

FARNBOROUGH TOWN CENTRE STRATEGY

SUMMARY AND RECOMMENDATIONS:

Town Centres across the country are changing and these changes have been accelerated and emphasised following the pandemic. The development and wider regeneration of Town Centres has historically been taken forward by the private sector but this can result in a piecemeal approach, uncoordinated and incur delays. It is now recognised that Local Authorities need to be proactive in taking direct intervention, just as the Council has in Aldershot.

In addition to the redevelopment of the Civic Quarter, the Council plan recognises the need to progress the wider regeneration of Farnborough town centre. The first stage of this work is the development of a town centre strategy which takes account of the post pandemic and economic position we are experiencing.

At its meeting on the 15th March, Cabinet agreed to fund the delivery of a Farnborough Town Centre Strategy. The draft strategy was presented to the Policy and Project Advisory Board (PPAB) Meeting on 5th April 2022 as work in progress and again as a draft document on 8th June 2022. PPAB members will make any final comments on the strategy by 28th June and these will be reported at the Cabinet meeting

Recommendation:

That subject to any further comments from the Policy and Projects Advisory Board Cabinet:

1. Agree and adopt the Farnborough Town Centre Strategy (attached as Appendix 1)
2. Consider establishing a Member Task and Finish Group to oversee the implementation of the Strategy.

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to explain to Cabinet the reasons why a Town Centre Strategy is required, what the Strategy comprises and to recommend that Cabinet agree and adopt the Farnborough Town Centre Strategy.

2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1 The habits and preferences of how communities use their town centres has been changing over many years. These changes have accelerated during and following the Covid pandemic and particularly the lockdowns. There is a need therefore to reinvigorate town centres to create vibrant, sustainable, diverse, and welcoming environments for residents, workers, and visitors.
- 2.2 In the past, town centres have evolved with private sector developments, but these can be site specific resulting in unplanned and uncoordinated town centres which are disjointed, isolated and unsustainable.
- 2.3 It is now recognised that town centres require a more strategic and holistic approach which can be supported by the intervention of Local Authorities, such as is happening in Aldershot. To ensure the Council can build on the ambitious proposals for the Farnborough Civic Quarter in a strategic and holistic way, it was agreed that a Farnborough Town Centre strategy should be produced.
- 2.4 Cabinet approved funding at the meeting on 15th March 2022 to produce a Town Centre strategy and following soft market testing with a range of providers, David Lock Associates were recommended and subsequently appointed to take this forward.
- 2.5 The strategy has been considered by the was presented to Policy and Project Advisory Board (PPAB) on 5th April 2022 and 8th June 2022 and they will prepare their final comments on 28th June and any recommended changes as a result will be reported to Cabinet at the meeting.
- 2.6 The draft strategy, attached as Appendix 1, sets out how the Council through land ownership and by acting as a catalyst for investment and changes, can secure a prosperous and sustainable future for Farnborough.

3. TOWN CENTRE STRATEGY

- 3.1 The strategy sets out the context, identifying Farnborough as
 - A medium sized town, within easy access of larger order centres
 - A young town, with a need to cater for families and younger people as well as national issues around an ageing population
 - A strong employment location, with specialities around aerospace, gaming, high tech manufacturing and emerging technologies
 - Excellent quality higher education, offering a highly skilled local workforce to support business development
 - A historic place, but without a historic town centre
 - A place with ambition and recognition of the need to change and regenerate
 - An actively and directly involved public sector, as evidenced by land ownership, and appetite for direct involvement

- A developing pace, with active projects such as the Civic Quarter
- 3.2 In considering and analysing the property market and vacancy levels, the strategy positively finds that Farnborough has a strong economic profile, an opportunity to grow and the potential for long term sustainability.
 - 3.3 It is recognised within the strategy that the town centre today faces a number of challenges including lack of sense of purpose/arrival, poor connectivity with surrounding area due to the road infrastructure severance, historic piecemeal approach to development, lack of balanced mix of uses, low quality public realm, threat of on-line shopping and declining high streets.
 - 3.4 The strategy describes how Farnborough does not offer the environment or mix that will serve the aspirations of its current and future immediate catchment area. It does not have the backgrounds and sights that younger populations seek, and it is felt that it currently struggles to offer an immediate welcome to visitors.
 - 3.5 A key issue that the strategy details is the lack of cultural, performance and arts spaces. Consultation that took place to inform the emerging draft Cultural Strategy identified that 79% of residents would like to see more arts and cultural activity in the town, to improve and enliven the public realm.
 - 3.6 The strategy has been developed taking into account consultation with stakeholders and the wealth of public consultation that took place in relation to the Farnborough Town Centre Supplementary Planning Document and more recently the Farnborough Civic Quarter Masterplan Outline planning application. The stakeholder responses are included in the document as an Appendix. However, it should be noted that further public consultation will take place as the strategy is implemented and projects are progressed.
 - 3.7 The combination of national and local policy context, feedback, perceptions and economy suggests the town centre needs a step change and a vision for Farnborough that is:
 - An offer that will make Farnborough attractive – more of a mix of uses, broader leisure, cultural and community offer, something for everybody, a day through to night-time economy
 - About place, space, and activity, developing pride, loyalty, a sense of ownership and an identity
 - A place where people live and work, celebrate, socialise and play
 - A place of education, Leisure, culture, performance, trade, service and business
 - A linked-up place, integrated with its surroundings
 - An active sustainable environment where people want to spend time
 - A greener place
 - 3.8 To draw these objectives into a meaningful strategy, five themes have been identified under which separate workstreams can be developed. These themes

are Identity, Branding and Events; Development; Activities; Access, Gateways and Wayfinding; and Environment, Safety and Wellbeing. These themes are considered in detail within the strategy document.

- 3.9 The strategy includes a process for delivery and an action plan broken down to short, medium, and longer-term actions. The suggested actions are indicative of the types of interventions that can be made to secure sustainable change and regeneration.
- 3.10 As with all strategies, the messages are high level and the detail will be in the workstreams and actions. This strategy is the start of the process which identifies the areas of work that will need to be taken forward to secure change and ensure the objectives become a reality.

4. Town Centre Strategy and Levelling Up bid

- 4.1 As mentioned in the Town Centre Strategy, a key issue is the lack of cultural, performance and arts spaces. To address the lack of, and limited cultural and arts activity within Farnborough, the Council is submitting a bid to Government to secure funding from the Levelling Up Fund. If successful, this funding will be a significant contribution to the cost of a Leisure and Cultural Hub Building on the Civic Quarter, which is to accommodate a new library with cultural and arts facilities alongside the new leisure centre. The foundation of the bid is to help 'level up' the health inequalities and poorer educational outcomes in Rushmoor as well as support the wider regeneration agenda.
- 4.2 Having an adopted Farnborough Town Centre Strategy, would strengthen the Council's bid and demonstrate a coordinated and holistic approach to reinvigorating the town centre to create a vibrant, sustainable, diverse and welcoming environments for residents, workers and visitors.

5. IMPLICATIONS

Financial Implications

- 5.1 There is no cost to the Council in adopting the Town Centre Strategy. Any costs required in taking the strategy forward and implementing the workstreams and actions under the five themes will be assessed and reported back separately for approval.

Risks

- 5.2 There are no risks to the Council in adopting the strategy. However, projects which form part of the action plan could entail risks which may vary between financial and reputational and in many cases across both headings depending on the size and nature of projects.

- 5.3 Projects and actions that are considered as part of the strategy will be assessed from a risk management perspective in the normal way and reported accordingly prior to implementation.

Equalities Impact Implications

- 5.4 There are no equalities impact implications as a result of adopting this strategy.

6. CONCLUSION

- 6.1 As with most town centres across the country, Farnborough faces challenges which have accelerated following the pandemic and particularly through the lockdowns. A town centre strategy is required to holistically shape the future of the town centre.
- 6.2 The draft Farnborough Town Centre Strategy attached as Appendix 1, is a high-level strategy which sets the overall direction of travel and work required to secure a sustainable and vibrant town centre for Farnborough through five key themes. Workstreams are set out which sit below each of the key themes and a suggested action plan is also included.
- 6.3 Whilst strategies require regular monitoring, review and updating, in adopting this strategy, it shows the Council has a plan and knows what it wants to achieve, and this commitment will provide confidence for investors and potential development partners.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX 1: Draft Farnborough Town Centre Strategy

DRAFT

FARNBOROUGH

TOWN CENTRE STRATEGY

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CHAPTER 1:

PURPOSE OF

THE STRATEGY

- 1.1 This strategy has been commissioned by Rushmoor Borough Council (RBC) to help shape the future of Farnborough Town Centre. This considers interventions, actions and the changing role of the town centre, and how development and change can secure a sustainable and prosperous future which will meet the needs of local people and visitors.
- 1.2 The habits and preferences of local communities and how they use their town centres has been changing over many years. These changes have been accelerated by the pandemic and lockdowns. There is a move to reinvigorate town centres to create vibrant, sustainable, diverse and welcoming environments where residents, workers and visitors will enjoy spending time and will want to return.
- 1.3 Farnborough is no exception. The Council recognises the need for a strategy which will provide a holistic approach to help drive and curate the improvement of the town centre. A key principle of the strategy will be to build on the ambitious proposals for a new Civic Quarter to the south of the town centre (for which an outline planning application has recently been submitted). It is important to ensure that this integrates seamlessly with the rest of the town centre to maximise the benefit it will bring. It also changes the nature of the town centre from a place people visit to become far more of a place people live.
- 1.4 The Council has also identified regeneration of the Meads Shopping Centre and adjacent vacant land as a major opportunity for Council intervention in the heart of Farnborough town centre.
- 1.5 This strategy sets out how the Council, through land ownership and by acting as a catalyst for investment and change, can secure a prosperous and sustainable future for Farnborough.

CHAPTER 2: UNDERSTANDING THE CONTEXT

A Brief History

- 2.1 Farnborough's origins can be traced back to the Anglo-Saxon period, with the settlement being recognised by the Domesday Book of 1086. With a recorded population of 22 households, the town was among the largest 40% of settlements in England at the time.
- 2.2 Farnborough has a rich history in aviation dating back to the early 20th century. The town's proximity to Aldershot, which is widely considered to be the Home of the British Army, established its appeal as a suitable location for aviation research and development. This strong heritage is evident through numerous aeronautical successes attributed to Farnborough, including being the location where Colonel Samuel Cody piloted the first powered flight in Britain.
- 2.3 In addition, the now-defunct Royal Aircraft Establishment (RAE) is credited with undertaking research and testing for the development of the Concorde, the first turbojet engine, and several other aviation inventions. Through the RAE, Farnborough has played a significant role in facilitating some of the most notable military and civil aviation innovations in history.
- 2.4 A further extension of its strong links to aviation, Farnborough is also home to one of Europe's leading business airports. The airport is considered to be "the UK's only dedicated business aviation airport and home to a number of the UK's largest business jet companies"¹. Farnborough Airport has also hosted the Farnborough International Airshow since 1948, currently attracting over 80,000 trade visitors.
- 2.5 Beyond aviation, archaeological records indicate that Farnborough was once an important centre for pottery production. Forming the western part of Farnborough, the village of Cove is known to have "13 kiln sites dating from the 15th century to the 20th century"².
- 2.6 Farnborough retains important parts of its heritage through a number of historic buildings. Farnborough Hill School, consisting of a Grade I listed Victorian manor house, was previously the home of the exiled Empress Eugenie of France. The empress, together with her husband Napoleon III and son Prince Imperial, is buried at nearby Grade I listed St. Michaels Abbey. North Camp also consists of distinct buildings of character and interest.

