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) and is a material planning consideration for future planning applications in the town centre. The SPD replaces 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 policy in the Rushmoor Plan Core Strategy that exists for development in the town.

Rushmoor Borough Council is not in a position to 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.

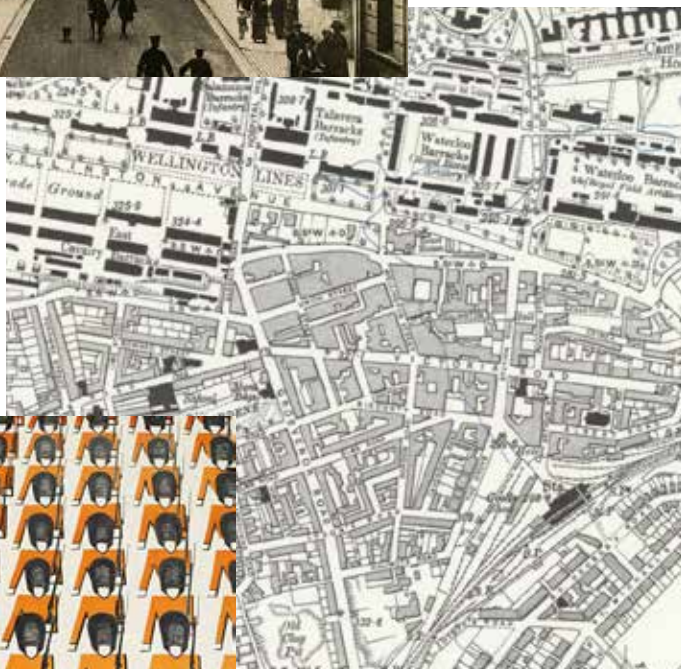


# PROUD PAST



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.

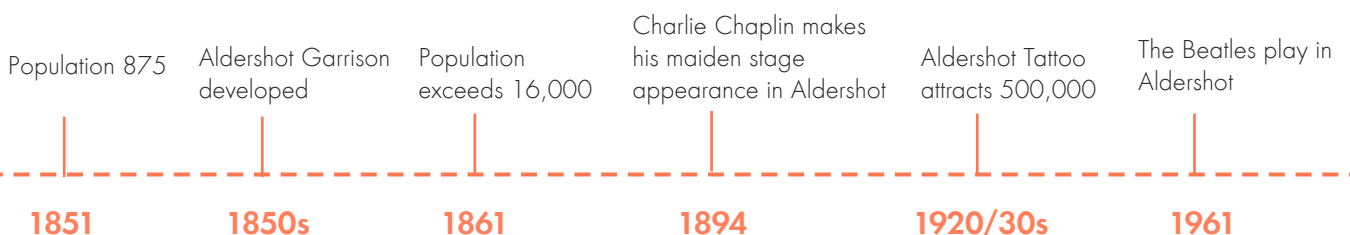


Aldershot Tattoo poster 1934

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.



Flyer for Beatles Concert





# 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 new 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 Enterprise 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.

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) 2014 has identified a significant requirement for new homes in the town above this, and town centre living presents a key opportunity to meet this housing need.



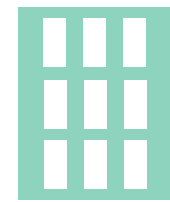
Aldershot is located central to the Enterprise M3 Local Economic Partnership

## TOWN CENTRE OPPORTUNITIES FOR.....

NEW HOMES



OFFICE SPACE



LEISURE USES



RETAIL SPACE

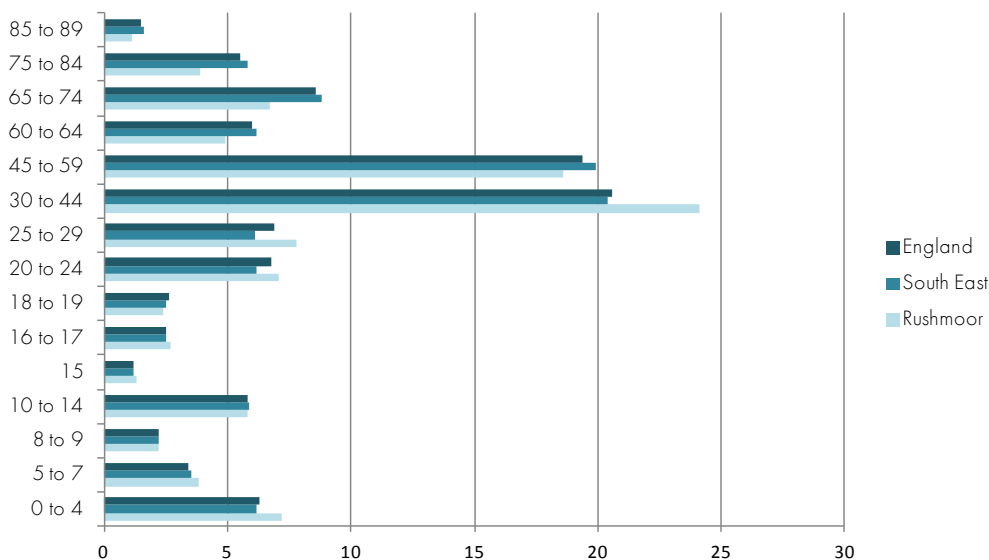


### A pro-active town centre approach

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 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 2011)

## 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.

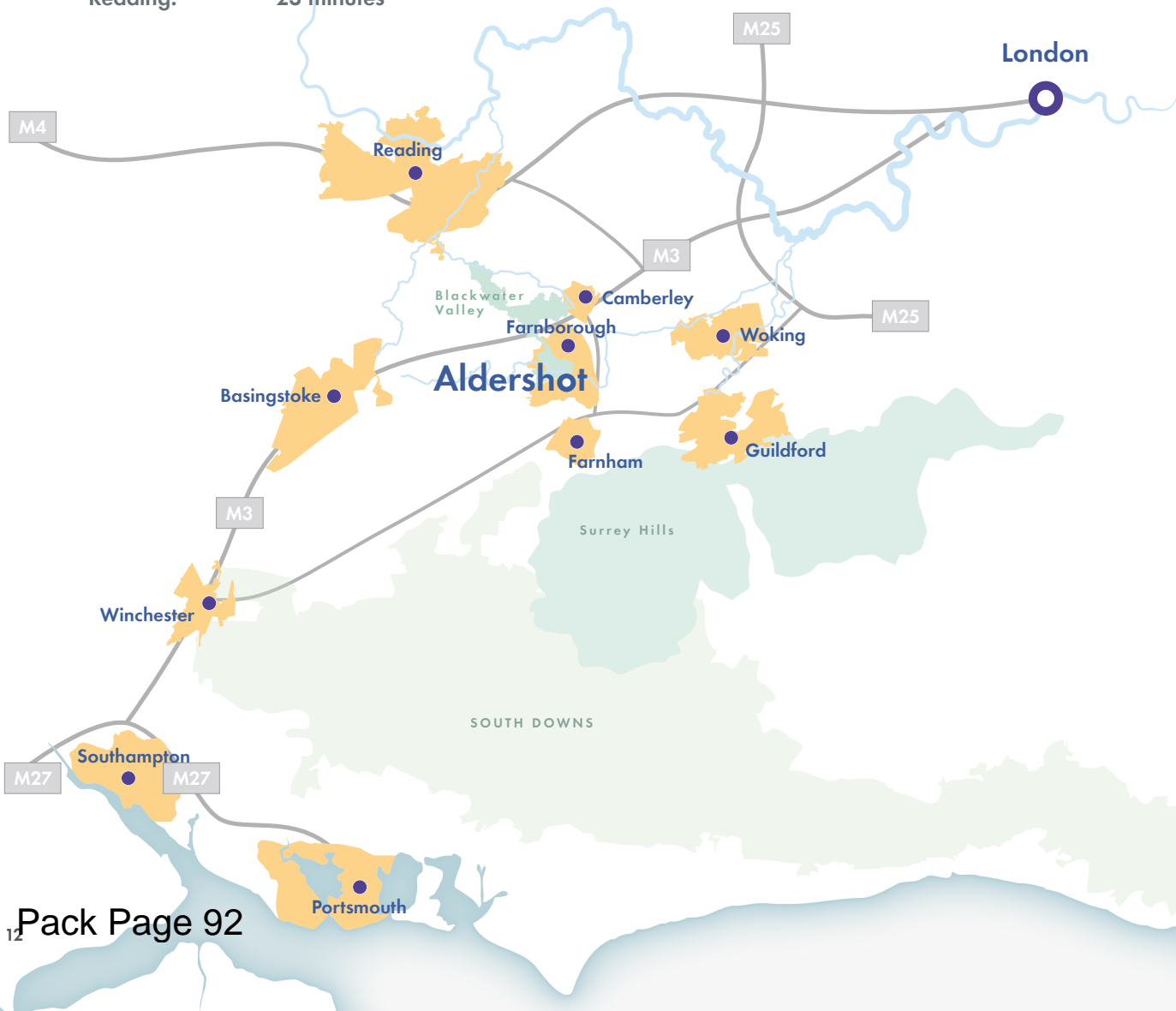
Aldershot is also just an hour from the coast, with Hayling Island, the Witterings and port towns within easy reach.

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 footpath widening and maintenance as funding permits.









## 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 under construction.

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



A new home at Wellesley



Links to 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 Leisure Park brought a new multiplex cinema to Aldershot town centre, along with a number of high street restaurant names, and has been very successful since opening. 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 Leisure Park 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.

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 SPD masterplan sets out opportunities for new homes and leisure uses in the centre, both of which will support the town's shops and add to the vitality and viability of the area.

The Council has 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 shop front improvements which is enabling retailers to improve the profile and appearance of their shops. The opportunity for this to be expanded to include building façade improvements for historic buildings with shops at ground floor, is being explored.

Many shopping areas coordinate efforts to raise their profile and improve the trading environment by forming a Business Improvement District (BID) and the Council will explore the feasibility of this for Aldershot.

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.



### Improving the trading environment

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

The Council will explore the potential for a Business Improvement District (BID) for the town centre, to co-ordinate measures to raise the profile of the centre, hold events and improve the environment.



### Bringing vacant buildings into use

The Council will explore the purchase or rental of vacant units in the town centre, with a view to leasing these at affordable rents to support start-ups in the town or work with artists and makers to use the space for exhibitions and education uses. Links with University of the Creative Arts will be explored for this.



### 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 mews houses in the town centre can provide shops and services in easy reach, proximity to the rail station and a sociable environment. Opportunity also exists to make better use of vacant floors above shops in the town centre. These spaces would have provided homes when built, and refurbishment would make better use of existing buildings, provide much needed homes and support the town centre.

The SPD has identified potential for new homes in the town centre from the key sites set out on pages 42-43. 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 Standards 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

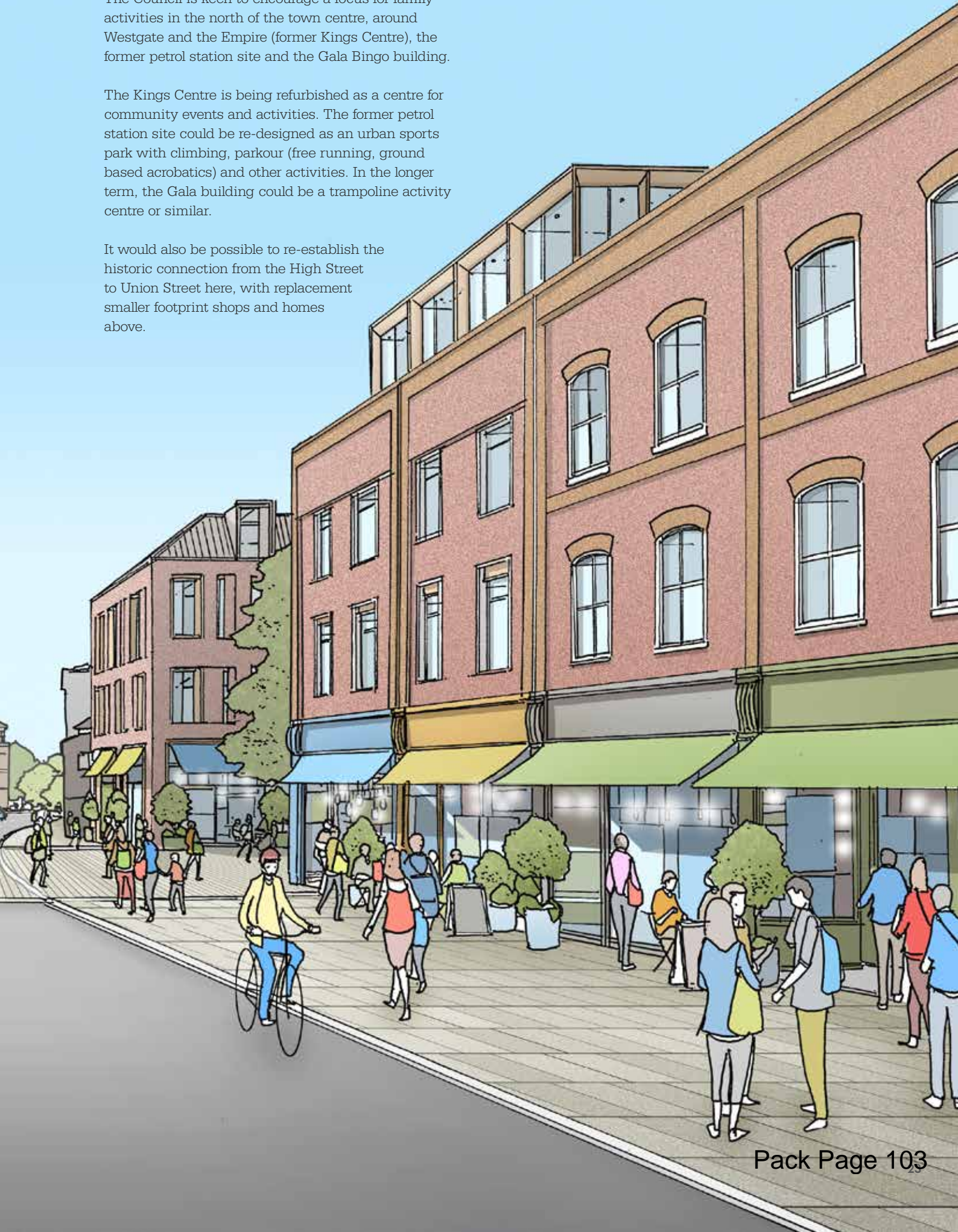




The Council is keen to encourage a focus for family activities in the north of the town centre, around Westgate and the Empire (former Kings Centre), the former petrol station site and the Gala Bingo building.

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.



## Sports and leisure

Aldershot has an impressive range of sports facilities and activities, including the football club, dry ski-slope, gymnastics centre and swimming pool. The council will explore the potential for establishing leisure facilities in the town centre to complement these and 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 and path maintenance and enhancement, as funding becomes available. The Wellesley Heritage Trail is one example of this initiative and a green link from Hospital Hill to the centre and from the canal and training heaths to the centre will also be explored.

Aldershot has a range of high quality town parks, including the Municipal Gardens, Princes Gardens and Manor Park. These will all be safe-guarded and improved, as and when funding becomes available.

## Accessibility

Providing a family-friendly town centre means ensuring accessibility for all. Coordinated public transport infrastructure with well-placed bus stops at the station, on the High Street and at outlying supermarkets is an important part of this. Pressing for improvements to rail connections will also support family living in the town by improving access to jobs

Cycling infrastructure is essential. This includes providing sufficient cycle parking at the rail station and in the town centre. It also includes providing cycle lanes on key routes into the town centre so that cycling can be a means of transport and not just a leisure activity.

In addition to strong public transport and cycling infrastructure, affordable and safe parking facilities are needed. The Council's Parking Strategy covers these issues and will continue to be reviewed.



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





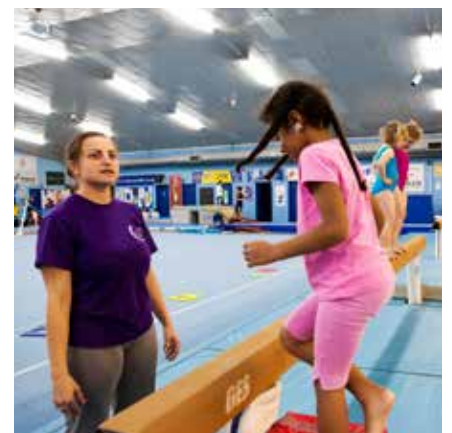
**Sports on the doorstep**

Aldershot has an array of sports and activities including Aldershot Football Club, the ski slope, gymnastics training 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

Aldershot town centre's cultural offer includes the much-loved Princes Hall theatre and the popular West End Centre in Queens Road. The town has a central library, on the High Street, and a full programme of street-based events throughout the year.

The SPD identifies opportunities for further enhancing this cultural offer by extending the theatre provision and raising the profile of other arts spaces.

The proximity of the University of Creative Arts in Farnham can be capitalised upon, and Rushmoor Borough Council will explore the potential for vacant units in the centre to be made available to artists for exhibitions or educational uses.

In the longer term, the library could be brought to a more central location, raising its profile and accessibility as an important community anchor.







### 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 continue to serve audiences in the future.



### 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 cultural and events programme

Aldershot has a full programme of cultural events and activities at venues such as the great West End Centre and on-street. These all 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.

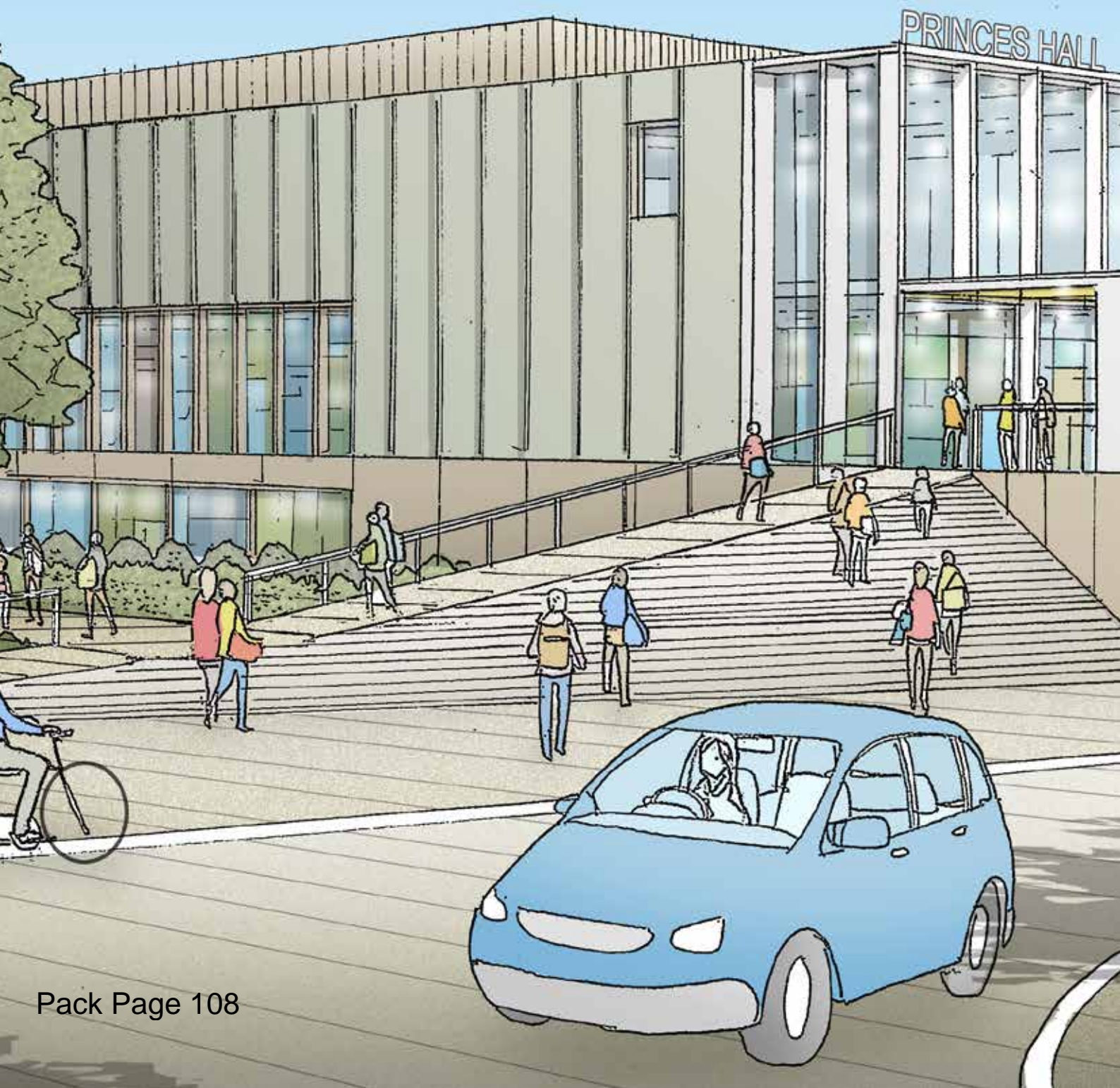




# PRINCES HALL: POTENTIAL FOR TRANSFORMATION

Opportunity exists to refurbish and extend Princes Hall at the front, to provide a stronger relationship with Princes Gardens and Westgate Leisure Park.

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.





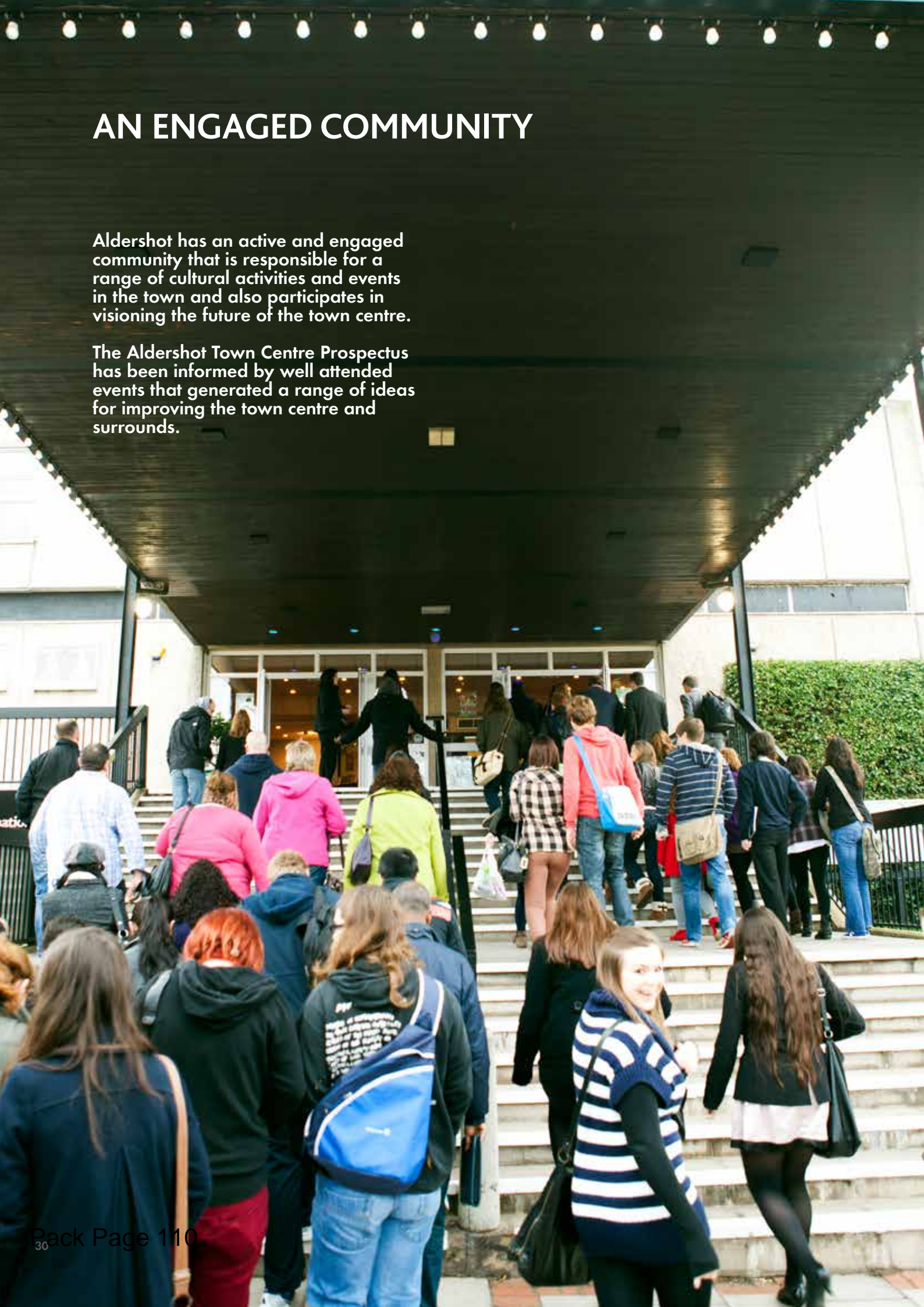




# AN ENGAGED COMMUNITY

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 Leisure Park 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 network as well as a new multi-storey car park will improve the experience of arriving in Aldershot by train and help to reduce the conflict between cars, buses and pedestrians in the area.
- Accessibility improvements that link to the new Wellesley development, pedestrian crossings on the high street as well as potentially new and improved pedestrian 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 Leisure Park 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 visitors 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 events 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.



# PUBLIC REALM INVESTMENT OPPORTUNITIES

Improvements to Princes Way to strengthen the links from Wellesley

A potential re-established 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
- Priority areas for landscape improvements
- Other areas for 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



- Improvements to Court Road and beyond to connect to Wellesley
- An improved crossing at the car park and enhanced landscaping in front of the library
- An outdoor pedestrian link to replace the Galleries link, with potential for a small public space
- Enhanced landscaping of the station approach, bus station and parking area

# 6 AFFIRMING THE VICTORIAN HERITAGE

With the role of UK town centres shifting away from a retail focus towards a leisure, 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 and other buildings of local importance.

Many of the finer historic buildings in the town centre are located at crossroads and the Council will seek to

enhance the public realm at these points 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 being implemented for historic buildings on key streets such as Station Road and Union Street, with funding 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.



A broad indication of clusters of historically significant buildings at crossroads. Willow House on Victoria Road/Grosvenor Road is not historic but occupies a prominent location - redevelopment at this site is supported, to complete the setting of the three listed buildings.



A composite photo showing historic 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.



# PROMOTING, PROTECTING, ENHANCING AND PRESERVING

Aldershot has a number of listed and locally listed buildings, identified in red and orange in the plan below. In addition to these individual historic buildings, many buildings in the town centre have group value, such as the row of historic buildings on the High Street.

The Council will support preservation and enhancement of these buildings proportionate to their heritage significance and will seek to ensure that any conversions or refurbishment of historic buildings

are made sensitively. Grosvenor Road has been identified as a priority for ensuring interventions do not undermine the historic integrity of buildings and streets.

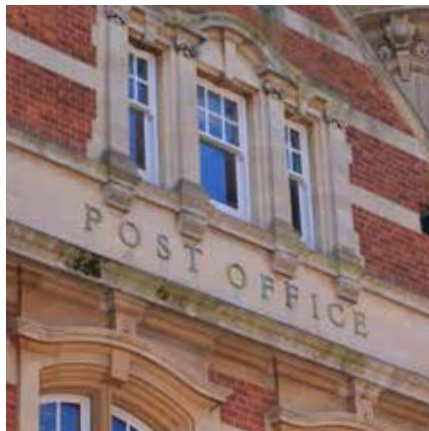
The Council will also more actively promote Aldershot's historic assets through the development of a heritage route that takes in the town's Victorian and military heritage and coordinates with the planned Wellesley Heritage Trail.



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







# PRESERVING AND ENHANCING 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.

Not all views in the town centre are positive. Key vehicular routes into the centre are currently poor and focus will be given to improving these in the future, including review of any planning applications with this objective in mind.



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, outdoor play and events venue

**Union Street:** Regeneration of the Union Street block with new retail and residential development

**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

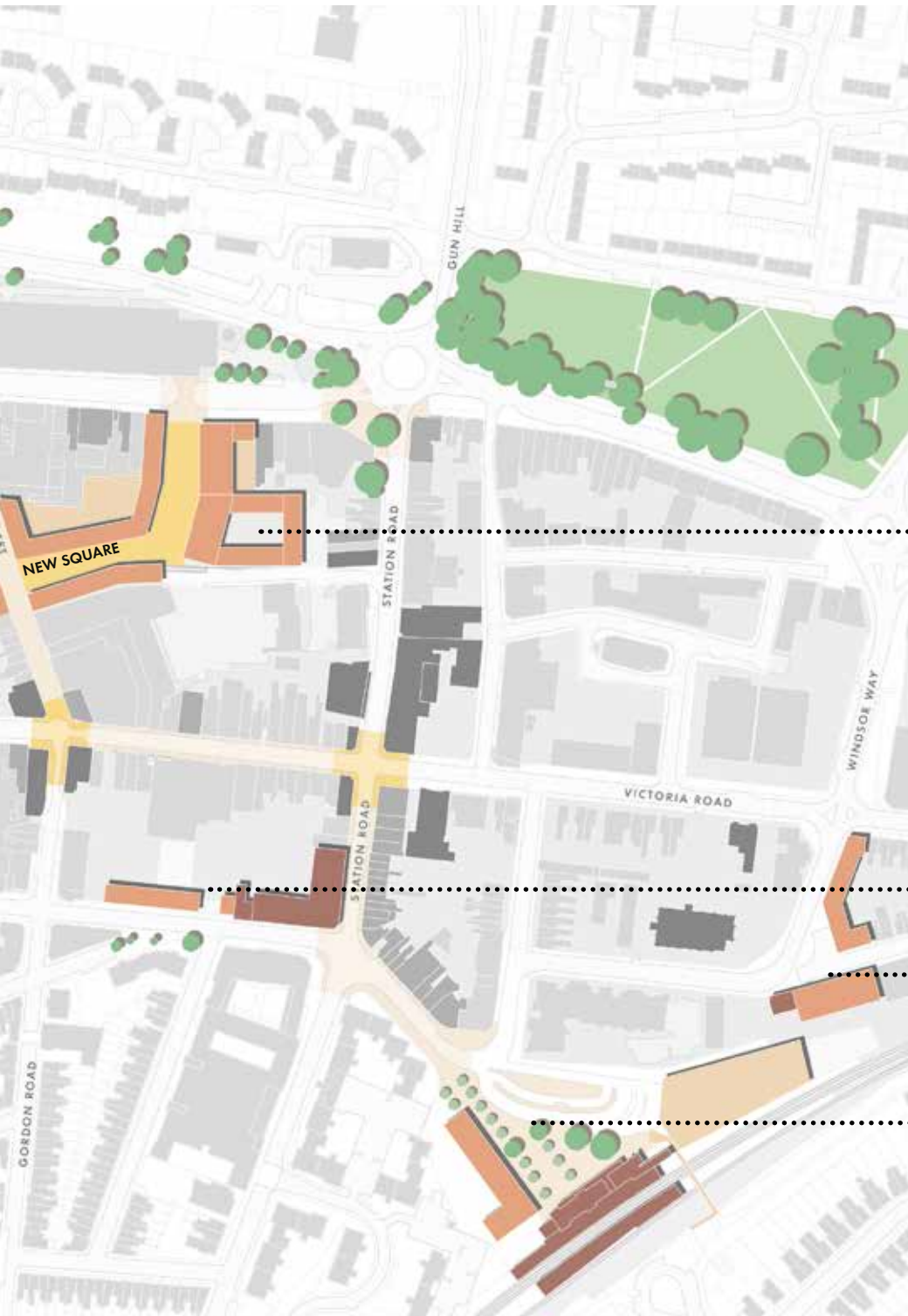


- Public realm improvements
- Key public spaces for investment
- Car park development
- Proposed development
- Potential refurbished existing buildings
- Listed buildings
- Other historic buildings



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



**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. Potential also exists for a commercial leisure centre within new development. Visitors would be able to make use of the existing car parking capacity in the High Street car park and the facility would act as a non-retail draw for the town centre, with potential to attract people 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.

Cycle parking should be included in any scheme here.

**Top: Option for the Galleries site with retail and town centre uses fronting the pedestrian connection and residential above**

**Bottom: A retail and residential scheme that includes a commercial leisure centre at ground floor**



Option 1



Option 2 - dotted red area shows additional commercial/leisure space

- Public realm improvements
- Key public spaces for investment
- Proposed development
- Listed buildings
- Other historic buildings

## Key information and delivery approach

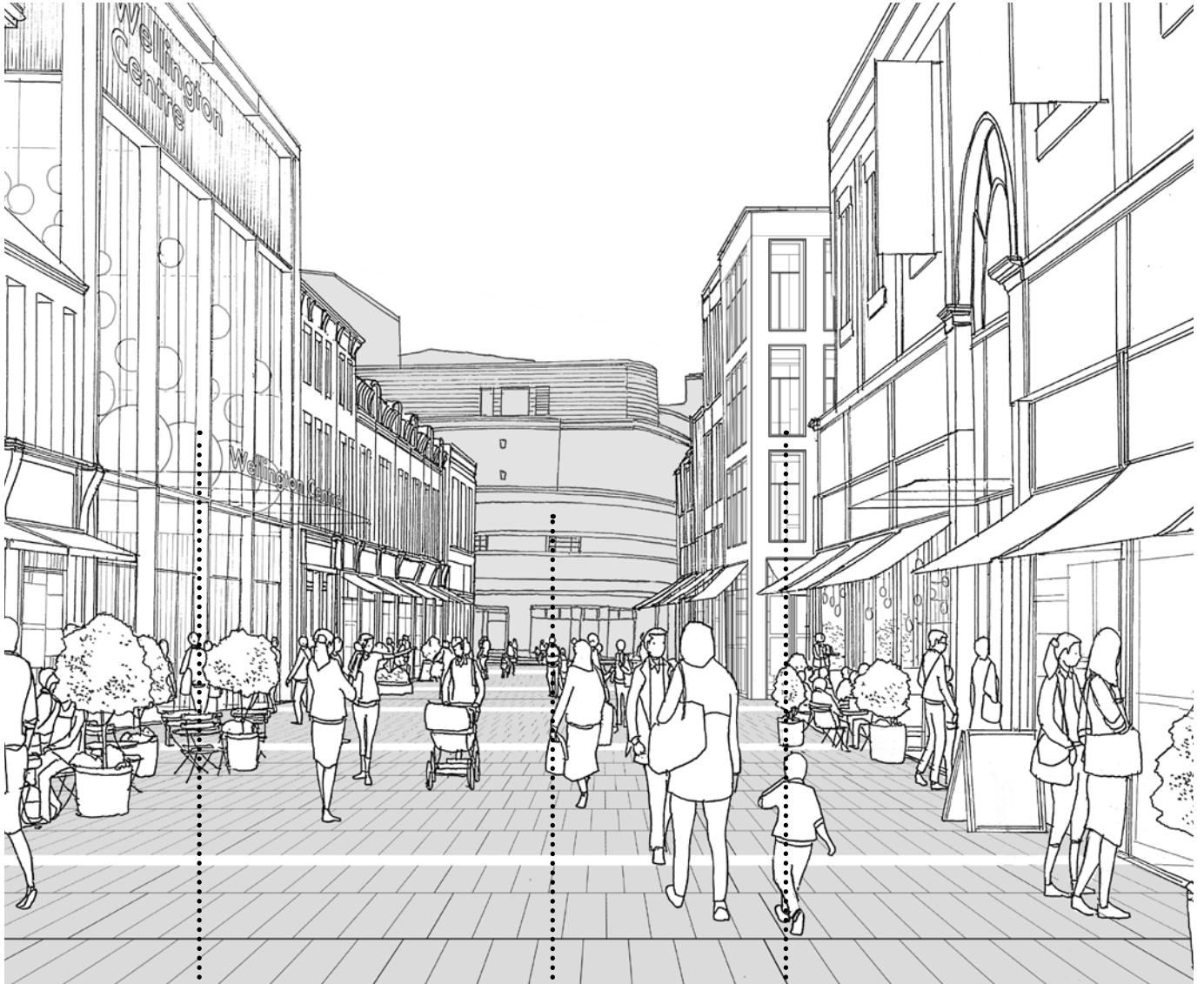
<b>Project Description</b>	<p>Redevelopment of vacant Galleries shopping mall for either:</p> <p>Option 1: As mixed use retail/active town centre uses/residential scheme</p> <p>Option 2: As above but with commercial leisure space</p>
<b>Potential uses</b>	<p>Option 1 – 3,800 sqm retail, 12,800 sqm gross residential (est. 130 units).</p> <p>Option 2 – 950 sqm commercial leisure, 3,150 sqm retail; 12,800 sqm gross residential (est. 130 units).</p>
<b>Current Uses</b>	Vacant shopping mall
<b>Ownership</b>	Private ownership (Threadneedle)
<b>Delivery Approach</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Private sector led delivery</li> <li>• Public sector led developer procurement</li> </ul>
<b>Delivery Timeframes Phasing</b>	<p>Option 1: 0-5 years</p> <p>Option 2: 0-5 years</p>

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. Options exist to refurbish the buildings in their current configuration, or to retain the facades and as much of the original buildings as possible, whilst reconfiguring the site to create modern retail spaces and residences.

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 and potential exists to create a town square as part of a scheme which would need to be well-defined and enclosed by active frontages. The two sites could be brought forward as a single development project.

-  Public realm improvements
-  Key public spaces for investment
-  Proposed development
-  Potential refurbished existing buildings
-  Listed buildings
-  Other historic buildings



Option 1



Option 2



Above: high quality historic fabric above the shop fronts

## 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. These could come forward as one scheme.</p> <p>Union Street East (54-62).</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Refurbishment of retail at ground floor with office/storage above</li> <li>2. Mixed retail/other active town centre uses/leisure with residential above</li> </ol> <p>Former Marks &amp; Spencer. Two options considered:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Re-configuration/reuse of retail space with office/storage space above</li> <li>2. Redevelopment of building with ground floor active town centre use and residential above</li> </ol>
<p><b>Potential uses</b></p>	<p>Union Street East:</p> <p>Option 1: 500 sqm residential (est 6 units); 2,600 sqm retail/leisure space refurbished; 4,400 sqm office/storage space</p> <p>Option 2: 4,600 sqm residential (est. 50 units); 2,600 sqm retail/active town centre use/leisure service</p> <p>Former M&amp;S:</p> <p>Option 1: 2,300 sqm reconfigured retail and 2,200 sqm office/storage above</p> <p>Option 2: 1,500 sqm retail/town centre uses; 3,700 sqm residential (est 40 units) above</p>
<p><b>Current Uses</b></p>	<p>Union Street East – Unit retail, with significant vacancies</p> <p>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>Union Street East: Public sector led developer partner procurement</p> <p>Former M&amp;S site: Private sector developer</p>
<p><b>Delivery Timeframes / Phasing</b></p>	<p>Union Street East – 0-5 years</p> <p>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 railway station, including the parking, bus stands and highway environment 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 accessibility in the area is complex, including buses, taxis, cyclists, pedestrians, 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 Enterprise Partnership (LEP) by Rushmoor Borough 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. The proposal involves significant changes to the existing forecourt of the railway station, by way of public realm improvements, that will result in a pedestrian friendly environment supported by a realigned public transport interchange that incorporates buses, taxis, cycling and a 'kiss and drop' facility and the provision of a new decked car park to offset the loss of existing car parking spaces. Additional cycle parking should be included in any landscaping designs, to maximise sustainable links to the rail station and minimise congestion at peak commuting times.

Any tree planting included in landscaping for a scheme at the rail station should not mask the view of the historic station building.

Nearby redundant sites on Windsor Way could be brought forward in connection with the station area scheme, including replacement of Penmark House and refurbishment of the adjacent historic building.



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

**Bottom: The existing Victorian Station building**

- Public realm improvements
- Car park development
- Proposed development
- Potential refurbished existing buildings
- Listed buildings

## 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          Reconfiguration of the public transport interchange and release of existing bus station site for residential/retail development</p>
<b>Project Outputs</b>	<p>car park          2,800 sqm gross residential (est. 28 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 public transport interchange: 0-5 years          Redevelopment of bus station: 0-5 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 help the building to integrate better with the successful Westgate Leisure Park as part of Aldershot's growing evening economy. Refurbishment also presents the opportunity to explore whether the theatre could be expanded to help attract touring shows to the town.

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 so there is an opportunity to enhance and retain the Police Station for public sector community benefit. In the event of the relocation of the Magistrates Court, the site could have potential for residential redevelopment.



- Public realm improvements
- Proposed development
- Potential refurbished existing buildings
- Listed buildings

Top: Development plan to replace the Magistrates Court and remodel Princes Hall

Bottom: Proposals for the remodelling of the Princes Hall



## Key information and delivery approach

<b>Project Description</b>	<p>Refurbishment and investment in Princes Hall theatre. Following the closure of the Police Station, retain the building for public sector community benefit. In the longer term, if the Magistrates Court was relocated, there could be a separate redevelopment of the Court and Police Station.</p>
<b>Potential uses</b>	<p>Princes Hall – 3,900 sqm refurbished theatre 900 sqm gross residential (est. 100 units)</p>
<b>Current Uses</b>	<p>Theatre, police station and magistrates court.</p>
<b>Ownership</b>	<p>All sites in public ownership (Council, Police, Magistrates)</p>
<b>Overarching Delivery Approach</b>	<p>Princes Hall – Public Sector led contractor procurement Police – Private Sector developer Magistrates – Private Sector developer Each development plot is expected to be delivered separately</p>
<b>Delivery Time frames / Phasing</b>	<p>Princes Hall: 0-5 years Police Station and Magistrates : 5-10 years</p>

## 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 for residential redevelopment 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. 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.

Opportunity might exist as part of a scheme here to improve the character of Frederick Street with landscaping works and possibly by establishing a shared surface.



- Public realm improvements
- Key public spaces for investment
- Proposed development
- Listed buildings

**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>	5,200 sqm gross residential (est. 55 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 their retention and re-use, given their important contribution to the character of Aldershot town centre, provided suitable uses can be identified.

The King's Centre was recently acquired by a private investor and has been 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.

-  Public realm improvements
-  Key public spaces for investment
-  Proposed development
-  Potential refurbished existing buildings
-  Listed buildings
-  Other historic buildings



**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 – 3,900 sqm refurbished space (983 sqm over 4 floors)          Car Wash – 780 sqm leisure          Gala Bingo – 5,200 sqm refurbished space (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.</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 – 0-1 years          Car Wash – 0-5 years          Gala Bingo – 10-15 years +</p>



## 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. 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 residential 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 improve the existing office space and to enhance the arrival to the town centre from the station.



- Public realm improvements
- Key public spaces for investment
- Proposed development
- Potential refurbished existing buildings
- Listed buildings
- Other historic buildings



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); 1,200 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.

## Project Priorities

While an holistic approach to renewing Aldershot town centre should be at the heart of any over arching strategy, inevitably not all projects will progress at the same time. Scarce resources may mean too that certain, more strategic sites in Aldershot town centre may be prioritised for investment and change.

Priorities for the town centre are considered to be:

- Union Street
- The Galleries
- Aldershot Rail and Bus Station

The enabling of these developments is likely to have the greatest physical positive impact on renewing Aldershot town centre, partly due to their due to their scale and – particularly for Union Street and the Galleries – their highly central location.

## Project Linkages

There are also clear town centre project linkages – some are physical in nature; others are enabling and sustaining. They include:

- Bringing forward significant new residential accommodation, which in turn will support retail and other leisure activities.
- Improving Aldershot Rail and Bus Station, so the perception of Aldershot to new residents is one of an attractive and accessible centre.
- Redevelopment of the Galleries and improvement to the Wellington Centre entrance through removal of the connecting bridge

Where appropriate, rationalising retail and service activity whilst at the same time improving available retail stock so it is more attractive to potential operators, thus increasing the prospects of enticing new businesses to the town. In part, delivering change at Union Street and the Galleries would help support this aim.

## 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

Asset Backed Vehicles (LABVs) may too have a role to play if of a sufficient size to be attractive. Asset backed vehicles are a delivery mechanism, with significant potential to lever in private sector funding usually across multi- sites in the form of a joint venture. In a LABV, a local authority typically contributes the land, and a private firm the skills and finance to develop out assets.

Local Delivery Companies are too becoming a more common feature of the regeneration agenda, with local authorities setting up arms' length companies to take a locally oriented commercial approach to realising schemes – again with the ability to reinvest profit toward other developments. Such companies can manage assets, develop land and property by themselves or through joint ventures with developers, landowners, local authorities and other public sector bodies.



## 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).

Rushmoor Borough Council can only grant planning permission for new residential development where there would be no likelihood of significant impact on the Thames Basin Heaths Special Protection Area (SPA). SANGs provide alternative public recreation areas and thus prevent an increase in visitor pressure on the SPA. Where new residential development is proposed in the masterplan, this must be offset by having sufficient SANG capacity.

The Council currently has a supply of SANGS land to offset net new 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 development. Presently, however, the

Council's ownership in the key intervention areas in Aldershot is limited, so an overarching strategy the Council 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. 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.

## Viability and funding the masterplan's delivery

The Council has tested the viability of the development schemes in the masterplan based on the identified areas of development and types of uses.



The outputs of this exercise show that many of the developments have the potential to be viable now, whilst others may have a longer term delivery horizon - as would be expected in a Prospectus which guides development over 10-15 years and beyond.

However, not all of the proposals contained in the masterplan are commercial in nature and some may require gap funding. 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
- CIL / S106 Agreements / developer contributions
- Rolling Investment Funds
- Rushmoor and Hampshire Councils' Capital Programme
- Lottery Funding
- Transport Funds

## Potential Funding Options

Unlocking funding may require developing a wider business case, and identifying both financial and value added benefits that can be accrued. This too will require the private and public sector to work closely together to promote individual opportunity sites and initiatives. The expectation too is that regeneration bodies such as M3 LEP and the HCA could have a crucial role.

These bodies are one of the key sources of central government grants for development projects, with a particular emphasis at present on driving increased housing delivery. Aldershot is already identified by M3 LEP as a Step Up town, indicating that it is a

priority centre for investment. M3 LEP offers project specific funds – for example, through the Growing Enterprise Fund or the Growth Deal. Ad hoc funds are also often administered through this body, such as access to preferential loan rates or co-ordinating enterprise zones

More innovative approaches to enabling financially viable schemes too could be justified. Some local authorities are, for example, using preferential borrowing rates to acquire sites; other are underpinning the viability of commercial schemes through investing in schemes by the virtue of the strength of their covenant.

More traditional sources of funding too may contribute to delivering the ambition for Aldershot, such as through S106 agreements. Business Improvement Districts (BIDs) can provide avenues for modest funding, and capable of paying for smaller common infrastructure items, public realm improvements, security, etc.

Rolling Investment Funds (RIFs) - such as the Growing Places fund (administered by M3 LEP) – may also be considered. Conceivably, a similar RIF programme could be used to deliver change at key sites in Aldershot – or possibly via a programme of improving / refurbishing / reusing vacant and underused properties. Once repaid, the RIF funds can then be re-invested in other projects. Examples of a RIF could be through a programme of acquisition, refurbishment and reuse of vacant retail units and upper floorspace.

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.

## The next steps

A series of key 'next steps' have been outlined beside each of the identified sites in the Aldershot Prospectus. These next steps for individual projects anticipate the involvement of the Borough Council, landowners and potentially other delivery body agents. There are other wider actions too which will help enable, transform and sustain Aldershot Town Centre as an attractive place to live, work and shop in the context of the masterplan.

Outlined below are a number of wider actions and activities that could help further set the foundations to progress the initiatives.

### *Planning*

- Embedding the Prospectus into the development control process so it becomes a material consideration.
- Preparing more detailed design and costing work for key sites where considered necessary. This might, for example, include Union Street and the Galleries.

### *Property/Regeneration/Economic Development*

- Enabling discussions with landowners – for example for the Galleries, Network Rail, Hippodrome House as well as other sites in the Prospectus.
- Liaison with potential delivery partners and stakeholders, including developers and potential public sector agencies.
- Preparing business cases where project funding is likely to be required.

Although not explicitly referenced in the Prospectus, next steps and key actions too might link to a wider holistic programme of cultural initiatives and events for the town centre. Allied to this may be synergies with improving Princes Hall Theatre - and involving the community in town centre initiatives which will serve to support the wider role and function of Aldershot over the coming years.

In promoting the delivery of the Prospectus, there may be other key organisational actions which are required to ensure delivery comes forward. Typically, critical components in assisting town centre renewal and regeneration are:

- Having clear strategic leadership, involving key stakeholders from public and private sectors who will take ownership. This may be on a site by site basis or perhaps more positively such leadership taking a strategic overview of the entire Prospectus and delivery programme – and ideally headed up by a very visible figurehead.
- Having a core team dedicated to delivery, ensuring clear operational leadership of the plan. Such a team needs to have the skills and resourcing required for delivery at each stage.
- Ensuring a degree of delegation, in order that changes in political balance within the authority do not disrupt long term development plans for Aldershot town centre.

Overall, the Prospectus needs to be supported by providing certainty and reassurance to public and private sector investors that the changes identified in the masterplan will take place.

## **Delivery Mechanisms**

Equally important is the need to consider what kinds of delivery mechanisms could help underpin the delivery of initiatives. There is unlikely to be a 'one size fits all' delivery mechanism for projects – the choice should reflect the scale, size and nature of the individual masterplan initiatives. While in some cases enabling discussions with landowners may simply be needed to bring forward schemes for other, more challenging, sites there may be a need to set up bespoke delivery models, perhaps including an asset backed vehicle, local delivery companies or implementing rolling investment funds to show a clear path towards how renewal will take place over a number of years.

Collectively, making it happen will need a cohesive action plan, combining both organisational and delivery mechanisms – and public, private and community sector involvement – to maximise the Prospectuses benefits.

# APPENDIX

## PROPERTY MARKET REVIEW

This Property Market Review has been undertaken by Montagu Evans and is presented as part of the evidence base to support the SPD. The Property Market Review, undertaken in early 2015, focuses on the key property sectors relevant to the location:

- Retail
- Leisure
- Offices
- Residential

The property market review relies on information drawn from a wide range of property data resources such as Focus, EGi and Promis and discussions with property agents, retailers and residential developers.

### Retail

Recent key economic trends are:

- Comparison Retailing - value orientated retail has grown considerably. They have taken advantage of the glut of vacant units appearing on high streets and a much more expenditure conscious shopper.
- A1 Convenience Retailing – focus on smaller convenience formats say 5,000 sq ft to 10,000 sq ft. Significant active increase in demand from discount foodstores.
- Service Sector Uses (A2 Uses) – growth sectors include betting shops and pawn brokers. Others have declined such as travel agents - as a result their presence on the high street has diminished.
- Restaurants, cafes and takeaways (A3-A5) - very rapid growth. Branded coffee shops have become far more prevalent in town centres.

These types of retailers are likely to be the mainstay of current retail demand for space in the centre, together with independent operators.

### Aldershot's Retail Offer

Aldershot's two main retail streets (Union Street and Wellington Street: both pedestrianised) are supported by the Wellington Centre – which is the location for the largest concentration of national operators.

There are a large number of void units evident within the retail core and the wider town centre. It is understood that around one in five units are vacant (although this includes the Galleries which is now earmarked for alternative uses).

No department stores are present, but key operators include Wilkinsons, New Look, Argos, Boots and 99p Stores and JD Sports (generally though the fashion multiple offer is generally quite limited). There has also been a trend of well known high street fashion retailers leaving the centre in recent years – this includes Next, Burton and most recently, M&S. Large format Morrisons and Tesco Extra foodstore lie at the edge of the centre. Lidl is the main convenience store present in the centre.

A2 use (Financial and Professional Services) occupiers are also evident in the town centre and include a range of betting offices, estate agents banks and building societies. Recent trends in occupier demand from some retailers in this sub-sector, suggest that provision of further A2 accommodation may also be a possible option.

In terms of A3 – A5 uses, café and restaurant provision include McDonald's, KFC, Subway, and Costa. There is a very limited offer of good quality eateries/cafes in town centre retail core though there are a number of ethnic food outlets.

Often restaurants cluster around major uses: Westgate Leisure Park, for example includes a cinema and number of multi-chain restaurants (including Frankie & Benny's, Nando's, Pizza Express and Prezzo). However, this is not prerequisite with, for example, branded coffee shops opening where there is good business trade and footfall available. The presence of restaurants and cafes in central locations has become a key and highly noticeable trend in recent years. In Aldershot town centre (and excluding Westgate) growth in this sector has largely been driven by independent traders.

## Rents and Yields

At the end of 2013, prime retail rents were at £40psf Zone A. Yields depend on the type and covenant of the operator from c. 4% - 5% for a foodstore operator to 10%+ for independent trader. More typically however, retail yields in Aldershot for a retailer offering good covenant are more likely to be around 7 – 7.5%.

## Retailer Demand

Five retailers are recorded on CoStar Focus and 67 retailers recorded on EGi with requirements for accommodation in Aldershot (November 2014). Retailer demand includes: Aldi Foodstore Ltd, Go Outdoors and William Hill. Retail demand for Aldershot is modest (NB - not all of those retailers listed on such databases will favour a town centre location or indeed the requirements logged are current). Generally, the retail environment for Aldershot is quite challenging and this view is supported by the outcome of a retail demand survey undertaken recently for a centrally located site.

Discussions with our in house agents also provided broad views of Aldershot as a trading destination. Concerns were raised about the amount of already available space in the centre, strong competing towns and that Aldershot had struggled to shake off its garrison town image. They did though recognise the positive impact that the Wellesley development could have on the town centre, if residents could be persuaded to shop there. There was also a feeling that the development of Westgate had been so successful that this had essentially soaked up much of the demand from restaurants and cafes for the town.

One notable feature of the town centre is the presence of a sizeable ethnic offer, especially in Station and Birchett Road. While this area offers a somewhat poorer shopping environment, it does offer a distinctive feel to this part of the town centre.

Generally, Aldershot town centre's retail market is fairly challenging at present and is strongly oriented toward the value end of the market. Any retail strategy should probably in the short term seek to protect and enhance the very core of the centre. Any possible new development will also need to provide well designed and configured units if they are to appeal to operators. It is also possible that some rationalisation in retail floorspace could be beneficial if it were to result in the better balance the demand and supply of units (say in secondary locations). Despite this, one different area to capitalise on is perhaps the independent - and particularly the ethnic offer in the centre - and making this a point of difference. Making the most of good quality, historic buildings as a setting for the retail area could also serve to make the centre more attractive to retailers and shoppers alike.

## Leisure / health and fitness

Covers a very broad range of uses – cinemas, health & fitness clubs, bowling alleys, bingo etc. The fortunes of leisure sub-sectors has varied. Bingo Halls for example have suffered a decline in patronage (albeit that recent changes to taxation rules has made tier enterprises more profitable again). Cinemas though have seen a considerable growth and are viewed as major leisure anchor attractors.

Excluding the Westgate development, the quality of leisure provision within the town centre core is modest, with the main commercial leisure offer comprising a solus Gala Bingo and a number of amusement arcades. In wider Aldershot there is also a bowling alley in the south of the town centre (Birchett Road), and activities such as live entertainment venues / theatres, museums, the library and Aldershot Football Club. Princes Hall theatre offers a positive cultural venue.

The health & fitness sector has also seen a surge in growth. Both the more luxurious and budget end health & fitness sectors are still seeking expansion opportunities. This use tends to be quite land hungry



and achieve fairly modest rents. Thus, they tend to be located on upper floor locations, at off pitch locations or are accommodated through reuse of existing space.

Health & fitness provision in Aldershot is limited. Existing provision includes Aldershot Garrison Sports Centre, Aldershot Pools, Curves and Connaught Leisure Centre.

We are aware of demand from budget gyms seeking space in the centre. This rent achievable is though likely to be fairly low (say £6-£10 per sq ft). Nevertheless, this could add a different dimension to Aldershot's town centre offer.

Overall, Aldershot has a reasonable range of leisure activities, through its combination of both public and private sector ventures. A notable absence is the presence of a commercial chain gym, and securing this use would help add some degree of diversification to the centre's offer – as well as help to extend activity in the centre during evenings.

## Hotels

The hotel market remains buoyant with continued interest from occupiers in this sector, especially for sites in London and the south east. Examples of continued expansion in the hotel sector and especially the budget sector. Serviced apartments are also viewed as a future growth channel – especially in areas on good corporate trade. Visible sites with good accessibility is an important factor in consideration for this type of use as well as adequate parking. Outside tourist centres, much of the demand for hotel space is driven either by the presence of a strong business market or good accessibility characteristics.

Hotels in the Aldershot area include Premier Inn, Travelodge and several independent operators. It is likely that there would need to be an upturn in corporate activity in the area for there to be further demand for hotel space in the centre.

In Aldershot a budget hotel would expect to secure a rent of around £4,000 - £4,500 per room per annum. Highest performing yields are in the order of 5% - 6%, reflecting a strong covenant. Overall though, site development values are modest for this use.

The broad view is that the general supply of town centre hotels is sufficient to meet current levels of demand. In the longer term, if there is an increase in office market activity this might help sustain increased interest.

## Offices

Aldershot falls within the Blackwater Valley sub office market area. Major office occupiers in the region tend to be at out of centre locations. Town centre demand for offices is fair and linked generally to meeting the needs of local service providers and smaller businesses. Some larger offices do exist (Hippodrome House), but the quality of the buildings are poor.

The office market strength is illustrated by asking rents falling in the range of £5 psf - £15 psf with the majority clustered between £10psf - £12psf bracket (EGi / Focus, 2014). At this level of rents, new office development is unlikely to be viable. This does not though rule out the opportunity for small scale refurbishments aimed again at smaller businesses [NB – according to the Centre for Cities, Aldershot had 390 SMEs per 10,000 population in 2011, compared to 170 SMEs per 10,000 population in Sunderland]. There is also some evidence that there is a modest improvement in interest in office space in the centre, though again this has focussed on smaller requirements.

Generally, larger scale office development is unlikely to take place in the heart of Aldershot. Despite this, there may be the chance to provide attractive (probably refurbished space) for smaller indigenous enterprises. Additions to the overall amount of office stock though are likely to be modest.

## Residential

The residential sector is now a boom sector in many part of the country; leading to concerns of overheating in London and the South East. The housing market is being sustained by increasing employment, historically low interest rates, greater availability of mortgage products, increased house builder profit margins and greater levels of residential development activity.

The regional housing market has experienced significant price growth in the last two years in the south east. According to Nationwide average house prices over the last 12 months for the outer South East was £230,409 – an annual change of 14%. Aldershot has a relatively strong residential market.

Housing in Aldershot is largely clustered towards the south east of the town centre in the form of flatted dwellings. Residential units are more limited in the heart of the town centre.

Major residential expansion is currently proposed for Aldershot, in the form of a major mixed use development known as Wellesley. This development will comprise up to 3,850 dwellings.

The average asking price in Aldershot is currently £291,900 (based on 126 properties recorded for sale on Zoopla – November 2014), with the typical price paid varying depending on the type of property.

### Average House Prices - Aldershot

House Type	Average Current Value	Average £ psf
Detached	£396,051	£289
Semi-Detached	£263,569	£269
Terraced	£230,639	£276
Flats	£155,346	£263

Average house prices in Aldershot, early 2015

There is also a good rental market in the town. Data provided by Zoopla, suggests average asking rents are currently £957pcm. The table below shows a summary of current asking rents in Aldershot based on house types / number of bedrooms. There is understood to be a pinch point in terms of strong demand and rising rents coupled with a tight supply of better quality private rented properties in Aldershot.

House Type	1 bed	2 beds	3 beds	4 beds	5 beds
Houses	£693 pcm	£975 pcm	£1,348 pcm	£1,456 pcm	-
Flats	£707 pcm	£847 pcm	£849 pcm	-	-

Average rental costs in Aldershot, early 2015

Currently residential development in Aldershot is limited and relates to very small scale developments. There are however a number of very significant housing developments in the pipeline: Wellesley and the Galleries.

The strong demand for housing in the south east and Rushmoor generally – alongside healthy house prices suggests residential uses could form significant parts of development opportunities in Aldershot – or perhaps by refurbishing existing space. Discussions with residential developers are generally quite positive – and much more so than those with retailers.

Overall, bringing more residential development into the heart of the centre may provide a strategy to strengthen the town. An increased population may also help to support the retail and evening economy, and generally increase footfall levels. There also appears to be interest from residential developers for sites in the town. This may be aided by the proposal at Wellesley and the ability to commute to London, together with a relatively affordable housing market.









# ALDERSHOT TOWN CENTRE PROSPECTUS

Supplementary Planning Document

CONSULTATION REPORT

December 2015





# ALDERSHOT TOWN CENTRE

## PROSPECTUS SUPPLEMENTARY PLANNING DOCUMENT

### THE MASTERPLAN FOR ALDERSHOT

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

- The Union front Welli
- The Rail St access and
- The area a refurbishm

Galleries site linking Wellington Street with the street car park

#### Princes Hall area:

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

#### Victoria Road:

Infill  
development  
opportunity

#### Marks and Spencer building:

Potential re-  
use or redevelopment

#### Former Kings Centre:

Established as  
The Empire community  
and events venue

#### Union Street:

Regeneration of the  
Union Street block

#### Galleries

active town  
residential  
the Galler  
4-







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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.

Consultation on the draft document was undertaken between Wednesday 30 September 2015 and Wednesday 11 November 2015. During this period there were a number of ways in which people could engage with the consultation:

- The study was highlighted on the front page of the Council's website with a summary mini-site and a full copy of the document available to download. This was linked to an on-line response form;
- The document was available for review at Aldershot library and Rushmoor Borough Council offices;

- A public exhibition was on display with approximately two weeks each in Morrisons, the Wellington Centre and the Princes Hall;
- Two staffed days of drop-in consultation were advertised and held on Saturday 17 October and Thursday 22 October;
- A public presentation and discussion on the evening of 7 October was hosted by Aldershot Civic Society; and
- A presentation and discussion with the Aldershot Retailer and Business Forum on Monday 5 October.

A questionnaire was used to record written responses to the consultation, duplicating the on-line feedback.

This report sets out the responses which were received to the consultation and identifies the key issues for consideration prior to the adoption of the draft SPD.

In total 180 responses were received:

- 65 online responses
- 83 paper questionnaires completed
- 32 written submissions



## FEEDBACK FORM

Please complete this feedback form and drop it in the box provided.  
You can also comment online at [www.rushmoor.gov.uk/improvingaldershot](http://www.rushmoor.gov.uk/improvingaldershot)

1. The **Vision for Aldershot** in the draft Aldershot Town Centre Prospectus is supported by six themes, which set out how the council thinks Aldershot could be improved. Do you agree with the vision and themes?

Yes  No

If no, please tell us why:

Is there anything you would like to change?

2. The prospectus sets out opportunities for change in Aldershot town centre. This includes ideas for four key sites. What do you think about the approach?

Do you have any comments on the ideas for individual sites?

3. Of all the opportunities and potential development in the prospectus, which do you think should be the top priority for the council?

**RUSHMOOR**  
BOROUGH COUNCIL

4. A key role of this prospectus is to attract investment in Aldershot. Are there any other town centre assets, which should be highlighted in the document? If so, please tell us what they are.

5. Please let us have any other comments you have on the proposals set out in the draft prospectus.

6. Please could you let us know the following information.

Male  Female

0-15  16-24  25-34  35-44  45-54  55-64  65+

Postcode

7. Would you like to know when we adopt the draft prospectus as a supplementary planning document?

Yes  No

8. Would you like to receive email news from the council?

Yes  No

9. If the answer to either of the above questions is yes, could you please provide us with your contact details.

Name

Address

Email

**Thank you very much for providing feedback on the draft Aldershot Town Centre Prospectus. Your comments will inform the final version of the SPD report.**

Data protection: We will only use your contact details for the purpose stated on this form.

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September 2015



# FEEDBACK FORMS

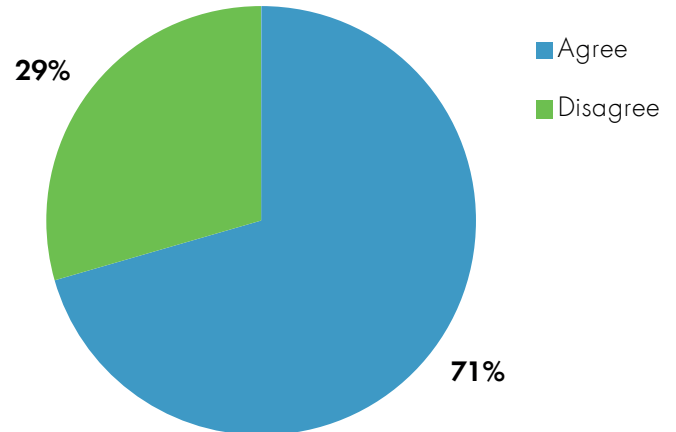
## 1. The 'Vision for Aldershot' in this draft prospectus is supported by six themes, which set out how the council thinks Aldershot could be improved. Do you agree with the vision and themes? If no, please tell us why.

139 responses were given to this question, of which 98 indicated they agree with the Vision and themes set out in the prospectus. Of those who responded with comments, the following points provide a cross-section of the more frequently mentioned issues. Two issues stood out as the most popular responses:

- The plan could be more radical including new ideas and more ambitious change; and
- More information is needed on the cost and deliverability of the proposals.

Of the other responses, a number attracted several comments:

- There should be more mention of public transport, including how it will be protected and improved;
- There should be a focus on Aldershot's role as a commuter town, with links to London improved;
- There is a need to understand the reasons behind Aldershot's unpopularity with retailers if the town is to succeed in the future;
- Protect historic shop fronts against inappropriate changes and modern replacements which are out of keeping;
- The document is wordy and would benefit from an executive summary.



**"Generally very exciting and much needed"**

**"Anything to bring life back into the centre would be great"**

## Is there anything that you would like to change?

107 comments were given to this question, with the most popular comments being:

- We need more quality shops in the town centre, given by 21 people;
- Additional parking is needed, which should be cheaper or free and include more disabled parking, given by 16 people; and
- Reduce the proportion of low value and discount shops in the town centre, given by 11 people.

Other suggestions which were made by several people include:

- A better bus service is needed, with drop-off at the rail station, the High Street and links to outlying supermarkets;
- Lower the rents or rates to attract shops and start-up businesses;
- We need a department store such as Primark - focus energy on attracting them;
- Everything needs to change!;
- More cycle parking and cycle routes are needed in the town centre;
- Grosvenor Road area looks shabby and could be improved. Recent conversions have been poor quality;
- Invest in the football club;
- Make the town a lively place with real shopping options; and
- More entertainment places.



## **2. This prospectus sets out opportunities for change in Aldershot town centre. This includes ideas for four key sites. What do you think about the approach?**

### **Do you have any comments on the ideas for individual sites?**

125 comments were given to this question, with 39 people stating that the approach and site proposals are fine, ok, good, great or excellent.

Popular comments for adjusting the overall approach and suggestions for individual sites included:

- We need well-known brand retailers in the town centre;
- Yes, we need houses but we need shops more
- The station area needs to be improved - it is the first port of call for visitors;
- Leave Princes Hall as it is or retain the frontage - it is striking 70s architecture;
- The Princes Hall proposals look good - it needs a radical overhaul;
- The Galleries site should have retail, including a large store;
- Removing the Galleries bridge sounds expensive / I would rather keep it;
- The Galleries site needs to move forward asap, by legal measures if needed;
- The M&S site is perfect site for Primark - could we attract it with zero business rates?;
- A link between Union Street and High Street is vital - it is disconnected since M&S closed. Like the idea of arcade here; and
- Include M&S and Union Street buildings as one site, and create new town square and new homes and flexible retail space to respond to demand.

***"We need to focus on smaller specialist shops"***

***"The Galleries must be sorted"***

***"The railway station area is currently a depressing welcome to Aldershot"***

### 3. Of all the opportunities and potential development in the prospectus, which do you think should be the top priority for the Council?

152 comments were given to this question, with high levels of consensus on the priorities for the prospectus. These were:

- Retaining and attracting decent shops, to bring more wealth into the town, mentioned by 32 people;
- Redeveloping the Galleries site, mentioned by 28 people;
- Improving the rail station area, with some suggestions for shops here, mentioned by 11 people;
- Refurbishment of Princes Hall and redevelopment of the Police Station site, mentioned by 10 people;
- Making the town centre more attractive including shop-front improvements, mentioned by 10 people;
- New homes - affordable for young and new families, especially local ones, mentioned by 8 people;
- Filling vacant shop units before redevelopment, mentioned by 7 people;
- Union Street - this being the centre of the town but suffering in terms of vacancies and environment, mentioned by 7 people.
- Celebrating and retaining Aldershot's Victorian heritage - and using this to attract businesses, mentioned by 6 people; and
- Attracting new businesses through reduced rates and/or rents, mentioned by 6 people.



**4. A key role of this prospectus is to attract investment in Aldershot. Are there any other town centre assets, which should be highlighted in the document? If so, please tell us what they are.**

59 people provided a response to this question, with popular suggestions including:

- Historic buildings, which should be highlighted and retained, mentioned by 12 people;
- The Westgate Leisure Park and improved links to this, mentioned by 8 people;
- Business opportunities, which should be highlighted alongside residential and leisure opportunities, as this will bring people into the centre during the day, mentioned by 5 people;
- The town's parks and sports fields, mentioned by 4 people
- The lido, which should be preserved - especially with the Wellesley development coming, and. underground heat/solar considered, mentioned by 4 people; and
- The great sporting facilities, including the football club and gymnastics centre, mentioned by 3 people
- Pedestrianise more of the shopping streets, mentioned by 3 people.

Other comments made by more than one person include:

- The military history, which 1 person suggested should be celebrated with a horse-drawn tour around the town and the camp;
- Special small independent shops such as Jerome's;
- The unusual cultural aspect with the Gurkha population and accompanying tastes and traditions; and
- The potential for a visitor centre or museum in a historic building.

***"Penmark House would make a great site for a hotel"***

***"The West End Centre is an excellent small venue which draws people to the town"***



## 5. Please let us have any other comments you have on the proposals set out in the draft prospectus.

88 people responded to this question, with the comments suggested by more than one person including:

- Focus on securing shops for the town centre rather than making superficial physical improvements such as paving and shop-front improvements. This was made by 8 people;
- Congratulations, well done, good job, made by 7 people;
- Negative comments regarding Rushmoor Borough Council's investment in Aldershot, made by 5 people;
- Comments on Farnborough receiving greater levels of investment than Aldershot, made by 5 people;
- Concern that money will be wasted on delivering the strategy, made by 5 people;
- Hope that it can be delivered and not remain a glossy prospectus, mentioned by 4 people;
- Buses to outlying supermarkets would be useful, made by 3 people;
- RBC should take on vacant units and offer them to start-up shops/businesses for free or at affordable rates, made by 3 people;
- No more HMOs in the area - we need quality housing, made by 3 people;
- Library building and services should remain intact at existing site, mentioned by 3 people;
- Retention of the Gala building is important to the plan, made by 2 people;
- The multi-storey car park is awkward for trolleys on upper levels as there are no ramps, made by 2 people;
- A landscape walk into town from new housing / a green link from the canal and training heaths, made by 2 people;
- Cover Union St and/or Wellington St with glass, made by 2 people;
- The electronic notice boards don't seem a good use of funding, made by 2 people;
- Can the Council impose shop-front improvements/upkeep on retailers - these let the town down, mentioned by 2 people;
- RBC should start legal proceedings for key buildings that have been long-term vacant - they are vulnerable to arson attacks - and in Council ownership, a retail strategy could be pursued; mentioned by 2 people;
- Ensure the pubs don't close down - we need these to attract young people, made by 2 people; and
- The Library building and services should remain intact at existing site, made by 2 people.

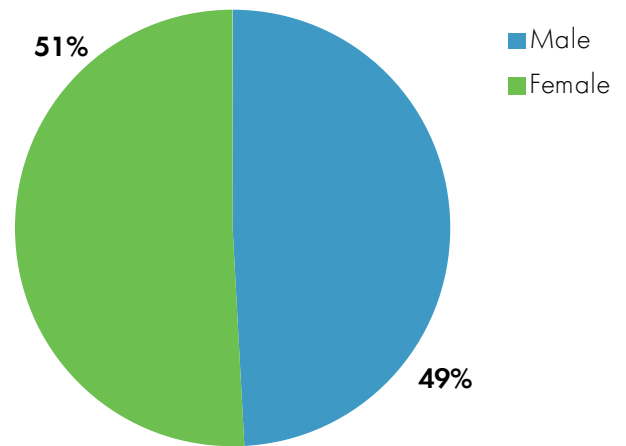
**"Let artists and makers use vacant spaces for exhibitions and education"**

# RESPONDENTS' PROFILE

The gender split of responses received via the feedback forms was incredibly evenly split with 51% being completed by women and 49% completed by men.

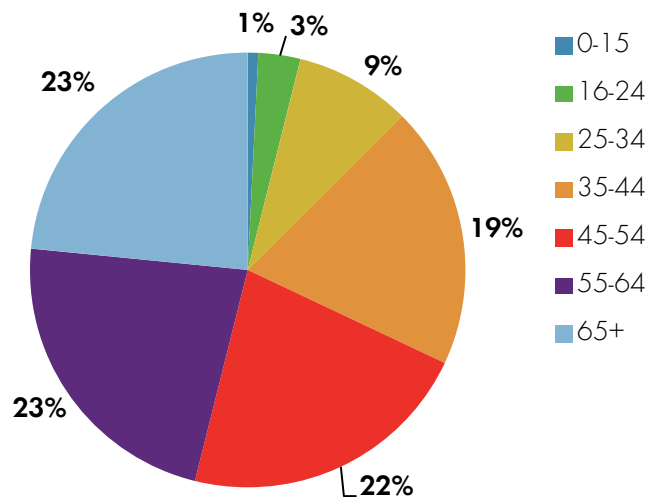
Likewise, the age range of people completing feedback forms was reasonably evenly split, with a breakdown as follows:

- 1% completed by people aged 0-15
- 3% completed by people aged 16-24
- 9% completed by people aged 25-34
- 19% completed by people aged 35-44
- 22% completed by people aged 45-54
- 23% completed by people aged 55-64
- 23% completed by people aged 65+



**"Anything to bring life back into the centre would be great"**

**"Don't just 'tart up' the town, more shops are needed"**





# ALDERSHOT TOWN CENTRE PROSPECTUS

COMPLEMENTARY PLANNING DOCUMENT

## MASTERPLAN FOR ALDERSHOT

The plan sets out development and investment opportunities in the Aldershot Town Prospectus. These vary in the scale and time which they are likely to come forward. Wokingham Borough Council has identified a number of priority sites, which are:

- The Union Street group of buildings that also front Wellington Street and the High Street
- The Rail Station area, including improved access and parking
- The area around the Princesses Hall, including refurbishment of the theatre

# ALDERSHOT TOWN CENTRE PROSPECTUS

COMPLEMENTARY PLANNING DOCUMENT

## OUR

### The Galleries

Plans would link Wellington Street and High Street car park directly fronted by homes and shops at ground level.

The plan would link Wellington Street and High Street car park directly fronted by homes and shops at ground level.

Site Name	Location	Area	Notes
Water Road	Water Road	Water Road	Water Road
High Street	High Street	High Street	High Street
Princesses Hall	Princesses Hall	Princesses Hall	Princesses Hall
Union Street	Union Street	Union Street	Union Street
Water Road	Water Road	Water Road	Water Road
High Street	High Street	High Street	High Street
Princesses Hall	Princesses Hall	Princesses Hall	Princesses Hall
Union Street	Union Street	Union Street	Union Street



The plan would link Wellington Street and High Street car park directly fronted by homes and shops at ground level.

The plan would link Wellington Street and High Street car park directly fronted by homes and shops at ground level.





# WRITTEN SUBMISSIONS

In addition to the online and paper copy feedback forms, Rushmoor Borough Council received a number of written submissions on the draft Supplementary Planning Document, made by statutory consultees, special interest groups and individuals. Written submissions from groups included:

- Aldershot Civic Society
- Aldershot Town FC
- Church Crookham Parish Council
- Environment Agency
- Hampshire County Council
- Hart District Council
- Health and Safety Executive
- Lantana Properties
- London and Cambridge Properties Ltd
- Natural England
- Rushmoor Cycle Forum
- Rushmoor Labour Group
- Rushmoor Pedestrian Forum
- Stagecoach
- Thames Water
- The Theatres Trust
- Columbia Threadneedle Investments
- Waverley Borough Council
- Rushmoor Borough Council Environment Panel

The written submissions have been reviewed and key comments pulled out to produce an overall summary of responses. Key comments in order of questions are set out over the following pages.

## **2. This prospectus sets out opportunities for change in Aldershot town centre. This includes ideas for seven key sites. What do you think about the approach?**

### **Do you have any comments on the ideas for individual sites?**

- The Galleries can be considered one of the disasters of planning in Aldershot. It is an enormous, sprawling structure, completely incongruous with the town centre's c.19 plan and grain of development. Moves to remedy the damage by way of reinstating finer grain development would be welcomed in principle and demolition of the bridge over Wellington Street would be an effectively instant improvement.
- The removal of the bridge is a great idea.
- Opening up the Galleries as a ground level pedestrian route is supported by the Civic Society as you will no longer have the problem of escalators and lifts not working because of uninterested landlords like Threadneedle.
- I would take this opportunity to recommend that the High Street frontage be added to the List of Buildings of Local Importance (if not capable of statutory listing).
- Some sort of town centre leisure facility would be good to tie into the High Street changes.
- A large retailer to replace M&S is wishful thinking. The idea of opening up the site with a new lane is welcomed, with support from the Civic Society to this particular idea.
- Princes Hall – this is overdue but some respondents felt that the proposals were not sufficiently ambitious and that a complete

redevelopment would have been more desirable.

- It seems to me that there could be a missed opportunity with the closing of Aldershot Police Station.
- To me the best option for that part of town would be to use the space to create a new much larger Princes Hall to serve not just Aldershot but the whole of the Aldershot Urban Area.
- The redevelopment of the Princes Hall should be an opportunity to include a much larger auditorium rather than just refurbishing the existing space.
- Whilst we welcome the changes to the look of the Princes Hall, we are also disappointed that something more substantial was not offered. Acquiring the old Ritz/Gala Bingo building as a new theatre for Aldershot, bringing it closer to the high street car park and town centre, and with its history of famous performers. A complete re-build at the present site to give Aldershot a brand new state of the art theatre would have also been more welcomed.
- The National Theatres Trust noted that they would like to see safeguards in place for the design of any residential development around the Princes Hall to protect the future use of the hall as an entertainment venue.
- The [Church Crookham] Parish Council particularly likes the modernisation of Princes Hall.
- The Theatres Trust welcomes the retention and refurbishment of Princes Hall in this document and indeed recognises the potential for a s106 agreement for redevelopment of the surrounding sites to pay for the refurbishment of the Hall. However, from our experience across the UK,

having residential use in close proximity to a theatre or performance venue inevitably creates serious issues for both the venue and the new residents. Where there are insufficient safeguards in place (mainly via sound insulation and creative design), disputes can emerge and the new residents can request a Noise Abatement Notice be issued by the council on the theatre restricting its activities and putting it at risk of closure.

- The station proposals are supported but with a number of caveats, including concerns about where bus stands will be relocated to, and how traffic flows will work if the roundabout is removed.

### **3. Of all the opportunities and potential development in the prospectus, which do you think should be the top priority for the Council?**

- The priority is sorting out the Galleries. The Civic Society supports the proposals, but recognises the need for the Council to use all of its powers to bring about change. The return to a street-based scheme is welcomed along with the prospect of a traditional scale and form of buildings.



**4. A key role of this prospectus is to attract investment in Aldershot. Are there any other town centre assets, which should be highlighted in the document? If so, please tell us what they are.**

- The prospectus needs to say more about Aldershot's other assets such as the Lido and the parks.
- Aldershot has a strong cultural offer already although HCC tried to close the West End Centre down in the past. Culture also covers bingo and football.

**5. Please let us have any other comments you have on the proposals set out in the draft prospectus.**

- Some comments were made about the potential for covered areas or awnings which would make the town centre more habitable in poor weather.
- I would love to see a children's indoor play area. The soft play outside Mothercare is always packed and it would be great to see something a bit bigger and better.
- I would also like to see a community hub that people can use to meet up for free
- I would love to see more cross-cultural events, learn to speak Nepalese and cook Nepalese food.
- Parking needs to be improved.
- Rushmoor needs to set up an independent Opportunity and Fairness Commission.
- There is no detail on the mechanism for who "owns" the Town Centre. RBC is looking for a Business Improvement District (BID) but should

we not be looking for a genuine partnership between residents and business? Should we be looking at Asset Based Community Development potential?

- There should be more emphasis on provision for cyclists, both in terms of connecting routes to the town as well as cycle facilities and parking within the town centre.
- The Prospectus would do well to explore the scope for improvement of specific sites (mention is already given to Station Road) and consider in more comprehensive detail how groups/ rows of perhaps more ordinary buildings could be enhanced. I would take this opportunity to recommend that the High Street frontage be added to the List of Buildings of Local Importance.
- There is concern about the development of a decked car park at the station close to the existing sheltered housing development of Kingsley Court.
- There is a significant level of perception that free parking would contribute to the revitalisation of the town centre.
- As well as new development we also need to consider how to lift the quality of the whole town – much of the fabric looks tatty.
- It is much better to have a much smaller vibrant town centre than the large dilapidated one that we have now.
- We [The Civic Society] generally support the draft Master Plan for Aldershot, and it is important that improvements are implemented as soon as possible to help our town thrive and become a destination of choice for locals in and around the area.

- I wholeheartedly agree with the supporting of specialist/independent retailers as opposed to 'competing' with neighbouring towns merely by offering more of the same. This is a refreshing break from a usual presumption in favour of large, multi-thousand square footage development in an attempt to attract large retailers.
- The Self-build and Custom Housebuilding Act 2015 compels local authorities to maintain a register of individuals who are seeking to build their own homes and there are many good reasons why 'self-building' should be encouraged generally. With that in mind, could the Prospectus not identify sites/areas with potential for development by self-builders?
- The proliferation 1 + 2 bed flats in recent times is troublesome; provision of larger accommodation designed for family occupancy would therefore be welcome.
- It is also worth noting that numerous structures such as former workshops, stables and industrial buildings remain extant and there ought perhaps to be a presumption in favour of retention where practicable.
- If conservation of our town's historic assets is to represent a serious part of the agenda, it needs to be considered broadly; it should not simply home-in on a few "pet-buildings" or favourite sightlines.
- We need more specialist shops opened in pairs next to existing thriving businesses. The mix of shops should also be varied and balanced. For example, how about a French baker and patisserie and a high quality greengrocers? People will pay a little more for something a little special and of excellent quality.
- We [Aldershot Pedestrian Forum] agree with the sentiments displayed in the prospectus regarding the Victorian legacy of the town, of the many listed Victorian buildings situated in the centre, and the need for these to feature strongly in the redeveloped town centre.
- The growth in population is an opportunity to attract top class retailers and make Aldershot a retail centre for a far wider area, like Farnham has been for years. The same applies to restaurants, cinemas, bars, the theatre, and service industries.
- How many times do they need to be told that people resent paying to park in a town with such a paltry choice of shops. Tesco, Morrisons, Sainsburys and Farnborough Gate are all within a 10-minute drive of Aldershot and all offer FREE parking. Why would you pay to park in Aldershot when you can get everything you need at one of those locations?
- I welcome the attempt by the Prospectus, developed as a Supplementary Planning Document (SPD), to set out a strategy for regeneration based on options for public and private investment, which we see as a matter of urgency to prevent collapse of Aldershot Town Centre as a result of the flight of retail from it. In particular, I welcome that, once the SPD is accepted, Rushmoor Borough Council will then be able to use its powers and resources in a proactive way to enable development and investment in Aldershot Town Centre.
- The conservation of our historic buildings and scenes ought to be seen as an inextricable element with regard to achieving the general goals set out.

# SUGGESTED UPDATES

Comments received through the consultation feedback form and through written submissions have been reviewed alongside feedback from public meetings and Council panel reviews to identify a series of suggested updates to the draft Supplementary Planning Document.

The majority of comments have been high level and relate to a general approach to the town or particular sites rather than specific pages of the draft report, so updates have been suggested with similar strategic focus.