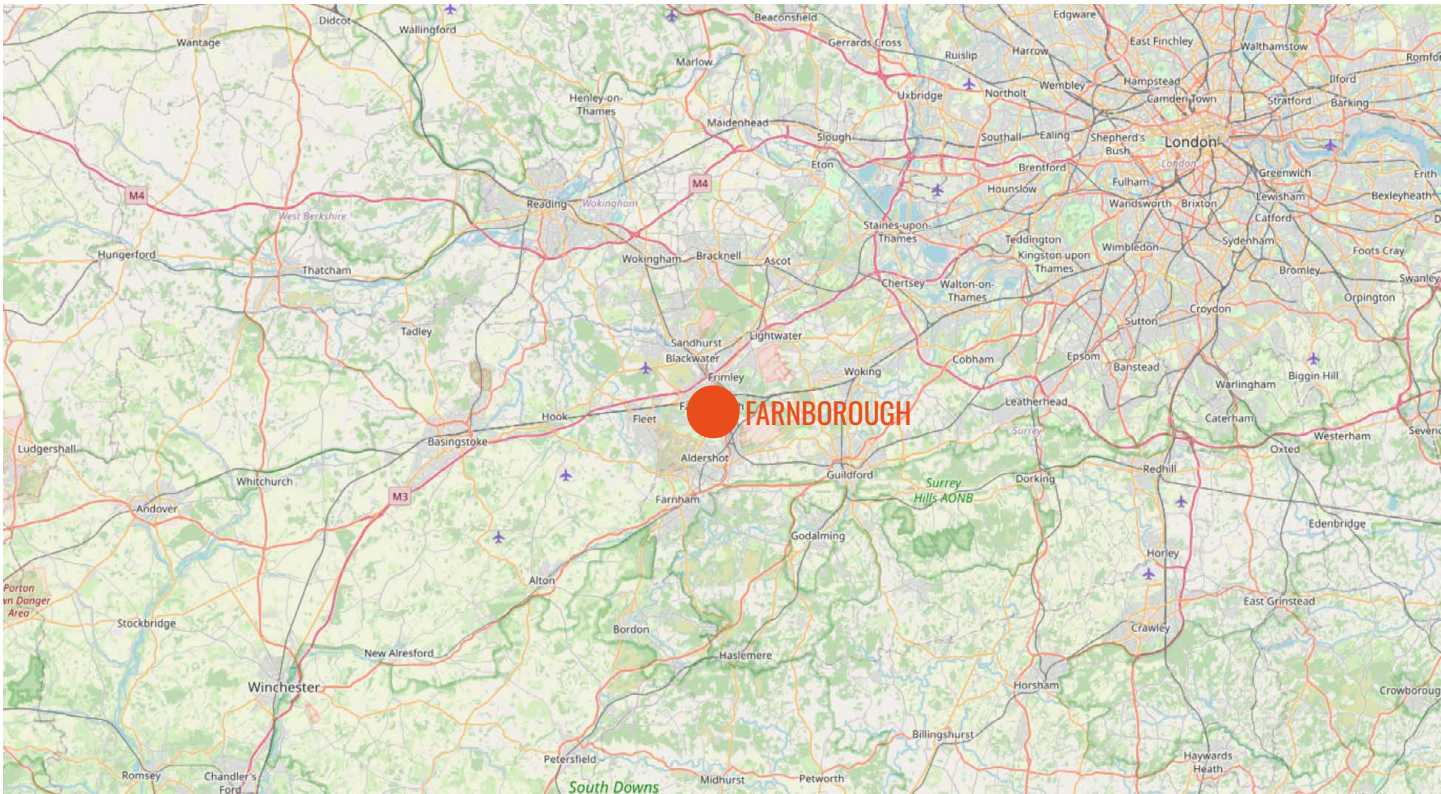


Figure 2.1: Location

- 2.7 In addition Farnborough has some 7 nationally listed buildings and structures at Farnborough airport and its immediate surroundings (2 x Grade 1, 1 x Grade II* and 4 x grade II).
- 2.8 Today, the aviation heritage and historic fabric of Farnborough provide a positive contribution to the town’s unique character and distinctiveness. It is therefore imperative that these defining characteristics are woven into the way the town centre is shaped for the future.

Farnborough today

LOCATION

- 2.9 Farnborough is in north east Hampshire 50 km south west of London in the borough of Rushmoor. Situated close to Junction 4 of the M3, which connects the town to London, the south coast and the M25, Farnborough is part of the Enterprise M3 Local Enterprise Partnership. The town also benefits from fast rail connections, including a 34 minute service to London Waterloo, and is recognised as a convenient satellite commuter town for the capital.
- 2.10 The town is positioned at the centre of a ribbon of development along the A331 on the Surrey/Hampshire border linking it to settlements in both counties: Camberley and Frimley to the north in Surrey and then to the south Aldershot in Hampshire and finally, Farnham back over the border in Surrey. The larger towns of Reading, Guildford, Woking and Basingstoke also provide wider employment opportunities for residents and offer larger shopping destinations than Farnborough town centre.

¹ Key facts about Farnborough Airport (RBC, 2015) <https://www.rushmoor.gov.uk/CHttpHandler.ashx?id=14688&p=0>

² Twelve Walks around Farnborough and Cove (David Cleeve, 2018) <https://www.rushmoor.gov.uk/CHttpHandler.ashx?id=19368&p=0>

POPULATION

2.11 The latest data from the ONS Population Estimates show that Farnborough has a population of 64,770 [2020]. This is compared with 57,486 at the 2011 Census. The following breakdown is available from the ONS.

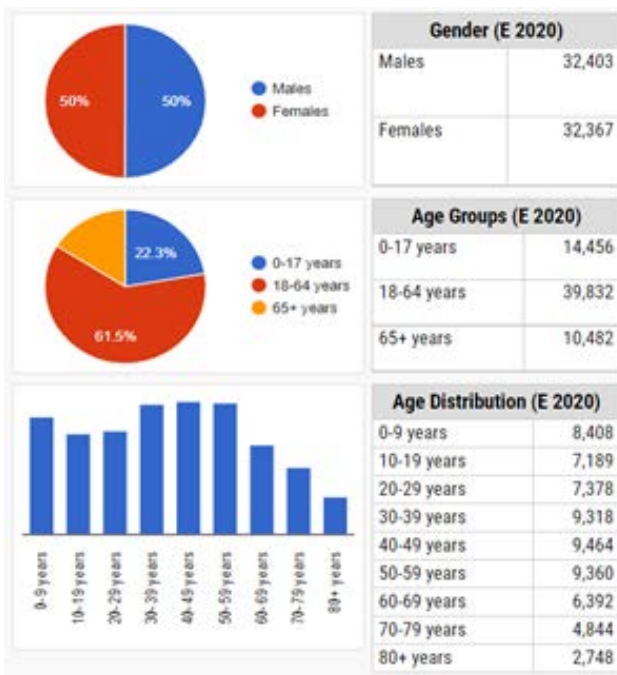


Table 1: Population Data for Farnborough

Source: ONS Mid-Year Population Estimates 2020

Figures for Rushmoor as a whole show that although the population has increased since 2011, it reached a peak in 2016 and has been in decline since.

2.12 Compared with the UK and England Farnborough has a young population profile. Farnborough is underrepresented in the 65 years and over group with 16.2% of the population in this age bracket compared with UK and England averages 18.6% and 18.5% respectively. Conversely there are a higher number of younger adults and young children, and a working age population greater than the UK average, circa 61.5%.

2.13 Locally, the comparison for 2020 estimates is as follows:

Location	% over 65	% working age
Farnborough	16.2	61.5
Camberley	19.39	59.3
Fleet	19	57.9
Farnham	20.95	56
Aldershot	16.7	61.3

EMPLOYMENT PROFILE

- 2.14 5 functional economic market areas (FEMAs) have been identified within the Enterprise M3 area. Farnborough sits centrally in the largest of these, the Southern Surrey/Eastern Hampshire FEMA. The role of the town is multi-functional i.e. residential, out-commuting, employment, retail and education. The LEP identifies Farnborough, alongside Basingstoke, Guildford and Woking as a growth town which can play an important role in the LEP economy.
- 2.15 In terms of employment, important sectors within the town are information & communication and professional, scientific and technical. The presence of Farnborough International Business Airport is very important to the local economy supporting aerospace and advanced engineering clusters. Other clusters represented are in the fields of data, communications and gaming, and a growing representation in film making.
- 2.16 Farnborough Business Park, which is very close to the town centre has a strong representation of high quality businesses including Fluor and Syneos Health. Other prominent businesses include nDreams and Satixfy at Spectrum Point close to the railway station. Calculations using 2019 ONS business and population data show Farnborough to have an employment ratio of 0.58 - greater than the comparable figure for the UK of 0.46.
- 2.17 Data on the median gross annual pay of town residents (Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings, 2018) shows median annual gross pay of Farnborough residents to be £22,300. The comparable value for the UK is £24,000³.

- 2.18 Currently the town centre has a limited offer to serve the nearby business community, which has led to mobile caterers visiting key business locations to fulfil this demand. The development of a more attractive town centre with a broader hospitality offer and a stronger night time economy could capture more of this spend and make Farnborough a more enticing location for young professionals when considering their employment options. A stronger town centre can only contribute to the growth of Farnborough as an attractive and successful employment location.

FURTHER AND HIGHER EDUCATION

- 2.19 Farnborough has both an outstanding 6th form college and an outstanding College of Technology with an associated University Centre, and Aerospace Research and Innovation Centre. The range of courses on offer at these outstanding institutions is wide, and incorporates A and T levels, Apprenticeships, BTECs, Degrees, Professional, Technical and Vocational training across a wide range of subject areas.
- 2.20 Of specific note are specialisms related to the aerospace industry, gaming, drones, robotics, STEM subjects, and E-sports, as well as subjects relating to performing arts and design. This demonstrates that Farnborough offers a fantastic location for employers seeking high quality trainees and has the potential to develop “university town” status where the presence of the educational institution(s) pervades economic and social life. This can bring benefits such as boosting the economic growth and prosperity of the town, and its wider regard.