1. Executive summary  
Add an executive summary of the key proposals in the SPD at the start of the document.
2. Baseline information  
Potential inclusion of more baseline information, such as property market and commercial analysis in an appendix, to demonstrate the complex and interlinked factors influencing Aldershot's future.
3. Public transport infrastructure  
Add reference to the importance of coordinated public transport infrastructure and potential to improve this in the future, including references to:
  - Better bus provision with well placed bus stops by the station, on the high street and potential links to outlying supermarkets.
  - Connection to London and other employment centres and the importance of pressing for faster rail connections in future
4. Cycling  
Add reference to cycling provision in and around the town centre, including:
  - Proposals for cycle parking at key sites
  - Potential for cycle lanes on key routes into the town centre, taking account of surrounding national cycle routes
  - Ambition to be at the forefront of cycle provision,
5. Vehicular access and parking
  - Make reference to the fact that key vehicular routes into the centre are currently poor and focus will be given to improving these in the future, including review of any planning applications with this objective in mind.
  - Add reference to RBC Parking strategy and harmonise proposals/objectives
6. Housing
  - Make reference to using vacant upper floors for housing
7. Commercial opportunities
  - Review with property consultant whether office space can be included at key sites, alongside residential/retail/leisure uses
8. Business rates and business support
  - Add reference to potential for a BID
9. Vacant buildings
  - Add reference to RBC willingness to explore purchase or rental of vacant units and lease of these at cheap rents to support start-ups
  - Review potential for these spaces to be leased to artists and makers for exhibitions/education, with potential links with University of the Creative Arts.
10. The historic environment
  - Strengthen references to the historic environment and the fact that it should be promoted, protected, enhanced and preserved.
  - add reference to potential for a historic walking route around the town which could coordinate with the planned Wellesley heritage walk
  - Add reference to potential military history tour covering the town centre and the camp
  - Add reference to group value of historic

- buildings, such as the High Street building frontages
- Add reference to improving the environment on Grosvenor Road - shop front improvements, ensuring conversions are carried out sensitively
11. The natural environment
    - Add reference to potential green link from Hospital Hill to/through the centre, and from the canal and training heaths to/through the centre
    - Add stronger references to Aldershot's town parks
  12. The Westgate Leisure Park
    - Add additional references to the positive impact of this scheme on the town centre and the importance of integrating this area
  13. West End Centre
 

Add reference to the value of this as a cultural and community use.
  14. Rail Station site
    - Review the impact of 2-storey parking at the rail station on Kingsley Court
    - Add reference to the fact that the station building should be retained and should not be masked by trees
    - Add more explicit reference to how the traffic flows will work here, to provide reassurance on congestion
    - Add reference to the fact that redundant sites on Windsor Way should be linked more to the Railway Station development in the document.
  15. Galleries site
    - Add reference in the delivery text about potential for phasing parts of the scheme and review with property consultant regarding impact on viability for this approach.
  16. Princes Hall site
    - Make explicit reference to the refurbishment of the theatre including an exploration of whether the capacity could be increased
  17. Library area site
    - This site was not considered essential and could cause issues with vehicular access to the multi-storey car park and with strengthened pedestrian links from Wellesley to the town centre.
    - Add reference to the value of the library itself as a town centre use; and the value of bringing this further into the centre if the opportunity arises in the future.
  18. Willow House site
 

Ensure the boundary of this site reflects land ownership in the masterplan and make explicit in the heritage section that this building is not of historic value.
  19. Union Street East/M+S site
 

Make explicit reference to possibility for the creation of a town square here. Include reference to the fact that a town square must be well defined and well-referenced.
  20. Birchett Road site
 

Make reference to whether Frederick Street could be a shared surface.
  21. Delivery commentary
    - Add additional information on potential funding sources such as the LEP, priorities and the inter-relationship of some sites to the delivery section of the report.
    - Review with property consultant the potential for a community asset backed vehicle

22. Specific page update requests:

Lantana Properties:

Page 34, Willow House, which is at the junction of Victoria Road and Grosvenor Road, is shown on the plan as a "historically significant building at crossroads". It is a tired 1960's office block, which the owners wish to redevelop and replace. This plan needs to be amended.

Page 40, Willow House is shown as a "corner infill development opportunity", which we agree it is. However, the land to the rear of the building is shown green as if it is to be landscaped. In fact, this land does not belong to Willow House. In reality, it is laid out to tarmac and used for car parking. This plan needs to be amended.

Hampshire County Council

Page 10 replace reference to better signage and path widening with 'footpath widening'.

Page 12, add clarification on what is meant by 'greening' - change to 'soft landscaping'

Page 12, add reference to specific existing routes that will be improved to demonstrate that routes do exist

Page 30 first bullet, change wording to: Enhanced landscaping, rationalisation of the road network as well as a new multi-storey car park will improve the experience of arriving in Aldershot by train and help to reduce the conflict between cars, buses and pedestrians in the area

Page 30 second bullet, change wording to: Accessibility improvements that link to the new Wellesley development, pedestrian crossings on the high street as well as potentially new and improved sustainable transport links between the High Street and Union Street.

Page 31 change reference that 'pedestrians can access the station more easily' with 'visitors can access the station more easily'

Page 48 first para, change wording to: The area around the railway station, including the parking, bus stands and highway environment does little to enhance the setting.

Page 48 second para, change wording to: The existing accessibility in the area is complex, including buses, taxis, cyclists, pedestrians, pick up and set down for private cars, and access to the station for parking."

Page 50, top right image to be removed

Page 50 paragraph on phasing to be changed to: '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 so there is an opportunity to enhance and retain the Police Station for public sector community benefit. In the event of the relocation of the Magistrates Court, the site could have potential for residential redevelopment.'

Page 60 third bullet: Add reference to CIL along with S106 and developer contributions



# FURTHER ACTION

Three key issues have been highlighted through the consultation process, which require further action outside of the scope of the SPD.

## Retail Offer

The Council acknowledges and shares the public concern in respect of the retail offer of Aldershot town centre. The Council has already undertaken action to seek to support, retain and attract retailers including:

- Organising town centre events to increase footfall
- Setting up a retail website to support new business in the town centre
- Running free online trading seminars for Independent retailers
- Providing retail space for Christmas pop-up shops
- Taking on running the market and developing it further
- Implementing Government Incentive Schemes for Retail Relief and Reoccupation Relief from Business Rates

The Council recognises the need to do more to support and where possible improve the town's retail offer. The Council will consider seeking specialist retail advice on retail options for the town centre to see what further encouragement can be given to attract retailers to the town centre. In the future, where the Council acquires an interest in buildings within the core town centre area, it will proactively work to support active uses, including retail. The Council will also seek to encourage other active town centre uses (such as restaurants and leisure) to locate in the town centre to support retail uses and reduce the number of vacant units. Developing more town centre living, as promoted through the SPD, will also help to support retail uses in the town centre by increasing footfall.

## Car Parking

The Council recognise that some people believe that additional, cheaper or free car parking will encourage greater use of the town centre. The Council will undertake a full review of the parking strategy in the New Year and will take account of the concerns expressed through this consultation as part of that review.

## Feelings of Safety

A number of respondents mentioned feeling unsafe in the town centre, particularly in the evenings. The Council will undertake a town centre safety audit to identify what other action maybe appropriate. To help the feelings of safety and to deal with any incidents that may arise the Council operates a CCTV service from 7am to 1am Sunday to Wednesday and 7am to 3am Thursday to Saturday. CCTV cameras are recording 24/7 and footage is retained for one month.

## Other comments

Individuals commenting on the draft Prospectus have made a number of other more detailed comments relating to wider town centre issues. These comments fall outside of the scope of matters that can be addressed through changes to the SPD but are being reviewed on a corporate basis to identify the need for further action.

# APPENDIX 1

# EXHIBITION BOARDS

# ALDERSHOT TOWN CENTRE PROSPECTUS

SUPPLEMENTARY PLANNING DOCUMENT

## Welcome to the exhibition.

We hope you find it interesting and will want to share your views with us.

Rushmoor Borough Council has prepared the Aldershot Town Centre Prospectus to help put the heart back into Aldershot.

The Prospectus sets out a strategy for regenerating the town with development options to attract and support growth in Aldershot town centre. The council has worked with a specialist team of consultants and engaged with local stakeholders and residents to combine local knowledge and enthusiasm for Aldershot with regeneration best practice.

## How to comment

Please give us your views by completing a feedback form and dropping it in the box provided.

The draft Aldershot Town Centre Prospectus can be found online where you can also comment:

[www.rushmoor.gov.uk/improvingaldershot](http://www.rushmoor.gov.uk/improvingaldershot)

The consultation will finish on Wednesday 11 November 2015. For further information, please contact:

[plan@rushmoor.gov.uk](mailto:plan@rushmoor.gov.uk)

## THE ROLE OF THE PROSPECTUS

The Prospectus is being developed as a Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) and will be a material planning consideration for future planning applications. It will replace the Aldershot Town Centre SPD (2009) and further develops the council's strategic approach to regeneration in Aldershot.

The council will need to work with developers and land owners to deliver the proposals. It will use its powers and resources in a proactive way to enable development and investment in the town.



Allies and Morrison  
Urban Practitioners

MONTAGU  
EVANS

RUSHMOOR  
BOROUGH COUNCIL

# ALDERSHOT TOWN CENTRE PROSPECTUS

SUPPLEMENTARY PLANNING DOCUMENT

## 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.

**Do you agree with the vision?**

**Would you add anything?**

**Do you have comments on the key themes?**

## SIX KEY THEMES FOR THE VISION

### 1 A REVITALISED TOWN CENTRE

Aldershot's retail core is not expected to compete with regional towns nearby but it can play an important role in meeting convenience and local shopping needs of a growing population.

The council will welcome new retailers and seek to focus these in the core shopping streets; will support specialist retailers providing an alternative offer; and will bring other uses such as leisure and homes into the centre to help support shops.



### 2 TOWN CENTRE LIVING

Aldershot has a significant requirement for new homes with demand from young families and professionals. The role of town centres across the country is shifting away from retail to leisure uses and new homes can help to meet demand while also helping to give the town centre back its vitality.

The council has reviewed a number of suitable town centre sites that can cater for people of different ages and family size. We are not able to bring these forward alone but will work with developers, ensuring an approach that responds to Aldershot's Victorian character.





# ALDERSHOT TOWN CENTRE PROSPECTUS

SUPPLEMENTARY PLANNING DOCUMENT

## 3 A FAMILY FRIENDLY TOWN CENTRE

Aldershot is appreciated as a safe and family friendly town centre with a range of leisure activities. With the Wellesey development under construction, the council will seek to provide additional town centre leisure facilities and public spaces.

Better signage and pathway improvements will be made as funding becomes available, to connect the town centre to Aldershot's many surrounding natural assets.



## 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 Wellesey 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.



## 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.



## 6 AFFIRMING THE VICTORIAN HERITAGE

Aldershot's quality Victorian buildings are frequently overlooked as an asset for the town. The buildings can help to give Aldershot the distinctiveness required to attract visitors as leisure plays a more important role for towns.

Many historic buildings are at crossroads and landscape improvements at these points can have a substantial impact in improving the environment. The council will protect these buildings and important views and will invest in shop front and building improvements as funding becomes available.





# ALDERSHOT TOWN CENTRE PROSPECTUS

## SUPPLEMENTARY PLANNING DOCUMENT

### THE MASTERPLAN FOR ALDERSHOT

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

- The Galleries site linking Wellington Street with the High Street car park
- The Union Street group of buildings that also front Wellington Street and the High Street
- The Rail Station area, including improved access and parking
- The area around the Princes Hall, including refurbishment of the theatre

**The Princes Hall area:**  
Remodelling of the Princes Hall with infill residential development to establish new street frontage

**Victoria Road:**  
Infill development opportunity

**Marks and Spencer building:** Potential reuse or redevelopment

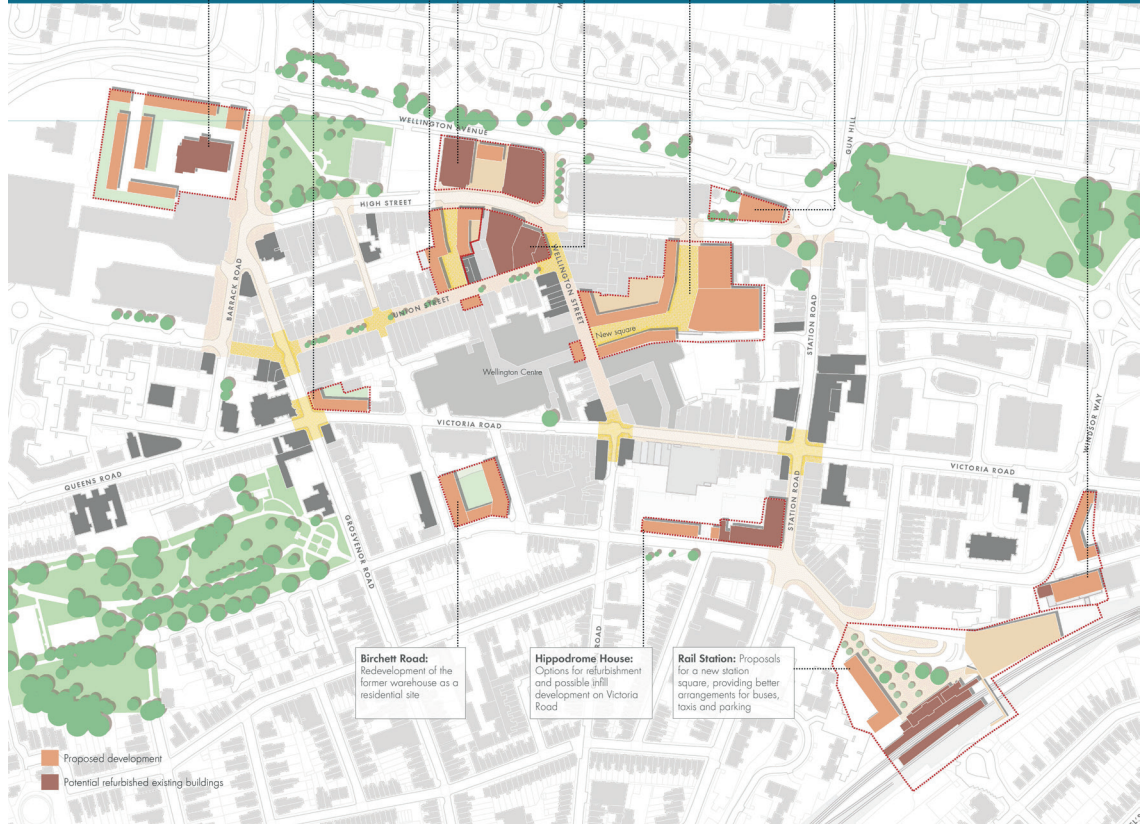
**Former Kings Centre:** Established as the Empire community and events venue

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

**Galleries site:** Retail, active town centre uses and residential redevelopment of the Galleries site with option to include new leisure facilities

**Library area:**  
Corner infill development opportunity

**Windsor Way:**  
Corner infill development opportunity



■ Proposed development  
■ Potential refurbished existing buildings

# ALDERSHOT TOWN CENTRE PROSPECTUS

SUPPLEMENTARY PLANNING DOCUMENT

## FOUR PRIORITY PROJECTS

### The Galleries site

Plans would link Wellington Street with the High Street car park directly at street level, fronted by homes and active town centre uses at ground floor.

The pedestrian bridge would be removed and the Wellington Centre would have a new, larger entrance with access to ground and first floor shops. Potential also exists for new leisure uses within a scheme.



### The Rail Station area

Aldershot rail station is an attractive Victorian building but is currently underused and the existing road layout is complex and hinders access.

The council, in partnership with others, has submitted a bid to the Enterprise M3 Local Economic Partnership (LEP) to improve the area, with a public space in front of the station, simpler access arrangements and replacement parking.



### The Union Street group of buildings

The council will prioritise bringing the vacant buildings at the eastern end of Union Street back into use, with retention and refurbishment a preferred strategy. Opportunities exist for active town centre uses at ground floor and residential above.



The former Marks and Spencer building also has potential either to be re-let as one large or two medium sized units. A more significant change could be the re-establishment of the arcade link between Union Street and the High Street, with smaller units that accommodate active uses at ground floor and homes above.

### The Princes Hall area

The police station is anticipated to close and with development coming forward, potential exists to invest in the Princes Hall 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. New homes fronting Wellington Avenue and Princes Way would create a better entrance to the town centre.



# APPENDIX 2 STAKEHOLDER COMMENTS

Respondent	Response	Officer Comment
<p><b>Aldershot Civic Society</b></p>	<p>The Civic Society is of the view that now, more than ever, Aldershot needs to re-imagine itself to stop further decline and to position itself as a modern town centre allowing independent businesses opportunities to flourish, and not just shops but leisure and decent places for people to live in a pleasant and thriving town centre.</p> <p>The priority for most people is sorting the Galleries, and the society welcomes the changes that have been put forward, but is concerned that without the council using all of its powers to make sure that something happens, Threadneedle will continue to sit on its asset bringing further decline to our town centre. It is without any doubt that the Galleries has been an instrumental part of the town centres decline and it must be a priority to ensure that this does not go on any longer, as if it does, no other changes in the plan will do more than polish the surface of a rotten apple, from which only Threadneedle will benefit.</p> <p>Opening up the Galleries as a ground level pedestrian route is supported by the society as you will no longer have the problem of escalators and lifts not working because of uninterested landlords like Threadneedle. It would be important to make sure that new shop units took on a Victorian look fitting with the frontages like the ones demonstrated in the master plan on Union Street. We welcome the removal of the bridge and the restoration of the street view through to the Gala Bingo building. Aldershot needs a new town square and we are sceptical as to whether the “new square” noted in the masterplan is substantial enough to be anywhere near big enough to perform this task. We would be like to find out more information on this new square, the size and how it would look.</p>	<p>Comments noted. No suggested change.</p> <p>The identification of the Galleries as a key site within the Prospectus SPD provides the planning policy framework upon which the Council can seek to bring forward positive change, preferably in partnership with the current landowner.</p> <p>Comments noted. It is not considered appropriate or necessary to be too prescriptive to restrict the design of any new build retail frontages. However, proposals should be sympathetic to the prevailing town character.</p> <p>The SPD identifies and supports the principle of a new square within the heart of the town centre. Following detailed design, it is more than likely that the location/dimensions of such a public space will evolve over time.</p>



Respondent	Response	Officer Comment
	<p>The former Marks and Spencer plan seems sensible as there seems little chance of a larger store wanting to use this space. Opening up this area as a through route makes sense to help make the town more accessible, and helps link the Princes Gardens and Empire with the town centre. Lining this with shop units we hope will encourage more independent traders.</p> <p>The “library area” needs further explanation, as to what happens with the entrance to the car park. It also seems to be desperate redevelopment, rather than needed development.</p> <p>The station development is welcomed with caution as it has long been an aim of the civic society to see improvements here. One concern is where the buses would go? The document states that they would stop in front of the station, but if this is the case that buses would stop nose to tail in front of the station we would lose the gain in making the area look better as all we would see looking towards the station would be parked buses.</p> <p>Windsor Way redevelopment is long overdue as this area is quite an eyesore, as is making Hippodrome House look better and this is supported by us too, as with Birchett Road and Victoria Road proposals.</p> <p>Whist we welcome the changes to the look of the Princes Hall, we are also disappointed that something more substantial was not offered. Acquiring the old Ritz/Gala Bingo building as a new theatre for Aldershot, bringing it closer to the high street car park and town centre, and with its history of famous</p>	<p>Comments noted. No suggested change.</p> <p>It is understood that the proposed improvements to pedestrian linkages between the Wellesley development and the town centre identify this parcel of land as an improved pedestrian connection. Subsequently, it is unlikely that the corner infill proposal is achievable. It is recommended that the allocation is removed from the final masterplan.</p> <p>The intention is to introduce bus stops to the front of the existing station building. There would be no requirement for a ‘bus station’ as is currently the case and therefore it is unlikely that the buses using the interchange would be stationary for long periods.</p> <p>Comments noted. No suggested change.</p> <p>Comments noted. The proposals within the SPD are indicative and it will be the decision of the landowner (RBC in the case of Princes Hall), based on a combination of financial viability and public demand for the centre and its cultural offer, as to how the scheme moves forward.</p>



Respondent	Response	Officer Comment
	<p>performers. A complete re-build at the present site to give Aldershot a brand new state of the art theatre would have also been more welcomed.</p> <p>New plans for the Empire are welcomed by the society and anything that can be done to improve the car wash area between the two old cinemas would be most welcomed.</p> <p>We feel that one thing has been overlooked. That is there are no plans in place for helping to ensure that the town is suitable for visiting in all weathers. Whilst opening up new streets and removing the Galleries is welcomed, there seems to be no thought for interlinking shelters or glass rooves so that restaurants could still seat people outside more modestly sized units, and so shoppers were protected from the elements. It could also be questioned why there is no information on pedestrian flows? This was standard 30 years ago. Aldershot does not want to compete with covered centres like Camberley and Farnborough, but a few strategic awnings would not go amiss. This could also help with linking together of key sites as Aldershot always seems like a town in many fractured pieces, rather than one joined up town.</p> <p>In conclusion we generally support the draft Master Plan for Aldershot, and it is important that improvements are implemented as soon as possible to help our town thrive and become a destination of choice for locals in and around the area. This isn't the first consultation on Aldershot Town Centre, and we feel that the council needs to be bold as this may be the last chance to try to revive the town.</p>	<p>Comments noted. No suggested change.</p> <p>A key theme of the Prospectus SPD is the desire to affirm the Victorian Heritage of the town. Whilst the introduction of traditional awnings within the street scene is welcomed such as those seen at Poppins and Café Machiato, it is considered that permanent shelters/connection corridors of contemporary design would detract from the visual aesthetic of the town centre.</p> <p>Comments noted. As previously stated, the introduction of this supplementary policy framework will help to drive forward regeneration aspirations across the town centre and allow for Council intervention where considered necessary.</p>
<b>Church Crookham Parish Council</b>	Church Crookham Parish Council support the regeneration of Aldershot. This is a major town with some beautiful buildings	Comments noted. The Prospectus seeks to promote the Victorian Heritage of the town and identifies that the Council

Respondent	Response	Officer Comment
	<p>which the parish council would like to see retained. Some of the more modern buildings have jarred with the development of the town and will need serious re-modelling.</p> <p>The addition of family friendly areas with pedestrianised ways will open up Aldershot to become more than a town just to shop in. The area needs more specialised shops side-by-side with national brands. The parish council particularly likes the modernization of Princes Hall.</p>	<p>is committed to maintaining and enhancing this heritage. Future development proposals will be considered in this context.</p> <p>Comments noted. The Prospectus seeks to promote a variety of uses within the town centre, recognising that a major retail focus is not necessarily the most appropriate approach. A flexible approach is key to the future vitality of the town.</p>
<b>Environment Agency</b>	<p>Based on the submitted information, the Aldershot town centre sites you have selected in the 'Masterplan for Aldershot' on pages 40 and 41 all lie within Flood Zone 1 in accordance with our Flood Risk Mapping. Flood Zone 1 is defined as having a low probability of flooding in accordance with Table 1 'Flood Risk' of the Planning Practice Guidance. There is no fluvial flood risk associated with the Aldershot town centre sites in accordance with our Flood Risk Mapping. You will need to consider other sources of flooding in consultation with the Lead Local Flood Authority (LLFA). In this case the LLFA is Hampshire County Council.</p>	<p>Comments noted. No suggested change.</p>
<b>Hampshire County Council</b>	<p>The County Council notes that "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".</p> <p>The Hampshire Countryside Access Plan 2015-25, states that Hampshire County Council Countryside Service</p> <p>"...will work with others to identify a strategic, county-wide network within this which incorporates the key links between</p>	

Respondent	Response	Officer Comment
	<p>centres of population and places of interest in Hampshire’s countryside, both at present and looking to meet future needs”.</p> <p>Hampshire County Council Countryside Service therefore supports this aspect of the SPD and look forward to working with the Borough and developers to achieve some of these shared objectives.</p> <p>The SPD currently makes no reference to sustainability or climate change. Hampshire County Council Environmental Strategy Team recommends the inclusion of wording to ensure that paragraphs 93 to 98 of the National Planning Policy Framework are addressed.</p> <p>The County Council recommend the following wording should be incorporated into the SPD:</p> <p>‘New developments and improvements to existing properties will be planned in a way that reduces greenhouse gas emissions and utilises energy efficiency measures. The use of renewable, decentralised and/or low carbon energy generation technology will be encouraged.’</p> <p>p.13 first para: Hampshire County Council as the Highway Authority notes that this text states: “easy to get to and park and get around”. The County Council recommends that the Borough Council amend this text to reference sustainable access as the current wording implies that people will drive from Wellesley as there is lots of parking available in town rather than promoting sustainable access to the town centre from the new development.</p>	<p>Comments noted. No suggested change.</p> <p>The SPD provides further planning guidance in support of the adopted Core Strategy. The policy framework in respect of sustainable development/construction methods is outlined within Policy CP3 of the Core Strategy and this would be a material consideration for any new proposals. It is not considered necessary to repeat these policies within the SPD.</p> <p>Comments noted. This part of the vision statement is not explicitly related to travel by car. The suggested revised wording is too detailed for inclusion in the vision statement. Other statements in the SPD support sustainable travel. No change proposed.</p>

Respondent	Response	Officer Comment
	<p>The County Council as Highway Authority recommends that the wording is amended as set out below:</p> <p>Easy to access by a variety of sustainable modes of transport, including walking, cycling, public transport as well as the private car. Easy to get to and around, the town will become increasingly vibrant...</p> <p>p.30 first bullet: Hampshire County Council as the Highway Authority notes that this text states: “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”</p> <p>This current wording makes it seem like the multi-storey car park will make it better for people arriving by train and recommends that the statement is amended for clarity.</p> <p>The County Council as Highway Authority recommends that for clarity the wording is amended as set out below to:</p> <p>Enhanced landscaping, rationalisation of the road <u>network as well as a layout</u> and new multi-storey car park <u>will</u> to improve the experience of arriving in Aldershot by train and <u>help to avoid reduce the</u> conflict between cars, buses and pedestrians in the area</p> <p>p.30 second bullet: Hampshire County Council notes that this text states: “Improvements to connections to and from the new Wellesley development”</p>	<p>Comments noted. Seek to amend bullet point to reflect HCC recommendation.</p> <p>This will confirm that the proposal here is to improve the integration of transport modes at the railway station by an improvement to the forecourt. As a consequence of this improvement, the proposal includes some decking of the car park to maintain the current levels of car park capacity (it is not proposed to construct a new multi-storey car park).</p>

Respondent	Response	Officer Comment
	<p>The County Council as Highway Authority would expect to see more emphasis on sustainable transport links if this section “Investing in Streets and Spaces” is referring to. The section should also reference what the new and improved links are (or are planned to be) so that it is made clear in this section.</p> <p>The County Council as Highway Authority recommends that the wording is amended as set out below:</p> <p>Accessibility improvements that link to the new Wellesley development, pedestrian crossings on the high street as well as potentially new and improved sustainable transport links between the High Street and Union Street.</p> <p>p.48 first para: Hampshire County Council notes that this text states: The area around the station, including the parking, bus stands and highways does little to enhance the setting.</p> <p>The County Council as Highway Authority recommends that this text is amended as the term “highways” is misleading and so should not be used in this context. The station should also be referred to as the railway station for clarity throughout the document.</p> <p>The County Council as Highway Authority recommends that the wording is amended as set out below:</p> <p>The area around the railway station, including the parking, bus stands and highway environment does little to enhance the setting.</p>	<p>The improved links between High Street and Union Street refer to the proposed new pedestrian link through the vacant M&amp;S store. It is proposed to make this clearer in the final version of the SPD.</p> <p>Comments noted. Seek to amend paragraph to reflect HCC recommendation.</p>



Respondent	Response	Officer Comment
	<p>p.48 second para: Hampshire County Council notes that this text states: “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.”</p> <p>The County Council as Highway Authority recommends amending this bullet point to provide a clearer picture of the movements at the entrance to the railway station and how that mix is influenced by vehicles and vulnerable users.</p> <p>The County Council as Highway Authority recommends that the wording is amended as set out below:</p> <p>The existing accessibility in the area is complex, including buses, taxis, cyclists, pedestrians, pick up and set down for private cars, and access to the station for parking.”</p> <p>p.50 The County Council supports the aspirations for the Princes Hall and Police Station. However the following comments clarify the delivery approach to the Police Station and Magistrates Court.</p> <p>On page 50, second paragraph, it is suggested that a phased approach would be taken to redevelopment. However, as the Police Station and Magistrates Court are housed in one building, it is likely that the comprehensive redevelopment could occur should the Magistrates Court be provided on another site.</p> <p>Therefore, the County Council recommends that the image on the top right of the page showing potential phasing is removed to reflect this, and that the paragraph be replaced as recommended by the County Council:</p>	<p>Comments noted. Seek to amend paragraph to reflect HCC recommendation.</p>

Respondent	Response	Officer Comment
	<p>'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 so there is an opportunity to enhance and retain the Police Station for public sector community benefit. In the event of the relocation of the Magistrates Court, the site could have potential for residential redevelopment.'</p> <p>p.10 Hampshire County Council notes that this text states: "....through better signage and path widening...."</p> <p>Although the County Council as the Highway Authority supports the aspiration stated here, if this section is referring to footpaths (which isn't currently made clear) then it should explicitly refer to footpath widening.</p> <p>The County Council as Highway Authority recommends that the wording is amended as set out below:</p> <p>.....through better signage and footpath widening</p> <p>p.12 Hampshire County Council note that this text states: ".....will be improved with greening and signage"</p> <p>Hampshire County Council as the Highway Authority take this opportunity to ask the Borough Council what the term 'Greening' means in this context as it is not clear from the text what it refers to?</p>	<p>RBC is aware that the Hampshire Police Authority is reviewing its estate and, at the time of writing, indications are that Aldershot Police Station will be marketed in the short term as a development opportunity. Whilst it is recognised that the building is attached to the Magistrate Court, it is likely that the Police Authority will be seeking best value from its site i.e. residential. Accordingly, it is considered appropriate to retain the phasing option within the Prospectus SPD to encourage a flexible approach.</p> <p>Comments noted. Seek to amend paragraph to reflect HCC recommendation.</p>

Respondent	Response	Officer Comment
	<p>Clarification from the Borough Council is required to understand what 'Greening' means in the context of this SPD.</p> <p>p.12 Hampshire County Council note that this text states: "Pedestrian and cycle links between new homes and the town centre will be very important and the routes on....."</p> <p>Hampshire County Council as the Highway Authority recommends that this wording should refer to existing routes to accurately highlight the fact that these routes exist but they will be improved.</p> <p>p.31 Hampshire County Council notes that the text states: ".....so that pedestrians can access the station more easily....."</p> <p>Hampshire County Council as the Highway Authority recommends the use of the term visitors should be applied to the SPD here instead of pedestrians. By not using the term pedestrians all modes and user groups are incorporated under the term visitors.</p> <p>The County Council as Highway Authority recommends that the wording is amended as set out below:  " .....so that visitors can access the station more easily....."</p> <p>p.60 third bullet: Hampshire County Council as Highway Authority asks the Borough Council whether CIL needs to be referenced here too along with S106 and Developer Contributions.</p>	<p>Comments noted. Will seek to amend wording to 'soft landscaping' rather than 'greening'.</p> <p>Comments noted. Seek to introduce the word "existing"</p> <p>Comments noted. Seek to amend paragraph to reflect HCC recommendation.</p> <p>Comments noted. Seek to amend bullet to reflect HCC recommendation i.e. introduce CIL into the delivery mechanisms.</p>

Respondent	Response	Officer Comment
<b>Hart District Council</b>	<p>There is more than enough vacant space in Aldershot to cope with forecast retail growth requirements (Rushmoor Retail &amp; Town Centre Study, 2015). Therefore the type of net growth needed is most likely to be housing, since this encourages activity within centres. It is understood that the SPD will provide guidelines as to how Aldershot town centre is to be redeveloped. Whilst the draft SPD addresses the potential for housing HDC does not have complete confidence that it seeks to optimise residential densities.</p> <p>In this context we highlight the following sites as examples:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Galleries - Option 1, which would provide an estimated 121 homes instead of 54, is preferable since it maximises housing and could be delivered within the first five years. The Rushmoor SHLAA indicates that in excess of 200 units would be feasible at this location, and a mix of uses could still be accommodated</li> <li>• Police Station - The draft SPD estimates 36 units may be possible whilst the SHLAA indicates potential for 100</li> <li>• High Street - Whilst it is important to consider a variety of uses at this location the SHLAA does indicate that the King's Centre / Gala Bingo and surrounding uses could accommodate around 85 homes. The draft SPD does not currently cater for homes.</li> </ul> <p>Rushmoor Borough Council has signed up to the principle that it will do all it reasonably can to accommodate its own objectively assessed housing need (OAHN, see Terms of Reference for the Joint Hart, Rushmoor, Surrey Heath Member Liaison Group). HDC's current understanding is that Rushmoor could have a housing shortfall of 1,600 units in its emerging local plan. HDC</p>	<p>The Prospectus actively promotes town centre living – seeking to promote homes to cater for young people, families and older people wishing to downsize.</p> <p>The Aldershot Prospectus SPD is drafted in support of adopted policies within the Core Strategy (2011). The SPD recognises (page 8) that a Strategic Housing Market Assessment has been undertaken, which in turn has identified a significant requirement for new homes in the town. However, it is not considered that the SPD is the appropriate place to refer to the objectively assessed housing need. This is best considered within the context of the emerging Rushmoor Local Plan.</p> <p>Regarding capacity, it is noted that the options outlined within the Prospectus differ from the capacity identified within the latest iteration of the SHLAA. However, the SPD is only indicative and the densities/layout suggested should only be considered as such.</p>

Respondent	Response	Officer Comment
	<p>stated within its response to the summer 2015 consultation on the Borough Council's preferred local plan that it was evident that greater residential densities could be achieved at sites in town centre locations.</p> <p>Hart therefore objects to the draft SPD and asks Rushmoor to refer more explicitly to its OAHN, and to the challenges required in seeking to accommodate such need. HDC also requests that the SPD is reviewed to ensure that housing density and delivery are maximised.</p>	
<b>Health and Safety Executive</b>	<p>We have concluded that we have no representations to make on this occasion. This is because our records show that the Aldershot Town Centre Prospectus SPD boundary and the land within does not encroach on the consultation zones of major hazard installations or major accident hazard pipelines (MAHPs). As no encroachment has been detected, the HSE does not need to be informed of the next stages in the adoption of the Aldershot Town Centre Prospectus SPD.</p>	Comments noted. No suggested change.
<b>Lantana Properties Ltd</b>	<p>1. On page 34, Willow House, which is at the junction of Victoria Road and Grosvenor Road, is shown on the plan as a "historically significant building at crossroads". It is a tired 1960's office block, which the owners wish to redevelop and replace. This plan needs to be amended.</p> <p>2. On page 40, Willow House is shown as a "corner infill development opportunity", which we agree it is. However, the land to the rear of the building is shown green as if it is to be landscaped. In fact, this land does not belong to Willow House. In reality, it is laid out to tarmac and used for car parking. This plan needs to be amended.</p>	<p>Comments noted. Seek to amend the plan to remove the designation of Willow House as an 'historically significant building'.</p> <p>Comments noted. Seek to amend plan to take account of the landowner's comments.</p>
<b>London and Cambridge Properties Ltd</b>	<p>We are broadly supportive of the six themes presented in the draft prospectus but it is considered that there should be an</p>	<p>The SPD actively promotes town centre living. It is not considered appropriate to actively encourage additional floors</p>



Respondent	Response	Officer Comment
	<p>acknowledgement in the prospectus with regards to building additional floors at upper levels, where appropriate, to encourage further homes in the town centre, in accordance with theme No.2. Town Centre Living.</p> <p>There are a number of sites where there are the opportunities to build additional floors to provide additional good quality residential units in the town centre location and this should be reflected in the wording of the policy accordingly. This would further help to add to a revitalised town centre, in accordance with theme No.1. The use of upper floors should specially be noted under No.2 Town Centre Living.</p> <p>Furthermore, as acknowledged in the 'Retail, Leisure and Town Centre Study' Part 2 Town Centres, prepared by Nathaniel Lichfield and Partners, the vacancy rate of the Aldershot Town Centre is almost double the national average at 23.6% suggesting there is weak demand for retail units in the centre. There should therefore be a reference which allows greater flexibility to alternative non-retail uses where units have been vacant for and or marketed for a significant time, i.e. 6-12 months. This is because vacant units, especially in the primary shopping of the town centre can have a significant impact on the town centre's vitality and viability, which would prevent the revitalisation of the Town Centre.</p> <p>Too restrictive and not enough sites identified, given the opportunities available in Aldershot. There needs to be additional sites added to ensure the 6 themes of the prospectus can be achieved.</p>	<p>at upper levels within the document itself. Given that a key theme is the recognition of the town's Victorian heritage, it would be somewhat at odds to encourage additional storeys that would detract from this character.</p> <p>Such proposals should be considered on their individual merits in the context of the townscape/street scene and should be a material consideration in the context of the Local Plan rather than promoted specifically within the SPD.</p> <p>The SPD is drafted within the context of the adopted Core Strategy and Rushmoor Local Plan Saved Policies and is required to be consistent. The town centre policies within these documents provide the framework for the SPD. Appropriate flexibility is built into these policies to allow for diversification where it is considered justified. Subsequently, it is not considered necessary to repeat this position within the SPD itself.</p> <p>The key sites identified are not an exhaustive list. They have been identified as RBC priorities but this does not restrict or take precedence over alternative or additional proposals coming forward.</p>
<b>Natural England</b>	I can confirm that Natural England have no comments to make on this draft document.	Comments noted. No suggested change.

Respondent	Response	Officer Comment
<p><b>Rushmoor Cycle Forum</b></p>	<p>We would state that any future developments in Rushmoor and Aldershot should have strong sustainable transport at the hub of the design.</p> <p>That the designers should use best practice and lessons learned from the UK and around the world. To ensure a positive change in Aldershot centre and the surrounding town.</p> <p>Reference should be made to both Hampshire cycling strategy, Rushmoor Local Plan development &amp; Aldershot Town Access Plan.</p> <p>We welcome the mention of sustainable transport and improved cycling facilities/connectivity and family friendly streets but details seems very sparse on this important topic.</p> <p>We would propose that a commitment for a dedicated key section of the proposal for top quality cycle/pedestrian and sustainable transport.</p> <p>We would like an expert team to do a full investigation of all options for providing this key topic. The work on the centre should be an integral part of a wider action plan to upgrade of a network of routes through the borough and beyond.</p> <p>Aldershot should consider all the ranges of possible solutions for improved sustainable infrastructure from becoming a mini Holland to filtered permeability' for cyclists. Cycling and sustainable infrastructure, is at the heart of a vibrant town and community and could help to fulfil the desired objective of the plan.</p>	<p>Comments noted. Sustainable transport modes are actively promoted and supported across Rushmoor.</p> <p>The Prospectus SPD provides further guidance in respect of existing planning policies within the adopted Core Strategy and the Rushmoor Local Plan Saved Policies.</p> <p>The comments of the Rushmoor Cycle Forum are noted. The Aldershot Town Access Plan has proposed a series of new facilities to encourage cycling in Aldershot which will be pursued, and funding associated with new town centre development will be sought to bring these projects forward as appropriate.</p>

Respondent	Response	Officer Comment
	<p>Cycling has a valuable role in improving the lives of Aldershot residence including; health and well being, an efficient form of transport, reducing congestion, pollution minimisation.</p> <p>Reclaiming the streets for people. Making it a more family and person friendly area and generally a more pleasant place to be and live.</p> <p>All new developments should priorities cycle developments as an efficient solution to solve many of the problems communities experience.</p> <p>We would call on the developers of Aldershot to have an ambitious vision.</p> <p>A number of cities and large towns are realising this and making applications for major funding to become mini Holland's with regards to cycle infrastructure, London has schemes in various stages of implementation, and locally Guildford is proposing major improvements in this area.</p> <p>Recent surveys by sustains shows the key desires for people to increase cycling and increased funding for infrastructure. Areas where quality cycle infrastructure has been implemented has shown an increase in retail sales.</p> <p>Cost benefit of cycle infrastructure in health benefits (reduced mortality) alone has been shown to be a ration of x2.5. We strongly suggest that Rushmoor and Aldershot ensure that each development is designed with the goal of future proofing the area with regards to cycle infrastructure. Matching and exceeding other UK infrastructure. To ensure that Rushmoor</p>	

Respondent	Response	Officer Comment
	<p>and Aldershot has a key differentiator in this field. With people looking to Aldershot for examples of successful cycle infrastructure and a quality of life.</p> <p>If each small or large development misses this opportunity it will severely damage the future potential of Rushmoor and Aldershot. Each part needs to be planned with extreme care and forethought, to ensure it links to future developments and meets the needs of its current and future residences.</p>	
<p><b>Rushmoor Borough Council – Environment Panel</b></p>	<p>Aldershot Town Hall is a significant building which deserves priority to emphasise its role in the development of Aldershot.</p> <p>Good quality family living in the town centre is vital (including good quality new builds and conversions).</p> <p>Princes Hall – the location was accepted but its size and capacity must be expanded.</p> <p>The principle of having a good town square was endorsed but the Panel wanted to see a well-defined and well-framed town square irrespective of its location.</p> <p>The emphasis on the town’s Victorian heritage and architecture was endorsed and it was felt that this should have prominence in the document and should be promoted, protected, enhanced and preserved.</p>	<p>Aldershot Town Hall is a Grade II listed building currently occupied by Hampshire County Council. RBC Officers are not aware of any future plans to vacate the building. As a statutorily protected building, its significance is recognised in the Aldershot townscape.</p> <p>Comments noted. The Prospectus supports/promotes town centre living. Detailed considerations such as the quality of design are covered by national and local policies.</p> <p>Comments noted. The principle of retaining the theatre is outlined in the Prospectus. Decisions relating to its size and capacity are a matter to be determined corporately.</p> <p>Comments noted. Seek to introduce further text in the SPD regarding good design principles for a town square.</p>

Respondent	Response	Officer Comment
	<p>Redundant sites on Windsor Way should be linked more to the Railway Station development in the document.</p> <p>A Heritage Trail was considered an excellent idea and should be referenced in the document. It was suggested that this could be enhanced through the use of good public art (not forgetting the military).</p>	
<p><b>Rushmoor Labour Group</b></p>	<p>What is considered Aldershot Town Centre is defined too narrowly if it is to include housing, leisure, culture and spaces. For example, the corners of Hospital Hill and Wellington Avenue across the road from Princes Hall and Princes Gardens could also be taken into consideration. Also, the open area of land between Cassino Close and High Street is very much in need of improvement. Further, the area between Parsons Close and High Street, including the Parsons Barracks Car Park could be included.</p> <p>To the south, with Aldershot Register Office moving out and the former Potters building on the corner of Queens Road empty and The Old Town Hall being vacated, the whole of that site could be considered for a major development (albeit The Old Town Hall is a Listed building).</p> <p>For a proactive approach to succeed, Rushmoor Borough Council needs to appoint a Project Director to act as the “champion” of Aldershot Town Centre in driving forward this development and investment while being democratically accountable to the local community.</p> <p>Further, Rushmoor Borough Council should consider setting up a</p>	<p>The Prospectus SPD is drafted as an extension of existing policies within the Core Strategy and the Rushmoor Local Plan Saved Policies document. The town centre boundary is defined by these policies and is reflected on the Core Strategy Proposals Map. The SPD operates within this remit.</p> <p>A number of the properties around the Queens Road/Victoria Road junction are either nationally or locally listed and subsequently, major development opportunities are limited. The former Potters Building has planning permission for conversion of the listed building and new build development to the rear.</p> <p>This is a matter to be considered corporately and falls outside of the remit of the Prospectus SPD.</p> <p>This is a matter to be considered corporately and falls outside</p>



Respondent	Response	Officer Comment
	<p>joint venture company with suitable partners (in the way that the Westgate development did) in order to provide a suitable vehicle for managing development and investment in Aldershot Town Centre.</p> <p>It is unrealistic for the Prospectus to set out policies for significant growth of retail in Aldershot Town Centre over the plan period.</p> <p>It would be more realistic to set out policies for consolidation and diversification of retail, while concentrating on providing much-needed housing and associated leisure and cultural facilities in Aldershot Town Centre.</p> <p>With that reservation, we welcome Rushmoor Borough Council's intention to plan positively for Aldershot's future and to provide clarity on investment priorities.</p> <p>It is not enough for development proposals to be permitted that maintain the vitality and the viability of Aldershot Town Centre. It is already too late for that laissez-faire approach, which has not worked in the past 10 years since The Galleries was emptied.</p> <p>Aldershot Town Centre is in a critical state, so Rushmoor Borough Council needs to take urgent action immediately to regenerate it.</p>	<p>of the remit of the Prospectus SPD. The Council being able to bring land forward i.e. as freeholder, is an integral part of any such venture.</p> <p>Comments noted. The Prospectus recognises that Aldershot is unlikely to compete with nearby regional centres and must focus on alternative approaches to supporting the vitality/vibrancy of the town.</p> <p>The SPD is drafted in support of existing policies within the Core Strategy and Rushmoor Local Plan Saved Policies document. Proposals to change frontages/consolidate the town centre need to be driven by changes to these policies within a new Local Plan.</p> <p>Comments noted.</p> <p>The SPD is drafted in support of existing policies within the Core Strategy and Rushmoor Local Plan Saved Policies document and reflects national planning guidance. As noted above, proposals to change frontages/consolidate the town centre need to be driven by changes to these policies within a new Local Plan.</p>

Respondent	Response	Officer Comment
	<p>Policy TC1 is not proactive enough, particularly in bringing to bear consideration of the real factors that are driving retail out:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- high rents</li> <li>- high business rates</li> <li>- high parking charges</li> <li>- expensive bus fares</li> <li>- relatively low income of population regularly using Aldershot Town Centre</li> <li>- concentration of deprivation in and around Aldershot Town Centre (including the high proportion of elderly in the population).</li> </ul> <p>Policy TC2 is in danger of leading to even more empty shop units and charity shops, in the absence of policies to address the factors above.</p> <p>Policy TC3 would be suitable if there was demand for shopping units on the ground floor. However, given the flight of retail from Aldershot Town Centre, it would be more appropriate to consider residential units without shopping on the ground floor, where appropriate.</p> <p>For Aldershot Town Centre, its critical state means that we need to see beyond policies being assessed purely on planning grounds to being practical, and we need to be prepared to consider any proposals that will make a positive contribution to saving Aldershot Town Centre from collapse.</p> <p>There seems no evidence for the optimistic view of the Enterprise M3 LEP that there is demand for new retail units, above which housing can be built.</p>	<p>Policies TC1, TC2 and TC3 are "saved" town centre policies (in the Rushmoor Local Plan Review, 2000) and form part of the basis for considering town centre related applications at present, along with relevant policies from the Core Strategy. Any proposed changes to this suite of policies will need to be taken forward within a new Local Plan document. RBC consulted on the Preferred Approach version of the new Local Plan during the Summer and will be publishing a further draft for consultation in 2016.</p> <p>Comments noted. RBC is able to consider departures from policy if there are material considerations that weigh in favour of a proposal.</p>

Respondent	Response	Officer Comment
	<p>We need to recognise that the £3 million investment in streets, spaces and shop fronts has not restored vitality to Aldershot Town Centre, many of whose retailers find themselves hard-pressed to make ends meet in the current climate.</p> <p>The Prospectus claims that Aldershot has a price differential with surrounding areas that makes property relatively affordable for a desirable part of the country. However, all of that changed when the first units on the Wellesley development went on sale by Bellway (for example, a one-bed flat costing £200,000 – well above the current average price in Aldershot of £140,000).</p> <p>The Prospectus needs to deal with the demographic of Aldershot Town Centre as it is now, and then go forward on a realistic timetable based on how change in that demographic may be reflected in future developments. The Prospectus needs proposals that address the following weaknesses in the current offer:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- high rents</li> <li>- high business rates</li> <li>- high parking charges</li> <li>- expensive bus fares</li> <li>- relatively low income of population using Aldershot Town Centre</li> <li>- concentration of deprivation in and around Aldershot Town Centre (including the high proportion of elderly in the population).</li> </ul> <p>Not everyone will be able to afford high-quality urban homes, so there will need to be provision of affordable and social housing to meet demand – demand that currently very much exceeds</p>	<p>This is not a matter for consideration within the Prospectus SPD.</p> <p>The focus of the Aldershot Town Centre Prospectus is the defined ‘town centre’ in accordance with the adopted Core Strategy. It is this location where the price differential exists.</p> <p>The issue of rents falls outside the remit of the SPD. If RBC was a significant landowner within the town centre, it could influence such matters. However, the majority of sites are within private ownership and landowners have the freedom to determine their own rent values.</p> <p>In addition, the Prospectus is not the appropriate mechanism for establishing the corporate position in respect of business rates, parking charges and bus fares. These issues fall outside of the scope of the SPD.</p> <p>Comments noted. Development proposals will need to accord with wider planning considerations, including in respect of the provision of affordable housing.</p>

Respondent	Response	Officer Comment
	<p>supply.</p> <p>Plans need to be realistic and based on the reality that the most affluent have nothing to attract them into Aldershot Town Centre at present or in the foreseeable future. Guildford, Farnham, Reading, Basingstoke, Winchester and even Portsmouth and Southampton have much more to offer the most affluent.</p> <p>In the longer term, as Wellesley housing is occupied, there may be opportunities to have more specialist shops in Aldershot Town Centre. However, Wellesley is going to have its own local centre to meet the convenience shopping needs of its residents, so this provision has to be taken into account. For non-convenience and affluent shopping, Wellesley residents will be most likely to travel to Guildford, Farnham, Reading, or Basingstoke, as the more affluent residents of Aldershot do at present.</p> <p>In terms of trying to establish a retail hierarchy, Wellington Centre is dominant because of the number and the range of its shops, but otherwise the most dynamic area is Station Road and the east of Victoria Road.</p> <p>In addition, the so-called improvement scheme of Victoria Road, which introduced an often-ignored “No Entry” zone between Heathland Street and Gordon Road, has affected shops there badly and needs to be removed as soon as possible.</p> <p>Before seeking to meet the demand from young professionals who wish to move the area, there needs to be some focus on meeting the demand from the existing population of Aldershot.</p>	<p>Comments noted. The Prospectus recognises that Aldershot is unlikely to compete with regional towns nearby in terms of being able to accommodate ‘High Street’ retailers. However, Officers consider that the SPD should be aspirational as well as deliverable, particularly given that the document looks to the longer term.</p> <p>The Prospectus recognises that the main role of Aldershot Town Centre will be in respect of convenience and local shopping needs.</p> <p>Comments noted. No suggested change.</p> <p>This is a matter to be considered corporately and falls outside of the remit of the Prospectus SPD.</p> <p>The policy mechanisms for the delivery of housing are set out in adopted local policy. In terms of low cost housing, there is an evident need for affordable housing across the Borough. It</p>

Respondent	Response	Officer Comment
	<p>This unmet demand from the existing population has increased the numbers of homeless, rough sleepers, people who have an urgent need to move, and people who have been assessed as having a high priority.</p> <p>In part, the high vacancy rate of the town centre car parking at the High Street multi-storey car park is due to the reluctance of town-centre residents to park there overnight because of the high charges and because of the anti-social behaviour of rough sleepers who have been residing there. Measures therefore need to be taken to invest in making the car park secure for residents and users, rather than having it open to the anti-social.</p> <p>A family-friendly town centre</p> <p>This theme is at odds with the increasing devotion of the town centre to a night-time economy, which has seen increases in late night and early morning openings of venues for consumption of alcohol, music and entertainment – the most recent being for the Empire (formerly The Kings Church) in High Street to be open until 3.00 am four nights a week, likely to be closely followed by the refurbished Palace nightclub in Station Road.</p> <p>Evidence of the degree of public nuisance is that Police crime records for Aldershot showed last year that rate of offences committed in Wellington Ward (Aldershot Town Centre) per head of population was five times as great as in all the other wards in Aldershot, these offences being mainly anti-social behaviour and assaults.</p> <p>For Aldershot to have a really family-friendly town centre, these sources of crime and anti-social behaviour need to be reduced</p>	<p>is recognised that higher density schemes within the town centre provide the opportunity to deliver affordable housing.</p> <p>Comments noted. This issue will be raised as a corporate matter.</p> <p>A successful town centre needs to offer variety and cater for a wide audience. The evening economy does not need to necessarily detract from the aim of achieving a ‘family-friendly’ town centre, particularly as the majority of ‘family’ activities will occur during the day time.</p> <p>Comments noted. This is a matter to be considered corporately. The SPD can have little, if any, impact on licensing issues.</p>



Respondent	Response	Officer Comment
	<p>as far as possible. Otherwise, Aldershot's reputation will continue to be tarnished.</p> <p>It is very disappointing that in the draft Prospectus there is no photograph and no mention made of Aldershot Lido, which provides a family day out for hundreds of Aldershot residents when it is open in the summer. There is great appetite among the long-standing residents of Aldershot to see this leisure facility regenerated.</p> <p>An improved cultural offer</p> <p>Unfortunately, this section shows a distinct lack of imagination in mentioning only Westgate and Princes Hall and the events programme in the town, however successful they are in raising peoples' spirits.</p> <p>There is no mention of Aldershot Library and what it offers. Through an integrated approach with Hampshire County Council, Aldershot Library could be relocated to a new civic centre (for example, as part of a Union Street/High Street redevelopment). That would then free up the current Aldershot Library to be joined with The Galleries site in a major development scheme with housing, leisure and some retail facing onto High Street opposite the High Street Car Park.</p> <p>Also, West End Centre in Queens Road, is a major local arts venue, now part of the Hampshire Cultural Trust. And, there is the ambitious Rock &amp; Pop Foundation in Grosvenor Road. Aldershot Town Football Club at the EBB Stadium in High Street makes a very significant contribution through its Football in the Community Scheme.</p>	<p>The Prospectus focuses on Aldershot Town Centre, as defined by the Core Strategy and Rushmoor Local Plan Saved Policies. Aldershot Lido is sited a considerable distance from the town centre and subsequently does not fall within the remit of the Prospectus.</p> <p>Comments noted. Seek to include the library within the Prospectus document.</p> <p>Comments noted. Seek to include reference to the West End Centre within the Prospectus document. Aldershot Town FC are mentioned within the Prospectus.</p>

Respondent	Response	Officer Comment
	<p>If Aldershot Town Centre is to have an improved cultural offer, all these organisations and others need to be involved in plans for its future.</p> <p>Also, with respect to the section on the potential for transformation of Princes Hall, the changes shown are purely superficial to the front of the building and do nothing to enhance the cultural content that it could offer if, for example, the stage and seating were to be reconfigured so that it could mount London West end shows. A café could already be provided in the current building, and an open terrace for the occasional ceremony is unnecessary. Finally, those steps to the side look totally out of place and would not really provide a stronger relationship with Westgate, which has two or three blank white walls facing Princes Hall.</p> <p>Investing in streets and spaces</p> <p>Although it has upgraded some streets and spaces, the Activation Aldershot programme has not led to any improvement in retail in Aldershot Town Centre – so we have seen the departure of M&amp;S Outlook from Union Street and the Coop from Victoria Road/Birchett Road.</p> <p>It is also questionable whether, with the current population profile, the £200,000 grant scheme for shop fronts will bring any extra retail into Aldershot.</p>	<p>The SPD does not preclude the involvement of community organisations in plans for the future of Aldershot. Indeed, RBC has brought together a community group to discuss matters relating to events within the town centre following initial engagement on the Prospectus.</p> <p>The Prospectus proposals are indicative of what could be achieved. This is a matter for RBC to determine how best to proceed, based on a combination of financial viability and public demand for the centre and its cultural offer.</p> <p>To date, the investment in public realm improvements has focused on strengthening pedestrian connections between Wellesley and the town centre (Court Road) and Westgate and the town centre (Barrack Road/Grosvenor Road). Given the lack of land ownership within the town centre, it is difficult for RBC to instigate a step-change in retail provision.</p> <p>The shop front improvement scheme seeks to build upon the Victorian heritage of the town centre, with an emphasis on Union Street and Wellington Street to create a more cohesive town centre.</p>

Respondent	Response	Officer Comment
	<p>The only way to create significant public space would be to demolish an existing building, and it is doubtful whether this would be worthwhile in terms of the benefit to be achieved. There are already significant public spaces in Aldershot Town Centre – Princes Gardens, Westgate and Court Road – so it may be preferable to develop plans to make better use of these.</p> <p>Another aspect of investing in streets and spaces that is currently neglected is maintenance, as evidenced by the run-down state of the abandoned buildings on two corners of the crossroads at Queens Road, Victoria Road and Grosvenor Road – which the Prospectus sees as providing a public realm investment opportunity.</p> <p>Affirming the Victorian heritage</p> <p>It is important to give the owners of the Victorian buildings, particularly those that are prominent, support in bringing them into active use, maintaining them and highlighting them, perhaps by having plaques explaining their historical significance and lighting them at night, and having an Aldershot Town Centre walk between them.</p> <p>The Galleries</p> <p>At first sight, either of the Options looks attractive compared with the empty (“ghost town”) shopping mall that The Galleries has been for the past 10 years.</p>	<p>It is recognised that the creation of a new public space within the heart of the town centre is reliant on significant redevelopment schemes, hence the consideration to include it within the Galleries proposal. A central open space would be of greater benefit to the town economy.</p> <p>Willow House has recently been purchased and the landowner has responded to the Prospectus SPD. The old Potters Building is with planning permission. As both buildings are in private ownership, there is little influence that RBC can have on their appearance.</p> <p>Comments noted. The Prospectus recognises the value of the Victorian buildings within the town centre and suggests that a number of these properties would benefit from up-lighting in the evenings to highlight their architectural qualities. The SPD also states that improvements could be made subject to funding being available.</p>

Respondent	Response	Officer Comment
	<p>However, closer inspection reveals significant issues:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The area labelled “NEW SQUARE” hardly seems any wider than Wellington Street at the end nearest to Wellington Street.</li> <li>• Little Wellington Street is closed off about halfway, so there is a question about access to service the new shops and flats to the south.</li> <li>• Both options contain significant amounts of additional retail, when all the evidence points to a flight of retail from Aldershot Town Centre.</li> <li>• In the event of Option 1 – est. 121 residential units – where would the car parking be to current standards?</li> </ul> <p>It may therefore be desirable to consider an Option 3 that configures the connecting walkway between High Street and Wellington Street with housing on the ground floor (allowing the construction of town houses, rather than flats) and with retail confined to the frontages on High Street and Wellington Street (of the type shown by Steve Walker of Allies &amp; Morrison at a Councillors’ Housing &amp; Planning Forum on 22 October 2015).</p> <p>Demolition of the walkway between The Wellington Centre and The Galleries is desirable, as it would no longer be required.</p> <p>Union Street and former Marks and Spencer building</p> <p>The Union Street East block would be best redeveloped as residential above and retail below, as it is highly visible from the stepped entrance into Aldershot Town Centre from the High Street Car Park.</p>	<p>Comments noted. The plans within the Prospectus are indicative and will be subject to detailed design – in respect of appearance, servicing and car parking. It is understood that the High Street car park could be used to offset car parking requirements of a Galleries residential scheme.</p> <p>Comments noted. No suggested change.</p> <p>Comments noted. No suggested change.</p>

Respondent	Response	Officer Comment
	<p>However, the question remains over the viability of the retail space below, given the flight of retail from Aldershot Town Centre at present.</p> <p>Given the size and the configuration of the former M&amp;S, the amount of refurbishment need to bring it into use, and the flight of retail from Aldershot Town Centre, the first option for this site seems unrealistic.</p> <p>The second option is preferable, particularly if the link created between Union Street and High Street could also allow creation of a town square facing onto the middle of Union Street.</p> <p>However, again, there is the question about the viability of new retail units in the current situation, so it could be preferable to have retail confined to the frontages on High Street and Union Street (again of the type shown by Steve Walker of Allies &amp; Morrison at a Councillors' Housing &amp; Planning Forum on 22 October 2015).</p> <p>The Rail Station</p> <p>The opportunity to redevelop Aldershot Station is welcome, but more consideration needs to be given to the effect on the residents of Kingsley Court, the sheltered housing accommodation for about 110 elderly residents, which would then be surrounded on three sides by traffic on the move all day and all evening. The location of the entry and the exit to the new decked car park could adversely affect the environment in the garden of Kingsley Court, where the elderly residents can sit in the summer.</p>	<p>It is understood that the current configuration of the units is not attractive to modern retailers. It is considered that a redevelopment scheme could address these concerns.</p> <p>Comments noted.</p> <p>Comments noted. Suggest making reference to a new public square within the final version of the Prospectus.</p> <p>The issue of viability for specific schemes is a matter for the detailed design/application stage but a high level viability assessment for each scheme in the SPD has been undertaken.</p> <p>Comments noted. This will need to be considered at the detailed design stage. Work to date by officers has focused on the provision of the decked car park to the railway side of the land parcel and it is hoped that a single deck would offer minimal/if any encroachment onto the amenity of the existing residents.</p>



Respondent	Response	Officer Comment
	<p>It could be preferable to have entry directly into the new decked car park off Windsor Way as part of the redevelopment of the empty site at the end of Albert Road nearest to Aldershot Station. That would also reduce the potential for conflict between pedestrians walking to Aldershot Station and vehicles entering and leaving the decked car park at the bend on Station Road.</p> <p>Given the Government drive to build starter homes at station sites, it could be practicable to build flats above the decked car park. With active support from the Homes &amp; Communities Agency (HCA), this project could be advanced rapidly and make a contribution towards the HCA target of building 200,000 starter homes by 2020.</p> <p>With respect to making the entrance to Aldershot Station attractive to passengers arriving, Network Rail needs to make proper provision for maintenance of the environment on the land it owns. At present, all that is apparent to passengers arriving from London is a ghastly underpass that brings them out into a weed-strewn forecourt, a neglected small garden and raised beds in the car park, whose only contribution is yet more weeds, with the car park itself being surrounded on all sides by weeds.</p> <p>Princes Hall, Police Station and Magistrates Court</p> <p>Consideration needs first to be given to assessing jointly with Her Majesty's Courts Service (HMCS) whether it is better to redevelop this site as a whole, as the HMCS lease on the County Court in Victoria Road is due to expire, so HMCS is planning to integrate the County Court into the Magistrates Court building,</p>	<p>Initial work has been undertaken to consider a new access route off Windsor Way into the car park. Unfortunately, the access requirements in respect of gradients and the extent of a ramp needed to address the changes in topography make this an unviable option.</p> <p>Comments noted. The proposals seek to make best use of the existing bus station site for residential purposes. The concept of building flats above the decked car park would require further thought and will be reliant on the construction method for the car park.</p> <p>Comments noted. RBC is in discussions with the landowner over maintenance and how this will be incorporated into regeneration proposals. The Prospectus focuses more so on the principle of development.</p>

Respondent	Response	Officer Comment
	<p>which would involve a certain amount of reconfiguration.</p> <p>On the diagrams shown, the extent of this site to the south seems questionable because there is a low wall about halfway between the Princes Hall and the Westgate site, which seems to mark the boundary of the Westgate site, but that is not taken into account.</p> <p>In particular, the new steps up to the south side of the extension to the Princes Hall, do not take into account the two low walls one at the boundary of the Westgate site and the other inside the Westgate site, which offers a very stark face to Princes Hall. It would be preferable for the Princes Hall, Police Station and Magistrates Court site to be developed as a whole, rather than the piecemeal approach of retaining the Magistrates Court building.</p> <p>The extension to the front of the Princes Hall does not seem to be good value for money in terms of improving the cultural offer at Princes Hall, which could benefit from extensive improvements to enable it to accommodate bigger shows (pre- and post-West End) and better backstage provision.</p> <p>Also, there is the question of car parking for Princes Hall, which is already very much constrained following the construction of Westgate, whose car parking is very often filled by Morrisons shoppers and Cineworld customers. Both options for development do not seem to include car parking provision, particularly if there are residential units that require car parking spaces.</p> <p>Birchett Road</p>	<p>Comments noted. The plans within the Prospectus are indicative and will be subject to detailed design. The Prospectus seeks to promote the principle of development.</p> <p>Comments noted. The plans within the Prospectus are indicative and will be subject to detailed design. The Prospectus seeks to promote the principle of development.</p> <p>Comments noted. The plans within the Prospectus are indicative and it will be for RBC as the landowner to determine how best to progress with plans for the site, based on a combination of financial viability and public demand for the centre and its cultural offer.</p> <p>Comments noted. Car parking will need to be carefully considered as part of the proposals and will need to accord with the requirements of the Car and Cycle Standards SPD. This is a matter for detailed design.</p>

Respondent	Response	Officer Comment
	<p>It is not clear from this proposal (including the bottom diagram) whether it is intended to pedestrianize Frederick Street. Although there was planning permission for housing on this site, that permission has now lapsed, so that provides an opportunity to reconsider its use.</p> <p>For example, at the recent Budget Working Group of Rushmoor Borough Council, it was suggested that there could be an opportunity to develop this Birchett Road site in conjunction with the Council car park in Birchett Road (directly opposite the site) as that could make better use of both sites.</p> <p>Also, it looks as though access to car parking for this Birchett Road site would be by the service road for the shops fronting onto Victoria Road. However, this service road is often blocked by large delivery vehicles for Iceland, so some other access to car parking for housing on this Birchett Road site would be required.</p> <p>High Street</p> <p>It seemed like good news that The King’s Centre was acquired for refurbishment as an events venue for community use. The subsequent news that the owners have submitted a licensing application that sees it open four nights a week until 3.00 am raises the prospect of it being part of the night-time economy, which is associated with higher levels of anti-social behaviour and violence in Aldershot Town Centre.</p> <p>Although that is not a planning matter, that use could affect the prospects for future investment in the future of Aldershot Town</p>	<p>Comments noted. Seek clarification on this point and address it within the final version of the document.</p> <p>Comments noted. The plans within the Prospectus are indicative and will be subject to detailed design. Matters including access and servicing will be considered at this stage.</p> <p>Comments noted. The Prospectus was drafted on the understanding that the King Centre had been acquired as an events venue. Planning permission has since been granted for such a use. The issue of licencing falls outside of the remit of the Prospectus.</p> <p>Comments noted.</p>

Respondent	Response	Officer Comment
	<p>Centre if the poor reputation for late-night economy was reinforced.</p> <p>The proposal for infill development between the new Empire and the Gala Bingo Building would be an improvement on the existing use as a car wash, although the car wash is largely hidden from view behind advertisement hoardings.</p> <p>Hippodrome House area</p> <p>Much is made of the poor aspect presented by Hippodrome House in walking along Station Road from Aldershot Station, so a refurbishment would be welcome.</p> <p>However, the news that the Co-operative is to vacate the Victoria Road premises and its Birchett Road car park on 8 November, creates the exciting prospect of a more extensive redevelopment of that site than the Prospectus contains.</p> <p>It opens up the possibility of having a passageway diagonally across the site to Victoria Road and residential development on either side of the passageway and on the Birchett Road frontage, with retail units on the ground floor on Victoria Road.</p> <p>Making it happen</p> <p>As highlighted in the introduction a proactive approach is needed for these proposals to succeed.</p> <p>Although the Prospectus advances various funding agencies and sources of finance, it does not propose suitable mechanisms to coordinate all of these and bring them to bear on an overarching</p>	<p>Comments noted. No suggested change.</p> <p>Comments noted. No suggested change.</p> <p>Comments noted. This proposal was previously considered by Officers in order to create a better linkage to the town centre. However, it was discounted on the basis that existing use value of the site compared to the proposed use value would not offer enough of an incentive to bring forward a comprehensive scheme.</p>

Respondent	Response	Officer Comment
	<p>plan.</p> <p>For that, Rushmoor Borough Council needs to appoint a Project Director to act as the “champion” of Aldershot Town Centre in driving forward this development and investment while being democratically accountable to the local community.</p> <p>Also, Rushmoor Borough Council should consider setting up a joint venture company with suitable partners (in the way that the Westgate development did) in order to provide a suitable vehicle for managing development and investment in Aldershot Town Centre with the urgency required.</p>	<p>Comments noted. As mentioned earlier, this is a matter to be considered corporately and falls outside of the remit of the Prospectus SPD.</p> <p>Comments noted. As mentioned earlier, this is a matter to be considered corporately and falls outside of the remit of the Prospectus SPD. The Prospectus provides the foundation upon which to instigate such ventures.</p>
<p><b>Rushmoor Pedestrian Forum</b></p>	<p>To fulfil objectives to encourage more of us to walk into town, a good understanding of all the current pedestrian routes is required. The prospectus is mostly specific on the possible pedestrian routes joining the Wellesley route to the town centre but linkage to the rest of the town, especially the residential areas so close to the town centre, is essential.</p> <p>Good pedestrian circulation relies on good pedestrian permeability and ideas of re-creating a link between Union Street and High Street, removing the Galleries Bridge so as to create a new way into the Wellington Centre or new shops around a public space created on the site of the Galleries we would applaud.</p> <p>To link better the Prince’s theatre and Westgate with the Prince’s gardens and with the rest of the town one might consider severely limiting traffic along Prince’s way and perhaps making this road and parts of those joining it shared space with very limited vehicle speed and access.</p>	<p>Comments noted. No suggested change.</p> <p>Comments noted. The area to the front of the Princes Hall is identified as an area for public realm improvement. The indicative proposals for the Princes Hall show this area as a shared space.</p>



Respondent	Response	Officer Comment
	<p>Although the Victoria Road scheme tidied up part of the central region of that road it most certainly left outstanding problems for the pedestrian. Amongst these are crossing the entrance to the Wellington multi-storey car park on the north side of Victoria Road and crossing Frederick Street, Heathland Street and Gordon Road on the south side. Twenty mile an hour speed restrictions, with suitable traffic calming measures, are required on these three roads and the carpark entrance needs to give higher priority to pedestrians walking along Victoria road.</p> <p>In particular unless a holistic approach is taken to pedestrian circulation it is likely that pedestrian routes will become fragmented and good circulation not achieved. We again emphasise the importance of introducing 20mph zones, extending pedestrianisation wherever possible; additionally we feel that steps need to be taken to ensure that side turnings into carparks, minor roads and loading areas do not break up the continuity of pedestrian routes. To encourage people to do more of their short journeys on foot and ensure that pedestrian circulation is really achieved it is crucial that the pedestrian infrastructure is designed properly and in a way that favours the pedestrian.</p> <p>It's therefore vital that attempts to expand the evening scene must create an atmosphere that is acceptable to a wide age range and cultural outlook and ensures that the town is, at all times, a place where people are happy to walk round. A locality which has a 'rough' reputation is not going to be the kind of place many of us would wish to visit or walk round – people avoid places which they perceive to be unsafe.</p>	<p>Comments noted. Speed restrictions fall outside of the remit of the Prospectus document and would be a matter for Hampshire County Council to consider.</p> <p>Comments noted.</p> <p>Comments noted. Improvements to the public realm have sought to improve the perception of safety to pedestrians. The Court Road proposals have opened up a pedestrian route, with better lighting and surveillance whereas the Barrack Road/Grosvenor Road improvements have sought to make pedestrian movement the priority by reducing vehicular lane widths and removing vehicular movements from Barrack Road into Grosvenor Road.</p>

Respondent	Response	Officer Comment
	<p>Removing the bus station and redeveloping the site residentially could result in the starting points for the various bus services spread over the town centre. Changing between train and bus, changing between bus services, or using a bus service that one is not too familiar with are all aided by having the bus station and having this adjacent to the train station. This is a feature that needs to be retained, if use of public transport is to be encouraged.</p> <p>A careful reappraisal of the current road arrangement, introduction of low speed restriction, and redesign to favour pedestrian access is probably all that is required to improve pedestrian ways to the bus station. Some minor cosmetic work would improve the look of the area.</p> <p>We hope that better pedestrian circulation is achieved and the advantages of this to retailing is understood. The need to create a family friendly environment to support both the future and present population is very laudable. We feel that to achieve all of this the retail environment must be kept healthy and that just replacement of the shops by town centre apartments and by a café environment may not achieve the desired active and lively town centre. We warn against allowing the evening scene to be subjected to an alcohol dominated culture which would deter many of us visiting the town during late evening. We hope that proposals for development of the bus station do not set back attempts to encourage more use of public transport.</p>	<p>Comments noted. The intention is for the bus service to maintain a presence at the railway station. However, this will be in the form of a stop rather than a station/depot area. Stagecoach have been engaged and support the proposals put forward.</p> <p>Comments noted.</p> <p>Comments noted.</p>
<b>Aldershot Town FC</b>	<p>I would like Aldershot FC as part of the vision for Aldershot as we are the highest profile entity in Aldershot The club needs to be the hub of the business and local community</p>	<p>Comments noted. The football club is very important to the town and is identified as part of the cultural offer section of the SPD, however as the club falls outside of the defined town centre boundary, there is limited opportunity to include it as part of the vision for the town centre.</p>

Respondent	Response	Officer Comment
<b>Stagecoach</b>	<p>My overall impression of the plan is that it is exciting and visionary but that whilst it mentions the railway station a great deal and the proposals for the forecourt it seems to completely omit any facilities for buses throughout the town.</p> <p>Our bus services offer very frequent services from Farnham, Guildford, Farnborough and Camberley as well as all the local areas of housing. Due to the layout of the town, most buses circulate the town offering convenient drop off and pick up points. There is evidence that bus passengers spend per trip is less than car visitors but that they make more trips. Therefore, for a strong retail environment we believe that bus passengers are essential.</p> <p>There is considerable reference to car parking yet this will simply encourage car visitors yet there is no increase in road capacity and therefore the congestion on the local roads will simply increase which in turn will force people to seek alternative places to visit.</p>	<p>Comments noted. This matter will be picked up by Transport colleagues.</p> <p>Comments noted.</p> <p>Comments noted. RBC will seek transport contributions from new development in order to offset the impact. A number of schemes are identified within the Aldershot Town Access Plan.</p>
<b>Thames Water</b>	<p>It is important that the SPD considers the net increase in wastewater/sewerage [and water] demand to serve proposed developments and also any impact the development may have off site further down the network, if no/low water pressure and internal/external sewage flooding of property is to be avoided</p> <p>Thames Water therefore recommend that developers engage with them at the earliest opportunity to establish the following</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The developments demand for Sewage Treatment and</li> </ul>	<p>Comments noted. The policy framework in respect of water management and SUDs is set out within the adopted Core Strategy and will be incorporated into the emerging Local Plan. Any new development proposals will be considered against this wider policy framework.</p>

Respondent	Response	Officer Comment
	<p>network infrastructure both on and off site and can it be met</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The surface water drainage requirements and flood risk of the development both on and off site and can it be met</li> </ul> <p>To accord with the NPPF/NPPG and the above, text along the lines of the following should be added to the SPD:</p> <p><b><u>“Sewerage &amp; Wastewater Infrastructure</u></b></p> <p><b><i>It is essential that developers demonstrate that adequate sewerage and wastewater treatment infrastructure capacity exists both on and off the site to serve the development and that it would not lead to problems for existing users. In some circumstances this may make it necessary for developers to carry out appropriate studies to ascertain whether the proposed development will lead to overloading of existing sewerage infrastructure. Where there is a capacity problem and no improvements are programmed by the water company, then the developer needs to contact the water company to agree what improvements are required and how they will be delivered and completed prior to any occupation of the development.</i></b></p> <p><b><i>Further information for Developers on sewerage infrastructure can be found on Thames Water’s website at:</i></b>  <a href="http://www.thameswater.co.uk/home/11425.htm">http://www.thameswater.co.uk/home/11425.htm</a></p> <p><b><i>Or contact can be made with Thames Water Developer Services  By post at: Thames Water Developer Services, Reading  Mailroom, Rose Kiln Court, Rose Kiln Lane, Reading RG2 0BY;  By telephone on: 0845 850 2777;</i></b></p>	

Respondent	Response	Officer Comment
	<p><b>Or by email: <a href="mailto:developer.services@thameswater.co.uk">developer.services@thameswater.co.uk</a></b></p> <p>Limiting the opportunity for surface water entering the foul and combined sewer networks is of critical importance to Thames Water. Thames Water have advocated an approach to SuDS that limits as far as possible the volume of and rate at which surface water enters the public sewer system. By doing this, SuDS have the potential to play an important role in helping to ensure the sewerage network has the capacity to cater for population growth and the effects of climate change.</p> <p>SuDS not only help to mitigate flooding, they can also help to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• improve water quality</li> <li>• provide opportunities for water efficiency</li> <li>• provide enhanced landscape and visual features</li> <li>• support wildlife</li> <li>• and provide amenity and recreational benefits.</li> </ul> <p>With regard to surface water drainage, Thames Water request that the following paragraph should be included in the Design SPD: <b><i>“It is the responsibility of a developer to make proper provision for surface water drainage to ground, water courses or surface water sewer. It must not be allowed to drain to the foul sewer, as this is the major contributor to sewer flooding.”</i></b></p>	
<p><b>The Theatres Trust</b></p>	<p>The Trust welcomes the retention and refurbishment of Princes Hall in this document and indeed recognises the potential for a s106 agreement for redevelopment of the surrounding sites to pay for the refurbishment of the Hall.</p> <p>However, from our experience across the UK, having residential use in close proximity to a theatre or performance venue</p>	<p>Comments noted. No suggested change.</p> <p>Comments noted. As the landowner, it would be in the</p>



Respondent	Response	Officer Comment
	<p>inevitably creates serious issues for both the venue and the new residents. Where there are insufficient safeguards in place (mainly via sound insulation and creative design), disputes can emerge and the new residents can request a Noise Abatement Notice be issued by the council on the theatre restricting its activities and putting it at risk of closure.</p> <p>In order to safeguard the theatre, this SPD should note that any new development adjacent to Princes Hall must be designed and constructed in such a way that the two uses will not conflict with each other. We note that the stage door and delivery dock are to the rear of the site and it will be essential that access and parking for 16.5m long articulated delivery vehicles will be maintained. This will also be a source of noise. The alternate provision of car parking for the theatre will also need to be addressed at this stage, as this will also affect the viability of the long term Princes Hall.</p>	<p>Council's interest to ensure that appropriate safeguards are in place to ensure that it can fulfil its commitment to providing a successful theatre.</p> <p>Comments noted. The proposals within the SPD reflect an indicative scheme and should not be read as a detailed design. The points raised would be considered at this later stage.</p>
<p><b>Columbia Threadneedle Investments</b></p>	<p>The draft Prospectus in its current form is concerning in a number of areas and our client feels that these need to be addressed before the document can reasonably be considered capable of playing a useful role in the planning process. These areas are:</p> <p>i. engagement;</p> <p>Our client was surprised not to have been given an opportunity to engage with Allies and Morrison during the preparatory stages of this draft Prospectus. Columbia Threadneedle Investments are a major landowner and key commercial stakeholder in the town centre, so we would have expected the Council to consult with them as a matter of course before publishing a document that promotes their asset for</p>	<p>Comments noted. Allies and Morrison to clarify if Threadneedle was engaged.</p>

Respondent	Response	Officer Comment
	<p>redevelopment.</p> <p>ii. financial viability and deliverability</p> <p>We are particularly interested to review the evidence justifying development proposals for The Galleries, as we would like to understand how the Council arrived at its decision to identify the site as suitable for: (i) a significant amount of public realm, such as a public square and an outdoor pedestrian link; and (ii) a large leisure facility.</p> <p>In order to engage fully with this consultation exercise, we need to understand the decision-making and criteria used in support of the draft Prospectus' development options, and to what extent considerations of land value and cost (particularly SANG mitigation) have informed the criteria in use.</p> <p>iii. site capacity.</p> <p>The Galleries presents one of the best opportunities in the Borough to deliver development that is highly sustainable in planning terms. The site occupies a prominent brownfield location in the heart of the town centre and it is important that future options maximise the development potential of this location in order to reduce pressure on other less sustainable sites.</p> <p>It follows that we do not agree that the site is only capable of accommodating perhaps 54 or 121 units. It is unclear how this capacity has been calculated; it appears to us that the this quantum of development fails to make best use of this previously-developed site in line with the requirements of the</p>	<p>Comments noted. Montagu Evans provided the viability evidence to support the proposals put forward within the Prospectus. RBC is happy to meet with the landowner to discuss this information.</p> <p>Comments noted.</p> <p>The capacity has been calculated taking into account general assumptions such as standard unit size and circulation space. Final capacity would be the subject of detailed design.</p> <p>For such a major proposal, RBC would expect a scheme to be</p>

Respondent	Response	Officer Comment
	<p>NPPF. In our view, both of the options cited in the draft Prospectus significantly underplay the capacity of this site to accommodate a major mixed use development. Our client has drawn up several development schemes for The Galleries, all of which have been subject to detailed feasibility and market testing and indicate that over 200 units could be accommodated. We have discussed these options previously with the Council and would be willing to share this work with the Council again.</p> <p>There are potentially significant anomalies in the current proposed layout of the development plans for The Galleries, including the location of development on Little Wellington Street. This land is not in our client's ownership, it would require a stopping up of the public highway, and it conflicts with the configuration of The Arcade Shopping Centre's northern elevation.</p> <p>At this stage, we remain concerned that the current draft Prospectus promotes tightly-defined redevelopment options. This approach potentially compromises the ability of our client to achieve certainty regarding the range of acceptable planning uses specific to its asset and would, on this basis, conflict with the Council's aspirations for early development of the site.</p>	<p>of good design, taking into account details such as the national prescribed space standards. Officers have noted concerns in this respect with the options presented by the landowner to date. In addition, given the prominence and importance of the Galleries site within Aldershot Town Centre, the proposed scheme should be viewed as more than a capacity exercise and this is what has underpinned the alternative approaches put forward within the Prospectus.</p> <p>Comments noted. The proposals set out within the SPD are indicative and will need to be the subject of detailed design at a later stage.</p> <p>Comments noted. The proposals outlined within the Prospectus are indicative and RBC would welcome the opportunity to further discuss proposals with the landowner.</p>
<b>Waverley Borough Council</b>	We have no comments to make at this stage.	Comments noted. No suggested change.







# ALDERSHOT TOWN CENTRE PROSPECTUS

Supplementary Planning Document

January 2016





Image: Victoria Day in Aldershot

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# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Aldershot Prospectus Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) sets out a strategy for regeneration in Aldershot Town Centre for the coming 10-15 years. The SPD provides a framework to guide future development in the town centre and identifies investment opportunities to establish a clear set of funding priorities for Rushmoor Borough Council. The document supplements planning policy in the Rushmoor Plan Core Strategy and will be a material planning consideration for future planning applications in the town centre.

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.

A strategic vision statement provides the overarching approach for future development and investment in Aldershot town centre. A number of key themes are then set out for the town centre, each with a review of Aldershot's existing assets and a number of initiatives and projects identified to help enhance the town's offer. These are:

## **1. A revitalised town centre offer**

to support existing retail businesses in the town centre and encourage others to open. This includes the shopfront improvement initiative and suggestions for bringing vacant units back into use. The Core Strategy's retail hierarchy for the town centre is supported.

## **2. Town centre living**

to bring more residents into the town centre through more effective use of vacant upper floors in existing buildings and through appropriate new residential development on key sites identified in the SPD

## **3. A family-friendly town centre**

drawing on the town's great parks and open spaces and its sports and leisure facilities. Opportunities to enhance these facilities are identified and improving accessibility - on foot, by bike, by public transport and by car - is highlighted as a priority.

## **4. An improved cultural offer**

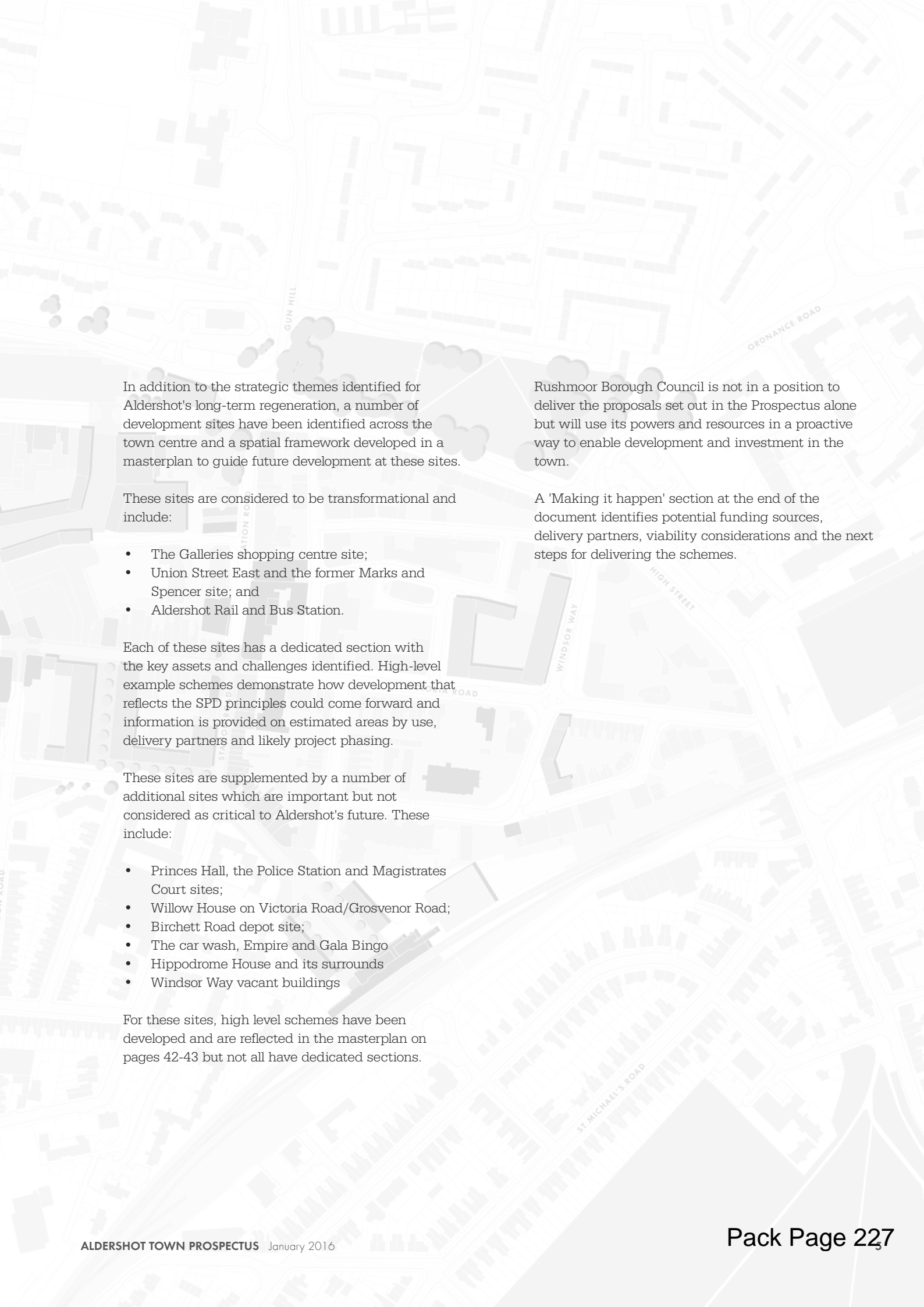
sets out ideas for refurbishing and expanding Princes Hall Theatre, in coordination with other development in the town centre. This is coupled with suggestions for raising the profile of town centre venues and collaborating with artists to bring vacant buildings back into use.