³Enterprise M3 Towns Analysis - Part1 (2019) Hardisty Jones Associates

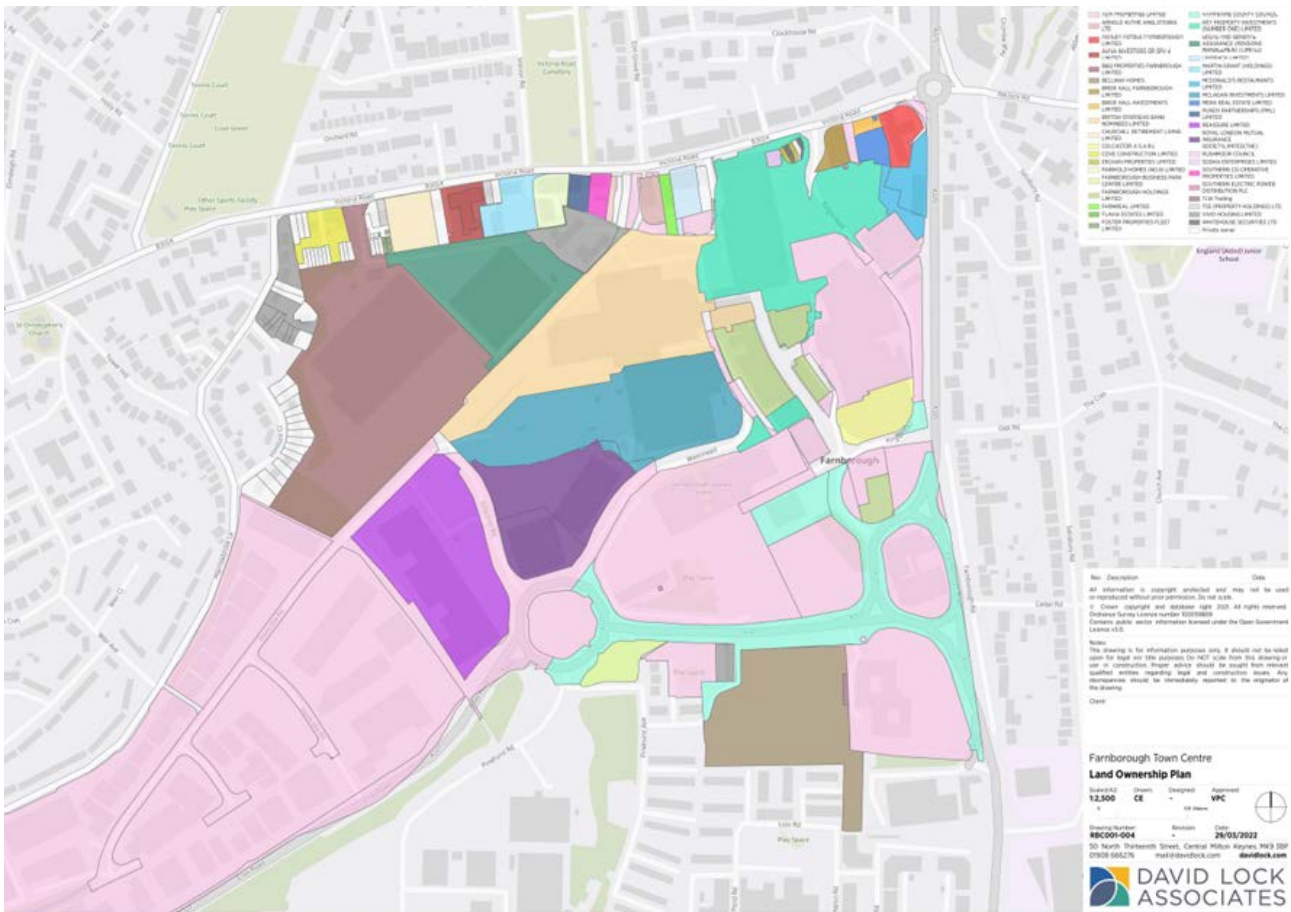


Fig 2: Land Ownership – source DLA/Land Registry

LAND OWNERSHIP

2.21 The land ownership plan above indicates that extensive areas of the town centre are in the freehold ownership of Rushmoor Borough Council (pink) some of which is currently subject to long leases. The majority of the remaining developed areas of the town centre are generally in single or a limited number of ownerships, with the exception of Victoria Road which demonstrates a more complex multiplicity of ownerships.

2.22 Generally, where significant sections of the town are in single ownership, there is more prospect of developing a relationship with the landowners, and securing buy in to a wider vision and programme of action than where the ownership/control pattern is very diverse. This therefore stands Farnborough in good stead for the management and implementation of future change.

POLICY CONTEXT

2.23 The policy context for Farnborough and its town centre is set out in detail at Appendix 1. This demonstrates that a programme of action to improve the town centre was put in place in 2007, which culminated in the priority development of the Civic Quarter, which is now starting its implementation stage. Work has been carried out to assess the overall position of the town centre as recently as 2021 through the Farnborough Town Centre Planning Policy and Guidance Review. (Carried out by SQW to inform the business case for the Civic Quarter). This recognised the need to establish a new vision, objectives and spatial plan for Farnborough Town Centre, and to move away from a retail centric focus and embrace a more diverse mix of uses. In particular it identified demand for offices and a lack of modern office space within the town centre.

2.24 In terms of wider issues such as accessibility, movement and transport, the latest policy guidance is found in HCC's consultation draft Local Transport Plan 4 (LTP4), published in April 2022. This seeks to develop a transport system that:

- supports a vibrant economy;
- is safe and healthy to use;
- does not pollute the environment with poor air quality and noise;
- removes severance (where traffic flow impedes the movement of pedestrians and cyclists) and disparities within streets and communities; and
- allows people to live healthier and more empowered lives.

The document also identifies that in the absence of reducing dependency on the private car the Department for Transport (DfT) forecasts that traffic will grow by 22% between 2015 and 2035.

2.25 In respect of Farnborough specifically, LTP4 identifies the potential for significant regeneration in Farnborough town centre which may trigger the need for new area strategies to be developed in line with land use changes being led by the borough council. The development of the strategy has therefore reflected the need for a balance between enabling the inevitable ongoing car access to Farnborough, and supporting greater ease of access by other modes of travel, in particular cycling and on foot.

2.26 Fundamental to the policy baseline for Farnborough town centre is also the declaration by Rushmoor Borough Council of a Climate Change emergency in 2019, and the development of the Climate Change Action Plan for 2020-2030. This specifically identifies the need to reduce carbon emissions, and where possible to reduce car use.

OVERALL CONTEXT

2.27 Overall, this background review identifies Farnborough as:

A medium sized town, within easy access of larger order centres

A young town, with a need to cater for families and younger people as well as national issues around an ageing population

A strong employment location, with specialities around aerospace, gaming, high tech manufacturing and emerging technologies

Excellent quality higher education, offering a highly skilled local workforce to support business development

A historic place, but without a historic town centre

A place with ambition and recognition of the need to change and regenerate

An actively and directly involved public sector, as evidenced by land ownership, appetite for acquisition and control and direct involvement in development projects such as the Civic Quarter

Of specific relevance to the development of the town centre strategy are a more in depth understanding of the local property market and the position and perceptions of the town centre today.

CHAPTER 3:

PROPERTY MARKET & VACANCY LEVELS

3.1 The health of the property market reflects wider economic trends. It is recognised that many of these trends will be outside the control of the local authority. However, there are factors that can be influenced locally, including policy direction, land ownership and partnership. This strategy considers Farnborough's position vis a vis other competing centres to help understand potential gaps in the market and what uses might be encouraged create a unique offer, relevant to current demands.

3.2 The UK retail sector is undergoing a fundamental structural change which can be seen in all high streets across the country, including Farnborough. The change has been accelerated by the pandemic with online shopping increasing from around 20% of all expenditure to around 30% within the space of only 2 years. Whilst it is anticipated that some old shopping habits will return now Covid related restrictions are lifted, it is generally understood that the growth of online shopping will continue, particularly for convenience goods, and that bricks and mortar retailing will have to work harder to attract trade. The types of retailers in town centres and the mix of uses and attractions are

changing in response to these national trends. A vibrant mix of uses, range of activities and events and a high quality environment are now considered more important to the success and sustainability of a town centre than simply having a good range of shops.

3.3 Vacancy rates provide a strong indicator of the general health and vitality of a town centre. Between 2019 and 2021 the structural changes affecting town centres resulted in record-high vacancy rates across the country. The average peaked at 14.5% in the second quarter of 2021⁴, before marginally falling to 14.4% in the fourth quarter of 2021⁵.

3.4 Farnborough town centre is not immune to the impacts of the pandemic and the changes it has accelerated. According to RBC's 2019-2020 Authority Monitoring Report (published December 2020), Farnborough Town Centre's vacancy rates reached 14% in June/July 2020. This was comparable to the national average of 12.2% at the time, with national high street and shopping centre vacancies reaching 12.4% and 14.3% respectively in the second quarter of 2020⁶.

⁴Vacancy Rate Plateaus (BRC, October 2021) <https://brc.org.uk/news/corporate-affairs/vacancy-rate-plateaus/>

⁵Glimmer of Hope for Vacancy Rate (BRC, January 2022) <https://brc.org.uk/news/corporate-affairs/glimmer-of-hope-for-vacancy-rate/>

⁶Vacancy Rate Highlights Need for Rents and Rates Support (BRC, July 2020) <https://brc.org.uk/news/corporate-affairs/vacancy-rate-highlights-need-for-rents-and-rates-support/>

Centre	Frontage Policy	Shopping Frontage	Policy % (non-A1)	No. Units	No. A1 Uses	No. Non-A1 Uses	% A1 Uses	% Non-A1 Uses	No. Vacant Units	% Vacant
Farnborough Town Centre	SP2.1 Primary	Prince's Mead, incl. Asda	20%	33	30	3	91%	9%	5	15%
		Queensmead (61-71, 56-76) and The Meads, incl. Sainsbury's		29	23	6	79%	21%	1	3%
	SP2.2 Secondary	Kingsmead	50%	23	11	12	48%	52%	7	30%
		Queensmead (73-93, 78-98) and Briarcliff House (93-99)	50%	24	11	13	46%	54%	3	13%
		Victoria Road (14-48) and Firgrove Parade (1-5)	n/a	14	3	11	21%	79%	1	7%
Total:				123	78	45	63%	37%	17	14%

Table 2: Farnborough Town Centre Vacancy Rates (June/July 2020)

Source: RBC 2019-2020 Authority Monitoring Report

3.5 However, RBC's latest records indicate a strong recovery in the first quarter of 2022, with Farnborough's relatively low vacancy rate of 9% outperforming the national average. This suggests that there is demand for retail space, particularly in Queensmead and Victoria Road. What this does not highlight is the size of the vacant units, or the vacancy rate by percentage of floorspace.

3.6 Despite this apparent relative strength, there remains a significant opportunity to improve the vitality of the town centre and its environment, and to further reduce vacancy rates and ensure its long term resilience. It is also particularly important to ensure that the town centre is insulated against the anticipated imminent impact of decreasing levels of disposable income caused by the national surge in living costs. Diversifying the offer, improving the appearance of the town centre and taking advantage of regeneration opportunities could enhance the attractiveness of the town centre and enable it to maintain its vibrancy.