## **5. Investing in streets and spaces**

highlights some of the investments made in the town centre in recent years and identifies future funding priorities. A plan is provided, identifying key spaces and opportunities.

## **6. Affirming the Victorian heritage**

showcases the fantastic historic built fabric in the town centre and sets out the Council's intention to promote, protect, enhance and preserve this. Key buildings are identified, along with important views and possible initiatives to celebrate Aldershot's heritage.



In addition to the strategic themes identified for Aldershot's long-term regeneration, a number of development sites have been identified across the town centre and a spatial framework developed in a masterplan to guide future development at these sites.

These sites are considered to be transformational and include:

- The Galleries shopping centre site;
- Union Street East and the former Marks and Spencer site; and
- Aldershot Rail and Bus Station.

Each of these sites has a dedicated section with the key assets and challenges identified. High-level example schemes demonstrate how development that reflects the SPD principles could come forward and information is provided on estimated areas by use, delivery partners and likely project phasing.

These sites are supplemented by a number of additional sites which are important but not considered as critical to Aldershot's future. These include:

- Princes Hall, the Police Station and Magistrates Court sites;
- Willow House on Victoria Road/Grosvenor Road;
- Birchett Road depot site;
- The car wash, Empire and Gala Bingo
- Hippodrome House and its surrounds
- Windsor Way vacant buildings

For these sites, high level schemes have been developed and are reflected in the masterplan on pages 42-43 but not all have dedicated sections.

Rushmoor Borough Council is not in a position to 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 'Making it happen' section at the end of the document identifies potential funding sources, delivery partners, viability considerations and the next steps for delivering the schemes.



# INTRODUCTION

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

The Prospectus has been adopted as a Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) and is a material planning consideration for future planning applications in the town centre. The SPD replaces 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 policy in the Rushmoor Plan Core Strategy that exists for development in the town.

Rushmoor Borough Council is not in a position to 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



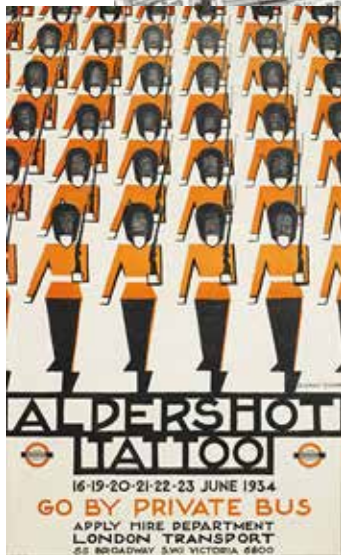
Union Street pre-1920

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.

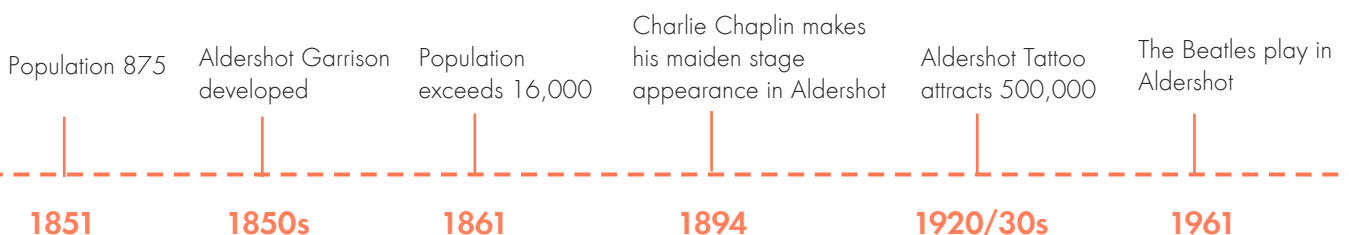


Aldershot Tattoo poster 1934



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 new 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 Enterprise 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.

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) 2014 has identified a significant requirement for new homes in the town above this, and town centre living presents a key opportunity to meet this housing need.



Aldershot is located central to the Enterprise M3 Local Economic Partnership

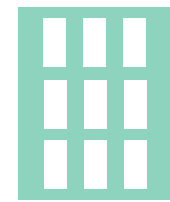


## TOWN CENTRE OPPORTUNITIES FOR.....

NEW HOMES



OFFICE SPACE



LEISURE USES



RETAIL SPACE

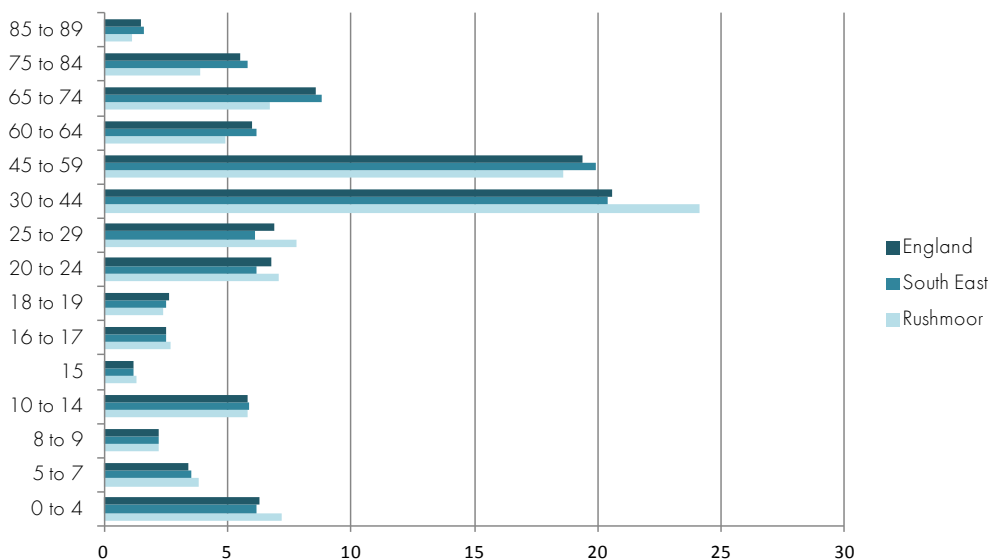


### A pro-active town centre approach

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 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 2011)

## 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.

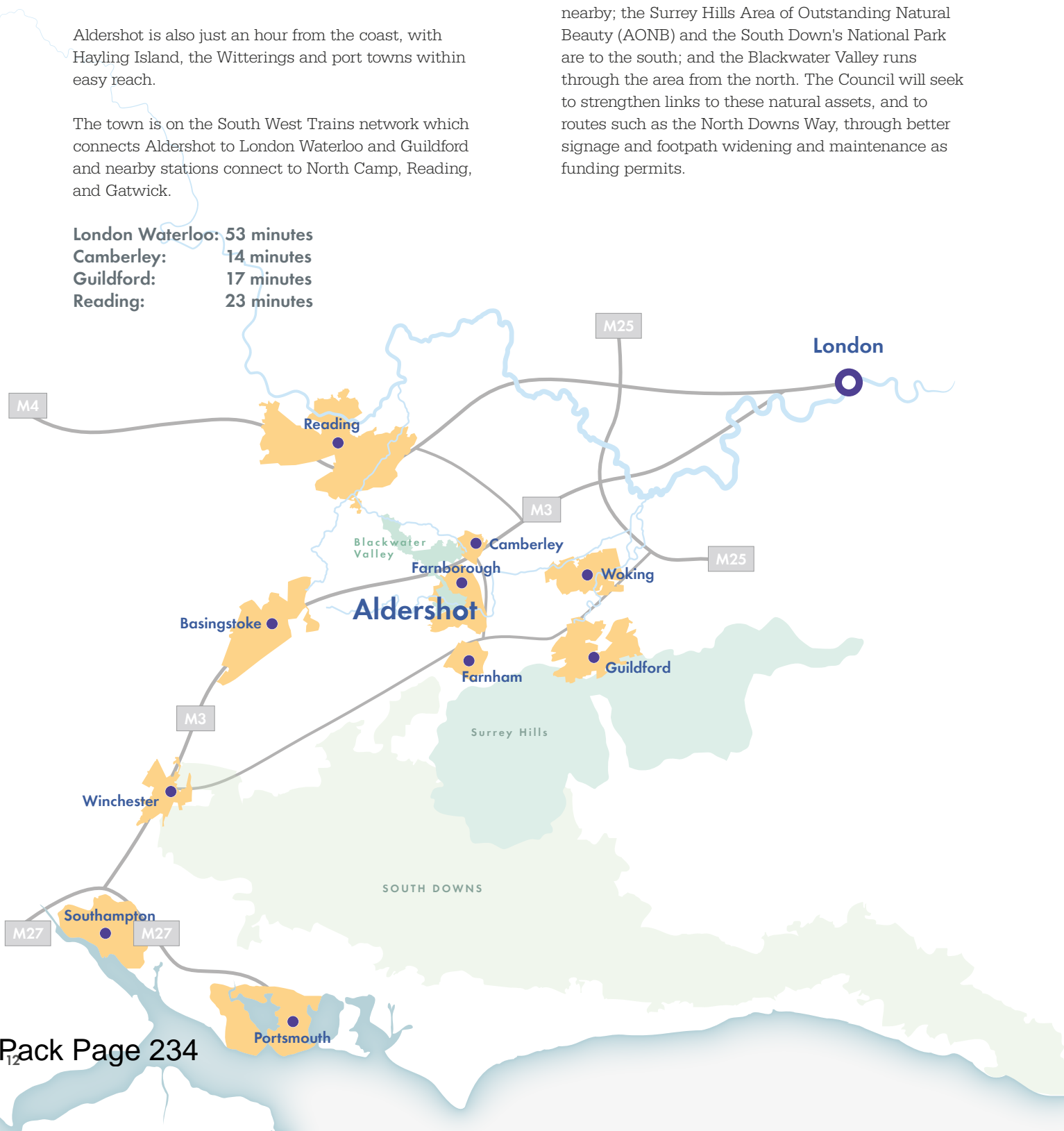
Aldershot is also just an hour from the coast, with Hayling Island, the Witterings and port towns within easy reach.

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 footpath widening and maintenance as funding permits.









## 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 under construction.

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



A new home at Wellesley



Links to 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 Leisure Park brought a new multiplex cinema to Aldershot town centre, along with a number of high street restaurant names, and has been very successful since opening. 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 Leisure Park 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.

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 SPD masterplan sets out opportunities for new homes and leisure uses in the centre, both of which will support the town's shops and add to the vitality and viability of the area.

The Council has 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 shop front improvements which is enabling retailers to improve the profile and appearance of their shops. The opportunity for this to be expanded to include building façade improvements for historic buildings with shops at ground floor, is being explored.

Many shopping areas coordinate efforts to raise their profile and improve the trading environment by forming a Business Improvement District (BID) and the Council will explore the feasibility of this for Aldershot.

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.



### Improving the trading environment

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

The Council will explore the potential for a Business Improvement District (BID) for the town centre, to co-ordinate measures to raise the profile of the centre, hold events and improve the environment.



### Bringing vacant buildings into use

The Council will explore the purchase or rental of vacant units in the town centre, with a view to leasing these at affordable rents to support start-ups in the town or work with artists and makers to use the space for exhibitions and education uses. Links with University of the Creative Arts will be explored for this.



### 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. Opportunity also exists to make better use of vacant floors above shops in the town centre. These spaces would have provided homes when built, and refurbishment would make better use of existing buildings, provide much needed homes and support the town centre.

The SPD has identified potential for new homes in the town centre from the key sites set out on pages 42-43. 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 Standards 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

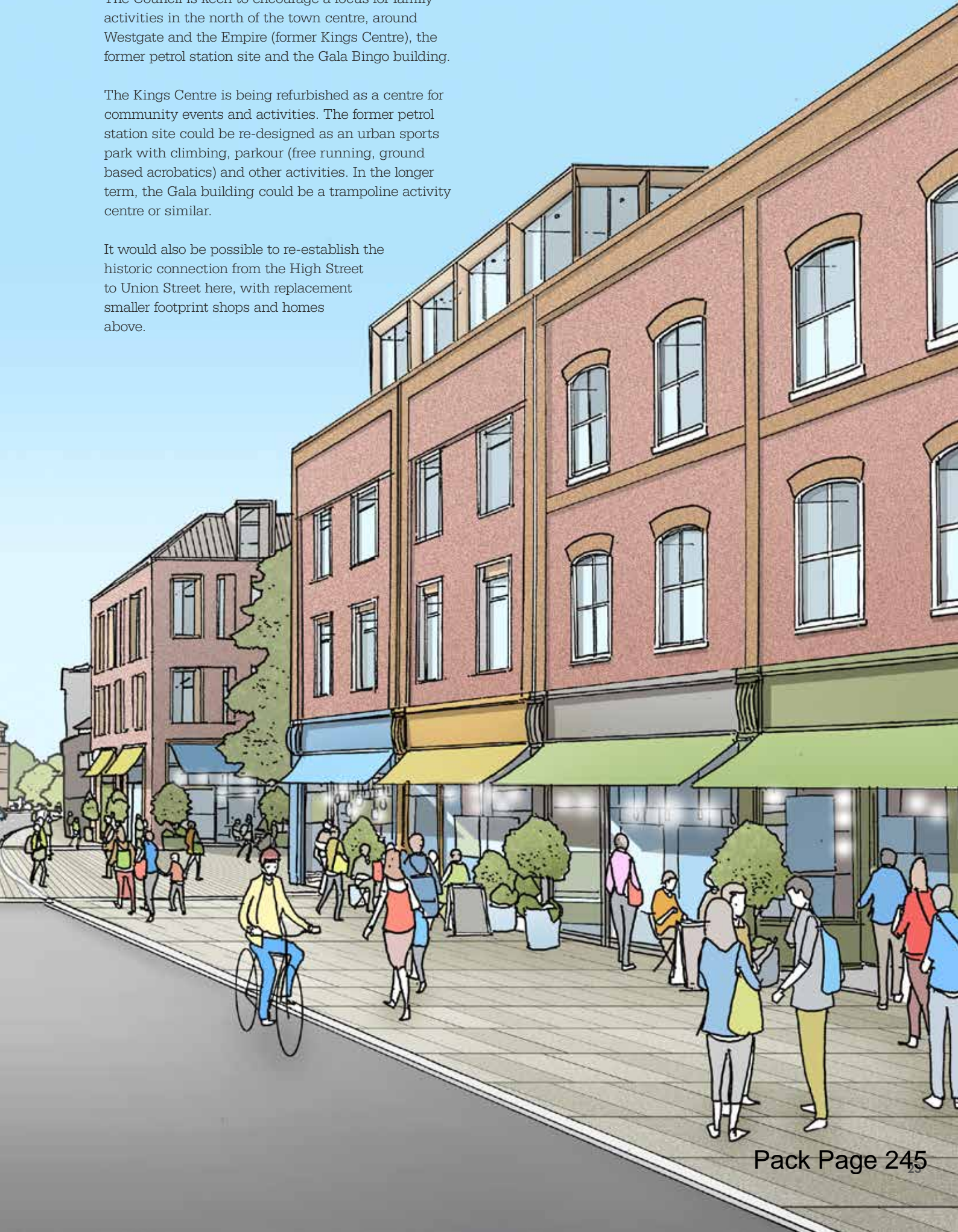




The Council is keen to encourage a focus for family activities in the north of the town centre, around Westgate and the Empire (former Kings Centre), the former petrol station site and the Gala Bingo building.

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.



## Sports and leisure

Aldershot has an impressive range of sports facilities and activities, including the football club, dry ski-slope, gymnastics centre and swimming pool. The council will explore the potential for establishing leisure facilities in the town centre to complement these and 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 and path maintenance and enhancement, as funding becomes available. The Wellesley Heritage Trail is one example of this initiative and a green link from Hospital Hill to the centre and from the canal and training heaths to the centre will also be explored.

Aldershot has a range of high quality town parks, including the Municipal Gardens, Princes Gardens and Manor Park. These will all be safe-guarded and improved, as and when funding becomes available.

## Accessibility

Providing a family-friendly town centre means ensuring accessibility for all. Coordinated public transport infrastructure with well-placed bus stops at the station, on the High Street and at outlying supermarkets is an important part of this. Pressing for improvements to rail connections will also support family living in the town by improving access to jobs

Cycling infrastructure is essential. This includes providing sufficient cycle parking at the rail station and in the town centre. It also includes providing cycle lanes on key routes into the town centre so that cycling can be a means of transport and not just a leisure activity.

In addition to strong public transport and cycling infrastructure, affordable and safe parking facilities are needed. The Council's Parking Strategy covers these issues and will continue to be reviewed.



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





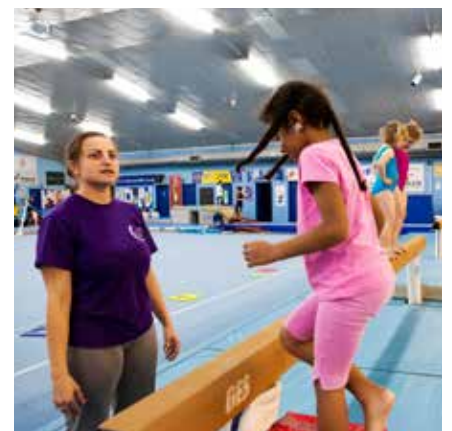
**Sports on the doorstep**

Aldershot has an array of sports and activities including Aldershot Football Club, the ski slope, gymnastics training 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

Aldershot town centre's cultural offer includes the much-loved Princes Hall theatre and the popular West End Centre in Queens Road. The town has a central library, on the High Street, and a full programme of street-based events throughout the year.

The SPD identifies opportunities for further enhancing this cultural offer by extending the theatre provision and raising the profile of other arts spaces.

The proximity of the University of Creative Arts in Farnham can be capitalised upon, and Rushmoor Borough Council will explore the potential for vacant units in the centre to be made available to artists for exhibitions or educational uses.

In the longer term, the library could be brought to a more central location, raising its profile and accessibility as an important community anchor.







### 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 continue to serve audiences in the future.



### 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 cultural and events programme

Aldershot has a full programme of cultural events and activities at venues such as the great West End Centre and on-street. These all 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.

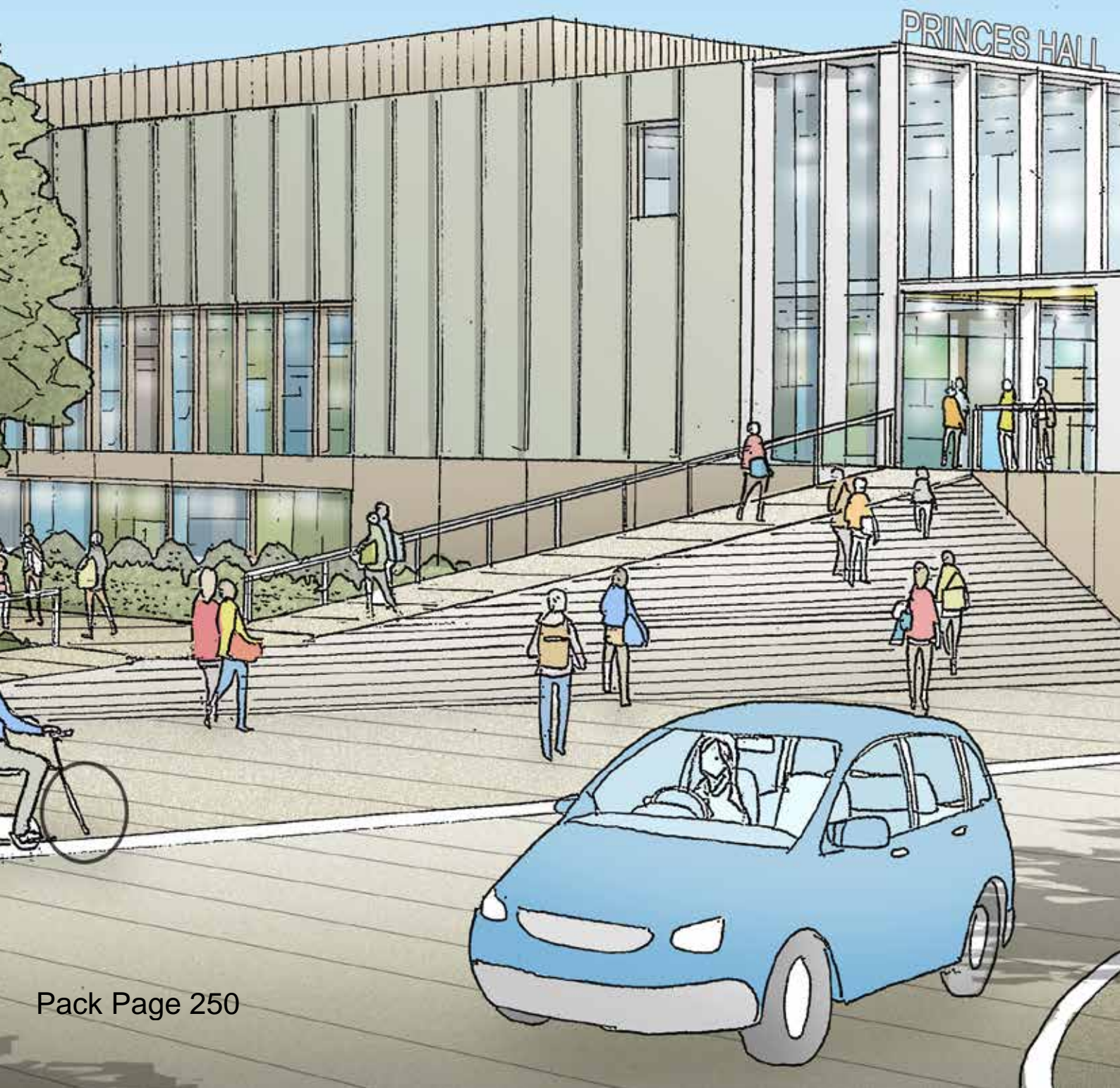




# PRINCES HALL: POTENTIAL FOR TRANSFORMATION

Opportunity exists to refurbish and extend Princes Hall at the front, to provide a stronger relationship with Princes Gardens and Westgate Leisure Park.

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.







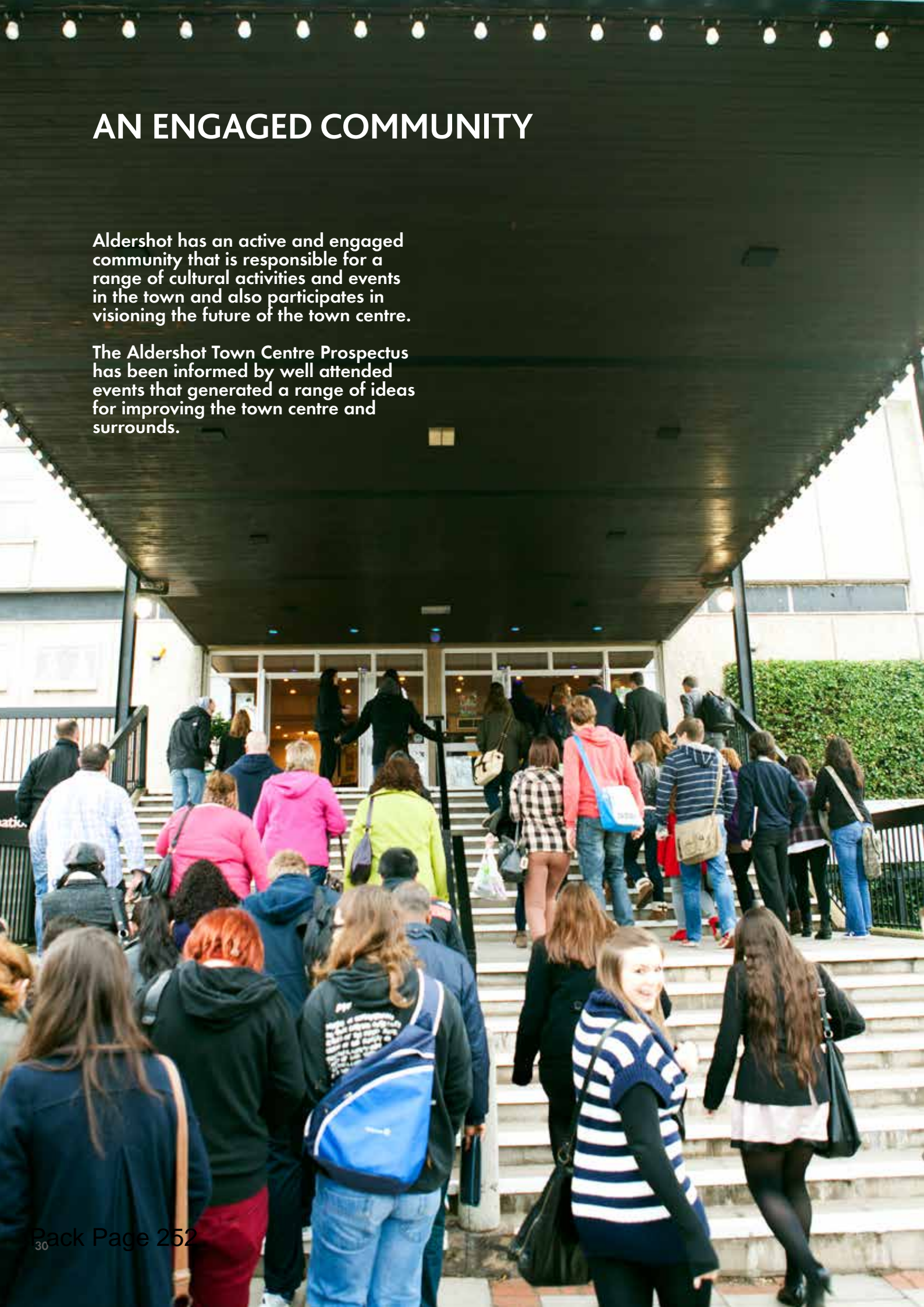
BOX OFFICE



# 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 Leisure Park 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 network as well as a new multi-storey car park will improve the experience of arriving in Aldershot by train and help to reduce the conflict between cars, buses and pedestrians in the area.
- Accessibility improvements that link to the new Wellesley development, pedestrian crossings on the high street as well as potentially new and improved pedestrian 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 Leisure Park 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 visitors 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 events 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.



# PUBLIC REALM INVESTMENT OPPORTUNITIES

Improvements to Princes Way to strengthen the links from Wellesley

A potential re-established 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
- Priority areas for landscape improvements
- Other areas for 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



- Improvements to Court Road and beyond to connect to Wellesley
- An improved crossing at the car park and enhanced landscaping in front of the library
- An outdoor pedestrian link to replace the Galleries link, with potential for a small public space
- Enhanced landscaping of the station approach, bus station and parking area

# 6 AFFIRMING THE VICTORIAN HERITAGE

With the role of UK town centres shifting away from a retail focus towards a leisure, 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 and other buildings of local importance.

Many of the finer historic buildings in the town centre are located at crossroads and the Council will seek to

enhance the public realm at these points 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 being implemented for historic buildings on key streets such as Station Road and Union Street, with funding 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.



A broad indication of clusters of historically significant buildings at crossroads. Willow House on Victoria Road/Grosvenor Road is not historic but occupies a prominent location - redevelopment at this site is supported, to complete the setting of the three listed buildings.



A composite photo showing historic 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.





# PROMOTING, PROTECTING, ENHANCING AND PRESERVING

Aldershot has a number of listed and locally listed buildings, identified in red and orange in the plan below. In addition to these individual historic buildings, many buildings in the town centre have group value, such as the row of historic buildings on the High Street.

The Council will support preservation and enhancement of these buildings proportionate to their heritage significance and will seek to ensure that any conversions or refurbishment of historic buildings

are made sensitively. Grosvenor Road has been identified as a priority for ensuring interventions do not undermine the historic integrity of buildings and streets.

The Council will also more actively promote Aldershot's historic assets through the development of a heritage route that takes in the town's Victorian and military heritage and coordinates with the planned Wellesley Heritage Trail.



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



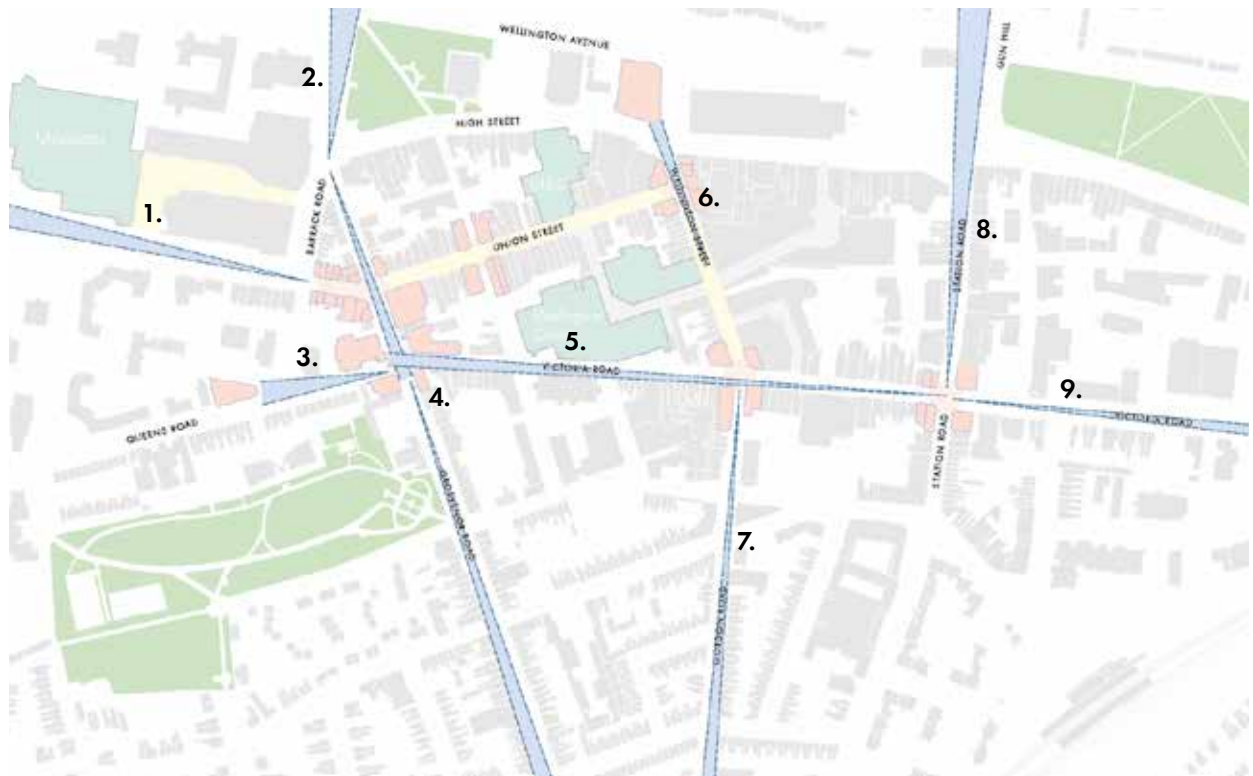




# PRESERVING AND ENHANCING VIEWS

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.

Not all views in the town centre are positive. Key vehicular routes into the centre are currently poor and focus will be given to improving these in the future, including review of any planning applications with this objective in mind.



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, outdoor play and events venue

**Union Street:** Regeneration of the Union Street block with new retail and residential development

**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

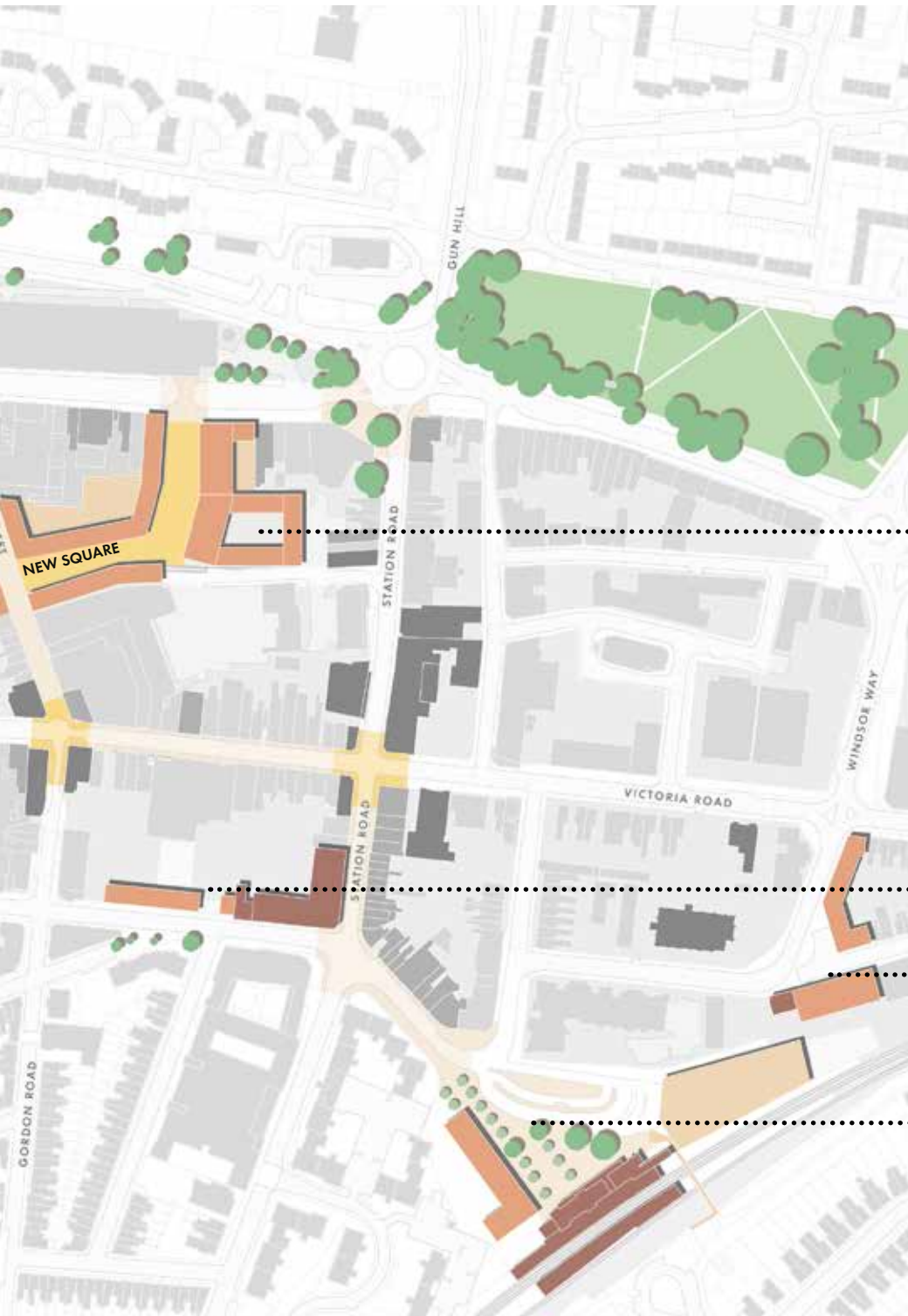


- Public realm improvements
- Key public spaces for investment
- Car park development
- Proposed development
- Potential refurbished existing buildings
- Listed buildings
- Other historic buildings



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



**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. Potential also exists for a commercial leisure centre within new development. Visitors would be able to make use of the existing car parking capacity in the High Street car park and the facility would act as a non-retail draw for the town centre, with potential to attract people 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.

Cycle parking should be included in any scheme here.

**Top: Option for the Galleries site with retail and town centre uses fronting the pedestrian connection and residential above**

**Bottom: A retail and residential scheme that includes a commercial leisure centre at ground floor**



Option 1



Option 2 - dotted red area shows additional commercial/leisure space

- Public realm improvements
- Key public spaces for investment
- Proposed development
- Listed buildings
- Other historic buildings

## Key information and delivery approach

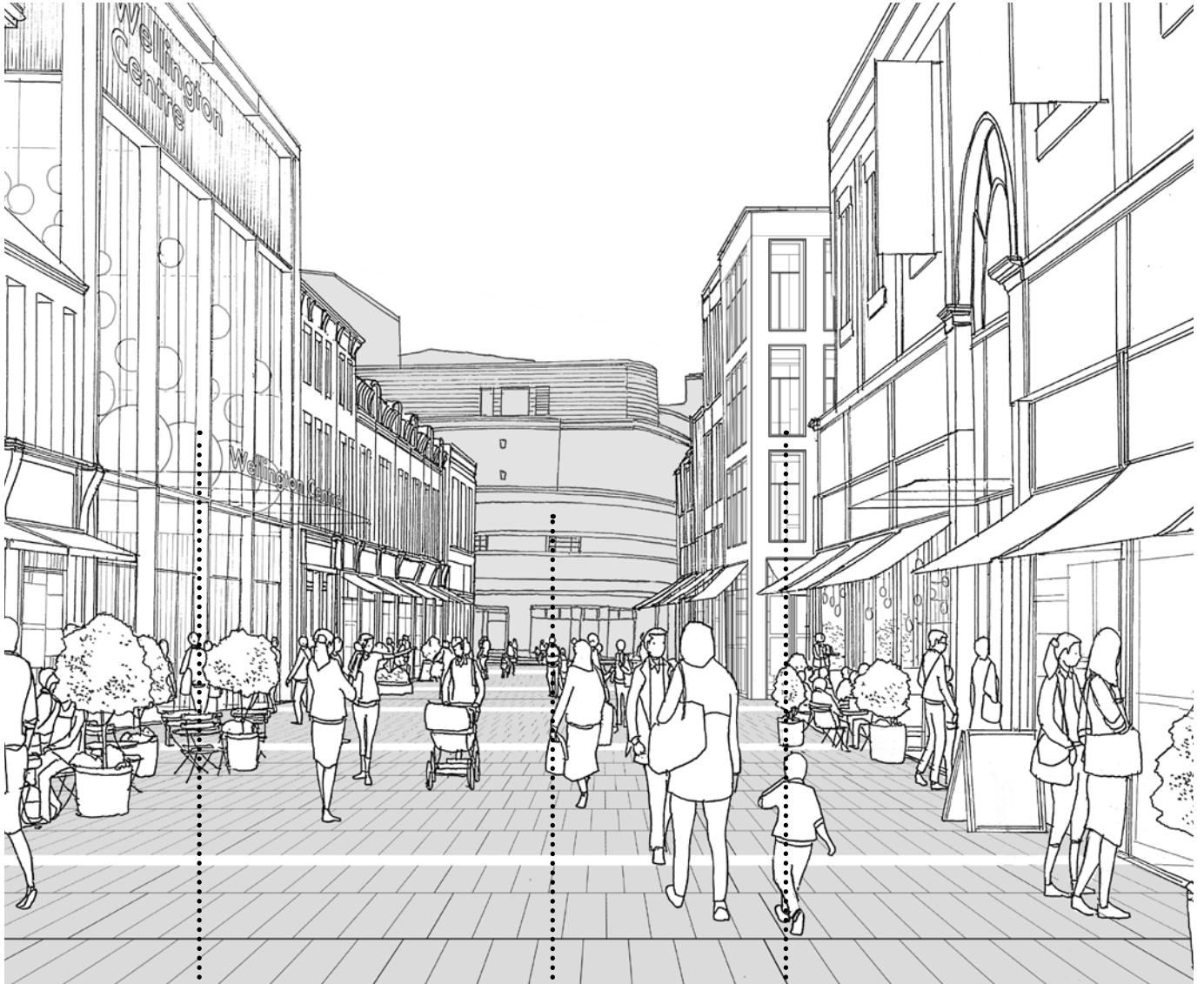
<b>Project Description</b>	Redevelopment of vacant Galleries shopping mall for either: Option 1: As mixed use retail/active town centre uses/residential scheme Option 2: As above but with commercial leisure space
<b>Potential uses</b>	Option 1 – 3,800 sqm retail, 12,800 sqm gross residential (est. 130 units). Option 2 – 950 sqm commercial leisure, 3,150 sqm retail; 12,800 sqm gross residential (est. 130 units).
<b>Current Uses</b>	Vacant shopping mall
<b>Ownership</b>	Private ownership (Threadneedle)
<b>Delivery Approach</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Private sector led delivery</li> <li>• Public sector led developer procurement</li> </ul>
<b>Delivery Timeframes Phasing</b>	Option 1: 0-5 years Option 2: 0-5 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. Options exist to refurbish the buildings in their current configuration, or to retain the facades and as much of the original buildings as possible, whilst reconfiguring the site to create modern retail spaces and residences.

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 and potential exists to create a town square as part of a scheme which would need to be well-defined and enclosed by active frontages. The two sites could be brought forward as a single development project.

-  Public realm improvements
-  Key public spaces for investment
-  Proposed development
-  Potential refurbished existing buildings
-  Listed buildings
-  Other historic buildings



Option 1



Option 2



Above: high quality historic fabric above the shop fronts

## 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. These could come forward as one scheme.</p> <p>Union Street East (54-62).</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Refurbishment of retail at ground floor with office/storage above</li> <li>2. Mixed retail/other active town centre uses/leisure with residential above</li> </ol> <p>Former Marks &amp; Spencer. Two options considered:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Re-configuration/reuse of retail space with office/storage space above</li> <li>2. Redevelopment of building with ground floor active town centre use and residential above</li> </ol>
<p><b>Potential uses</b></p>	<p>Union Street East:</p> <p>Option 1: 500 sqm residential (est 6 units); 2,600 sqm retail/leisure space refurbished; 4,400 sqm office/storage space</p> <p>Option 2: 4,600 sqm residential (est. 50 units); 2,600 sqm retail/active town centre use/leisure service</p> <p>Former M&amp;S:</p> <p>Option 1: 2,300 sqm reconfigured retail and 2,200 sqm office/storage above</p> <p>Option 2: 1,500 sqm retail/town centre uses; 3,700 sqm residential (est 40 units) above</p>
<p><b>Current Uses</b></p>	<p>Union Street East – Unit retail, with significant vacancies</p> <p>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>Union Street East: Public sector led developer partner procurement</p> <p>Former M&amp;S site: Private sector developer</p>
<p><b>Delivery Timeframes / Phasing</b></p>	<p>Union Street East – 0-5 years</p> <p>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 railway station, including the parking, bus stands and highway environment 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 accessibility in the area is complex, including buses, taxis, cyclists, pedestrians, 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 Enterprise Partnership (LEP) by Rushmoor Borough 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. The proposal involves significant changes to the existing forecourt of the railway station, by way of public realm improvements, that will result in a pedestrian friendly environment supported by a realigned public transport interchange that incorporates buses, taxis, cycling and a 'kiss and drop' facility and the provision of a new decked car park to offset the loss of existing car parking spaces. Additional cycle parking should be included in any landscaping designs, to maximise sustainable links to the rail station and minimise congestion at peak commuting times.