	No. Premises	Jan-22			Feb-22			Mar-22		
		Active	Dormant	Vacant	Active	Dormant	Vacant	Active	Dormant	Vacant
Queensmead (outdoor area)	51	49	0	2	49	0	2	50	0	1
The Meads (indoor area)	22	18	0	4	19	0	3	19	0	3
Princes Meads (indoor area)	34	28	0	6	28	0	6	28	0	6
Victoria Road	33	31	0	2	30	0	3	30	0	3
TOTALS	140	126	0	14	126	0	14	127	0	13
		90%	0%	10%	90%	0%	10%	91%	0%	9%

Table 3: Farnborough Town Centre Vacancy Rates (Jan-March 2022)

Source: Rushmoor Borough Council



Fig 3 Heat Map indicating relative regional residential property values – source Zoopla

3.7 In terms of the property market, current housing market analysis is provided at Appendix 2. In summary, this highlights that housing in Rushmoor is more affordable than in the surrounding areas of Waverley and Surrey Heath. This represents an opportunity for Rushmoor, and Farnborough to attract first time buyers and occupiers who are aspiring to settle in the area, but cannot afford some of the more expensive locations. Key to securing and attracting such occupiers is having a good quality stock of suitably sized accommodation.

3.8 Currently, whilst there is a good supply of modern flatted accommodation around the town, the flat market in Farnborough town centre tends to be primarily older properties above existing retail, such as that in Queensmead. Such accommodation may not reflect the demands of aspiring young singles and families, and may attract a more transient occupancy. Newer purpose built accommodation such as that proposed for the Civic Quarter, and likely to be proposed for Princes Mead and other town centre locations offers the opportunity for a much better quality of accommodation and setting, more suited to modern urban living. The promoters of the Bellway development at Meudon Avenue have confirmed that the majority of interest in their flats, which have just been released to market ahead of completion later this year, is from first time buyers and people moving into the Farnborough area to live. They have reported only limited interest from investors. This indicates that good quality accommodation can generate a new stable community which in turn will support the performance and sustainability of the town centre.

3.9 Looking at retail performance, there is evidence of recent lettings in the Meads and rental values being achieved, depending on the size and location of the unit, of between circa £20psf (215/m²) and £35 (375/m²) per sq ft overall. Prime Zone A rental for Princes Mead is circa £45-£55 per sq ft (£500-600 per m²) (source: VOA). This level of rent suggests that the development of new retail floorspace in non-prime locations is likely to need a mix of uses to support overall viability, and is expected to be underpinned by residential development.

3.10 The office market in Farnborough is strong on the very successful Farnborough Business Park adjacent to the town centre, and the Cody Technology Park by the airport. It is underpinned by Farnborough's inherent accessibility by road, rail and air, a critical mass of businesses in one location, and access to skilled future employees from the colleges. Skills is a key driver for office and R&D occupiers, which puts Farnborough at an advantage regionally compared to other locations such as Camberley and Farnham. Office rents for prime floorspace in Farnborough are currently at around £27.50 - £29 per sq ft (Letting, Fowler Avenue, November 2021, and Ascent, Aerospace Boulevard, June 2020.). This is a strong rental figure which is likely to support new development. By comparison office space in the town centre at The Meads Business Centre, which is more secondary, is asking only £22.50 per sq ft.

3.11 Overall, the property market and vacancy levels indicate:

A strong economic profile
An opportunity to grow
The potential for long term sustainability

CHAPTER 4: THE TOWN CENTRE TODAY

- 4.1 The town centre today faces a number of challenges including a lack of sense of purpose/arrival, poor connectivity with the surrounding area due to the road infrastructure severance, a historic piecemeal approach to development, lack of a balanced mix of uses, low quality public realm and the ever present threat of on-line shopping and declining high street sales.
- 4.2 Farnborough's natural "High Street" is the pedestrianised Queensmead. However, a stranger visiting Farnborough for the first time may be excused for assuming that the central shopping area is the somewhat secondary retail focussed around the eastern end of Victoria Road, as this is most visible from the road network. The majority of the town centre is hidden from view, with its back turned on the A325, and the A327.
- 4.3 The town centre has 3 dominant shopping (and to a lesser degree leisure) locations: Queensmead, The Meads covered Centre and Princes Mead. These are loosely joined, but function separately, with no clearly defined or logical route around the town centre as a whole. On the edges of these core town centre areas are:
- A substantial and comprehensive area of retail warehousing to the south, incorporating the Horizon Retail Park, and Solartron Retail Park,
 - Further retail warehousing and trade counter retailing fronting Invincible Road,
 - Retail warehousing forming part of Princes Mead, together with a stand alone B&Q warehouse and Asda supermarket.
- To the north are Sainsburys, Premier Inn and the 360 Play centre.
- 4.4 Whilst immediately adjacent to the town centre, both major supermarkets and the extensive retail warehousing do not function as part of the town centre, but more as an adjunct to it, or separate trip opportunity, as each benefits from its own contiguous surface car parking. If better integrated into the overall town centre offer, these extensive retail offers could benefit the town centre, as they have the critical mass to draw trade from a wider catchment – particularly the unusually wide range of retail warehousing located in one geographical location to the south west of the town centre.
- 4.5 In terms of supermarket provision, that which is best integrated with the town centre is Iceland, currently located at the southern end of Queensmead, where the town centre will meet the emerging Civic Quarter. This location has been identified for redevelopment as part of the Civic Quarter proposals.

4.6 The town centre offer is predominantly a mix of convenience (food and household goods) and comparison (clothing, jewellery, footwear, etc) shopping. It is very retail focussed, but even this activity has a significant gap in lack of provision of men's clothing other than sports or activity wear, and little in the way of individual or higher quality women's wear. It appears to appeal to a somewhat limited sector of the local population.

4.7 There is a small but growing representation of restaurants, particularly in The Meads covered centre, associated in that location with the Vue cinema, and along Victoria Road. The majority of the restaurants offer pizzas, burgers, Kebabs, fast food and a variety of Asian/fusion foods, or are chain venues such as Weatherspoons, Beefeater and McDonalds. Further out of the town centre is a more traditional mix of food pubs, such as the Swan, and speciality restaurants such as the Nepalese, reflecting the long standing association in the area with the Ghurkas, Indian and Italian restaurants. There is no specific location where there is a critical mass of higher quality dining opportunities in the town centre, and no "restaurant street" to browse, as is often found in other more traditionally evolved town centres. Farnborough does not currently present as a place people would seek out for eating out. Given the local demographic profile, this offers an opportunity, particularly as the homes identified for the Civic Quarter become a reality.

4.8 There is an emerging leisure offer, building on the draw of the cinema in the Meads, in particular the recent addition of the High Score video arcade. The town centre also accommodates a gym, and the 360

soft play and party venue. It has a valued skate park, and had a well used leisure centre, which is currently being demolished and is intended for replacement as part of the first phase of the Civic Quarter. Overall, aside from the cinema, there appears to be little to attract younger people and families into the town centre after 5.00pm.

4.9 The town has a lack of cultural, performance and arts spaces. Consultation to inform the emerging draft Cultural Strategy identified that 79% of residents would like to see more arts and cultural activity in the town, to improve and enliven the public realm.

4.10 Part of the first impression of Farnborough is a town dominated by large areas of tarmacked surface car parking, with little relief in the way of greening, defined footways or pedestrian/cycle friendly routes. Again, this can be an opportunity, as the surface car parks offer longer term potential for further expansion/development as Farnborough grows. However, they currently detract from the public realm, and frequently feature as one of the first things you see on arrival at the town.

4.11 Overall, our first impressions are that Farnborough Town Centre:

Punches below its weight

Does not offer the environment or mix that will serve the aspirations of its current and future immediate catchment.

Offers limited arts and cultural activity.

Is not "instagrammable" - something younger populations seek

Does not offer an immediate welcome to those who might visit.

4.12 Of particular note is the Town Centre's lack of visual presence, and the domination of the local road network. This serves as an obstacle to access, and offers an easy route to alternative destinations rather than into Farnborough itself. Whilst the fabric of the town centre is not bad, and the town is clean and fairly modern, there is little variety in the public realm, few places of quality to sit, and little reason to dwell beyond the purpose of the visit.

4.13 One thing that struck us as giving a particularly poor impression was not so much the town itself, but the access points by which you arrive at it:



1 Entrance to subway from Oak Road:



Uninviting access



Steep inaccessible slope

5 Entrance to Princes Mead from Retail parks



Not obvious that there is a shopping centre here

Welcome To Farnborough!

Access to Queensmead across the car park



Another uninviting subway



...leading to a car park

3 Entrance to Queensmead



Unwelcoming approach



Dominated by service yard access

4 Entrance to Sainsburys from Victoria Road



Admittedly at its worst, but not very inviting

Crossing from Solartron retail park towards Asda



Crossing point leads to the back of the recycle bins

7 Access from Victoria Road towards Princes Mead



Through another car park

8 Crossing and access from Sainsburys and Beefeater to



Through another car park

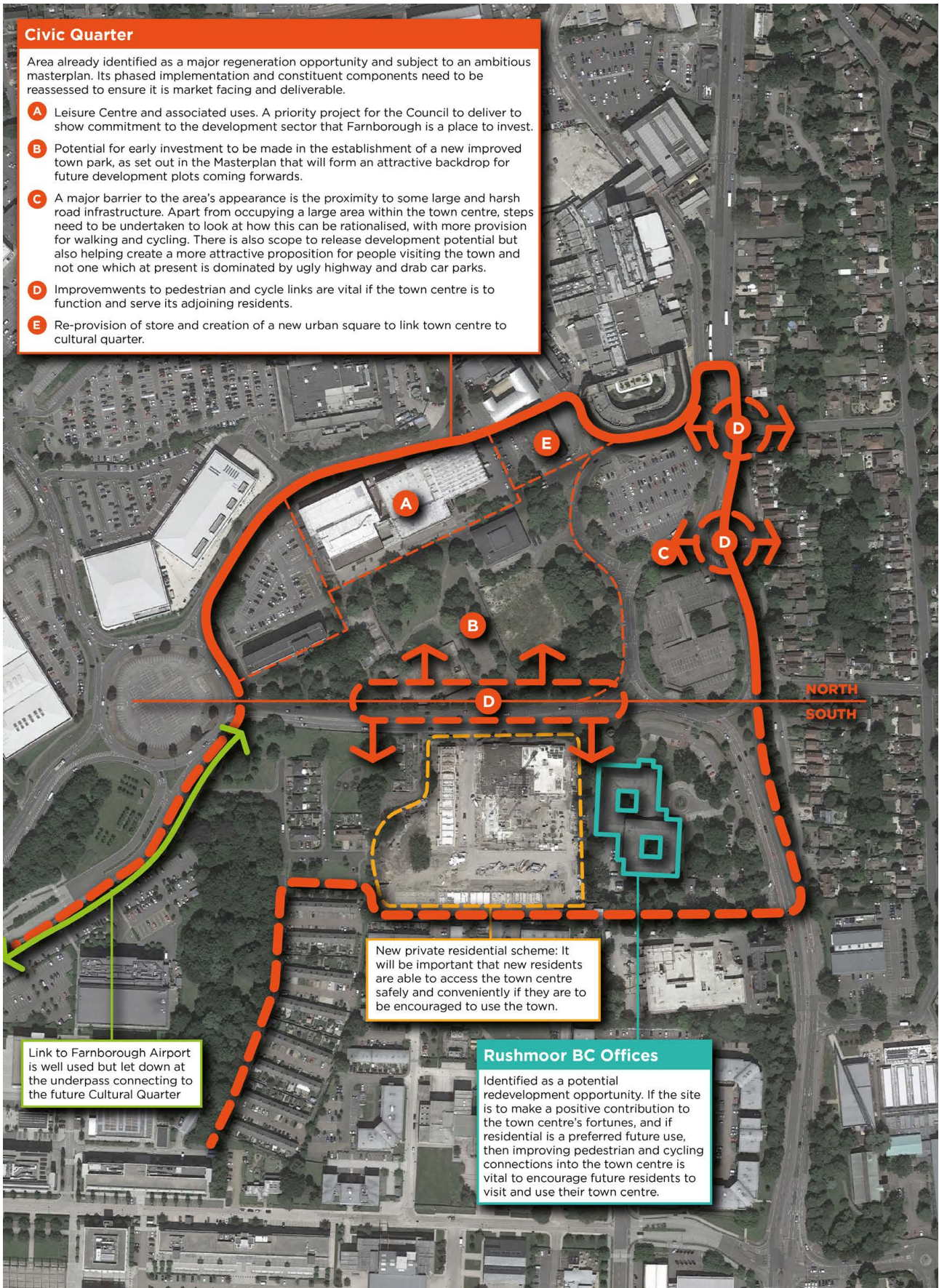
9 Entrances to The Meads



Where's the entrance?