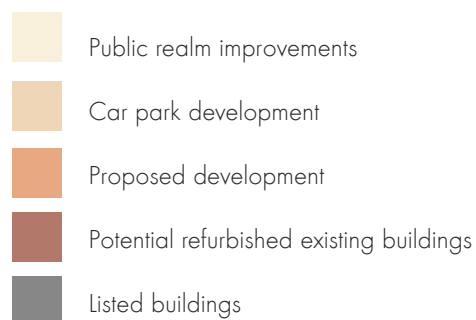
Any tree planting included in landscaping for a scheme at the rail station should not mask the view of the historic station building.

Nearby redundant sites on Windsor Way could be brought forward in connection with the station area scheme, including replacement of Penmark House and refurbishment of the adjacent historic building.



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

**Bottom: The existing Victorian Station building**





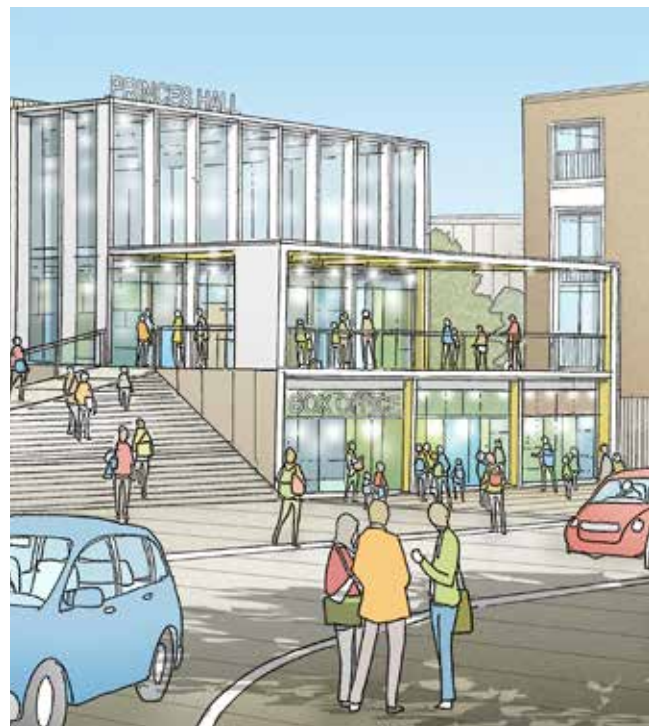
## Key information and delivery approach

<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          Reconfiguration of the public transport interchange and release of existing bus station site for residential/retail development</p>
<b>Project Outputs</b>	<p>car park          2,800 sqm gross residential (est. 28 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 public transport interchange: 0-5 years          Redevelopment of bus station: 0-5 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 help the building to integrate better with the successful Westgate Leisure Park as part of Aldershot's growing evening economy. Refurbishment also presents the opportunity to explore whether the theatre could be expanded to help attract touring shows to the town.

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 so there is an opportunity to enhance and retain the Police Station for public sector community benefit. In the event of the relocation of the Magistrates Court, the site could have potential for residential redevelopment.



- Public realm improvements
- Proposed development
- Potential refurbished existing buildings
- Listed buildings

Top: Development plan to replace the Magistrates Court and remodel Princes Hall

Bottom: Proposals for the remodelling of the Princes Hall

## Key information and delivery approach

<b>Project Description</b>	<p>Refurbishment and investment in Princes Hall theatre. Following the closure of the Police Station, retain the building for public sector community benefit. In the longer term, if the Magistrates Court was relocated, there could be a separate redevelopment of the Court and Police Station.</p>
<b>Potential uses</b>	<p>Princes Hall – 3,900 sqm refurbished theatre 900 sqm gross residential (est. 100 units)</p>
<b>Current Uses</b>	<p>Theatre, police station and magistrates court.</p>
<b>Ownership</b>	<p>All sites in public ownership (Council, Police, Magistrates)</p>
<b>Overarching Delivery Approach</b>	<p>Princes Hall – Public Sector led contractor procurement Police – Private Sector developer Magistrates – Private Sector developer Each development plot is expected to be delivered separately</p>
<b>Delivery Time frames / Phasing</b>	<p>Princes Hall: 0-5 years Police Station and Magistrates : 5-10 years</p>

## 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 for residential redevelopment 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. 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.

Opportunity might exist as part of a scheme here to improve the character of Frederick Street with landscaping works and possibly by establishing a shared surface.



- Public realm improvements
- Key public spaces for investment
- Proposed development
- Listed buildings

**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>	5,200 sqm gross residential (est. 55 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 their retention and re-use, given their important contribution to the character of Aldershot town centre, provided suitable uses can be identified.

The King's Centre was recently acquired by a private investor and has been 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.

-  Public realm improvements
-  Key public spaces for investment
-  Proposed development
-  Potential refurbished existing buildings
-  Listed buildings
-  Other historic buildings



**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 – 3,900 sqm refurbished space (983 sqm over 4 floors)          Car Wash – 780 sqm leisure          Gala Bingo – 5,200 sqm refurbished space (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.</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 – 0-1 years          Car Wash – 0-5 years          Gala Bingo – 10-15 years +</p>

## 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. 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 residential 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 improve the existing office space and to enhance the arrival to the town centre from the station.



- Public realm improvements
- Key public spaces for investment
- Proposed development
- Potential refurbished existing buildings
- Listed buildings
- Other historic buildings



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); 1,200 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.

## Project Priorities

While an holistic approach to renewing Aldershot town centre should be at the heart of any over arching strategy, inevitably not all projects will progress at the same time. Scarce resources may mean too that certain, more strategic sites in Aldershot town centre may be prioritised for investment and change.

Priorities for the town centre are considered to be:

- Union Street
- The Galleries
- Aldershot Rail and Bus Station

The enabling of these developments is likely to have the greatest physical positive impact on renewing Aldershot town centre, partly due to their due to their scale and – particularly for Union Street and the Galleries – their highly central location.

## Project Linkages

There are also clear town centre project linkages – some are physical in nature; others are enabling and sustaining. They include:

- Bringing forward significant new residential accommodation, which in turn will support retail and other leisure activities.
- Improving Aldershot Rail and Bus Station, so the perception of Aldershot to new residents is one of an attractive and accessible centre.
- Redevelopment of the Galleries and improvement to the Wellington Centre entrance through removal of the connecting bridge

Where appropriate, rationalising retail and service activity whilst at the same time improving available retail stock so it is more attractive to potential operators, thus increasing the prospects of enticing new businesses to the town. In part, delivering change at Union Street and the Galleries would help support this aim.

## 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

Asset Backed Vehicles (LABVs) may too have a role to play if of a sufficient size to be attractive. Asset backed vehicles are a delivery mechanism, with significant potential to lever in private sector funding usually across multi- sites in the form of a joint venture. In a LABV, a local authority typically contributes the land, and a private firm the skills and finance to develop out assets.

Local Delivery Companies are too becoming a more common feature of the regeneration agenda, with local authorities setting up arms' length companies to take a locally oriented commercial approach to realising schemes – again with the ability to reinvest profit toward other developments. Such companies can manage assets, develop land and property by themselves or through joint ventures with developers, landowners, local authorities and other public sector bodies.



## 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).

Rushmoor Borough Council can only grant planning permission for new residential development where there would be no likelihood of significant impact on the Thames Basin Heaths Special Protection Area (SPA). SANGs provide alternative public recreation areas and thus prevent an increase in visitor pressure on the SPA. Where new residential development is proposed in the masterplan, this must be offset by having sufficient SANG capacity.

The Council currently has a supply of SANGS land to offset net new 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 development. Presently, however, the

Council's ownership in the key intervention areas in Aldershot is limited, so an overarching strategy the Council 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. 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.

## Viability and funding the masterplan's delivery

The Council has tested the viability of the development schemes in the masterplan based on the identified areas of development and types of uses.



The outputs of this exercise show that many of the developments have the potential to be viable now, whilst others may have a longer term delivery horizon - as would be expected in a Prospectus which guides development over 10-15 years and beyond.

However, not all of the proposals contained in the masterplan are commercial in nature and some may require gap funding. 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
- CIL / S106 Agreements / developer contributions
- Rolling Investment Funds
- Rushmoor and Hampshire Councils' Capital Programme
- Lottery Funding
- Transport Funds

## Potential Funding Options

Unlocking funding may require developing a wider business case, and identifying both financial and value added benefits that can be accrued. This too will require the private and public sector to work closely together to promote individual opportunity sites and initiatives. The expectation too is that regeneration bodies such as M3 LEP and the HCA could have a crucial role.

These bodies are one of the key sources of central government grants for development projects, with a particular emphasis at present on driving increased housing delivery. Aldershot is already identified by M3 LEP as a Step Up town, indicating that it is a

priority centre for investment. M3 LEP offers project specific funds – for example, through the Growing Enterprise Fund or the Growth Deal. Ad hoc funds are also often administered through this body, such as access to preferential loan rates or co-ordinating enterprise zones

More innovative approaches to enabling financially viable schemes too could be justified. Some local authorities are, for example, using preferential borrowing rates to acquire sites; other are underpinning the viability of commercial schemes through investing in schemes by the virtue of the strength of their covenant.

More traditional sources of funding too may contribute to delivering the ambition for Aldershot, such as through S106 agreements. Business Improvement Districts (BIDs) can provide avenues for modest funding, and capable of paying for smaller common infrastructure items, public realm improvements, security, etc.

Rolling Investment Funds (RIFs) - such as the Growing Places fund (administered by M3 LEP) – may also be considered. Conceivably, a similar RIF programme could be used to deliver change at key sites in Aldershot – or possibly via a programme of improving / refurbishing / reusing vacant and underused properties. Once repaid, the RIF funds can then be re-invested in other projects. Examples of a RIF could be through a programme of acquisition, refurbishment and reuse of vacant retail units and upper floorspace.

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.

## The next steps

A series of key 'next steps' have been outlined beside each of the identified sites in the Aldershot Prospectus. These next steps for individual projects anticipate the involvement of the Borough Council, landowners and potentially other delivery body agents. There are other wider actions too which will help enable, transform and sustain Aldershot Town Centre as an attractive place to live, work and shop in the context of the masterplan.

Outlined below are a number of wider actions and activities that could help further set the foundations to progress the initiatives.

### *Planning*

- Embedding the Prospectus into the development control process so it becomes a material consideration.
- Preparing more detailed design and costing work for key sites where considered necessary. This might, for example, include Union Street and the Galleries.

### *Property/Regeneration/Economic Development*

- Enabling discussions with landowners – for example for the Galleries, Network Rail, Hippodrome House as well as other sites in the Prospectus.
- Liaison with potential delivery partners and stakeholders, including developers and potential public sector agencies.
- Preparing business cases where project funding is likely to be required.

Although not explicitly referenced in the Prospectus, next steps and key actions too might link to a wider holistic programme of cultural initiatives and events for the town centre. Allied to this may be synergies with improving Princes Hall Theatre - and involving the community in town centre initiatives which will serve to support the wider role and function of Aldershot over the coming years.

In promoting the delivery of the Prospectus, there may be other key organisational actions which are required to ensure delivery comes forward. Typically, critical components in assisting town centre renewal and regeneration are:

- Having clear strategic leadership, involving key stakeholders from public and private sectors who will take ownership. This may be on a site by site basis or perhaps more positively such leadership taking a strategic overview of the entire Prospectus and delivery programme – and ideally headed up by a very visible figurehead.
- Having a core team dedicated to delivery, ensuring clear operational leadership of the plan. Such a team needs to have the skills and resourcing required for delivery at each stage.
- Ensuring a degree of delegation, in order that changes in political balance within the authority do not disrupt long term development plans for Aldershot town centre.

Overall, the Prospectus needs to be supported by providing certainty and reassurance to public and private sector investors that the changes identified in the masterplan will take place.

## **Delivery Mechanisms**

Equally important is the need to consider what kinds of delivery mechanisms could help underpin the delivery of initiatives. There is unlikely to be a 'one size fits all' delivery mechanism for projects – the choice should reflect the scale, size and nature of the individual masterplan initiatives. While in some cases enabling discussions with landowners may simply be needed to bring forward schemes for other, more challenging, sites there may be a need to set up bespoke delivery models, perhaps including an asset backed vehicle, local delivery companies or implementing rolling investment funds to show a clear path towards how renewal will take place over a number of years.

Collectively, making it happen will need a cohesive action plan, combining both organisational and delivery mechanisms – and public, private and community sector involvement – to maximise the Prospectuses benefits.

# APPENDIX

## PROPERTY MARKET REVIEW

This Property Market Review has been undertaken by Montagu Evans and is presented as part of the evidence base to support the SPD. The Property Market Review, undertaken in early 2015, focuses on the key property sectors relevant to the location:

- Retail
- Leisure
- Offices
- Residential

The property market review relies on information drawn from a wide range of property data resources such as Focus, EGi and Promis and discussions with property agents, retailers and residential developers.

### Retail

Recent key economic trends are:

- Comparison Retailing - value orientated retail has grown considerably. They have taken advantage of the glut of vacant units appearing on high streets and a much more expenditure conscious shopper.
- A1 Convenience Retailing – focus on smaller convenience formats say 5,000 sq ft to 10,000 sq ft. Significant active increase in demand from discount foodstores.
- Service Sector Uses (A2 Uses) – growth sectors include betting shops and pawn brokers. Others have declined such as travel agents - as a result their presence on the high street has diminished.
- Restaurants, cafes and takeaways (A3-A5) - very rapid growth. Branded coffee shops have become far more prevalent in town centres.

These types of retailers are likely to be the mainstay of current retail demand for space in the centre, together with independent operators.

### Aldershot's Retail Offer

Aldershot's two main retail streets (Union Street and Wellington Street: both pedestrianised) are supported by the Wellington Centre – which is the location for the largest concentration of national operators.

There are a large number of void units evident within the retail core and the wider town centre. It is understood that around one in five units are vacant (although this includes the Galleries which is now earmarked for alternative uses).

No department stores are present, but key operators include Wilkinsons, New Look, Argos, Boots and 99p Stores and JD Sports (generally though the fashion multiple offer is generally quite limited). There has also been a trend of well known high street fashion retailers leaving the centre in recent years – this includes Next, Burton and most recently, M&S. Large format Morrisons and Tesco Extra foodstore lie at the edge of the centre. Lidl is the main convenience store present in the centre.

A2 use (Financial and Professional Services) occupiers are also evident in the town centre and include a range of betting offices, estate agents banks and building societies. Recent trends in occupier demand from some retailers in this sub-sector, suggest that provision of further A2 accommodation may also be a possible option.

In terms of A3 – A5 uses, café and restaurant provision include McDonald's, KFC, Subway, and Costa. There is a very limited offer of good quality eateries/cafes in town centre retail core though there are a number of ethnic food outlets.

Often restaurants cluster around major uses: Westgate Leisure Park, for example includes a cinema and number of multi-chain restaurants (including Frankie & Benny's, Nando's, Pizza Express and Prezzo). However, this is not prerequisite with, for example, branded coffee shops opening where there is good business trade and footfall available. The presence of restaurants and cafes in central locations has become a key and highly noticeable trend in recent years. In Aldershot town centre (and excluding Westgate) growth in this sector has largely been driven by independent traders.



## Rents and Yields

At the end of 2013, prime retail rents were at £40psf Zone A. Yields depend on the type and covenant of the operator from c. 4% - 5% for a foodstore operator to 10%+ for independent trader. More typically however, retail yields in Aldershot for a retailer offering good covenant are more likely to be around 7 – 7.5%.

## Retailer Demand

Five retailers are recorded on CoStar Focus and 67 retailers recorded on EGi with requirements for accommodation in Aldershot (November 2014). Retailer demand includes: Aldi Foodstore Ltd, Go Outdoors and William Hill. Retail demand for Aldershot is modest (NB - not all of those retailers listed on such databases will favour a town centre location or indeed the requirements logged are current). Generally, the retail environment for Aldershot is quite challenging and this view is supported by the outcome of a retail demand survey undertaken recently for a centrally located site.

Discussions with our in house agents also provided broad views of Aldershot as a trading destination. Concerns were raised about the amount of already available space in the centre, strong competing towns and that Aldershot had struggled to shake off its garrison town image. They did though recognise the positive impact that the Wellesley development could have on the town centre, if residents could be persuaded to shop there. There was also a feeling that the development of Westgate had been so successful that this had essentially soaked up much of the demand from restaurants and cafes for the town.

One notable feature of the town centre is the presence of a sizeable ethnic offer, especially in Station and Birchett Road. While this area offers a somewhat poorer shopping environment, it does offer a distinctive feel to this part of the town centre.

Generally, Aldershot town centre's retail market is fairly challenging at present and is strongly oriented toward the value end of the market. Any retail strategy should probably in the short term seek to protect and enhance the very core of the centre. Any possible new development will also need to provide well designed and configured units if they are to appeal to operators. It is also possible that some rationalisation in retail floorspace could be beneficial if it were to result in the better balance the demand and supply of units (say in secondary locations). Despite this, one different area to capitalise on is perhaps the independent - and particularly the ethnic offer in the centre - and making this a point of difference. Making the most of good quality, historic buildings as a setting for the retail area could also serve to make the centre more attractive to retailers and shoppers alike.

## Leisure / health and fitness

Covers a very broad range of uses – cinemas, health & fitness clubs, bowling alleys, bingo etc. The fortunes of leisure sub-sectors has varied. Bingo Halls for example have suffered a decline in patronage (albeit that recent changes to taxation rules has made tier enterprises more profitable again). Cinemas though have seen a considerable growth and are viewed as major leisure anchor attractors.

Excluding the Westgate development, the quality of leisure provision within the town centre core is modest, with the main commercial leisure offer comprising a solus Gala Bingo and a number of amusement arcades. In wider Aldershot there is also a bowling alley in the south of the town centre (Birchett Road), and activities such as live entertainment venues / theatres, museums, the library and Aldershot Football Club. Princes Hall theatre offers a positive cultural venue.

The health & fitness sector has also seen a surge in growth. Both the more luxurious and budget end health & fitness sectors are still seeking expansion opportunities. This use tends to be quite land hungry

and achieve fairly modest rents. Thus, they tend to be located on upper floor locations, at off pitch locations or are accommodated through reuse of existing space.

Health & fitness provision in Aldershot is limited. Existing provision includes Aldershot Garrison Sports Centre, Aldershot Pools, Curves and Connaught Leisure Centre.

We are aware of demand from budget gyms seeking space in the centre. This rent achievable is though likely to be fairly low (say £6-£10 per sq ft). Nevertheless, this could add a different dimension to Aldershot's town centre offer.

Overall, Aldershot has a reasonable range of leisure activities, through its combination of both public and private sector ventures. A notable absence is the presence of a commercial chain gym, and securing this use would help add some degree of diversification to the centre's offer – as well as help to extend activity in the centre during evenings.

## Hotels

The hotel market remains buoyant with continued interest from occupiers in this sector, especially for sites in London and the south east. Examples of continued expansion in the hotel sector and especially the budget sector. Serviced apartments are also viewed as a future growth channel – especially in areas on good corporate trade. Visible sites with good accessibility is an important factor in consideration for this type of use as well as adequate parking. Outside tourist centres, much of the demand for hotel space is driven either by the presence of a strong business market or good accessibility characteristics.

Hotels in the Aldershot area include Premier Inn, Travelodge and several independent operators. It is likely to that there would need to be an upturn in corporate activity in the area for there to be further demand for hotel space in the centre.

In Aldershot a budget hotel would expect to secure a rent of around £4,000 - £4,500 per room per annum. Highest performing yields are in the order of 5% - 6%, reflecting a strong covenant. Overall though, site development values are modest for this use.

The broad view is that the general supply of town centre hotels is sufficient to meet current levels of demand. In the longer term, if there is an increase in office market activity this might help sustain increased interest.

## Offices

Aldershot falls within the Blackwater Valley sub office market area. Major office occupiers in the region tend to be at out of centre locations. Town centre demand for offices is fair and linked generally to meeting the needs of local service providers and smaller businesses. Some larger offices do exist (Hippodrome House), but the quality of the buildings are poor.

The office market strength is illustrated by asking rents falling in the range of £5 psf - £15 psf with the majority clustered between £10psf - £12psf bracket (EGi / Focus, 2014). At this level of rents, new office development is unlikely to be viable. This does not though rule out the opportunity for small scale refurbishments aimed again at smaller businesses [NB – according to the Centre for Cities, Aldershot had 390 SMEs per 10,000 population in 2011, compared to 170 SMEs per 10,000 population in Sunderland]. There is also some evidence that there is a modest improvement in interest in office space in the centre, though again this has focussed on smaller requirements.

Generally, larger scale office development is unlikely to take place in the heart of Aldershot. Despite this, there may be the chance to provide attractive (probably refurbished space) for smaller indigenous enterprises. Additions to the overall amount of office stock though are likely to be modest.

## Residential

The residential sector is now a boom sector in many part of the country; leading to concerns of overheating in London and the South East. The housing market is being sustained by increasing employment, historically low interest rates, greater availability of mortgage products, increased house builder profit margins and greater levels of residential development activity.

The regional housing market has experienced significant price growth in the last two years in the south east. According to Nationwide average house prices over the last 12 months for the outer South East was £230,409 – an annual change of 14%. Aldershot has a relatively strong residential market.

Housing in Aldershot is largely clustered towards the south east of the town centre in the form of flatted dwellings. Residential units are more limited in the heart of the town centre.

Major residential expansion is currently proposed for Aldershot, in the form of a major mixed use development known as Wellesley. This development will comprise up to 3,850 dwellings.

The average asking price in Aldershot is currently £291,900 (based on 126 properties recorded for sale on Zoopla – November 2014), with the typical price paid varying depending on the type of property.

### Average House Prices - Aldershot

House Type	Average Current Value	Average £ psf
Detached	£396,051	£289
Semi-Detached	£263,569	£269
Terraced	£230,639	£276
Flats	£155,346	£263

Average house prices in Aldershot, early 2015

There is also a good rental market in the town. Data provided by Zoopla, suggests average asking rents are currently £957pcm. The table below shows a summary of current asking rents in Aldershot based on house types / number of bedrooms. There is understood to be a pinch point in terms of strong demand and rising rents coupled with a tight supply of better quality private rented properties in Aldershot.

House Type	1 bed	2 beds	3 beds	4 beds	5 beds
Houses	£693 pcm	£975 pcm	£1,348 pcm	£1,456 pcm	-
Flats	£707 pcm	£847 pcm	£849 pcm	-	-

Average rental costs in Aldershot, early 2015

Currently residential development in Aldershot is limited and relates to very small scale developments. There are however a number of very significant housing developments in the pipeline: Wellesley and the Galleries.

The strong demand for housing in the south east and Rushmoor generally – alongside healthy house prices suggests residential uses could form significant parts of development opportunities in Aldershot – or perhaps by refurbishing existing space. Discussions with residential developers are generally quite positive – and much more so than those with retailers.

Overall, bringing more residential development into the heart of the centre may provide a strategy to strengthen the town. An increased population may also help to support the retail and evening economy, and generally increase footfall levels. There also appears to be interest from residential developers for sites in the town. This may be aided by the proposal at Wellesley and the ability to commute to London, together with a relatively affordable housing market.









# ALDERSHOT TOWN CENTRE PROSPECTUS

Supplementary Planning Document

CONSULTATION REPORT

December 2015





# ALDERSHOT TOWN CENTRE PROSPECTUS

SUPPLEMENTARY PLANNING DOCUMENT

## THE MASTERPLAN FOR ALDERSHOT

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

- The Union front Welli
- The Rail St access and
- The area a refurbishm

Galleries site linking Wellington Street with the street car park

### Princes Hall area:

Modelling of the Princes Hall in infill residential development to establish new street frontage

### Victoria Road:

Infill development opportunity

### Marks and Spencer building:

Potential reuse or redevelopment

### Former Kings Centre:

Established as The Empire community and events venue

### Union Street:

Regeneration of the Union Street block

### Galleries

active town residential the Galler







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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.

Consultation on the draft document was undertaken between Wednesday 30 September 2015 and Wednesday 11 November 2015. During this period there were a number of ways in which people could engage with the consultation:

- The study was highlighted on the front page of the Council's website with a summary mini-site and a full copy of the document available to download. This was linked to an on-line response form;
- The document was available for review at Aldershot library and Rushmoor Borough Council offices;

- A public exhibition was on display with approximately two weeks each in Morrisons, the Wellington Centre and the Princes Hall;
- Two staffed days of drop-in consultation were advertised and held on Saturday 17 October and Thursday 22 October;
- A public presentation and discussion on the evening of 7 October was hosted by Aldershot Civic Society; and
- A presentation and discussion with the Aldershot Retailer and Business Forum on Monday 5 October.

A questionnaire was used to record written responses to the consultation, duplicating the on-line feedback.

This report sets out the responses which were received to the consultation and identifies the key issues for consideration prior to the adoption of the draft SPD.

In total 180 responses were received:

- 65 online responses
- 83 paper questionnaires completed
- 32 written submissions



## FEEDBACK FORM

Please complete this feedback form and drop it in the box provided.  
You can also comment online at [www.rushmoor.gov.uk/improvingaldershot](http://www.rushmoor.gov.uk/improvingaldershot)

1. The **Vision for Aldershot** in the draft Aldershot Town Centre Prospectus is supported by six themes, which set out how the council thinks Aldershot could be improved. Do you agree with the vision and themes?

Yes  No

If no, please tell us why:

Is there anything you would like to change?

2. The prospectus sets out opportunities for change in Aldershot town centre. This includes ideas for four key sites. What do you think about the approach?

Do you have any comments on the ideas for individual sites?

3. Of all the opportunities and potential development in the prospectus, which do you think should be the top priority for the council?

4. A key role of this prospectus is to attract investment in Aldershot. Are there any other town centre assets, which should be highlighted in the document? If so, please tell us what they are.

5. Please let us have any other comments you have on the proposals set out in the draft prospectus.

6. Please could you let us know the following information.

Male  Female

0-15  16-24  25-34  35-44  45-54  55-64  65+

Postcode

7. Would you like to know when we adopt the draft prospectus as a supplementary planning document?

Yes  No

8. Would you like to receive email news from the council?

Yes  No

9. If the answer to either of the above questions is yes, could you please provide us with your contact details.

Name

Address

Email

**Thank you very much for providing feedback on the draft Aldershot Town Centre Prospectus. Your comments will inform the final version of the SPD report.**

Data protection: We will only use your contact details for the purpose stated on this form.

# FEEDBACK FORMS

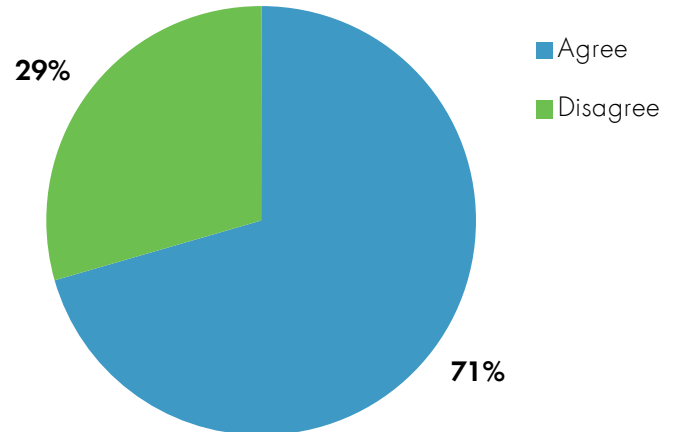
## 1. The 'Vision for Aldershot' in this draft prospectus is supported by six themes, which set out how the council thinks Aldershot could be improved. Do you agree with the vision and themes? If no, please tell us why.

139 responses were given to this question, of which 98 indicated they agree with the Vision and themes set out in the prospectus. Of those who responded with comments, the following points provide a cross-section of the more frequently mentioned issues. Two issues stood out as the most popular responses:

- The plan could be more radical including new ideas and more ambitious change; and
- More information is needed on the cost and deliverability of the proposals.

Of the other responses, a number attracted several comments:

- There should be more mention of public transport, including how it will be protected and improved;
- There should be a focus on Aldershot's role as a commuter town, with links to London improved;
- There is a need to understand the reasons behind Aldershot's unpopularity with retailers if the town is to succeed in the future;
- Protect historic shop fronts against inappropriate changes and modern replacements which are out of keeping;
- The document is wordy and would benefit from an executive summary.



**"Generally very exciting and much needed"**

**"Anything to bring life back into the centre would be great"**



## Is there anything that you would like to change?

107 comments were given to this question, with the most popular comments being:

- We need more quality shops in the town centre, given by 21 people;
- Additional parking is needed, which should be cheaper or free and include more disabled parking, given by 16 people; and
- Reduce the proportion of low value and discount shops in the town centre, given by 11 people.

Other suggestions which were made by several people include:

- A better bus service is needed, with drop-off at the rail station, the High Street and links to outlying supermarkets;
- Lower the rents or rates to attract shops and start-up businesses;
- We need a department store such as Primark - focus energy on attracting them;
- Everything needs to change!;
- More cycle parking and cycle routes are needed in the town centre;
- Grosvenor Road area looks shabby and could be improved. Recent conversions have been poor quality;
- Invest in the football club;
- Make the town a lively place with real shopping options; and
- More entertainment places.



## **2. This prospectus sets out opportunities for change in Aldershot town centre. This includes ideas for four key sites. What do you think about the approach?**

### **Do you have any comments on the ideas for individual sites?**

125 comments were given to this question, with 39 people stating that the approach and site proposals are fine, ok, good, great or excellent.

Popular comments for adjusting the overall approach and suggestions for individual sites included:

- We need well-known brand retailers in the town centre;
- Yes, we need houses but we need shops more
- The station area needs to be improved - it is the first port of call for visitors;
- Leave Princes Hall as it is or retain the frontage - it is striking 70s architecture;
- The Princes Hall proposals look good - it needs a radical overhaul;
- The Galleries site should have retail, including a large store;
- Removing the Galleries bridge sounds expensive / I would rather keep it;
- The Galleries site needs to move forward asap, by legal measures if needed;
- The M&S site is perfect site for Primark - could we attract it with zero business rates?;
- A link between Union Street and High Street is vital - it is disconnected since M&S closed. Like the idea of arcade here; and
- Include M&S and Union Street buildings as one site, and create new town square and new homes and flexible retail space to respond to demand.

***"We need to focus on smaller specialist shops"***

***"The Galleries must be sorted"***

***"The railway station area is currently a depressing welcome to Aldershot"***

### 3. Of all the opportunities and potential development in the prospectus, which do you think should be the top priority for the Council?

152 comments were given to this question, with high levels of consensus on the priorities for the prospectus. These were:

- Retaining and attracting decent shops, to bring more wealth into the town, mentioned by 32 people;
- Redeveloping the Galleries site, mentioned by 28 people;
- Improving the rail station area, with some suggestions for shops here, mentioned by 11 people;
- Refurbishment of Princes Hall and redevelopment of the Police Station site, mentioned by 10 people;
- Making the town centre more attractive including shop-front improvements, mentioned by 10 people;
- New homes - affordable for young and new families, especially local ones, mentioned by 8 people;
- Filling vacant shop units before redevelopment, mentioned by 7 people;
- Union Street - this being the centre of the town but suffering in terms of vacancies and environment, mentioned by 7 people.
- Celebrating and retaining Aldershot's Victorian heritage - and using this to attract businesses, mentioned by 6 people; and
- Attracting new businesses through reduced rates and/or rents, mentioned by 6 people.



**4. A key role of this prospectus is to attract investment in Aldershot. Are there any other town centre assets, which should be highlighted in the document? If so, please tell us what they are.**

59 people provided a response to this question, with popular suggestions including:

- Historic buildings, which should be highlighted and retained, mentioned by 12 people;
- The Westgate Leisure Park and improved links to this, mentioned by 8 people;
- Business opportunities, which should be highlighted alongside residential and leisure opportunities, as this will bring people into the centre during the day, mentioned by 5 people;
- The town's parks and sports fields, mentioned by 4 people
- The lido, which should be preserved - especially with the Wellesley development coming, and. underground heat/solar considered, mentioned by 4 people; and
- The great sporting facilities, including the football club and gymnastics centre, mentioned by 3 people
- Pedestrianise more of the shopping streets, mentioned by 3 people.

Other comments made by more than one person include:

- The military history, which 1 person suggested should be celebrated with a horse-drawn tour around the town and the camp;
- Special small independent shops such as Jerome's;
- The unusual cultural aspect with the Gurkha population and accompanying tastes and traditions; and
- The potential for a visitor centre or museum in a historic building.

***"Penmark House would make a great site for a hotel"***

***"The West End Centre is an excellent small venue which draws people to the town"***



## 5. Please let us have any other comments you have on the proposals set out in the draft prospectus.

88 people responded to this question, with the comments suggested by more than one person including:

- Focus on securing shops for the town centre rather than making superficial physical improvements such as paving and shop-front improvements. This was made by 8 people;
- Congratulations, well done, good job, made by 7 people;
- Negative comments regarding Rushmoor Borough Council's investment in Aldershot, made by 5 people;
- Comments on Farnborough receiving greater levels of investment than Aldershot, made by 5 people;
- Concern that money will be wasted on delivering the strategy, made by 5 people;
- Hope that it can be delivered and not remain a glossy prospectus, mentioned by 4 people;
- Buses to outlying supermarkets would be useful, made by 3 people;
- RBC should take on vacant units and offer them to start-up shops/businesses for free or at affordable rates, made by 3 people;
- No more HMOs in the area - we need quality housing, made by 3 people;
- Library building and services should remain intact at existing site, mentioned by 3 people;
- Retention of the Gala building is important to the plan, made by 2 people;
- The multi-storey car park is awkward for trolleys on upper levels as there are no ramps, made by 2 people;
- A landscape walk into town from new housing / a green link from the canal and training heaths, made by 2 people;
- Cover Union St and/or Wellington St with glass, made by 2 people;
- The electronic notice boards don't seem a good use of funding, made by 2 people;
- Can the Council impose shop-front improvements/upkeep on retailers - these let the town down, mentioned by 2 people;
- RBC should start legal proceedings for key buildings that have been long-term vacant - they are vulnerable to arson attacks - and in Council ownership, a retail strategy could be pursued; mentioned by 2 people;
- Ensure the pubs don't close down - we need these to attract young people, made by 2 people; and
- The Library building and services should remain intact at existing site, made by 2 people.

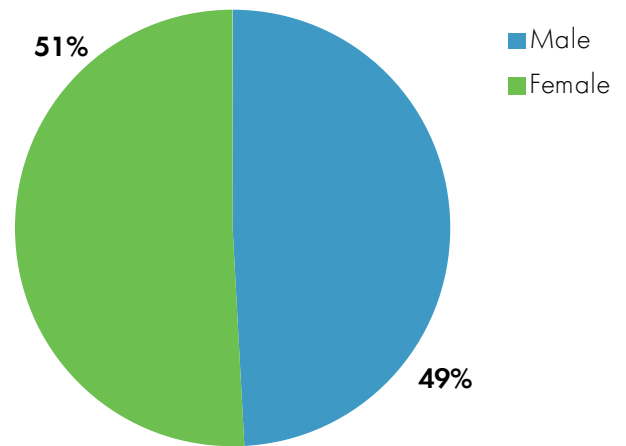
**"Let artists and makers use vacant spaces for exhibitions and education"**

# RESPONDENTS' PROFILE

The gender split of responses received via the feedback forms was incredibly evenly split with 51% being completed by women and 49% completed by men.

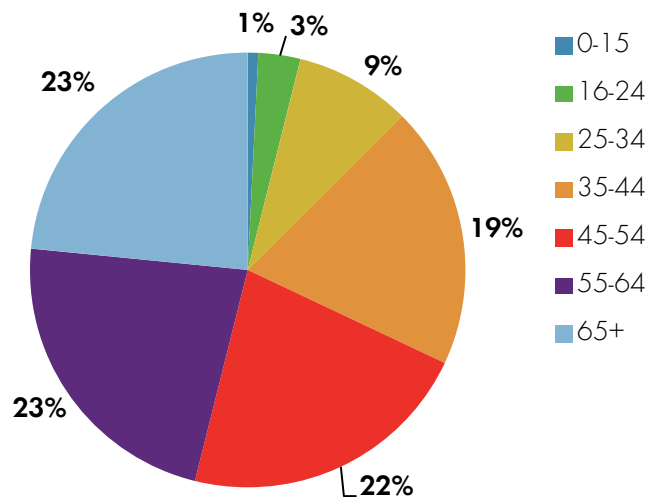
Likewise, the age range of people completing feedback forms was reasonably evenly split, with a breakdown as follows:

- 1% completed by people aged 0-15
- 3% completed by people aged 16-24
- 9% completed by people aged 25-34
- 19% completed by people aged 35-44
- 22% completed by people aged 45-54
- 23% completed by people aged 55-64
- 23% completed by people aged 65+



**"Anything to bring life back into the centre would be great"**

**"Don't just 'tart up' the town, more shops are needed"**





# ALDERSHOT TOWN CENTRE PROSPECTUS

COMPLEMENTARY PLANNING DOCUMENT

## MASTERPLAN FOR ALDERSHOT

The plan sets out development and investment opportunities in the Aldershot Town Prospectus. These vary in the scale and time which they are likely to come forward. Wokingham Borough Council has identified a number of priority sites, which are:

- The Union Street group of buildings that also front Wellington Street and the High Street
- The Rail Station area, including improved access and parking
- The area around the Princesses Hall, including refurbishment of the theatre

# ALDERSHOT TOWN CENTRE PROSPECTUS

COMPLEMENTARY PLANNING DOCUMENT

## OUR

### The Galleries

Plans would link Wellington Street and High Street car park directly to the Galleries, fronted by homes and shops at ground level.

The plan would also link the High Street and Wellington Street to the Galleries, fronted by homes and shops at ground level.

Water Road

High Street

Princesses Hall

Station

High Street

Water Road

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Princesses Hall

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Princesses Hall

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Princesses Hall

Station



The plan would link Wellington Street and High Street car park directly to the Galleries, fronted by homes and shops at ground level.

The plan would also link the High Street and Wellington Street to the Galleries, fronted by homes and shops at ground level.



# WRITTEN SUBMISSIONS

In addition to the online and paper copy feedback forms, Rushmoor Borough Council received a number of written submissions on the draft Supplementary Planning Document, made by statutory consultees, special interest groups and individuals. Written submissions from groups included:

- Aldershot Civic Society
- Aldershot Town FC
- Church Crookham Parish Council
- Environment Agency
- Hampshire County Council
- Hart District Council
- Health and Safety Executive
- Lantana Properties
- London and Cambridge Properties Ltd
- Natural England
- Rushmoor Cycle Forum
- Rushmoor Labour Group
- Rushmoor Pedestrian Forum
- Stagecoach
- Thames Water
- The Theatres Trust
- Columbia Threadneedle Investments
- Waverley Borough Council
- Rushmoor Borough Council Environment Panel

The written submissions have been reviewed and key comments pulled out to produce an overall summary of responses. Key comments in order of questions are set out over the following pages.

## **2. This prospectus sets out opportunities for change in Aldershot town centre. This includes ideas for seven key sites. What do you think about the approach?**

### **Do you have any comments on the ideas for individual sites?**

- The Galleries can be considered one of the disasters of planning in Aldershot. It is an enormous, sprawling structure, completely incongruous with the town centre's c.19 plan and grain of development. Moves to remedy the damage by way of reinstating finer grain development would be welcomed in principle and demolition of the bridge over Wellington Street would be an effectively instant improvement.
- The removal of the bridge is a great idea.
- Opening up the Galleries as a ground level pedestrian route is supported by the Civic Society as you will no longer have the problem of escalators and lifts not working because of uninterested landlords like Threadneedle.
- I would take this opportunity to recommend that the High Street frontage be added to the List of Buildings of Local Importance (if not capable of statutory listing).
- Some sort of town centre leisure facility would be good to tie into the High Street changes.
- A large retailer to replace M&S is wishful thinking. The idea of opening up the site with a new lane is welcomed, with support from the Civic Society to this particular idea.
- Princes Hall – this is overdue but some respondents felt that the proposals were not sufficiently ambitious and that a complete



redevelopment would have been more desirable.

- It seems to me that there could be a missed opportunity with the closing of Aldershot Police Station.
- To me the best option for that part of town would be to use the space to create a new much larger Princes Hall to serve not just Aldershot but the whole of the Aldershot Urban Area.
- The redevelopment of the Princes Hall should be an opportunity to include a much larger auditorium rather than just refurbishing the existing space.
- Whilst we welcome the changes to the look of the Princes Hall, we are also disappointed that something more substantial was not offered. Acquiring the old Ritz/Gala Bingo building as a new theatre for Aldershot, bringing it closer to the high street car park and town centre, and with its history of famous performers. A complete re-build at the present site to give Aldershot a brand new state of the art theatre would have also been more welcomed.
- The National Theatres Trust noted that they would like to see safeguards in place for the design of any residential development around the Princes Hall to protect the future use of the hall as an entertainment venue.
- The [Church Crookham] Parish Council particularly likes the modernisation of Princes Hall.
- The Theatres Trust welcomes the retention and refurbishment of Princes Hall in this document and indeed recognises the potential for a s106 agreement for redevelopment of the surrounding sites to pay for the refurbishment of the Hall. However, from our experience across the UK,

having residential use in close proximity to a theatre or performance venue inevitably creates serious issues for both the venue and the new residents. Where there are insufficient safeguards in place (mainly via sound insulation and creative design), disputes can emerge and the new residents can request a Noise Abatement Notice be issued by the council on the theatre restricting its activities and putting it at risk of closure.

- The station proposals are supported but with a number of caveats, including concerns about where bus stands will be relocated to, and how traffic flows will work if the roundabout is removed.

### **3. Of all the opportunities and potential development in the prospectus, which do you think should be the top priority for the Council?**

- The priority is sorting out the Galleries. The Civic Society supports the proposals, but recognises the need for the Council to use all of its powers to bring about change. The return to a street-based scheme is welcomed along with the prospect of a traditional scale and form of buildings.