This one's Through a service yard!



Civic Quarter

Area already identified as a major regeneration opportunity and subject to an ambitious masterplan. Its phased implementation and constituent components need to be reassessed to ensure it is market facing and deliverable.

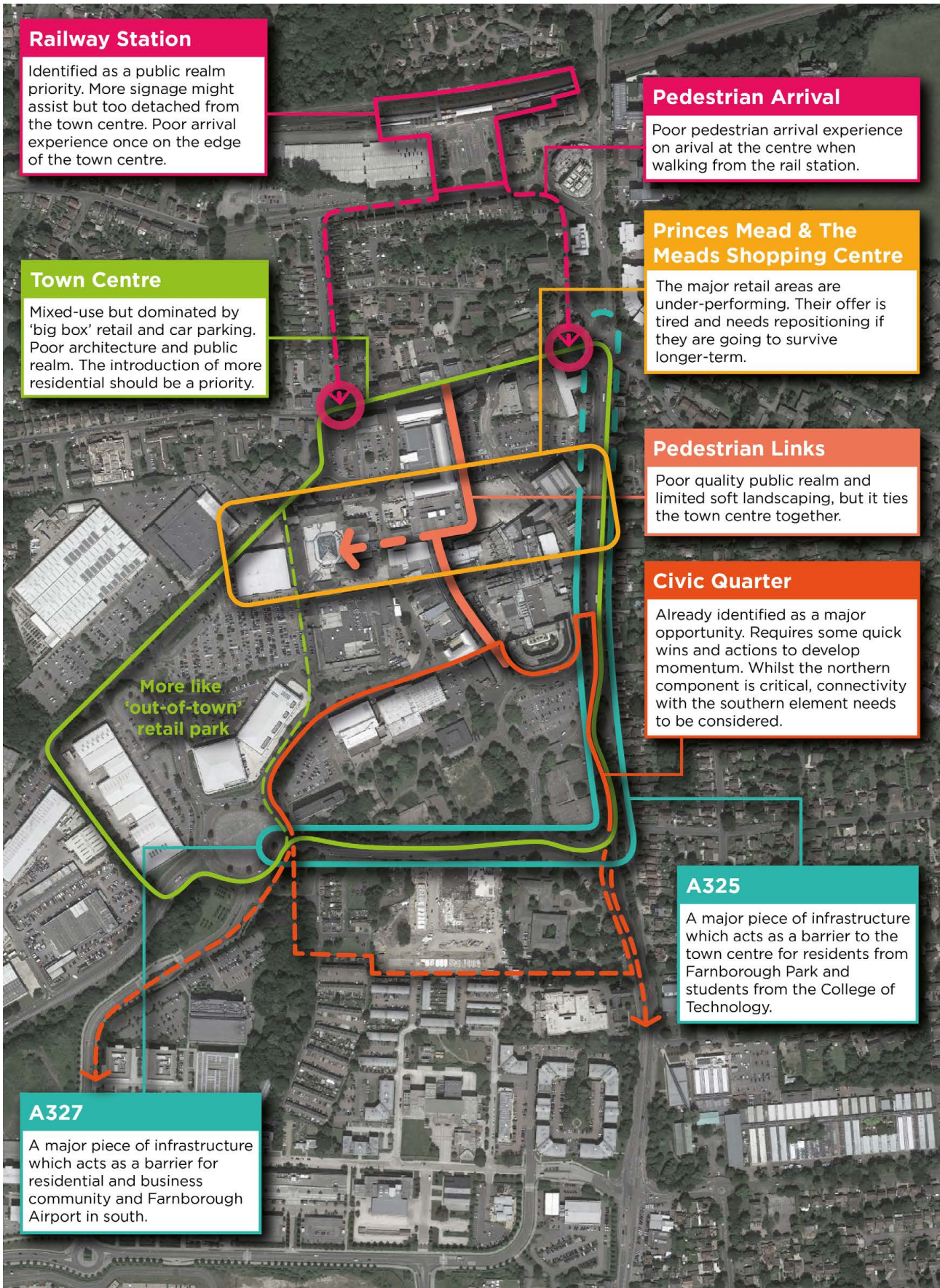
- A** Leisure Centre and associated uses. A priority project for the Council to deliver to show commitment to the development sector that Farnborough is a place to invest.
- B** Potential for early investment to be made in the establishment of a new improved town park, as set out in the Masterplan that will form an attractive backdrop for future development plots coming forwards.
- C** A major barrier to the area's appearance is the proximity to some large and harsh road infrastructure. Apart from occupying a large area within the town centre, steps need to be undertaken to look at how this can be rationalised, with more provision for walking and cycling. There is also scope to release development potential but also helping create a more attractive proposition for people visiting the town and not one which at present is dominated by ugly highway and drab car parks.
- D** Improvements to pedestrian and cycle links are vital if the town centre is to function and serve its adjoining residents.
- E** Re-provision of store and creation of a new urban square to link town centre to cultural quarter.

New private residential scheme: It will be important that new residents are able to access the town centre safely and conveniently if they are to be encouraged to use the town.

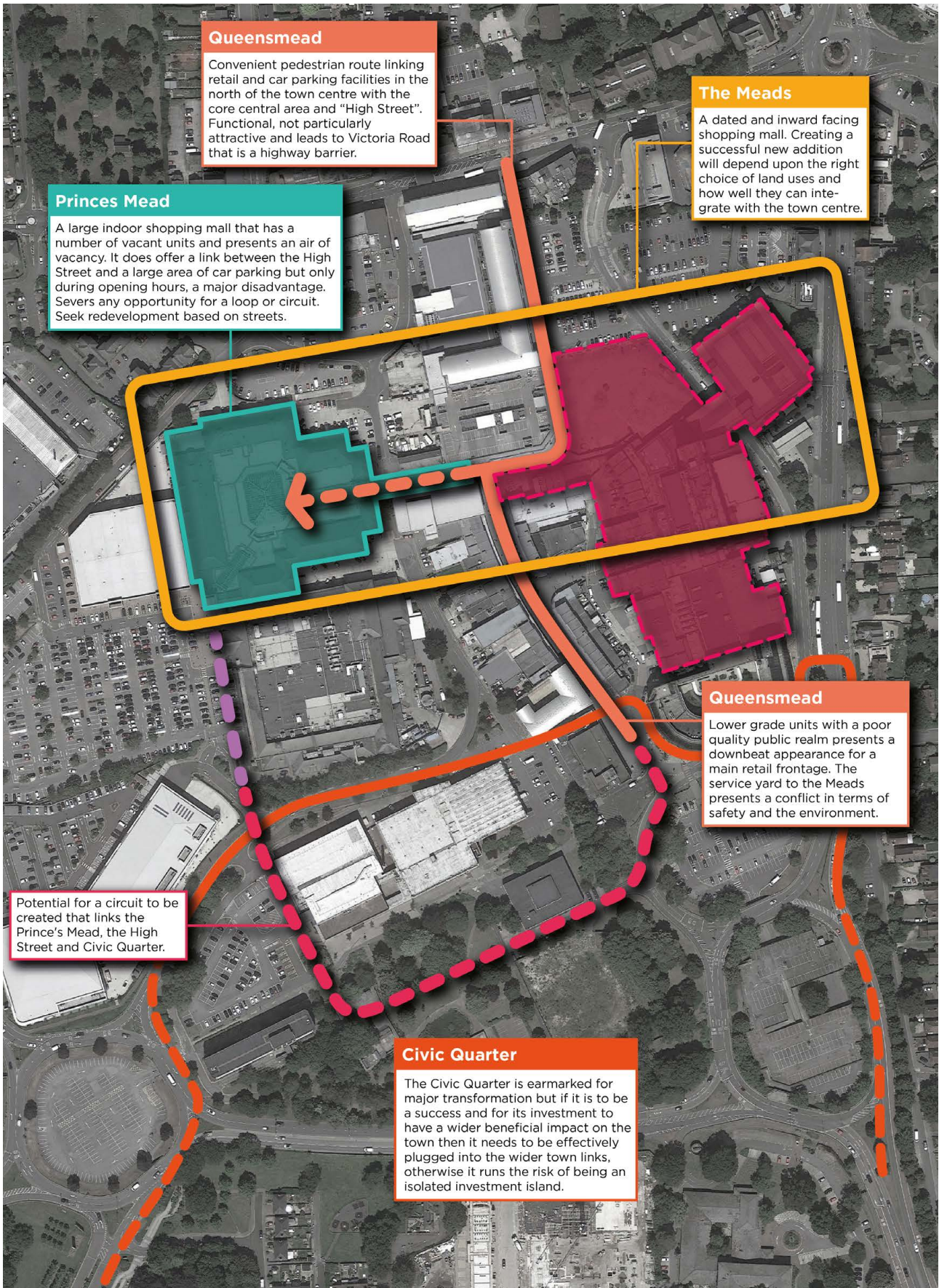
Link to Farnborough Airport is well used but let down at the underpass connecting to the future Cultural Quarter

Rushmoor BC Offices
 Identified as a potential redevelopment opportunity. If the site is to make a positive contribution to the town centre's fortunes, and if residential is a preferred future use, then improving pedestrian and cycling connections into the town centre is vital to encourage future residents to visit and use their town centre.

Town Centre Analysis - Civic Quarter



Town Centre Analysis



Queensmead
 Convenient pedestrian route linking retail and car parking facilities in the north of the town centre with the core central area and "High Street". Functional, not particularly attractive and leads to Victoria Road that is a highway barrier.

The Meads
 A dated and inward facing shopping mall. Creating a successful new addition will depend upon the right choice of land uses and how well they can integrate with the town centre.

Princes Mead
 A large indoor shopping mall that has a number of vacant units and presents an air of vacancy. It does offer a link between the High Street and a large area of car parking but only during opening hours, a major disadvantage. Severs any opportunity for a loop or circuit. Seek redevelopment based on streets.

Queensmead
 Lower grade units with a poor quality public realm presents a downbeat appearance for a main retail frontage. The service yard to the Meads presents a conflict in terms of safety and the environment.

Potential for a circuit to be created that links the Prince's Mead, the High Street and Civic Quarter.

Civic Quarter
 The Civic Quarter is earmarked for major transformation but if it is to be a success and for its investment to have a wider beneficial impact on the town then it needs to be effectively plugged into the wider town links, otherwise it runs the risk of being an isolated investment island.

Town Centre Analysis - Retail

CHAPTER 5: WHAT YOU TOLD US

consultation with stakeholders, and what our youngsters found for themselves

What you told us

5.1 Whilst it is important to gain our own first impressions in developing the strategy for Farnborough Town Centre, it is even more important to understand the views of local stakeholders with a long term interest in and knowledge of the town. The limited budget, timescale and scope for the task did not allow for public consultation at this stage, and as this is a high level strategy rather than a statutory document, this was not a formal requirement. RBC provided a list of stakeholders who were consulted, but inevitably the list grew naturally as we spoke to people. RBC also provided the full outcomes of the public consultation process carried out in respect of the Civic Quarter proposals. We would like to thank the following for their contribution to this process:

- RBC Policy & Project Advisory Board (PPAB)
- RBC Councillors
- RBC Town Centres Manager
- Farnborough International Exhibition and Conference Centre
- Enterprise M3
- Hampshire County Council
- Farnborough Air Sciences Trust

Regard was also had to the outcomes of the public consultation exercise carried out in respect of the proposed Civic Quarter

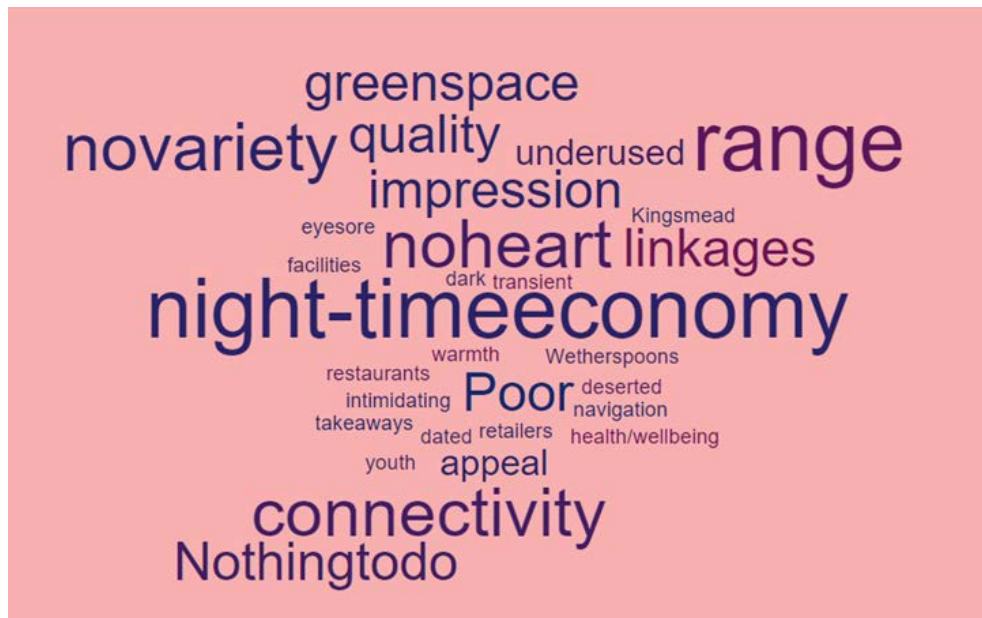
5.2 A full summary of the feedback from the stakeholders is provided at Appendix 3. Overall, the stakeholders demonstrated a positive enthusiasm for Farnborough, and confirmed that the town as a whole has a lot to offer, great prospects for growth and prosperity and offers a wealth of opportunity and accessibility to London and the wider south east for its population. It was however recognised that the Town Centre did not necessarily live up to the quality of other offers such as the business park, exhibition centre and the airport, and provide an opportunity for regeneration. The proposed Civic Quarter is generally welcomed and is seen as a step change in developing the town centre offer, moving towards more living in the town centre, and could be a catalyst for wider improvement.

5.3 From the stakeholder feedback, we have formulated summary “word clouds” which express the nature of the feedback we have received, further detail is provided at Appendix 3:

What is good:



What is bad:



What needs to be improved / changed?



5.4 Some individual comments made by the stakeholders also struck a chord:

“Farnborough is a place you got to for what you need, not what you want”

“Farnborough needs to elevate its brand and connect with its history”

“The exhibition centre alone brings between 170,000 and 250,000 visitors per year – if the town centre had the right offer, the benefits to Farnborough could be multiplied”

“There is nowhere to buy menswear, other than sports or outdoor clothing – You cannot buy a suit or a pair of chinos in Farnborough, so you go elsewhere or online”

“If we do not provide a range of facilities that can attract under 40s, the town centre will struggle to compete against other urban centres in Surrey, Hampshire and Berkshire”.

What our youngsters found

5.5 To inform our understanding of Farnborough from a younger person's point of view 3 Graduates spent the day looking at Farnborough and the local competition in Camberley, Aldershot and Farnham. This is what they told us:

- Lack of leisure activities: Skatepark, Cinema or Arcade, with indoor go-karting located to the south, but lack of spur of the moment opportunities.
- Poor connectivity: town centre isolated by dual carriageways and busy roads and physically blocked off by fencing. Inaccessible to pedestrians. Access should prioritise walking and cycling, enabling them to become a preferred and safe option.
- Library appeared well used. The Civic Quarter should look to capitalise on this, but provide further integration with the wider town centre.
- Too much car parking: better to utilise multistorey car parks in key areas rather than spreading parking over a large area.
- Significant need to improve the amount of green space in the town centre.
- Good selection of fast-food operators, but limited choices for dining, with only a Wetherspoon, Sticky Sisters or Prezzo.

A more detailed analysis of their findings is provided at Appendix 4.

CHAPTER 6: A VISION FOR THE FUTURE FARNBOROUGH TOWN CENTRE

6.1 The combination of national and local policy context, feedback, perceptions and economy suggest that Farnborough Town Centre needs a step change to maintain and enhance its role and to become a sustainable destination for local people and visitors. Key to that is establishing a simple vision.

6.2 The stakeholder feedback suggest that a suitable starting point could be:

Farnborough
Town Centre -
where people
choose to go for
what they want
and need, and
find so much
more...

6.3 Ultimately it will be a matter for local people to determine the vision, which needs to be inclusive, age blind, broad and ambitious, but also achievable. The fundamentally robust economy, and clear evidence of investment activity indicates that the strategy and actions that arise from it are being developed in a deliverable location. This is not a process of promising the moon and the stars and setting the process up to fail, but of establishing the themes that need to be developed and invested in to ensure that the town centre grows and changes in a way that matches and complements its wider economy.

6.4 This involves a process of understanding the role that is now being demanded of town centres and how this can be developed for Farnborough:

- The type of offer will make Farnborough attractive – more of a mix of uses, less of an emphasis on retail, broader leisure, cultural and community offer, something for everybody, a day through to night time economy
- What Amazon Can't Do – reasons for people to come to the town centre
- About place and space as much as activity, developing pride, loyalty, a sense of ownership and an identity
- Living in the town centre – a growing trend across the UK and an intrinsic part of the financial equation for making positive change in Farnborough
- Linking up spaces – Civic Quarter, Airport, college, business parks, retail parks – what does the town centre need to enable this
- Linking up minds through culture, art, performance and communication, physically, digitally and virtually, embracing the way in which new technologies can contribute to personal development.
- Creating an attractive, sustainable environment where people want to spend time
- Working in partnership – being open to imaginative/innovative partnership models and processes embracing economic activity

6.5 To draw this into a meaningful strategy, a number of themes have been identified under which work streams can be developed. A high level spatial concept plan has also been produced, highlighting some of the key priority areas for change and intervention.

6.6 The key themes are as follows:



6.7 These themes have many areas of overlap, but collectively identify the focus for change. Each is explored in more detail below:

Theme 1: Identity, Branding & Events

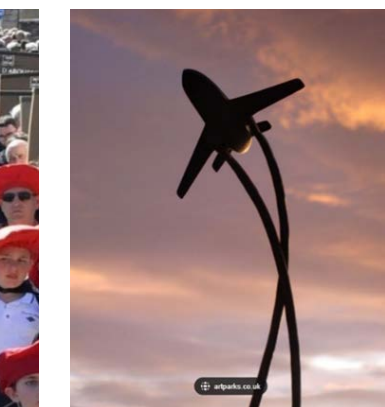
Key issues	Objective	Ideas for Action
<i>Need for a clear and recognisable identity</i>	To generate loyalty, a sense of pride, ownership and inclusivity, and to increase town centre footfall and dwell time through diversification of attraction	Develop a brand for Farnborough Town Centre
<i>Making Farnborough special and distinctive</i>		Work with local design students, possibly by way of a competition
<i>USP</i>		Build on Aviation history – Public Art?
<i>Enlivening the town</i>		Develop and market a programme of town centre events and a stronger cultural offer – at least 2 per month, some incorporating day and evening elements, with different activities to attract a variety of age groups. Market the programme using the branding material, and via Social Media. Involve local businesses and community representatives. Speciality markets and festivals etc. Develop a prospectus for Farnborough, setting out the ambitions of the Council and the development/regeneration programme.
<i>Making reasons for people to visit</i>		
<i>Creating a dynamic community related programme of activities</i>		

An example from wider afield – South West France, Toques et Cloches annual wine and food festival – each local small town takes it in turn year by year to host an auction and an afternoon and evening event aimed at fundraising to maintain the church towers and bells. Tickets are sold in advance, everyone brings a plastic cup, in the town food stalls and shops are all open selling their wares (particularly food and drink), and local growers and providers set up stalls. Visitors buy a book of 5 tickets for a fixed sum (more are available throughout the evening), and exchange each ticket with a trader for a drink or something to eat. This enables the organisers to distribute a payment to those who have sold stuff, and to take a small top slice towards the costs of the event and the towers and bells fund. There are processions, lots of different types of bands providing live music, dancing, street theatre, art exhibitions, craft stalls etc. The event attracts families, older and younger people from all the surrounding villages. It finishes at around 11 pm, and a team of street cleaners then comes in to ensure that the town can trade as usual the next day. [Toques et Cloches | Wine festival in Aude | Where? What? When? \(tasteatlas.com\)](http://tasteatlas.com)



Toques et Cloches

Lead and potential organisations involved	Measuring success	Delivery mechanisms and indicative timetable	Longer term aspirations
RBC Town Centre Management team, plus Culture/Libraries at HCC	Use baseline survey on perceptions of TC, linked to scoring, and repeat each year, e.g. Town Toolkit EXAMPLES OF MEASURING SUCCESS , or alternatively engage a local task group of business and resident representatives to endorse processes and actions. e.g. of good practice: Peoples Panel (dudley.gov.uk)	Lead by RBC Town Centre Manager. Seek sponsorship from local business community.	Generate a level of interest that will enable the development of the town centre as a Business Improvement District, which can levy a charge on businesses to fund an ongoing active programme e.g. of good practice: Hinckley Shops, Pubs, Businesses, News & Events (hinckleybid.co.uk)
Involve the schools and colleges, particularly Graphic design students – Competition?		Seek involvement from education establishments – a real life project – secure design work at no cost	
FAST – to help reflect the Aviation history in the branding			
Invest in town centre management and involving the community, this will pay back investment in the longer term E.G of good practice Town Centre Engagement Officers - Doncaster Council		Explore existing community organisations to partner with for some events – e.g. Local Running Groups – TC half marathon? or dance troupes, Local Music business – live music in the town event etc., busking pitches, Build on Heritage – museums, TC exhibitions? Borrow ideas from elsewhere – e.g. soap box aeroplane race through Queensmead? Town Centre Curry/fusion food night – with concession stands and music?	