**4. A key role of this prospectus is to attract investment in Aldershot. Are there any other town centre assets, which should be highlighted in the document? If so, please tell us what they are.**

- The prospectus needs to say more about Aldershot's other assets such as the Lido and the parks.
- Aldershot has a strong cultural offer already although HCC tried to close the West End Centre down in the past. Culture also covers bingo and football.

**5. Please let us have any other comments you have on the proposals set out in the draft prospectus.**

- Some comments were made about the potential for covered areas or awnings which would make the town centre more habitable in poor weather.
- I would love to see a children's indoor play area. The soft play outside Mothercare is always packed and it would be great to see something a bit bigger and better.
- I would also like to see a community hub that people can use to meet up for free
- I would love to see more cross-cultural events, learn to speak Nepalese and cook Nepalese food.
- Parking needs to be improved.
- Rushmoor needs to set up an independent Opportunity and Fairness Commission.
- There is no detail on the mechanism for who "owns" the Town Centre. RBC is looking for a Business Improvement District (BID) but should

we not be looking for a genuine partnership between residents and business? Should we be looking at Asset Based Community Development potential?

- There should be more emphasis on provision for cyclists, both in terms of connecting routes to the town as well as cycle facilities and parking within the town centre.
- The Prospectus would do well to explore the scope for improvement of specific sites (mention is already given to Station Road) and consider in more comprehensive detail how groups/ rows of perhaps more ordinary buildings could be enhanced. I would take this opportunity to recommend that the High Street frontage be added to the List of Buildings of Local Importance.
- There is concern about the development of a decked car park at the station close to the existing sheltered housing development of Kingsley Court.
- There is a significant level of perception that free parking would contribute to the revitalisation of the town centre.
- As well as new development we also need to consider how to lift the quality of the whole town – much of the fabric looks tatty.
- It is much better to have a much smaller vibrant town centre than the large dilapidated one that we have now.
- We [The Civic Society] generally support the draft Master Plan for Aldershot, and it is important that improvements are implemented as soon as possible to help our town thrive and become a destination of choice for locals in and around the area.

- I wholeheartedly agree with the supporting of specialist/independent retailers as opposed to 'competing' with neighbouring towns merely by offering more of the same. This is a refreshing break from a usual presumption in favour of large, multi-thousand square footage development in an attempt to attract large retailers.
- The Self-build and Custom Housebuilding Act 2015 compels local authorities to maintain a register of individuals who are seeking to build their own homes and there are many good reasons why 'self-building' should be encouraged generally. With that in mind, could the Prospectus not identify sites/areas with potential for development by self-builders?
- The proliferation 1 + 2 bed flats in recent times is troublesome; provision of larger accommodation designed for family occupancy would therefore be welcome.
- It is also worth noting that numerous structures such as former workshops, stables and industrial buildings remain extant and there ought perhaps to be a presumption in favour of retention where practicable.
- If conservation of our town's historic assets is to represent a serious part of the agenda, it needs to be considered broadly; it should not simply home-in on a few "pet-buildings" or favourite sightlines.
- We need more specialist shops opened in pairs next to existing thriving businesses. The mix of shops should also be varied and balanced. For example, how about a French baker and patisserie and a high quality greengrocers? People will pay a little more for something a little special and of excellent quality.
- We [Aldershot Pedestrian Forum] agree with the sentiments displayed in the prospectus regarding the Victorian legacy of the town, of the many listed Victorian buildings situated in the centre, and the need for these to feature strongly in the redeveloped town centre.
- The growth in population is an opportunity to attract top class retailers and make Aldershot a retail centre for a far wider area, like Farnham has been for years. The same applies to restaurants, cinemas, bars, the theatre, and service industries.
- How many times do they need to be told that people resent paying to park in a town with such a paltry choice of shops. Tesco, Morrisons, Sainsburys and Farnborough Gate are all within a 10-minute drive of Aldershot and all offer FREE parking. Why would you pay to park in Aldershot when you can get everything you need at one of those locations?
- I welcome the attempt by the Prospectus, developed as a Supplementary Planning Document (SPD), to set out a strategy for regeneration based on options for public and private investment, which we see as a matter of urgency to prevent collapse of Aldershot Town Centre as a result of the flight of retail from it. In particular, I welcome that, once the SPD is accepted, Rushmoor Borough Council will then be able to use its powers and resources in a proactive way to enable development and investment in Aldershot Town Centre.
- The conservation of our historic buildings and scenes ought to be seen as an inextricable element with regard to achieving the general goals set out.

# SUGGESTED UPDATES

Comments received through the consultation feedback form and through written submissions have been reviewed alongside feedback from public meetings and Council panel reviews to identify a series of suggested updates to the draft Supplementary Planning Document.

The majority of comments have been high level and relate to a general approach to the town or particular sites rather than specific pages of the draft report, so updates have been suggested with similar strategic focus.

1. Executive summary  
Add an executive summary of the key proposals in the SPD at the start of the document.
2. Baseline information  
Potential inclusion of more baseline information, such as property market and commercial analysis in an appendix, to demonstrate the complex and interlinked factors influencing Aldershot's future.
3. Public transport infrastructure  
Add reference to the importance of coordinated public transport infrastructure and potential to improve this in the future, including references to:
  - Better bus provision with well placed bus stops by the station, on the high street and potential links to outlying supermarkets.
  - Connection to London and other employment centres and the importance of pressing for faster rail connections in future
4. Cycling  
Add reference to cycling provision in and around the town centre, including:
  - Proposals for cycle parking at key sites
  - Potential for cycle lanes on key routes into the town centre, taking account of surrounding national cycle routes
  - Ambition to be at the forefront of cycle provision,
5. Vehicular access and parking
  - Make reference to the fact that key vehicular routes into the centre are currently poor and focus will be given to improving these in the future, including review of any planning applications with this objective in mind.
  - Add reference to RBC Parking strategy and harmonise proposals/objectives
6. Housing
  - Make reference to using vacant upper floors for housing
7. Commercial opportunities
  - Review with property consultant whether office space can be included at key sites, alongside residential/retail/leisure uses
8. Business rates and business support
  - Add reference to potential for a BID
9. Vacant buildings
  - Add reference to RBC willingness to explore purchase or rental of vacant units and lease of these at cheap rents to support start-ups
  - Review potential for these spaces to be leased to artists and makers for exhibitions/education, with potential links with University of the Creative Arts.
10. The historic environment
  - Strengthen references to the historic environment and the fact that it should be promoted, protected, enhanced and preserved.
  - add reference to potential for a historic walking route around the town which could coordinate with the planned Wellesley heritage walk
  - Add reference to potential military history tour covering the town centre and the camp
  - Add reference to group value of historic



- buildings, such as the High Street building frontages
- Add reference to improving the environment on Grosvenor Road - shop front improvements, ensuring conversions are carried out sensitively
11. The natural environment
    - Add reference to potential green link from Hospital Hill to/through the centre, and from the canal and training heaths to/through the centre
    - Add stronger references to Aldershot's town parks
  12. The Westgate Leisure Park
    - Add additional references to the positive impact of this scheme on the town centre and the importance of integrating this area
  13. West End Centre
 

Add reference to the value of this as a cultural and community use.
  14. Rail Station site
    - Review the impact of 2-storey parking at the rail station on Kingsley Court
    - Add reference to the fact that the station building should be retained and should not be masked by trees
    - Add more explicit reference to how the traffic flows will work here, to provide reassurance on congestion
    - Add reference to the fact that redundant sites on Windsor Way should be linked more to the Railway Station development in the document.
  15. Galleries site
    - Add reference in the delivery text about potential for phasing parts of the scheme and review with property consultant regarding impact on viability for this approach.
  16. Princes Hall site
    - Make explicit reference to the refurbishment of the theatre including an exploration of whether the capacity could be increased
  17. Library area site
    - This site was not considered essential and could cause issues with vehicular access to the multi-storey car park and with strengthened pedestrian links from Wellesley to the town centre.
    - Add reference to the value of the library itself as a town centre use; and the value of bringing this further into the centre if the opportunity arises in the future.
  18. Willow House site
 

Ensure the boundary of this site reflects land ownership in the masterplan and make explicit in the heritage section that this building is not of historic value.
  19. Union Street East/M+S site
 

Make explicit reference to possibility for the creation of a town square here. Include reference to the fact that a town square must be well defined and well-referenced.
  20. Birchett Road site
 

Make reference to whether Frederick Street could be a shared surface.
  21. Delivery commentary
    - Add additional information on potential funding sources such as the LEP, priorities and the inter-relationship of some sites to the delivery section of the report.
    - Review with property consultant the potential for a community asset backed vehicle

22. Specific page update requests:

Lantana Properties:

Page 34, Willow House, which is at the junction of Victoria Road and Grosvenor Road, is shown on the plan as a "historically significant building at crossroads". It is a tired 1960's office block, which the owners wish to redevelop and replace. This plan needs to be amended.

Page 40, Willow House is shown as a "corner infill development opportunity", which we agree it is. However, the land to the rear of the building is shown green as if it is to be landscaped. In fact, this land does not belong to Willow House. In reality, it is laid out to tarmac and used for car parking. This plan needs to be amended.

Hampshire County Council

Page 10 replace reference to better signage and path widening with 'footpath widening'.

Page 12, add clarification on what is meant by 'greening' - change to 'soft landscaping'

Page 12, add reference to specific existing routes that will be improved to demonstrate that routes do exist

Page 30 first bullet, change wording to: Enhanced landscaping, rationalisation of the road network as well as a new multi-storey car park will improve the experience of arriving in Aldershot by train and help to reduce the conflict between cars, buses and pedestrians in the area

Page 30 second bullet, change wording to: Accessibility improvements that link to the new Wellesley development, pedestrian crossings on the high street as well as potentially new and improved sustainable transport links between the High Street and Union Street.

Page 31 change reference that 'pedestrians can access the station more easily' with 'visitors can access the station more easily'

Page 48 first para, change wording to: The area around the railway station, including the parking, bus stands and highway environment does little to enhance the setting.

Page 48 second para, change wording to: The existing accessibility in the area is complex, including buses, taxis, cyclists, pedestrians, pick up and set down for private cars, and access to the station for parking."

Page 50, top right image to be removed

Page 50 paragraph on phasing to be changed to: '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 so there is an opportunity to enhance and retain the Police Station for public sector community benefit. In the event of the relocation of the Magistrates Court, the site could have potential for residential redevelopment.'

Page 60 third bullet: Add reference to CIL along with S106 and developer contributions

# FURTHER ACTION

Three key issues have been highlighted through the consultation process, which require further action outside of the scope of the SPD.

## Retail Offer

The Council acknowledges and shares the public concern in respect of the retail offer of Aldershot town centre. The Council has already undertaken action to seek to support, retain and attract retailers including:

- Organising town centre events to increase footfall
- Setting up a retail website to support new business in the town centre
- Running free online trading seminars for Independent retailers
- Providing retail space for Christmas pop-up shops
- Taking on running the market and developing it further
- Implementing Government Incentive Schemes for Retail Relief and Reoccupation Relief from Business Rates

The Council recognises the need to do more to support and where possible improve the town's retail offer. The Council will consider seeking specialist retail advice on retail options for the town centre to see what further encouragement can be given to attract retailers to the town centre. In the future, where the Council acquires an interest in buildings within the core town centre area, it will proactively work to support active uses, including retail. The Council will also seek to encourage other active town centre uses (such as restaurants and leisure) to locate in the town centre to support retail uses and reduce the number of vacant units. Developing more town centre living, as promoted through the SPD, will also help to support retail uses in the town centre by increasing footfall.

## Car Parking

The Council recognise that some people believe that additional, cheaper or free car parking will encourage greater use of the town centre. The Council will undertake a full review of the parking strategy in the New Year and will take account of the concerns expressed through this consultation as part of that review.

## Feelings of Safety

A number of respondents mentioned feeling unsafe in the town centre, particularly in the evenings. The Council will undertake a town centre safety audit to identify what other action maybe appropriate. To help the feelings of safety and to deal with any incidents that may arise the Council operates a CCTV service from 7am to 1am Sunday to Wednesday and 7am to 3am Thursday to Saturday. CCTV cameras are recording 24/7 and footage is retained for one month.

## Other comments

Individuals commenting on the draft Prospectus have made a number of other more detailed comments relating to wider town centre issues. These comments fall outside of the scope of matters that can be addressed through changes to the SPD but are being reviewed on a corporate basis to identify the need for further action.

# APPENDIX 1

# EXHIBITION BOARDS



# ALDERSHOT TOWN CENTRE PROSPECTUS

SUPPLEMENTARY PLANNING DOCUMENT

## Welcome to the exhibition.

We hope you find it interesting and will want to share your views with us.

Rushmoor Borough Council has prepared the Aldershot Town Centre Prospectus to help put the heart back into Aldershot.

The Prospectus sets out a strategy for regenerating the town with development options to attract and support growth in Aldershot town centre. The council has worked with a specialist team of consultants and engaged with local stakeholders and residents to combine local knowledge and enthusiasm for Aldershot with regeneration best practice.

## How to comment

Please give us your views by completing a feedback form and dropping it in the box provided.

The draft Aldershot Town Centre Prospectus can be found online where you can also comment:

[www.rushmoor.gov.uk/improvingaldershot](http://www.rushmoor.gov.uk/improvingaldershot)

The consultation will finish on Wednesday 11 November 2015. For further information, please contact:

[plan@rushmoor.gov.uk](mailto:plan@rushmoor.gov.uk)

## THE ROLE OF THE PROSPECTUS

The Prospectus is being developed as a Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) and will be a material planning consideration for future planning applications. It will replace the Aldershot Town Centre SPD (2009) and further develops the council's strategic approach to regeneration in Aldershot.

The council will need to work with developers and land owners to deliver the proposals. It will use its powers and resources in a proactive way to enable development and investment in the town.



Allies and Morrison  
Urban Practitioners

MONTAGU  
EVANS

RUSHMOOR  
BOROUGH COUNCIL

# ALDERSHOT TOWN CENTRE PROSPECTUS

SUPPLEMENTARY PLANNING DOCUMENT

## 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.

**Do you agree with the vision?**

**Would you add anything?**

**Do you have comments on the key themes?**

## SIX KEY THEMES FOR THE VISION

### 1 A REVITALISED TOWN CENTRE

Aldershot's retail core is not expected to compete with regional towns nearby but it can play an important role in meeting convenience and local shopping needs of a growing population.

The council will welcome new retailers and seek to focus these in the core shopping streets; will support specialist retailers providing an alternative offer; and will bring other uses such as leisure and homes into the centre to help support shops.



### 2 TOWN CENTRE LIVING

Aldershot has a significant requirement for new homes with demand from young families and professionals. The role of town centres across the country is shifting away from retail to leisure uses and new homes can help to meet demand while also helping to give the town centre back its vitality.

The council has reviewed a number of suitable town centre sites that can cater for people of different ages and family size. We are not able to bring these forward alone but will work with developers, ensuring an approach that responds to Aldershot's Victorian character.



# ALDERSHOT TOWN CENTRE PROSPECTUS

SUPPLEMENTARY PLANNING DOCUMENT

## 3 A FAMILY FRIENDLY TOWN CENTRE

Aldershot is appreciated as a safe and family friendly town centre with a range of leisure activities. With the Wellesey development under construction, the council will seek to provide additional town centre leisure facilities and public spaces.

Better signage and pathway improvements will be made as funding becomes available, to connect the town centre to Aldershot's many surrounding natural assets.



## 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 Wellesey 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.



## 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.



## 6 AFFIRMING THE VICTORIAN HERITAGE

Aldershot's quality Victorian buildings are frequently overlooked as an asset for the town. The buildings can help to give Aldershot the distinctiveness required to attract visitors as leisure plays a more important role for towns.

Many historic buildings are at crossroads and landscape improvements at these points can have a substantial impact in improving the environment. The council will protect these buildings and important views and will invest in shop front and building improvements as funding becomes available.





# ALDERSHOT TOWN CENTRE PROSPECTUS

## SUPPLEMENTARY PLANNING DOCUMENT

### THE MASTERPLAN FOR ALDERSHOT

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

- The Galleries site linking Wellington Street with the High Street car park
- The Union Street group of buildings that also front Wellington Street and the High Street
- The Rail Station area, including improved access and parking
- The area around the Princes Hall, including refurbishment of the theatre

**The Princes Hall area:** Remodelling of the Princes Hall with infill residential development to establish new street frontage

**Victoria Road:** Infill development opportunity

**Marks and Spencer building:** Potential reuse or redevelopment

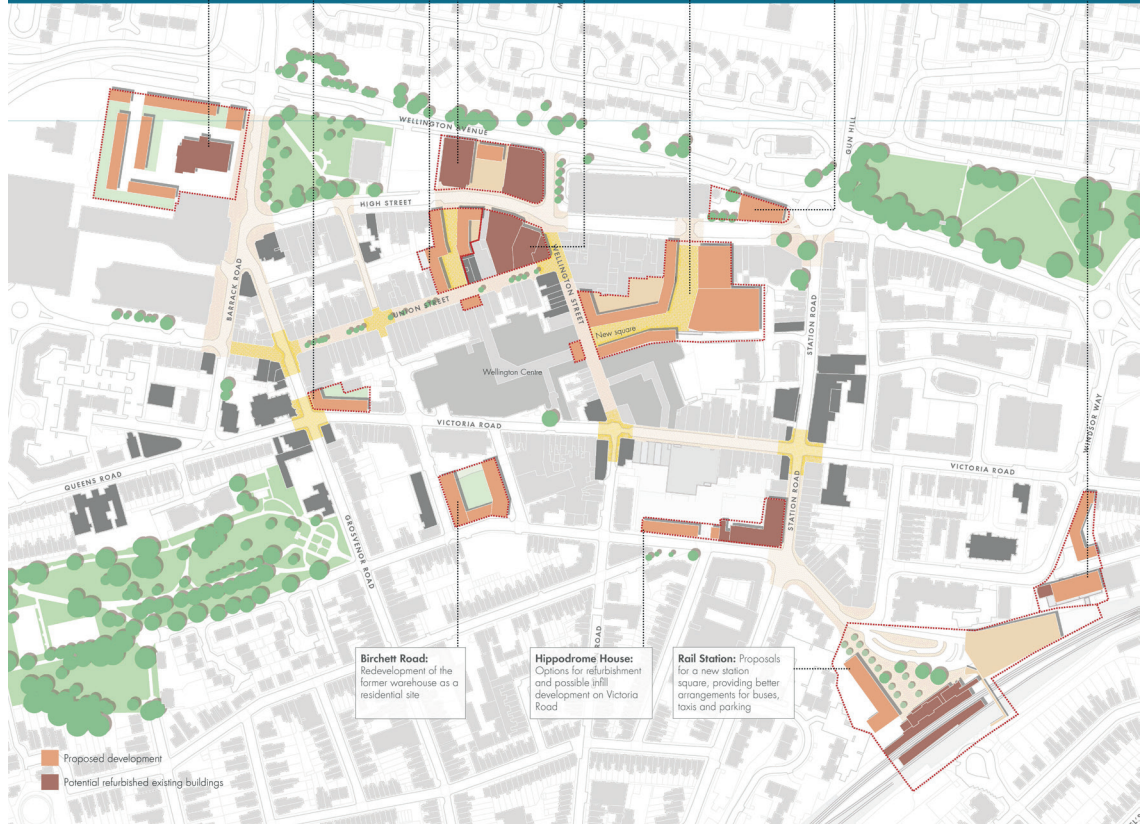
**Former Kings Centre:** Established as the Empire community and events venue

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

**Galleries site:** Retail, active town centre uses and residential redevelopment of the Galleries site with option to include new leisure facilities

**Library area:** Corner infill development opportunity

**Windsor Way:** Corner infill development opportunity



■ Proposed development  
■ Potential refurbished existing buildings



# ALDERSHOT TOWN CENTRE PROSPECTUS

SUPPLEMENTARY PLANNING DOCUMENT

## FOUR PRIORITY PROJECTS

### The Galleries site

Plans would link Wellington Street with the High Street car park directly at street level, fronted by homes and active town centre uses at ground floor.

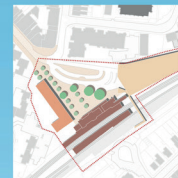
The pedestrian bridge would be removed and the Wellington Centre would have a new, larger entrance with access to ground and first floor shops. Potential also exists for new leisure uses within a scheme.



### The Rail Station area

Aldershot rail station is an attractive Victorian building but is currently underused and the existing road layout is complex and hinders access.

The council, in partnership with others, has submitted a bid to the Enterprise M3 Local Economic Partnership (LEP) to improve the area, with a public space in front of the station, simpler access arrangements and replacement parking.



### The Union Street group of buildings

The council will prioritise bringing the vacant buildings at the eastern end of Union Street back into use, with retention and refurbishment a preferred strategy. Opportunities exist for active town centre uses at ground floor and residential above.



The former Marks and Spencer building also has potential either to be re-let as one large or two medium sized units. A more significant change could be the re-establishment of the arcade link between Union Street and the High Street, with smaller units that accommodate active uses at ground floor and homes above.

### The Princes Hall area

The police station is anticipated to close and with development coming forward, potential exists to invest in the Princes Hall 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. New homes fronting Wellington Avenue and Princes Way would create a better entrance to the town centre.



# APPENDIX 2 STAKEHOLDER COMMENTS

Respondent	Response	Officer Comment
<b>Aldershot Civic Society</b>	<p>The Civic Society is of the view that now, more than ever, Aldershot needs to re-imagine itself to stop further decline and to position itself as a modern town centre allowing independent businesses opportunities to flourish, and not just shops but leisure and decent places for people to live in a pleasant and thriving town centre.</p> <p>The priority for most people is sorting the Galleries, and the society welcomes the changes that have been put forward, but is concerned that without the council using all of its powers to make sure that something happens, Threadneedle will continue to sit on its asset bringing further decline to our town centre. It is without any doubt that the Galleries has been an instrumental part of the town centres decline and it must be a priority to ensure that this does not go on any longer, as if it does, no other changes in the plan will do more than polish the surface of a rotten apple, from which only Threadneedle will benefit.</p> <p>Opening up the Galleries as a ground level pedestrian route is supported by the society as you will no longer have the problem of escalators and lifts not working because of uninterested landlords like Threadneedle. It would be important to make sure that new shop units took on a Victorian look fitting with the frontages like the ones demonstrated in the master plan on Union Street. We welcome the removal of the bridge and the restoration of the street view through to the Gala Bingo building. Aldershot needs a new town square and we are sceptical as to whether the “new square” noted in the masterplan is substantial enough to be anywhere near big enough to perform this task. We would be like to find out more information on this new square, the size and how it would look.</p>	<p>Comments noted. No suggested change.</p> <p>The identification of the Galleries as a key site within the Prospectus SPD provides the planning policy framework upon which the Council can seek to bring forward positive change, preferably in partnership with the current landowner.</p> <p>Comments noted. It is not considered appropriate or necessary to be too prescriptive to restrict the design of any new build retail frontages. However, proposals should be sympathetic to the prevailing town character.</p> <p>The SPD identifies and supports the principle of a new square within the heart of the town centre. Following detailed design, it is more than likely that the location/dimensions of such a public space will evolve over time.</p>

Respondent	Response	Officer Comment
	<p>The former Marks and Spencer plan seems sensible as there seems little chance of a larger store wanting to use this space. Opening up this area as a through route makes sense to help make the town more accessible, and helps link the Princes Gardens and Empire with the town centre. Lining this with shop units we hope will encourage more independent traders.</p> <p>The “library area” needs further explanation, as to what happens with the entrance to the car park. It also seems to be desperate redevelopment, rather than needed development.</p> <p>The station development is welcomed with caution as it has long been an aim of the civic society to see improvements here. One concern is where the buses would go? The document states that they would stop in front of the station, but if this is the case that buses would stop nose to tail in front of the station we would lose the gain in making the area look better as all we would see looking towards the station would be parked buses.</p> <p>Windsor Way redevelopment is long overdue as this area is quite an eyesore, as is making Hippodrome House look better and this is supported by us too, as with Birchett Road and Victoria Road proposals.</p> <p>Whilst we welcome the changes to the look of the Princes Hall, we are also disappointed that something more substantial was not offered. Acquiring the old Ritz/Gala Bingo building as a new theatre for Aldershot, bringing it closer to the high street car park and town centre, and with its history of famous</p>	<p>Comments noted. No suggested change.</p> <p>It is understood that the proposed improvements to pedestrian linkages between the Wellesley development and the town centre identify this parcel of land as an improved pedestrian connection. Subsequently, it is unlikely that the corner infill proposal is achievable. It is recommended that the allocation is removed from the final masterplan.</p> <p>The intention is to introduce bus stops to the front of the existing station building. There would be no requirement for a ‘bus station’ as is currently the case and therefore it is unlikely that the buses using the interchange would be stationary for long periods.</p> <p>Comments noted. No suggested change.</p> <p>Comments noted. The proposals within the SPD are indicative and it will be the decision of the landowner (RBC in the case of Princes Hall), based on a combination of financial viability and public demand for the centre and its cultural offer, as to how the scheme moves forward.</p>



Respondent	Response	Officer Comment
	<p>performers. A complete re-build at the present site to give Aldershot a brand new state of the art theatre would have also been more welcomed.</p> <p>New plans for the Empire are welcomed by the society and anything that can be done to improve the car wash area between the two old cinemas would be most welcomed.</p> <p>We feel that one thing has been overlooked. That is there are no plans in place for helping to ensure that the town is suitable for visiting in all weathers. Whilst opening up new streets and removing the Galleries is welcomed, there seems to be no thought for interlinking shelters or glass rooves so that restaurants could still seat people outside more modestly sized units, and so shoppers were protected from the elements. It could also be questioned why there is no information on pedestrian flows? This was standard 30 years ago. Aldershot does not want to compete with covered centres like Camberley and Farnborough, but a few strategic awnings would not go amiss. This could also help with linking together of key sites as Aldershot always seems like a town in many fractured pieces, rather than one joined up town.</p> <p>In conclusion we generally support the draft Master Plan for Aldershot, and it is important that improvements are implemented as soon as possible to help our town thrive and become a destination of choice for locals in and around the area. This isn't the first consultation on Aldershot Town Centre, and we feel that the council needs to be bold as this may be the last chance to try to revive the town.</p>	<p>Comments noted. No suggested change.</p> <p>A key theme of the Prospectus SPD is the desire to affirm the Victorian Heritage of the town. Whilst the introduction of traditional awnings within the street scene is welcomed such as those seen at Poppins and Café Machiato, it is considered that permanent shelters/connection corridors of contemporary design would detract from the visual aesthetic of the town centre.</p> <p>Comments noted. As previously stated, the introduction of this supplementary policy framework will help to drive forward regeneration aspirations across the town centre and allow for Council intervention where considered necessary.</p>
<b>Church Crookham Parish Council</b>	Church Crookham Parish Council support the regeneration of Aldershot. This is a major town with some beautiful buildings	Comments noted. The Prospectus seeks to promote the Victorian Heritage of the town and identifies that the Council

Respondent	Response	Officer Comment
	<p>which the parish council would like to see retained. Some of the more modern buildings have jarred with the development of the town and will need serious re-modelling.</p> <p>The addition of family friendly areas with pedestrianised ways will open up Aldershot to become more than a town just to shop in. The area needs more specialised shops side-by-side with national brands. The parish council particularly likes the modernization of Princes Hall.</p>	<p>is committed to maintaining and enhancing this heritage. Future development proposals will be considered in this context.</p> <p>Comments noted. The Prospectus seeks to promote a variety of uses within the town centre, recognising that a major retail focus is not necessarily the most appropriate approach. A flexible approach is key to the future vitality of the town.</p>
<b>Environment Agency</b>	<p>Based on the submitted information, the Aldershot town centre sites you have selected in the 'Masterplan for Aldershot' on pages 40 and 41 all lie within Flood Zone 1 in accordance with our Flood Risk Mapping. Flood Zone 1 is defined as having a low probability of flooding in accordance with Table 1 'Flood Risk' of the Planning Practice Guidance. There is no fluvial flood risk associated with the Aldershot town centre sites in accordance with our Flood Risk Mapping. You will need to consider other sources of flooding in consultation with the Lead Local Flood Authority (LLFA). In this case the LLFA is Hampshire County Council.</p>	<p>Comments noted. No suggested change.</p>
<b>Hampshire County Council</b>	<p>The County Council notes that "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".</p> <p>The Hampshire Countryside Access Plan 2015-25, states that Hampshire County Council Countryside Service</p> <p>"...will work with others to identify a strategic, county-wide network within this which incorporates the key links between</p>	

Respondent	Response	Officer Comment
	<p>centres of population and places of interest in Hampshire’s countryside, both at present and looking to meet future needs”.</p> <p>Hampshire County Council Countryside Service therefore supports this aspect of the SPD and look forward to working with the Borough and developers to achieve some of these shared objectives.</p> <p>The SPD currently makes no reference to sustainability or climate change. Hampshire County Council Environmental Strategy Team recommends the inclusion of wording to ensure that paragraphs 93 to 98 of the National Planning Policy Framework are addressed.</p> <p>The County Council recommend the following wording should be incorporated into the SPD:</p> <p>‘New developments and improvements to existing properties will be planned in a way that reduces greenhouse gas emissions and utilises energy efficiency measures. The use of renewable, decentralised and/or low carbon energy generation technology will be encouraged.’</p> <p>p.13 first para: Hampshire County Council as the Highway Authority notes that this text states: “easy to get to and park and get around”. The County Council recommends that the Borough Council amend this text to reference sustainable access as the current wording implies that people will drive from Wellesley as there is lots of parking available in town rather than promoting sustainable access to the town centre from the new development.</p>	<p>Comments noted. No suggested change.</p> <p>The SPD provides further planning guidance in support of the adopted Core Strategy. The policy framework in respect of sustainable development/construction methods is outlined within Policy CP3 of the Core Strategy and this would be a material consideration for any new proposals. It is not considered necessary to repeat these policies within the SPD.</p> <p>Comments noted. This part of the vision statement is not explicitly related to travel by car. The suggested revised wording is too detailed for inclusion in the vision statement. Other statements in the SPD support sustainable travel. No change proposed.</p>

Respondent	Response	Officer Comment
	<p>The County Council as Highway Authority recommends that the wording is amended as set out below:</p> <p>Easy to access by a variety of sustainable modes of transport, including walking, cycling, public transport as well as the private car. Easy to get to and around, the town will become increasingly vibrant...</p> <p>p.30 first bullet: Hampshire County Council as the Highway Authority notes that this text states: “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”</p> <p>This current wording makes it seem like the multi-storey car park will make it better for people arriving by train and recommends that the statement is amended for clarity.</p> <p>The County Council as Highway Authority recommends that for clarity the wording is amended as set out below to:</p> <p>Enhanced landscaping, rationalisation of the road <u>network as well as a layout</u> and new multi-storey car park <u>will</u> to improve the experience of arriving in Aldershot by train and <u>help to avoid reduce the</u> conflict between cars, buses and pedestrians in the area</p> <p>p.30 second bullet: Hampshire County Council notes that this text states: “Improvements to connections to and from the new Wellesley development”</p>	<p>Comments noted. Seek to amend bullet point to reflect HCC recommendation.</p> <p>This will confirm that the proposal here is to improve the integration of transport modes at the railway station by an improvement to the forecourt. As a consequence of this improvement, the proposal includes some decking of the car park to maintain the current levels of car park capacity (it is not proposed to construct a new multi-storey car park).</p>



Respondent	Response	Officer Comment
	<p>The County Council as Highway Authority would expect to see more emphasis on sustainable transport links if this section “Investing in Streets and Spaces” is referring to. The section should also reference what the new and improved links are (or are planned to be) so that it is made clear in this section.</p> <p>The County Council as Highway Authority recommends that the wording is amended as set out below:</p> <p>Accessibility improvements that link to the new Wellesley development, pedestrian crossings on the high street as well as potentially new and improved sustainable transport links between the High Street and Union Street.</p> <p>p.48 first para: Hampshire County Council notes that this text states: The area around the station, including the parking, bus stands and highways does little to enhance the setting.</p> <p>The County Council as Highway Authority recommends that this text is amended as the term “highways” is misleading and so should not be used in this context. The station should also be referred to as the railway station for clarity throughout the document.</p> <p>The County Council as Highway Authority recommends that the wording is amended as set out below:</p> <p>The area around the railway station, including the parking, bus stands and highway environment does little to enhance the setting.</p>	<p>The improved links between High Street and Union Street refer to the proposed new pedestrian link through the vacant M&amp;S store. It is proposed to make this clearer in the final version of the SPD.</p> <p>Comments noted. Seek to amend paragraph to reflect HCC recommendation.</p>

Respondent	Response	Officer Comment
	<p>p.48 second para: Hampshire County Council notes that this text states: “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.”</p> <p>The County Council as Highway Authority recommends amending this bullet point to provide a clearer picture of the movements at the entrance to the railway station and how that mix is influenced by vehicles and vulnerable users.</p> <p>The County Council as Highway Authority recommends that the wording is amended as set out below:</p> <p>The existing accessibility in the area is complex, including buses, taxis, cyclists, pedestrians, pick up and set down for private cars, and access to the station for parking.”</p> <p>p.50 The County Council supports the aspirations for the Princes Hall and Police Station. However the following comments clarify the delivery approach to the Police Station and Magistrates Court.</p> <p>On page 50, second paragraph, it is suggested that a phased approach would be taken to redevelopment. However, as the Police Station and Magistrates Court are housed in one building, it is likely that the comprehensive redevelopment could occur should the Magistrates Court be provided on another site.</p> <p>Therefore, the County Council recommends that the image on the top right of the page showing potential phasing is removed to reflect this, and that the paragraph be replaced as recommended by the County Council:</p>	<p>Comments noted. Seek to amend paragraph to reflect HCC recommendation.</p>

Respondent	Response	Officer Comment
	<p>'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 so there is an opportunity to enhance and retain the Police Station for public sector community benefit. In the event of the relocation of the Magistrates Court, the site could have potential for residential redevelopment.'</p> <p>p.10 Hampshire County Council notes that this text states: "....through better signage and path widening...."</p> <p>Although the County Council as the Highway Authority supports the aspiration stated here, if this section is referring to footpaths (which isn't currently made clear) then it should explicitly refer to footpath widening.</p> <p>The County Council as Highway Authority recommends that the wording is amended as set out below:</p> <p>.....through better signage and footpath widening</p> <p>p.12 Hampshire County Council note that this text states: ".....will be improved with greening and signage"</p> <p>Hampshire County Council as the Highway Authority take this opportunity to ask the Borough Council what the term 'Greening' means in this context as it is not clear from the text what it refers to?</p>	<p>RBC is aware that the Hampshire Police Authority is reviewing its estate and, at the time of writing, indications are that Aldershot Police Station will be marketed in the short term as a development opportunity. Whilst it is recognised that the building is attached to the Magistrate Court, it is likely that the Police Authority will be seeking best value from its site i.e. residential. Accordingly, it is considered appropriate to retain the phasing option within the Prospectus SPD to encourage a flexible approach.</p> <p>Comments noted. Seek to amend paragraph to reflect HCC recommendation.</p>

Respondent	Response	Officer Comment
	<p>Clarification from the Borough Council is required to understand what 'Greening' means in the context of this SPD.</p> <p>p.12 Hampshire County Council note that this text states: "Pedestrian and cycle links between new homes and the town centre will be very important and the routes on....."</p> <p>Hampshire County Council as the Highway Authority recommends that this wording should refer to existing routes to accurately highlight the fact that these routes exist but they will be improved.</p> <p>p.31 Hampshire County Council notes that the text states: ".....so that pedestrians can access the station more easily....."</p> <p>Hampshire County Council as the Highway Authority recommends the use of the term visitors should be applied to the SPD here instead of pedestrians. By not using the term pedestrians all modes and user groups are incorporated under the term visitors.</p> <p>The County Council as Highway Authority recommends that the wording is amended as set out below:  ".....so that visitors can access the station more easily....."</p> <p>p.60 third bullet: Hampshire County Council as Highway Authority asks the Borough Council whether CIL needs to be referenced here too along with S106 and Developer Contributions.</p>	<p>Comments noted. Will seek to amend wording to 'soft landscaping' rather than 'greening'.</p> <p>Comments noted. Seek to introduce the word "existing"</p> <p>Comments noted. Seek to amend paragraph to reflect HCC recommendation.</p> <p>Comments noted. Seek to amend bullet to reflect HCC recommendation i.e. introduce CIL into the delivery mechanisms.</p>



Respondent	Response	Officer Comment
<b>Hart District Council</b>	<p>There is more than enough vacant space in Aldershot to cope with forecast retail growth requirements (Rushmoor Retail &amp; Town Centre Study, 2015). Therefore the type of net growth needed is most likely to be housing, since this encourages activity within centres. It is understood that the SPD will provide guidelines as to how Aldershot town centre is to be redeveloped. Whilst the draft SPD addresses the potential for housing HDC does not have complete confidence that it seeks to optimise residential densities.</p> <p>In this context we highlight the following sites as examples:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Galleries - Option 1, which would provide an estimated 121 homes instead of 54, is preferable since it maximises housing and could be delivered within the first five years. The Rushmoor SHLAA indicates that in excess of 200 units would be feasible at this location, and a mix of uses could still be accommodated</li> <li>• Police Station - The draft SPD estimates 36 units may be possible whilst the SHLAA indicates potential for 100</li> <li>• High Street - Whilst it is important to consider a variety of uses at this location the SHLAA does indicate that the King's Centre / Gala Bingo and surrounding uses could accommodate around 85 homes. The draft SPD does not currently cater for homes.</li> </ul> <p>Rushmoor Borough Council has signed up to the principle that it will do all it reasonably can to accommodate its own objectively assessed housing need (OAHN, see Terms of Reference for the Joint Hart, Rushmoor, Surrey Heath Member Liaison Group). HDC's current understanding is that Rushmoor could have a housing shortfall of 1,600 units in its emerging local plan. HDC</p>	<p>The Prospectus actively promotes town centre living – seeking to promote homes to cater for young people, families and older people wishing to downsize.</p> <p>The Aldershot Prospectus SPD is drafted in support of adopted policies within the Core Strategy (2011). The SPD recognises (page 8) that a Strategic Housing Market Assessment has been undertaken, which in turn has identified a significant requirement for new homes in the town. However, it is not considered that the SPD is the appropriate place to refer to the objectively assessed housing need. This is best considered within the context of the emerging Rushmoor Local Plan.</p> <p>Regarding capacity, it is noted that the options outlined within the Prospectus differ from the capacity identified within the latest iteration of the SHLAA. However, the SPD is only indicative and the densities/layout suggested should only be considered as such.</p>

Respondent	Response	Officer Comment
	<p>stated within its response to the summer 2015 consultation on the Borough Council's preferred local plan that it was evident that greater residential densities could be achieved at sites in town centre locations.</p> <p>Hart therefore objects to the draft SPD and asks Rushmoor to refer more explicitly to its OAHN, and to the challenges required in seeking to accommodate such need. HDC also requests that the SPD is reviewed to ensure that housing density and delivery are maximised.</p>	
<b>Health and Safety Executive</b>	<p>We have concluded that we have no representations to make on this occasion. This is because our records show that the Aldershot Town Centre Prospectus SPD boundary and the land within does not encroach on the consultation zones of major hazard installations or major accident hazard pipelines (MAHPs). As no encroachment has been detected, the HSE does not need to be informed of the next stages in the adoption of the Aldershot Town Centre Prospectus SPD.</p>	Comments noted. No suggested change.
<b>Lantana Properties Ltd</b>	<p>1. On page 34, Willow House, which is at the junction of Victoria Road and Grosvenor Road, is shown on the plan as a "historically significant building at crossroads". It is a tired 1960's office block, which the owners wish to redevelop and replace. This plan needs to be amended.</p> <p>2. On page 40, Willow House is shown as a "corner infill development opportunity", which we agree it is. However, the land to the rear of the building is shown green as if it is to be landscaped. In fact, this land does not belong to Willow House. In reality, it is laid out to tarmac and used for car parking. This plan needs to be amended.</p>	<p>Comments noted. Seek to amend the plan to remove the designation of Willow House as an 'historically significant building'.</p> <p>Comments noted. Seek to amend plan to take account of the landowner's comments.</p>
<b>London and Cambridge Properties Ltd</b>	<p>We are broadly supportive of the six themes presented in the draft prospectus but it is considered that there should be an</p>	<p>The SPD actively promotes town centre living. It is not considered appropriate to actively encourage additional floors</p>

Respondent	Response	Officer Comment
	<p>acknowledgement in the prospectus with regards to building additional floors at upper levels, where appropriate, to encourage further homes in the town centre, in accordance with theme No.2. Town Centre Living.</p> <p>There are a number of sites where there are the opportunities to build additional floors to provide additional good quality residential units in the town centre location and this should be reflected in the wording of the policy accordingly. This would further help to add to a revitalised town centre, in accordance with theme No.1. The use of upper floors should specially be noted under No.2 Town Centre Living.</p> <p>Furthermore, as acknowledged in the 'Retail, Leisure and Town Centre Study' Part 2 Town Centres, prepared by Nathaniel Lichfield and Partners, the vacancy rate of the Aldershot Town Centre is almost double the national average at 23.6% suggesting there is weak demand for retail units in the centre. There should therefore be a reference which allows greater flexibility to alternative non-retail uses where units have been vacant for and or marketed for a significant time, i.e. 6-12 months. This is because vacant units, especially in the primary shopping of the town centre can have a significant impact on the town centre's vitality and viability, which would prevent the revitalisation of the Town Centre.</p> <p>Too restrictive and not enough sites identified, given the opportunities available in Aldershot. There needs to be additional sites added to ensure the 6 themes of the prospectus can be achieved.</p>	<p>at upper levels within the document itself. Given that a key theme is the recognition of the town's Victorian heritage, it would be somewhat at odds to encourage additional storeys that would detract from this character.</p> <p>Such proposals should be considered on their individual merits in the context of the townscape/street scene and should be a material consideration in the context of the Local Plan rather than promoted specifically within the SPD.</p> <p>The SPD is drafted within the context of the adopted Core Strategy and Rushmoor Local Plan Saved Policies and is required to be consistent. The town centre policies within these documents provide the framework for the SPD. Appropriate flexibility is built into these policies to allow for diversification where it is considered justified. Subsequently, it is not considered necessary to repeat this position within the SPD itself.</p> <p>The key sites identified are not an exhaustive list. They have been identified as RBC priorities but this does not restrict or take precedence over alternative or additional proposals coming forward.</p>
<b>Natural England</b>	I can confirm that Natural England have no comments to make on this draft document.	Comments noted. No suggested change.