Examples of aircraft related sculptures

Theme 2: Environment, Safety and Wellbeing

Key issues	Objective	Ideas for Action
<i>Creating an attractive and active town centre environment</i>	<p>To develop a town centre that is a place to spend time, not just shop or access services. A place that contributes to a feeling of wellbeing and provides access to cultural experiences.</p> <p>Make the town part of the experience of living and socialising in Farnborough</p> <p>Make the town comfortable and accessible for all people.</p> <p>Change perception so that when people think of Farnborough Town Centre they think of an enjoyable place to visit rather than just a functional one</p>	<p>Linked to identity and branding, but with a Greener aspect – More planters, more seating, Green strips in open areas, Fountain, water feature?</p>
<i>Greening the streets – providing important shade for climate change comfort, and opportunities for natural drainage,</i>		<p>More trees, Greener areas in car parks, better defined walkways etc. Needs a more detailed public realm masterplan to set out a comprehensive scheme. Incorporate new green focus in Meads redevelopment site where it intersects with Queensmead by Starbucks</p>
<i>Seating and gathering places – public and associated with cafes, restaurants etc</i>		<p>Secure Public Art for key entrance to the town centre – Queensmead – linked to access gateways and wayfinding Secure opportunities for open air public performance and gatherings</p>
<i>A safe and attractive place – Extending CCTV to improve security and feeling of safety, linked to evening activities and lighting</i>		<p>Consider introduction of heritage trail through town centre, linking e.g. paving which tells a story in engraved pictures and captions.</p> <p>Consider incorporating art into new construction.</p> <p>Consider incorporating green walls and roofs</p>
<i>Developing beauty, through the design of new buildings and spaces, improvements to the existing public realm, and the introduction of public art, opportunities for public performance and heritage</i>		<p>Develop a “Selfie Trail” or “Selfie wall trail” Slough selfie trail goes live as part of Christmas ceremony Royal Borough Observer (windsorobserver.co.uk) The Bournemouth & Poole Selfie Wall Trail - Bournemouth</p>
<i>Developing an “Instagrammable environment” Where people want to see and be seen</i>		

Examples of incorporating art into buildings:



Poem on wall of Premier Inn, Guildford



The Headington Shark (Listed!!)



Pixel Building Melbourne Australia
Example of sustainable architecture

Lead and potential organisations involved	Measuring success	Delivery mechanisms and indicative timetable	Longer term aspirations
<p>RBC and HCC and Developers/ development partnerships</p> <p>Building on the work being done for Farnborough Civic Quarter.</p>	<p>Measuring social media activities</p> <p>No of Instagram posts (Currently 123k compared to 234k for Farnham, 112k for Camberley, 167k for Bracknell, 638k for Guildford)</p> <p>No of followers on social media (Farnborough TC site 991 followers 25.4.2022)</p> <p>Via town centre satisfaction surveys</p>	<p>Via Development briefs, use of any available s.106 money from development, or development of policies whereby any development within the TC or the adjacent areas makes a financial contribution to TC management and improvement.</p> <p>Explore Sponsorship opportunities.</p> <p>Develop a detailed Public Realm Masterplan, either as part of a wider TC masterplan, or as a standalone exercise.</p>	<p>A well maintained town centre where the feeling of green space, beauty and sense of place and wellbeing extends throughout the Civic Quarter and the Town Centre evenly - building on the proposed park and square in the Civic Quarter, via a new events space at its linkage with Queensmead, and through to Princes Mead, the retail parks and in front of Sainsbury's.</p> <p>Linked places where people can sit and people watch or socialise in a friendly enjoyable environment.</p>

Greening the centre:



Buildings in Miami



Small green space and pop up performance space, manchester

Theme 3: Access, Gateways and Wayfinding

Key issues	Objective	Ideas for Action
<i>Poor access on foot and by bicycle, and for people with disabilities – often through car parks</i>		Develop a detailed wayfinding plan, and link the signage and route marking to the town centre branding.
<i>Poor sense of arrival and lack of welcoming, easily identified gateways</i>	To make the presence of the town centre obvious from the outset To provide clear easy access routes and links, and to identify key gateways positively, linked to branding	Break the barriers that are created by the existing road network – particularly across the A325 between Oak Road and Briarcliffe House, between Asda and the Civic Quarter, and across the A 327 between the Business Park and the Town Centre
<i>Lack of wayfinding both within and to the town centre, particularly from Station, Business parks, nearby residential areas</i>	To develop pride and a sense of place and ownership	Create Better delineated , if possible more direct, and pedestrian and cycle friendly crossings at the locations identified above and across Victoria Road. Wayfinding related to the station and the town centre at the junctions of Victoria Road with Elm Grove Road and the A325 roundabout
<i>Blockage and disincentive to access and finding the town centre created by the existing road network</i>	To support the changes needed in how people get to the town centre, as part of the actions to mitigate climate change	
<i>Car focussed</i>	To minimise the negative impact of extensive surface car parking on the visual amenity of the town centre. To improve health and wellbeing though walking and cycling.	Design and install clear gateway indicators <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • where Briarcliffe house and the proposed Civic Quarter intersect with Queensmead, • at the entrance on Victoria Road leading to Sainsburys, • as part of any new development of the Meads vacant site, • where Princes Mead meets the retail parks – the existing entrance is only apparent once you have arrived at it. See spatial concept plans.
<i>Easy to drive away from!</i>		

Some examples:



Bolton: Junction upgrades



Weston Super Mare



Thunder Bay city

Lead and potential organisations involved	Measuring success	Delivery mechanisms and indicative timetable	Longer term aspirations
<p>RBC and development partners in liaison with HCC - NB suggestions accord with the key principles set out in HCC latest draft LPT4, regarding improving accessibility to a wider variety of sustainable and healthier modes of transport other than the car.</p>	<p>Town centre footfall</p> <p>Satisfaction surveys</p>	<p>Working with HCC on developing a Transport Plan for Farnborough</p> <p>Some elements linked to delivery of Civic Quarter and associated changes to A 327</p> <hr/> <p>Need some short term changes to secure early confidence - in particular improvements to key gateways - especially where these are in public control.</p> <p>Development of a wayfinding plan - short term.</p> <p>Overall delivery medium term.</p>	<p>Less car dominated environment and accessibility, with better delineated pedestrian and cycle routes, and clear gateways and pathways through and around the town centre.</p>



Tooley St Wayfinding triangle, and Reddacliffe Place

Example of green arch

Theme 4: Activities

Key issues	Objective	Ideas for Action
<p><i>Farnborough is primarily a “shopping” town, with additional attraction provided by Vue Cinema. There is a need to diversify the offer to generate greater footfall and dwell time, and to attract a younger age group.</i></p>		<p>Creation of a Leisure, Cultural and Civic Hub linked to play, indoor and outdoor leisure activity, performance, art, health and fitness and community participation space.</p> <p>Concentrate commercial/competitive leisure Welcome Gravity (gravity-uk.com) Savills UK Competitive Socialising and Emerging Concepts in Leisure What is Competitive Socialising? (homeleisuredirect.com) and flexible leisure space around the Vue cinema and within and approaching The Meads, possibly table tennis tables in the mall space.</p>
<p><i>The development of a cinema in Farnham is a threat to Farnborough, as this will impact on the wider catchment available for Vue.</i></p> <p><i>Additional activities identified to be developed include Leisure (especially given the timing of demolition of the existing leisure centre), commercial leisure, Culture, Community, Restaurants, particularly more quality dining, Living in the town centre, and events (see Identity branding and events above).</i></p>	<p>To broaden the purpose and attraction of Farnborough.</p> <p>To secure a sustainable and flexible offer for the long term.</p> <p>To appeal to all sectors of the population, specifically including attractions for families and young people.</p> <p>To lengthen the day, with a range of uses and activities that stretch from day to evening, and to enable a vibrant night time economy.</p> <p>To create momentum that will attract an upward spiral of investment.</p>	<p>Work with developers of Princes Mead to secure active ground floor frontages, active links and a high quality built environment.</p> <p>Introduce space for community activity, , e.g. within Council led development; within the new leisure centre which should ideally be designed to accommodate multiple activities Blog Archives - Everyone Events: Bracknell Leisure Centre - Everyone Events: and as part of the public realm – outdoor Events Space at the entrance to Queensmead, and its junction with the access to Princes Mead.</p> <p>Introduce flexible space for local commercial uses in Council led development, to enable new young businesses to have representation, and to try out new concepts.</p> <p>Adopt a lettings policy for Council controlled space that encourages and enables new and specialist operations to be represented.</p>
<p><i>Key is an offer that includes speciality, local and service based activities – What Amazon Can’t Do.</i></p>		<p>Explore the opportunity for pop up events/performance space, open mike nights in the town centre, pop up food offers – to enable targeted food based festivals</p> <p>Energise the public realm around the skatepark to incorporate family orientated activities, seating café and natural surveillance to create an attractive welcoming environment. F51- Skate Park Climbing Centre Boxing Club</p> <p>Develop digital and virtual experiences alongside physical leisure and community activity.</p>

Lead and potential organisations involved	Measuring success	Delivery mechanisms and indicative timetable	Longer term aspirations
<p>RBC, through preparation of development briefs for The Meads and vacant land in conjunction with land owners.</p> <p>Through the planning process and working with developers who bring forward proposals for Princes Mead.</p> <p>Through the development partnership for delivery of the Civic Quarter.</p> <p>Through working with the Arts Council, HCC and Hampshire cultural Trust on the cultural offer.</p> <p>Through partnering with an events management company to make best use of the new Leisure Centre for community and cultural use, and as live music/performance venue.</p>	<p>Town centre satisfaction surveys.</p> <p>The ability to attract competitive/commercial leisure operators.</p> <p>Number of events hosted in Farnborough per annum.</p>	<p>Largely linked to delivery of development projects.</p> <p>Short term development of Masterplans for Town Centre sites, and policy context for developments.</p> <p>Short term - introduce leisure in mall space in The Meads - collaboration with Table Tennis England Home - Table Tennis England</p> <p>Short term: provide busking locations, enable pop up venues/activities/performance opportunities, work with local colleges, charities etc to instigate immediate range of activities.</p> <p>Short term: Explore potential for charitable delivery of multi-function ambitious skateboard/climbing facility such as that in Folkestone.</p> <p>Longer term collaboration and partnering with the Private sector where appropriate.</p>	<p>For Farnborough to be recognised within the region as a location that offers unique leisure destinations, has an active cultural and live music scene, including the ability to host medium sized bands, and for Farnborough to be identified and used as a place to eat, with an evening economy offer that spans age groups and a quality range from fine and speciality dining to fast and street food.</p>

Case Study: F51

Funded by The Roger De Haan Charitable Trust and run by local sports charity, The Sports Trust, Folkestone 51 is the world's first purpose built multi-storey skatepark. Only a 54 minute train journey from London St Pancras, it is home to the largest lead climbing wall in the South East while also featuring bouldering facilities and a boxing gym. With three floors dedicated to skateboarding, including two world class suspended concrete bowls, F51 has turned heads both nationally and internationally. Equipped with our friendly team of coaches, our venue is for everyone, no matter where your level of skill or confidence is.