Respondent	Response	Officer Comment
<p><b>Rushmoor Cycle Forum</b></p>	<p>We would state that any future developments in Rushmoor and Aldershot should have strong sustainable transport at the hub of the design.</p> <p>That the designers should use best practice and lessons learned from the UK and around the world. To ensure a positive change in Aldershot centre and the surrounding town.</p> <p>Reference should be made to both Hampshire cycling strategy, Rushmoor Local Plan development &amp; Aldershot Town Access Plan.</p> <p>We welcome the mention of sustainable transport and improved cycling facilities/connectivity and family friendly streets but details seems very sparse on this important topic.</p> <p>We would propose that a commitment for a dedicated key section of the proposal for top quality cycle/pedestrian and sustainable transport.</p> <p>We would like an expert team to do a full investigation of all options for providing this key topic. The work on the centre should be an integral part of a wider action plan to upgrade of a network of routes through the borough and beyond.</p> <p>Aldershot should consider all the ranges of possible solutions for improved sustainable infrastructure from becoming a mini Holland to filtered permeability' for cyclists. Cycling and sustainable infrastructure, is at the heart of a vibrant town and community and could help to fulfil the desired objective of the plan.</p>	<p>Comments noted. Sustainable transport modes are actively promoted and supported across Rushmoor.</p> <p>The Prospectus SPD provides further guidance in respect of existing planning policies within the adopted Core Strategy and the Rushmoor Local Plan Saved Policies.</p> <p>The comments of the Rushmoor Cycle Forum are noted. The Aldershot Town Access Plan has proposed a series of new facilities to encourage cycling in Aldershot which will be pursued, and funding associated with new town centre development will be sought to bring these projects forward as appropriate.</p>



Respondent	Response	Officer Comment
	<p>Cycling has a valuable role in improving the lives of Aldershot residence including; health and well being, an efficient form of transport, reducing congestion, pollution minimisation.</p> <p>Reclaiming the streets for people. Making it a more family and person friendly area and generally a more pleasant place to be and live.</p> <p>All new developments should priorities cycle developments as an efficient solution to solve many of the problems communities experience.</p> <p>We would call on the developers of Aldershot to have an ambitious vision.</p> <p>A number of cities and large towns are realising this and making applications for major funding to become mini Holland's with regards to cycle infrastructure, London has schemes in various stages of implementation, and locally Guildford is proposing major improvements in this area.</p> <p>Recent surveys by sustains shows the key desires for people to increase cycling and increased funding for infrastructure. Areas where quality cycle infrastructure has been implemented has shown an increase in retail sales.</p> <p>Cost benefit of cycle infrastructure in health benefits (reduced mortality) alone has been shown to be a ration of x2.5. We strongly suggest that Rushmoor and Aldershot ensure that each development is designed with the goal of future proofing the area with regards to cycle infrastructure. Matching and exceeding other UK infrastructure. To ensure that Rushmoor</p>	

Respondent	Response	Officer Comment
	<p>and Aldershot has a key differentiator in this field. With people looking to Aldershot for examples of successful cycle infrastructure and a quality of life.</p> <p>If each small or large development misses this opportunity it will severely damage the future potential of Rushmoor and Aldershot. Each part needs to be planned with extreme care and forethought, to ensure it links to future developments and meets the needs of its current and future residences.</p>	
<p><b>Rushmoor Borough Council – Environment Panel</b></p>	<p>Aldershot Town Hall is a significant building which deserves priority to emphasise its role in the development of Aldershot.</p> <p>Good quality family living in the town centre is vital (including good quality new builds and conversions).</p> <p>Princes Hall – the location was accepted but its size and capacity must be expanded.</p> <p>The principle of having a good town square was endorsed but the Panel wanted to see a well-defined and well-framed town square irrespective of its location.</p> <p>The emphasis on the town’s Victorian heritage and architecture was endorsed and it was felt that this should have prominence in the document and should be promoted, protected, enhanced and preserved.</p>	<p>Aldershot Town Hall is a Grade II listed building currently occupied by Hampshire County Council. RBC Officers are not aware of any future plans to vacate the building. As a statutorily protected building, its significance is recognised in the Aldershot townscape.</p> <p>Comments noted. The Prospectus supports/promotes town centre living. Detailed considerations such as the quality of design are covered by national and local policies.</p> <p>Comments noted. The principle of retaining the theatre is outlined in the Prospectus. Decisions relating to its size and capacity are a matter to be determined corporately.</p> <p>Comments noted. Seek to introduce further text in the SPD regarding good design principles for a town square.</p>

Respondent	Response	Officer Comment
	<p>Redundant sites on Windsor Way should be linked more to the Railway Station development in the document.</p> <p>A Heritage Trail was considered an excellent idea and should be referenced in the document. It was suggested that this could be enhanced through the use of good public art (not forgetting the military).</p>	
<p><b>Rushmoor Labour Group</b></p>	<p>What is considered Aldershot Town Centre is defined too narrowly if it is to include housing, leisure, culture and spaces. For example, the corners of Hospital Hill and Wellington Avenue across the road from Princes Hall and Princes Gardens could also be taken into consideration. Also, the open area of land between Cassino Close and High Street is very much in need of improvement. Further, the area between Parsons Close and High Street, including the Parsons Barracks Car Park could be included.</p> <p>To the south, with Aldershot Register Office moving out and the former Potters building on the corner of Queens Road empty and The Old Town Hall being vacated, the whole of that site could be considered for a major development (albeit The Old Town Hall is a Listed building).</p> <p>For a proactive approach to succeed, Rushmoor Borough Council needs to appoint a Project Director to act as the “champion” of Aldershot Town Centre in driving forward this development and investment while being democratically accountable to the local community.</p> <p>Further, Rushmoor Borough Council should consider setting up a</p>	<p>The Prospectus SPD is drafted as an extension of existing policies within the Core Strategy and the Rushmoor Local Plan Saved Policies document. The town centre boundary is defined by these policies and is reflected on the Core Strategy Proposals Map. The SPD operates within this remit.</p> <p>A number of the properties around the Queens Road/Victoria Road junction are either nationally or locally listed and subsequently, major development opportunities are limited. The former Potters Building has planning permission for conversion of the listed building and new build development to the rear.</p> <p>This is a matter to be considered corporately and falls outside of the remit of the Prospectus SPD.</p> <p>This is a matter to be considered corporately and falls outside</p>

Respondent	Response	Officer Comment
	<p>joint venture company with suitable partners (in the way that the Westgate development did) in order to provide a suitable vehicle for managing development and investment in Aldershot Town Centre.</p> <p>It is unrealistic for the Prospectus to set out policies for significant growth of retail in Aldershot Town Centre over the plan period.</p> <p>It would be more realistic to set out policies for consolidation and diversification of retail, while concentrating on providing much-needed housing and associated leisure and cultural facilities in Aldershot Town Centre.</p> <p>With that reservation, we welcome Rushmoor Borough Council's intention to plan positively for Aldershot's future and to provide clarity on investment priorities.</p> <p>It is not enough for development proposals to be permitted that maintain the vitality and the viability of Aldershot Town Centre. It is already too late for that laissez-faire approach, which has not worked in the past 10 years since The Galleries was emptied.</p> <p>Aldershot Town Centre is in a critical state, so Rushmoor Borough Council needs to take urgent action immediately to regenerate it.</p>	<p>of the remit of the Prospectus SPD. The Council being able to bring land forward i.e. as freeholder, is an integral part of any such venture.</p> <p>Comments noted. The Prospectus recognises that Aldershot is unlikely to compete with nearby regional centres and must focus on alternative approaches to supporting the vitality/vibrancy of the town.</p> <p>The SPD is drafted in support of existing policies within the Core Strategy and Rushmoor Local Plan Saved Policies document. Proposals to change frontages/consolidate the town centre need to be driven by changes to these policies within a new Local Plan.</p> <p>Comments noted.</p> <p>The SPD is drafted in support of existing policies within the Core Strategy and Rushmoor Local Plan Saved Policies document and reflects national planning guidance. As noted above, proposals to change frontages/consolidate the town centre need to be driven by changes to these policies within a new Local Plan.</p>



Respondent	Response	Officer Comment
	<p>Policy TC1 is not proactive enough, particularly in bringing to bear consideration of the real factors that are driving retail out:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- high rents</li> <li>- high business rates</li> <li>- high parking charges</li> <li>- expensive bus fares</li> <li>- relatively low income of population regularly using Aldershot Town Centre</li> <li>- concentration of deprivation in and around Aldershot Town Centre (including the high proportion of elderly in the population).</li> </ul> <p>Policy TC2 is in danger of leading to even more empty shop units and charity shops, in the absence of policies to address the factors above.</p> <p>Policy TC3 would be suitable if there was demand for shopping units on the ground floor. However, given the flight of retail from Aldershot Town Centre, it would be more appropriate to consider residential units without shopping on the ground floor, where appropriate.</p> <p>For Aldershot Town Centre, its critical state means that we need to see beyond policies being assessed purely on planning grounds to being practical, and we need to be prepared to consider any proposals that will make a positive contribution to saving Aldershot Town Centre from collapse.</p> <p>There seems no evidence for the optimistic view of the Enterprise M3 LEP that there is demand for new retail units, above which housing can be built.</p>	<p>Policies TC1, TC2 and TC3 are "saved" town centre policies (in the Rushmoor Local Plan Review, 2000) and form part of the basis for considering town centre related applications at present, along with relevant policies from the Core Strategy. Any proposed changes to this suite of policies will need to be taken forward within a new Local Plan document. RBC consulted on the Preferred Approach version of the new Local Plan during the Summer and will be publishing a further draft for consultation in 2016.</p> <p>Comments noted. RBC is able to consider departures from policy if there are material considerations that weigh in favour of a proposal.</p>

Respondent	Response	Officer Comment
	<p>We need to recognise that the £3 million investment in streets, spaces and shop fronts has not restored vitality to Aldershot Town Centre, many of whose retailers find themselves hard-pressed to make ends meet in the current climate.</p> <p>The Prospectus claims that Aldershot has a price differential with surrounding areas that makes property relatively affordable for a desirable part of the country. However, all of that changed when the first units on the Wellesley development went on sale by Bellway (for example, a one-bed flat costing £200,000 – well above the current average price in Aldershot of £140,000).</p> <p>The Prospectus needs to deal with the demographic of Aldershot Town Centre as it is now, and then go forward on a realistic timetable based on how change in that demographic may be reflected in future developments. The Prospectus needs proposals that address the following weaknesses in the current offer:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- high rents</li> <li>- high business rates</li> <li>- high parking charges</li> <li>- expensive bus fares</li> <li>- relatively low income of population using Aldershot Town Centre</li> <li>- concentration of deprivation in and around Aldershot Town Centre (including the high proportion of elderly in the population).</li> </ul> <p>Not everyone will be able to afford high-quality urban homes, so there will need to be provision of affordable and social housing to meet demand – demand that currently very much exceeds</p>	<p>This is not a matter for consideration within the Prospectus SPD.</p> <p>The focus of the Aldershot Town Centre Prospectus is the defined ‘town centre’ in accordance with the adopted Core Strategy. It is this location where the price differential exists.</p> <p>The issue of rents falls outside the remit of the SPD. If RBC was a significant landowner within the town centre, it could influence such matters. However, the majority of sites are within private ownership and landowners have the freedom to determine their own rent values.</p> <p>In addition, the Prospectus is not the appropriate mechanism for establishing the corporate position in respect of business rates, parking charges and bus fares. These issues fall outside of the scope of the SPD.</p> <p>Comments noted. Development proposals will need to accord with wider planning considerations, including in respect of the provision of affordable housing.</p>

Respondent	Response	Officer Comment
	<p>supply.</p> <p>Plans need to be realistic and based on the reality that the most affluent have nothing to attract them into Aldershot Town Centre at present or in the foreseeable future. Guildford, Farnham, Reading, Basingstoke, Winchester and even Portsmouth and Southampton have much more to offer the most affluent.</p> <p>In the longer term, as Wellesley housing is occupied, there may be opportunities to have more specialist shops in Aldershot Town Centre. However, Wellesley is going to have its own local centre to meet the convenience shopping needs of its residents, so this provision has to be taken into account. For non-convenience and affluent shopping, Wellesley residents will be most likely to travel to Guildford, Farnham, Reading, or Basingstoke, as the more affluent residents of Aldershot do at present.</p> <p>In terms of trying to establish a retail hierarchy, Wellington Centre is dominant because of the number and the range of its shops, but otherwise the most dynamic area is Station Road and the east of Victoria Road.</p> <p>In addition, the so-called improvement scheme of Victoria Road, which introduced an often-ignored “No Entry” zone between Heathland Street and Gordon Road, has affected shops there badly and needs to be removed as soon as possible.</p> <p>Before seeking to meet the demand from young professionals who wish to move the area, there needs to be some focus on meeting the demand from the existing population of Aldershot.</p>	<p>Comments noted. The Prospectus recognises that Aldershot is unlikely to compete with regional towns nearby in terms of being able to accommodate ‘High Street’ retailers. However, Officers consider that the SPD should be aspirational as well as deliverable, particularly given that the document looks to the longer term.</p> <p>The Prospectus recognises that the main role of Aldershot Town Centre will be in respect of convenience and local shopping needs.</p> <p>Comments noted. No suggested change.</p> <p>This is a matter to be considered corporately and falls outside of the remit of the Prospectus SPD.</p> <p>The policy mechanisms for the delivery of housing are set out in adopted local policy. In terms of low cost housing, there is an evident need for affordable housing across the Borough. It</p>

Respondent	Response	Officer Comment
	<p>This unmet demand from the existing population has increased the numbers of homeless, rough sleepers, people who have an urgent need to move, and people who have been assessed as having a high priority.</p> <p>In part, the high vacancy rate of the town centre car parking at the High Street multi-storey car park is due to the reluctance of town-centre residents to park there overnight because of the high charges and because of the anti-social behaviour of rough sleepers who have been residing there. Measures therefore need to be taken to invest in making the car park secure for residents and users, rather than having it open to the anti-social.</p> <p>A family-friendly town centre</p> <p>This theme is at odds with the increasing devotion of the town centre to a night-time economy, which has seen increases in late night and early morning openings of venues for consumption of alcohol, music and entertainment – the most recent being for the Empire (formerly The Kings Church) in High Street to be open until 3.00 am four nights a week, likely to be closely followed by the refurbished Palace nightclub in Station Road.</p> <p>Evidence of the degree of public nuisance is that Police crime records for Aldershot showed last year that rate of offences committed in Wellington Ward (Aldershot Town Centre) per head of population was five times as great as in all the other wards in Aldershot, these offences being mainly anti-social behaviour and assaults.</p> <p>For Aldershot to have a really family-friendly town centre, these sources of crime and anti-social behaviour need to be reduced</p>	<p>is recognised that higher density schemes within the town centre provide the opportunity to deliver affordable housing.</p> <p>Comments noted. This issue will be raised as a corporate matter.</p> <p>A successful town centre needs to offer variety and cater for a wide audience. The evening economy does not need to necessarily detract from the aim of achieving a ‘family-friendly’ town centre, particularly as the majority of ‘family’ activities will occur during the day time.</p> <p>Comments noted. This is a matter to be considered corporately. The SPD can have little, if any, impact on licensing issues.</p>



Respondent	Response	Officer Comment
	<p>as far as possible. Otherwise, Aldershot's reputation will continue to be tarnished.</p> <p>It is very disappointing that in the draft Prospectus there is no photograph and no mention made of Aldershot Lido, which provides a family day out for hundreds of Aldershot residents when it is open in the summer. There is great appetite among the long-standing residents of Aldershot to see this leisure facility regenerated.</p> <p>An improved cultural offer</p> <p>Unfortunately, this section shows a distinct lack of imagination in mentioning only Westgate and Princes Hall and the events programme in the town, however successful they are in raising peoples' spirits.</p> <p>There is no mention of Aldershot Library and what it offers. Through an integrated approach with Hampshire County Council, Aldershot Library could be relocated to a new civic centre (for example, as part of a Union Street/High Street redevelopment). That would then free up the current Aldershot Library to be joined with The Galleries site in a major development scheme with housing, leisure and some retail facing onto High Street opposite the High Street Car Park.</p> <p>Also, West End Centre in Queens Road, is a major local arts venue, now part of the Hampshire Cultural Trust. And, there is the ambitious Rock &amp; Pop Foundation in Grosvenor Road. Aldershot Town Football Club at the EBB Stadium in High Street makes a very significant contribution through its Football in the Community Scheme.</p>	<p>The Prospectus focuses on Aldershot Town Centre, as defined by the Core Strategy and Rushmoor Local Plan Saved Policies. Aldershot Lido is sited a considerable distance from the town centre and subsequently does not fall within the remit of the Prospectus.</p> <p>Comments noted. Seek to include the library within the Prospectus document.</p> <p>Comments noted. Seek to include reference to the West End Centre within the Prospectus document. Aldershot Town FC are mentioned within the Prospectus.</p>

Respondent	Response	Officer Comment
	<p>If Aldershot Town Centre is to have an improved cultural offer, all these organisations and others need to be involved in plans for its future.</p> <p>Also, with respect to the section on the potential for transformation of Princes Hall, the changes shown are purely superficial to the front of the building and do nothing to enhance the cultural content that it could offer if, for example, the stage and seating were to be reconfigured so that it could mount London West end shows. A café could already be provided in the current building, and an open terrace for the occasional ceremony is unnecessary. Finally, those steps to the side look totally out of place and would not really provide a stronger relationship with Westgate, which has two or three blank white walls facing Princes Hall.</p> <p>Investing in streets and spaces</p> <p>Although it has upgraded some streets and spaces, the Activation Aldershot programme has not led to any improvement in retail in Aldershot Town Centre – so we have seen the departure of M&amp;S Outlook from Union Street and the Coop from Victoria Road/Birchett Road.</p> <p>It is also questionable whether, with the current population profile, the £200,000 grant scheme for shop fronts will bring any extra retail into Aldershot.</p>	<p>The SPD does not preclude the involvement of community organisations in plans for the future of Aldershot. Indeed, RBC has brought together a community group to discuss matters relating to events within the town centre following initial engagement on the Prospectus.</p> <p>The Prospectus proposals are indicative of what could be achieved. This is a matter for RBC to determine how best to proceed, based on a combination of financial viability and public demand for the centre and its cultural offer.</p> <p>To date, the investment in public realm improvements has focused on strengthening pedestrian connections between Wellesley and the town centre (Court Road) and Westgate and the town centre (Barrack Road/Grosvenor Road). Given the lack of land ownership within the town centre, it is difficult for RBC to instigate a step-change in retail provision.</p> <p>The shop front improvement scheme seeks to build upon the Victorian heritage of the town centre, with an emphasis on Union Street and Wellington Street to create a more cohesive town centre.</p>

Respondent	Response	Officer Comment
	<p>The only way to create significant public space would be to demolish an existing building, and it is doubtful whether this would be worthwhile in terms of the benefit to be achieved. There are already significant public spaces in Aldershot Town Centre – Princes Gardens, Westgate and Court Road – so it may be preferable to develop plans to make better use of these.</p> <p>Another aspect of investing in streets and spaces that is currently neglected is maintenance, as evidenced by the run-down state of the abandoned buildings on two corners of the crossroads at Queens Road, Victoria Road and Grosvenor Road – which the Prospectus sees as providing a public realm investment opportunity.</p> <p>Affirming the Victorian heritage</p> <p>It is important to give the owners of the Victorian buildings, particularly those that are prominent, support in bringing them into active use, maintaining them and highlighting them, perhaps by having plaques explaining their historical significance and lighting them at night, and having an Aldershot Town Centre walk between them.</p> <p>The Galleries</p> <p>At first sight, either of the Options looks attractive compared with the empty (“ghost town”) shopping mall that The Galleries has been for the past 10 years.</p>	<p>It is recognised that the creation of a new public space within the heart of the town centre is reliant on significant redevelopment schemes, hence the consideration to include it within the Galleries proposal. A central open space would be of greater benefit to the town economy.</p> <p>Willow House has recently been purchased and the landowner has responded to the Prospectus SPD. The old Potters Building is with planning permission. As both buildings are in private ownership, there is little influence that RBC can have on their appearance.</p> <p>Comments noted. The Prospectus recognises the value of the Victorian buildings within the town centre and suggests that a number of these properties would benefit from up-lighting in the evenings to highlight their architectural qualities. The SPD also states that improvements could be made subject to funding being available.</p>





Respondent	Response	Officer Comment
	<p>However, the question remains over the viability of the retail space below, given the flight of retail from Aldershot Town Centre at present.</p> <p>Given the size and the configuration of the former M&amp;S, the amount of refurbishment need to bring it into use, and the flight of retail from Aldershot Town Centre, the first option for this site seems unrealistic.</p> <p>The second option is preferable, particularly if the link created between Union Street and High Street could also allow creation of a town square facing onto the middle of Union Street.</p> <p>However, again, there is the question about the viability of new retail units in the current situation, so it could be preferable to have retail confined to the frontages on High Street and Union Street (again of the type shown by Steve Walker of Allies &amp; Morrison at a Councillors' Housing &amp; Planning Forum on 22 October 2015).</p> <p>The Rail Station</p> <p>The opportunity to redevelop Aldershot Station is welcome, but more consideration needs to be given to the effect on the residents of Kingsley Court, the sheltered housing accommodation for about 110 elderly residents, which would then be surrounded on three sides by traffic on the move all day and all evening. The location of the entry and the exit to the new decked car park could adversely affect the environment in the garden of Kingsley Court, where the elderly residents can sit in the summer.</p>	<p>It is understood that the current configuration of the units is not attractive to modern retailers. It is considered that a redevelopment scheme could address these concerns.</p> <p>Comments noted.</p> <p>Comments noted. Suggest making reference to a new public square within the final version of the Prospectus.</p> <p>The issue of viability for specific schemes is a matter for the detailed design/application stage but a high level viability assessment for each scheme in the SPD has been undertaken.</p> <p>Comments noted. This will need to be considered at the detailed design stage. Work to date by officers has focused on the provision of the decked car park to the railway side of the land parcel and it is hoped that a single deck would offer minimal/if any encroachment onto the amenity of the existing residents.</p>

Respondent	Response	Officer Comment
	<p>It could be preferable to have entry directly into the new decked car park off Windsor Way as part of the redevelopment of the empty site at the end of Albert Road nearest to Aldershot Station. That would also reduce the potential for conflict between pedestrians walking to Aldershot Station and vehicles entering and leaving the decked car park at the bend on Station Road.</p> <p>Given the Government drive to build starter homes at station sites, it could be practicable to build flats above the decked car park. With active support from the Homes &amp; Communities Agency (HCA), this project could be advanced rapidly and make a contribution towards the HCA target of building 200,000 starter homes by 2020.</p> <p>With respect to making the entrance to Aldershot Station attractive to passengers arriving, Network Rail needs to make proper provision for maintenance of the environment on the land it owns. At present, all that is apparent to passengers arriving from London is a ghastly underpass that brings them out into a weed-strewn forecourt, a neglected small garden and raised beds in the car park, whose only contribution is yet more weeds, with the car park itself being surrounded on all sides by weeds.</p> <p>Princes Hall, Police Station and Magistrates Court</p> <p>Consideration needs first to be given to assessing jointly with Her Majesty's Courts Service (HMCS) whether it is better to redevelop this site as a whole, as the HMCS lease on the County Court in Victoria Road is due to expire, so HMCS is planning to integrate the County Court into the Magistrates Court building,</p>	<p>Initial work has been undertaken to consider a new access route off Windsor Way into the car park. Unfortunately, the access requirements in respect of gradients and the extent of a ramp needed to address the changes in topography make this an unviable option.</p> <p>Comments noted. The proposals seek to make best use of the existing bus station site for residential purposes. The concept of building flats above the decked car park would require further thought and will be reliant on the construction method for the car park.</p> <p>Comments noted. RBC is in discussions with the landowner over maintenance and how this will be incorporated into regeneration proposals. The Prospectus focuses more so on the principle of development.</p>

Respondent	Response	Officer Comment
	<p>which would involve a certain amount of reconfiguration.</p> <p>On the diagrams shown, the extent of this site to the south seems questionable because there is a low wall about halfway between the Princes Hall and the Westgate site, which seems to mark the boundary of the Westgate site, but that is not taken into account.</p> <p>In particular, the new steps up to the south side of the extension to the Princes Hall, do not take into account the two low walls one at the boundary of the Westgate site and the other inside the Westgate site, which offers a very stark face to Princes Hall. It would be preferable for the Princes Hall, Police Station and Magistrates Court site to be developed as a whole, rather than the piecemeal approach of retaining the Magistrates Court building.</p> <p>The extension to the front of the Princes Hall does not seem to be good value for money in terms of improving the cultural offer at Princes Hall, which could benefit from extensive improvements to enable it to accommodate bigger shows (pre- and post-West End) and better backstage provision.</p> <p>Also, there is the question of car parking for Princes Hall, which is already very much constrained following the construction of Westgate, whose car parking is very often filled by Morrisons shoppers and Cineworld customers. Both options for development do not seem to include car parking provision, particularly if there are residential units that require car parking spaces.</p> <p>Birchett Road</p>	<p>Comments noted. The plans within the Prospectus are indicative and will be subject to detailed design. The Prospectus seeks to promote the principle of development.</p> <p>Comments noted. The plans within the Prospectus are indicative and will be subject to detailed design. The Prospectus seeks to promote the principle of development.</p> <p>Comments noted. The plans within the Prospectus are indicative and it will be for RBC as the landowner to determine how best to progress with plans for the site, based on a combination of financial viability and public demand for the centre and its cultural offer.</p> <p>Comments noted. Car parking will need to be carefully considered as part of the proposals and will need to accord with the requirements of the Car and Cycle Standards SPD. This is a matter for detailed design.</p>

Respondent	Response	Officer Comment
	<p>It is not clear from this proposal (including the bottom diagram) whether it is intended to pedestrianize Frederick Street. Although there was planning permission for housing on this site, that permission has now lapsed, so that provides an opportunity to reconsider its use.</p> <p>For example, at the recent Budget Working Group of Rushmoor Borough Council, it was suggested that there could be an opportunity to develop this Birchett Road site in conjunction with the Council car park in Birchett Road (directly opposite the site) as that could make better use of both sites.</p> <p>Also, it looks as though access to car parking for this Birchett Road site would be by the service road for the shops fronting onto Victoria Road. However, this service road is often blocked by large delivery vehicles for Iceland, so some other access to car parking for housing on this Birchett Road site would be required.</p> <p>High Street</p> <p>It seemed like good news that The King’s Centre was acquired for refurbishment as an events venue for community use. The subsequent news that the owners have submitted a licensing application that sees it open four nights a week until 3.00 am raises the prospect of it being part of the night-time economy, which is associated with higher levels of anti-social behaviour and violence in Aldershot Town Centre.</p> <p>Although that is not a planning matter, that use could affect the prospects for future investment in the future of Aldershot Town</p>	<p>Comments noted. Seek clarification on this point and address it within the final version of the document.</p> <p>Comments noted. The plans within the Prospectus are indicative and will be subject to detailed design. Matters including access and servicing will be considered at this stage.</p> <p>Comments noted. The Prospectus was drafted on the understanding that the King Centre had been acquired as an events venue. Planning permission has since been granted for such a use. The issue of licencing falls outside of the remit of the Prospectus.</p> <p>Comments noted.</p>



Respondent	Response	Officer Comment
	<p>Centre if the poor reputation for late-night economy was reinforced.</p> <p>The proposal for infill development between the new Empire and the Gala Bingo Building would be an improvement on the existing use as a car wash, although the car wash is largely hidden from view behind advertisement hoardings.</p> <p>Hippodrome House area</p> <p>Much is made of the poor aspect presented by Hippodrome House in walking along Station Road from Aldershot Station, so a refurbishment would be welcome.</p> <p>However, the news that the Co-operative is to vacate the Victoria Road premises and its Birchett Road car park on 8 November, creates the exciting prospect of a more extensive redevelopment of that site than the Prospectus contains.</p> <p>It opens up the possibility of having a passageway diagonally across the site to Victoria Road and residential development on either side of the passageway and on the Birchett Road frontage, with retail units on the ground floor on Victoria Road.</p> <p>Making it happen</p> <p>As highlighted in the introduction a proactive approach is needed for these proposals to succeed.</p> <p>Although the Prospectus advances various funding agencies and sources of finance, it does not propose suitable mechanisms to coordinate all of these and bring them to bear on an overarching</p>	<p>Comments noted. No suggested change.</p> <p>Comments noted. No suggested change.</p> <p>Comments noted. This proposal was previously considered by Officers in order to create a better linkage to the town centre. However, it was discounted on the basis that existing use value of the site compared to the proposed use value would not offer enough of an incentive to bring forward a comprehensive scheme.</p>

Respondent	Response	Officer Comment
	<p>plan.</p> <p>For that, Rushmoor Borough Council needs to appoint a Project Director to act as the “champion” of Aldershot Town Centre in driving forward this development and investment while being democratically accountable to the local community.</p> <p>Also, Rushmoor Borough Council should consider setting up a joint venture company with suitable partners (in the way that the Westgate development did) in order to provide a suitable vehicle for managing development and investment in Aldershot Town Centre with the urgency required.</p>	<p>Comments noted. As mentioned earlier, this is a matter to be considered corporately and falls outside of the remit of the Prospectus SPD.</p> <p>Comments noted. As mentioned earlier, this is a matter to be considered corporately and falls outside of the remit of the Prospectus SPD. The Prospectus provides the foundation upon which to instigate such ventures.</p>
<p><b>Rushmoor Pedestrian Forum</b></p>	<p>To fulfil objectives to encourage more of us to walk into town, a good understanding of all the current pedestrian routes is required. The prospectus is mostly specific on the possible pedestrian routes joining the Wellesley route to the town centre but linkage to the rest of the town, especially the residential areas so close to the town centre, is essential.</p> <p>Good pedestrian circulation relies on good pedestrian permeability and ideas of re-creating a link between Union Street and High Street, removing the Galleries Bridge so as to create a new way into the Wellington Centre or new shops around a public space created on the site of the Galleries we would applaud.</p> <p>To link better the Prince’s theatre and Westgate with the Prince’s gardens and with the rest of the town one might consider severely limiting traffic along Prince’s way and perhaps making this road and parts of those joining it shared space with very limited vehicle speed and access.</p>	<p>Comments noted. No suggested change.</p> <p>Comments noted. The area to the front of the Princes Hall is identified as an area for public realm improvement. The indicative proposals for the Princes Hall show this area as a shared space.</p>

Respondent	Response	Officer Comment
	<p>Although the Victoria Road scheme tidied up part of the central region of that road it most certainly left outstanding problems for the pedestrian. Amongst these are crossing the entrance to the Wellington multi-storey car park on the north side of Victoria Road and crossing Frederick Street, Heathland Street and Gordon Road on the south side. Twenty mile an hour speed restrictions, with suitable traffic calming measures, are required on these three roads and the carpark entrance needs to give higher priority to pedestrians walking along Victoria road.</p> <p>In particular unless a holistic approach is taken to pedestrian circulation it is likely that pedestrian routes will become fragmented and good circulation not achieved. We again emphasise the importance of introducing 20mph zones, extending pedestrianisation wherever possible; additionally we feel that steps need to be taken to ensure that side turnings into carparks, minor roads and loading areas do not break up the continuity of pedestrian routes. To encourage people to do more of their short journeys on foot and ensure that pedestrian circulation is really achieved it is crucial that the pedestrian infrastructure is designed properly and in a way that favours the pedestrian.</p> <p>It's therefore vital that attempts to expand the evening scene must create an atmosphere that is acceptable to a wide age range and cultural outlook and ensures that the town is, at all times, a place where people are happy to walk round. A locality which has a 'rough' reputation is not going to be the kind of place many of us would wish to visit or walk round – people avoid places which they perceive to be unsafe.</p>	<p>Comments noted. Speed restrictions fall outside of the remit of the Prospectus document and would be a matter for Hampshire County Council to consider.</p> <p>Comments noted.</p> <p>Comments noted. Improvements to the public realm have sought to improve the perception of safety to pedestrians. The Court Road proposals have opened up a pedestrian route, with better lighting and surveillance whereas the Barrack Road/Grosvenor Road improvements have sought to make pedestrian movement the priority by reducing vehicular lane widths and removing vehicular movements from Barrack Road into Grosvenor Road.</p>

Respondent	Response	Officer Comment
	<p>Removing the bus station and redeveloping the site residentially could result in the starting points for the various bus services spread over the town centre. Changing between train and bus, changing between bus services, or using a bus service that one is not too familiar with are all aided by having the bus station and having this adjacent to the train station. This is a feature that needs to be retained, if use of public transport is to be encouraged.</p> <p>A careful reappraisal of the current road arrangement, introduction of low speed restriction, and redesign to favour pedestrian access is probably all that is required to improve pedestrian ways to the bus station. Some minor cosmetic work would improve the look of the area.</p> <p>We hope that better pedestrian circulation is achieved and the advantages of this to retailing is understood. The need to create a family friendly environment to support both the future and present population is very laudable. We feel that to achieve all of this the retail environment must be kept healthy and that just replacement of the shops by town centre apartments and by a café environment may not achieve the desired active and lively town centre. We warn against allowing the evening scene to be subjected to an alcohol dominated culture which would deter many of us visiting the town during late evening. We hope that proposals for development of the bus station do not set back attempts to encourage more use of public transport.</p>	<p>Comments noted. The intention is for the bus service to maintain a presence at the railway station. However, this will be in the form of a stop rather than a station/depot area. Stagecoach have been engaged and support the proposals put forward.</p> <p>Comments noted.</p> <p>Comments noted.</p>
<b>Aldershot Town FC</b>	<p>I would like Aldershot FC as part of the vision for Aldershot as we are the highest profile entity in Aldershot The club needs to be the hub of the business and local community</p>	<p>Comments noted. The football club is very important to the town and is identified as part of the cultural offer section of the SPD, however as the club falls outside of the defined town centre boundary, there is limited opportunity to include it as part of the vision for the town centre.</p>



Respondent	Response	Officer Comment
<b>Stagecoach</b>	<p>My overall impression of the plan is that it is exciting and visionary but that whilst it mentions the railway station a great deal and the proposals for the forecourt it seems to completely omit any facilities for buses throughout the town.</p> <p>Our bus services offer very frequent services from Farnham, Guildford, Farnborough and Camberley as well as all the local areas of housing. Due to the layout of the town, most buses circulate the town offering convenient drop off and pick up points. There is evidence that bus passengers spend per trip is less than car visitors but that they make more trips. Therefore, for a strong retail environment we believe that bus passengers are essential.</p> <p>There is considerable reference to car parking yet this will simply encourage car visitors yet there is no increase in road capacity and therefore the congestion on the local roads will simply increase which in turn will force people to seek alternative places to visit.</p>	<p>Comments noted. This matter will be picked up by Transport colleagues.</p> <p>Comments noted.</p> <p>Comments noted. RBC will seek transport contributions from new development in order to offset the impact. A number of schemes are identified within the Aldershot Town Access Plan.</p>
<b>Thames Water</b>	<p>It is important that the SPD considers the net increase in wastewater/sewerage [and water] demand to serve proposed developments and also any impact the development may have off site further down the network, if no/low water pressure and internal/external sewage flooding of property is to be avoided</p> <p>Thames Water therefore recommend that developers engage with them at the earliest opportunity to establish the following</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The developments demand for Sewage Treatment and</li> </ul>	<p>Comments noted. The policy framework in respect of water management and SUDs is set out within the adopted Core Strategy and will be incorporated into the emerging Local Plan. Any new development proposals will be considered against this wider policy framework.</p>

Respondent	Response	Officer Comment
	<p>network infrastructure both on and off site and can it be met</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The surface water drainage requirements and flood risk of the development both on and off site and can it be met</li> </ul> <p>To accord with the NPPF/NPPG and the above, text along the lines of the following should be added to the SPD:</p> <p><b><u>“Sewerage &amp; Wastewater Infrastructure</u></b></p> <p><b><i>It is essential that developers demonstrate that adequate sewerage and wastewater treatment infrastructure capacity exists both on and off the site to serve the development and that it would not lead to problems for existing users. In some circumstances this may make it necessary for developers to carry out appropriate studies to ascertain whether the proposed development will lead to overloading of existing sewerage infrastructure. Where there is a capacity problem and no improvements are programmed by the water company, then the developer needs to contact the water company to agree what improvements are required and how they will be delivered and completed prior to any occupation of the development.</i></b></p> <p><b><i>Further information for Developers on sewerage infrastructure can be found on Thames Water’s website at:</i></b>  <a href="http://www.thameswater.co.uk/home/11425.htm">http://www.thameswater.co.uk/home/11425.htm</a></p> <p><b><i>Or contact can be made with Thames Water Developer Services  By post at: Thames Water Developer Services, Reading  Mailroom, Rose Kiln Court, Rose Kiln Lane, Reading RG2 0BY;  By telephone on: 0845 850 2777;</i></b></p>	

Respondent	Response	Officer Comment
	<p><b>Or by email: <a href="mailto:developer.services@thameswater.co.uk">developer.services@thameswater.co.uk</a></b></p> <p>Limiting the opportunity for surface water entering the foul and combined sewer networks is of critical importance to Thames Water. Thames Water have advocated an approach to SuDS that limits as far as possible the volume of and rate at which surface water enters the public sewer system. By doing this, SuDS have the potential to play an important role in helping to ensure the sewerage network has the capacity to cater for population growth and the effects of climate change.</p> <p>SuDS not only help to mitigate flooding, they can also help to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• improve water quality</li> <li>• provide opportunities for water efficiency</li> <li>• provide enhanced landscape and visual features</li> <li>• support wildlife</li> <li>• and provide amenity and recreational benefits.</li> </ul> <p>With regard to surface water drainage, Thames Water request that the following paragraph should be included in the Design SPD: <b><i>“It is the responsibility of a developer to make proper provision for surface water drainage to ground, water courses or surface water sewer. It must not be allowed to drain to the foul sewer, as this is the major contributor to sewer flooding.”</i></b></p>	
<p><b>The Theatres Trust</b></p>	<p>The Trust welcomes the retention and refurbishment of Princes Hall in this document and indeed recognises the potential for a s106 agreement for redevelopment of the surrounding sites to pay for the refurbishment of the Hall.</p> <p>However, from our experience across the UK, having residential use in close proximity to a theatre or performance venue</p>	<p>Comments noted. No suggested change.</p> <p>Comments noted. As the landowner, it would be in the</p>

Respondent	Response	Officer Comment
	<p>inevitably creates serious issues for both the venue and the new residents. Where there are insufficient safeguards in place (mainly via sound insulation and creative design), disputes can emerge and the new residents can request a Noise Abatement Notice be issued by the council on the theatre restricting its activities and putting it at risk of closure.</p> <p>In order to safeguard the theatre, this SPD should note that any new development adjacent to Princes Hall must be designed and constructed in such a way that the two uses will not conflict with each other. We note that the stage door and delivery dock are to the rear of the site and it will be essential that access and parking for 16.5m long articulated delivery vehicles will be maintained. This will also be a source of noise. The alternate provision of car parking for the theatre will also need to be addressed at this stage, as this will also affect the viability of the long term Princes Hall.</p>	<p>Council’s interest to ensure that appropriate safeguards are in place to ensure that it can fulfil its commitment to providing a successful theatre.</p> <p>Comments noted. The proposals within the SPD reflect an indicative scheme and should not be read as a detailed design. The points raised would be considered at this later stage.</p>
<p><b>Columbia Threadneedle Investments</b></p>	<p>The draft Prospectus in its current form is concerning in a number of areas and our client feels that these need to be addressed before the document can reasonably be considered capable of playing a useful role in the planning process. These areas are:</p> <p>i. engagement;</p> <p>Our client was surprised not to have been given an opportunity to engage with Allies and Morrison during the preparatory stages of this draft Prospectus. Columbia Threadneedle Investments are a major landowner and key commercial stakeholder in the town centre, so we would have expected the Council to consult with them as a matter of course before publishing a document that promotes their asset for</p>	<p>Comments noted. Allies and Morrison to clarify if Threadneedle was engaged.</p>



Respondent	Response	Officer Comment
	<p>redevelopment.</p> <p>ii. financial viability and deliverability</p> <p>We are particularly interested to review the evidence justifying development proposals for The Galleries, as we would like to understand how the Council arrived at its decision to identify the site as suitable for: (i) a significant amount of public realm, such as a public square and an outdoor pedestrian link; and (ii) a large leisure facility.</p> <p>In order to engage fully with this consultation exercise, we need to understand the decision-making and criteria used in support of the draft Prospectus' development options, and to what extent considerations of land value and cost (particularly SANG mitigation) have informed the criteria in use.</p> <p>iii. site capacity.</p> <p>The Galleries presents one of the best opportunities in the Borough to deliver development that is highly sustainable in planning terms. The site occupies a prominent brownfield location in the heart of the town centre and it is important that future options maximise the development potential of this location in order to reduce pressure on other less sustainable sites.</p> <p>It follows that we do not agree that the site is only capable of accommodating perhaps 54 or 121 units. It is unclear how this capacity has been calculated; it appears to us that the this quantum of development fails to make best use of this previously-developed site in line with the requirements of the</p>	<p>Comments noted. Montagu Evans provided the viability evidence to support the proposals put forward within the Prospectus. RBC is happy to meet with the landowner to discuss this information.</p> <p>Comments noted.</p> <p>The capacity has been calculated taking into account general assumptions such as standard unit size and circulation space. Final capacity would be the subject of detailed design.</p> <p>For such a major proposal, RBC would expect a scheme to be</p>

Respondent	Response	Officer Comment
	<p>NPPF. In our view, both of the options cited in the draft Prospectus significantly underplay the capacity of this site to accommodate a major mixed use development. Our client has drawn up several development schemes for The Galleries, all of which have been subject to detailed feasibility and market testing and indicate that over 200 units could be accommodated. We have discussed these options previously with the Council and would be willing to share this work with the Council again.</p> <p>There are potentially significant anomalies in the current proposed layout of the development plans for The Galleries, including the location of development on Little Wellington Street. This land is not in our client's ownership, it would require a stopping up of the public highway, and it conflicts with the configuration of The Arcade Shopping Centre's northern elevation.</p> <p>At this stage, we remain concerned that the current draft Prospectus promotes tightly-defined redevelopment options. This approach potentially compromises the ability of our client to achieve certainty regarding the range of acceptable planning uses specific to its asset and would, on this basis, conflict with the Council's aspirations for early development of the site.</p>	<p>of good design, taking into account details such as the national prescribed space standards. Officers have noted concerns in this respect with the options presented by the landowner to date. In addition, given the prominence and importance of the Galleries site within Aldershot Town Centre, the proposed scheme should be viewed as more than a capacity exercise and this is what has underpinned the alternative approaches put forward within the Prospectus.</p> <p>Comments noted. The proposals set out within the SPD are indicative and will need to be the subject of detailed design at a later stage.</p> <p>Comments noted. The proposals outlined within the Prospectus are indicative and RBC would welcome the opportunity to further discuss proposals with the landowner.</p>
<b>Waverley Borough Council</b>	We have no comments to make at this stage.	Comments noted. No suggested change.