F51's design, location and conception aims to revolutionise the way we look at town/city spaces and how we can incorporate more facilities for sport and young people within town centres that may already feel cramped and populated. F51 seeks to put skaters, BMXers and climbers at the forefront of Folkestone, celebrating existing talent and encouraging new beginners to get involved through a range of lessons and inclusive sessions to ensure that there is something for everyone."

Images of F51:



The venue



Climbing



Skateboarding



Coaching



Table tennis tables outside shopping centre in Milton Keynes, outside John Lewis in Milton Keynes shopping centre, and in open green space:

Theme 5: Development

6.8 The Development theme does not lend itself to the format above, but requires consideration on a site by site basis, including commentary on how the sites are linked. The Key development areas considered are:

- The Civic Quarter – Maximising the benefit
- Vacant town centre site & The Meads
- A new Town Centre outdoor events space - southern end of Queensmead
- Princes Mead
- Longer term opportunities – Westmead Car Park? The Meads?

THE CIVIC QUARTER – MAXIMISING THE BENEFIT

6.9 The proposals for the Civic Quarter offer an exciting opportunity to introduce urban living, and an urban park into the town centre, together with space to enhance the community, health, sport, leisure, culture, evening economy and hotel offer and a new Leisure, cultural and Civic hub for Farnborough. The proposed Mobility Hubs introduce the concept of bringing EV charging into the centre, and enable areas of dominant surface car parking to be redeveloped. Such an ambitious and extensive development will represent a step change in the Farnborough offer, in line with the ambitions in the strategy, but will take time to deliver.

6.10 These proposals also align with Rushmoor’s recent identification by the Arts Council as a “Priority Place” where actions to bring more cultural experiences to the local community will be supported, and where it is recognised that the power of culture to bring people together can make a real difference. The Civic Quarter embeds the Council’s cultural ambitions through its aspiration to create a place for the entire family, with day to night activities covering a range of cultural and leisure activities from play to theatre, integrated with active indoor and outdoor leisure.

6.11 At this stage the proposals are in outline only, and therefore capable of refinement should demands and ambitions change over the delivery period. Key to the success of this development for the performance of Farnborough overall is the way in which the cultural and civic offer expands throughout the town centre and provides the physical and activity related links needed to knit the town centre together. This will spread the benefits these new activities will bring, and create a halo effect across the town centre as a whole.

6.12 In terms of knitting the town together, the masterplan indicates linkages across the A325 to residential areas, however this appears to include the route of the existing underpass. In our view the natural gateway to the



town centre is at the southern end of Queensmead, where there is a large open area adjacent to Briarcliffe House. This may offer a strong landing point for connectivity to the east, and enable people arriving at this location to see both the existing town centre and the activities in the new Civic Quarter.

6.13 At the western end of the Civic Quarter plans, there is a proposed link between the new development and the Horizon Retail Park/Princes Mead. This is an important node in creating the potential for a circular route through the town centre and the Civic Quarter. This area may be worthy of further detailed study and liaison with the owners of the Asda and its car parking, to ensure that a comprehensive and visually attractive scheme can be developed to maximise the benefit of this link. The proposed location of the new skate park offers an opportunity to expand the attraction of this area to include play, café, seating areas and direct linkages to the Leisure, Cultural and Civic Hub, the park, community and cultural uses. This will activate this location and attract people from the retail park and the wider town centre, and will help to strengthen and establish this route. A detailed public realm study and additional ground floor commercial uses may further enhance this link, particularly if it can be visually related to any outdoor focus for performance and gathering within the Civic Quarter park.

6.14 The proposed link across the A327 will provide a gateway for people from the business park and nearby commercial and residential areas offers an excellent opportunity to improve access to the town centre, leisure and cultural activities, and choice to local people. It also brings the town and its offer closer to the business park, which should encourage greater use, particularly at lunch times and immediately after the working day.

6.15 A key part of the Civic Quarter development is the point at which it physically links to the town centre gateway at the southern end of Queensmead. Here, the masterplan indicates the retention of a building in the current orientation of the existing Iceland unit. As this appears to be a new building, this is likely to require a break in trade if Iceland is to be re-accommodated in this location. The orientation of this block as currently indicated appears to represent a visual obstacle for people within the Civic Quarter being able to see the linkage to Queensmead until they reach the very eastern end of the development. To maximise benefit to the town as a whole, and draw users and residents of the Civic Quarter into the rest of the town, visual connectivity is essential. Minor amendments to the orientation or design of this block could improve the visual connectivity, and lead people better to the rest of the town centre. This could be addressed at the detailed design stage.



VACANT TOWN CENTRE SITE AND THE MEADS

- 6.16 The Council is exploring the acquisition of the stalled development site adjacent to The Meads shopping centre. This offers a significant opportunity to provide a broader mix of uses at this end of the town centre, and to provide a development of quality which takes on board the need for place making. In principle, the findings that have contributed to this Strategy indicate that the development would ideally include active commercial frontages at ground floor level, a small area of green landscaped public realm to offer a balance to the much larger park in the Civic Quarter and inevitably, to ensure a viable development, residential floorspace above.
- 6.17 The commercial space should ideally be designed to be flexible, so that it can be occupied in smaller or larger units, to be sustainable to changes in market demand over time. Use class E indicates that there will be some flexibility going forward for types of occupation in any event. The development may also accommodate a more community focussed area, which can be used to provide indoor selling and doing spaces to emerging local businesses, and possibly to include a dedicated space which can be used by the college for students to promote their new ideas. This may also be able to incorporate a room available to rent for community use behind the active frontage. To attract more local and individual traders to Farnborough town centre, the Council could consider adopting a lettings policy that is more flexible than traditional commercial leases. This could include a more flexible attitude to financial references, easy in/out terms, some space that is fitted out to a basic level to enable businesses to operate at little initial capital outlay, fully inclusive terms charged on a weekly or monthly basis. This will encourage smaller local providers of goods and services to have a go at stepping up to the town centre, and will encourage an eclectic and individual mix of trades that is much wider than the usual established offer.
- 6.18 The location of the site also offers a unique opportunity to improve the overall layout and function of The Meads and Queensmead. Careful design should seek to provide a limited servicing opportunity at the northern end of The Meads, which can enable trolley service access to the service road to the rear of the eastern side of Quensmead. This will enable the intrusive service road access at the key gateway to the town centre to be closed to traffic, providing an opportunity to create an outdoor events space at the junction of Quensmead and the Civic Quarter and to provide art/gateway features that provide a clear welcome to the town centre.
- 6.19 The development can also provide a new entrance to The Meads shopping centre, ideally incorporating space suitable for the development of commercial socialising uses.

A NEW TOWN CENTRE OUTDOOR EVENTS SPACE - SOUTHERN END OF QUEENSMEAD

6.20 As introduced above, there is a large amount of undeveloped space at the junction of Queensmead, Briarcliffe House and the southern entrance to The Meads, the existing Iceland unit and the link to the Civic Quarter. This is currently bisected by a service road, which renders the space largely unusable, creates a conflict between pedestrians and delivery traffic, and impacts visually on the space. Currently the space is incoherent, somewhat unwelcoming and unfriendly.

6.21 If the service road can be removed, or redesigned and managed in such a way as it enables the space to be used for other activities, this offers the opportunity for a new Town Square of circa 170 M2, circa 0.14 ha (just over a third of an acre). This area will differ in character, but link directly into the proposed Westmead Square as shown in the Civic Quarter masterplan. It offers an opportunity for events, markets, pop up food traders, trade fairs, links to the Exhibition Centre where e.g. car fairs can have a presence in the town centre, thus increasing traffic between the two venues, etc. It will also be big enough to incorporate some high quality public art, possibly linked to Farnborough's aeronautical heritage as a key gateway feature, or an active water feature. This area has the potential to be an easily identifiable, inspirational front door to both the new Civic Quarter and the existing town centre. In our view this represents a key priority in securing a step change in the identity of Farnborough, on which progress can be made ahead of completion of the major development projects.

6.22 Whilst investment will be needed, by starting the process and setting the tone for a new level of quality in public realm, such action will engender confidence that the town is in the process of wholesale regeneration, and will help to attract both investors and new occupiers to Farnborough. It will demonstrate evidence of intent and a positive attitude to securing improvement. One Public Estate funding may be available to develop the feasibility stage of this project, and to identify how to unlock the servicing issue, as the aim is to make better use of publicly owned land, to enable it to develop a more commercial role.

PRINCES MEAD

6.23 Princes Mead has recently been marketed for sale, on the basis that it has potential for comprehensive redevelopment to include a significant number of new homes, as well as replacement commercial floorspace. It is anticipated that this will be commercially led by the buyer of the centre, but offers a clear opportunity for the Council to work with a new owner to secure contribution to a holistic town centre masterplan. Benefits that might be secured through this process include:

- A more street based less monolithic design suitable to urban living with flexible commercial space and active frontages at ground floor level
- A better gateway and town centre presence where the development links into the retail park, enhancing the opportunity for a circular route around the town
- Improvements to the gateway from Victoria Road via Westmead car park
- Improved linkage to Queensmead, with a new entranceway

- Opportunities for new public realm, greening and another small square where people can gather
- Modern high quality frontages and high quality designs for urban living

Plans to redevelop the centre may offer an opportunity for some of the existing traders to move either to empty units elsewhere in the town centre, or if carefully sequenced to new commercial floorspace in The Meads development area.

6.24 The interest in Prince Mead for redevelopment, together with the ambitious proposals for the Civic Quarter, and the town centre site indicate that the majority of the town centre will be coming forward for improvement within the next 10-15 years. The current exception is Queensmead, which indicates that this should ideally be a priority for early public realm improvements.

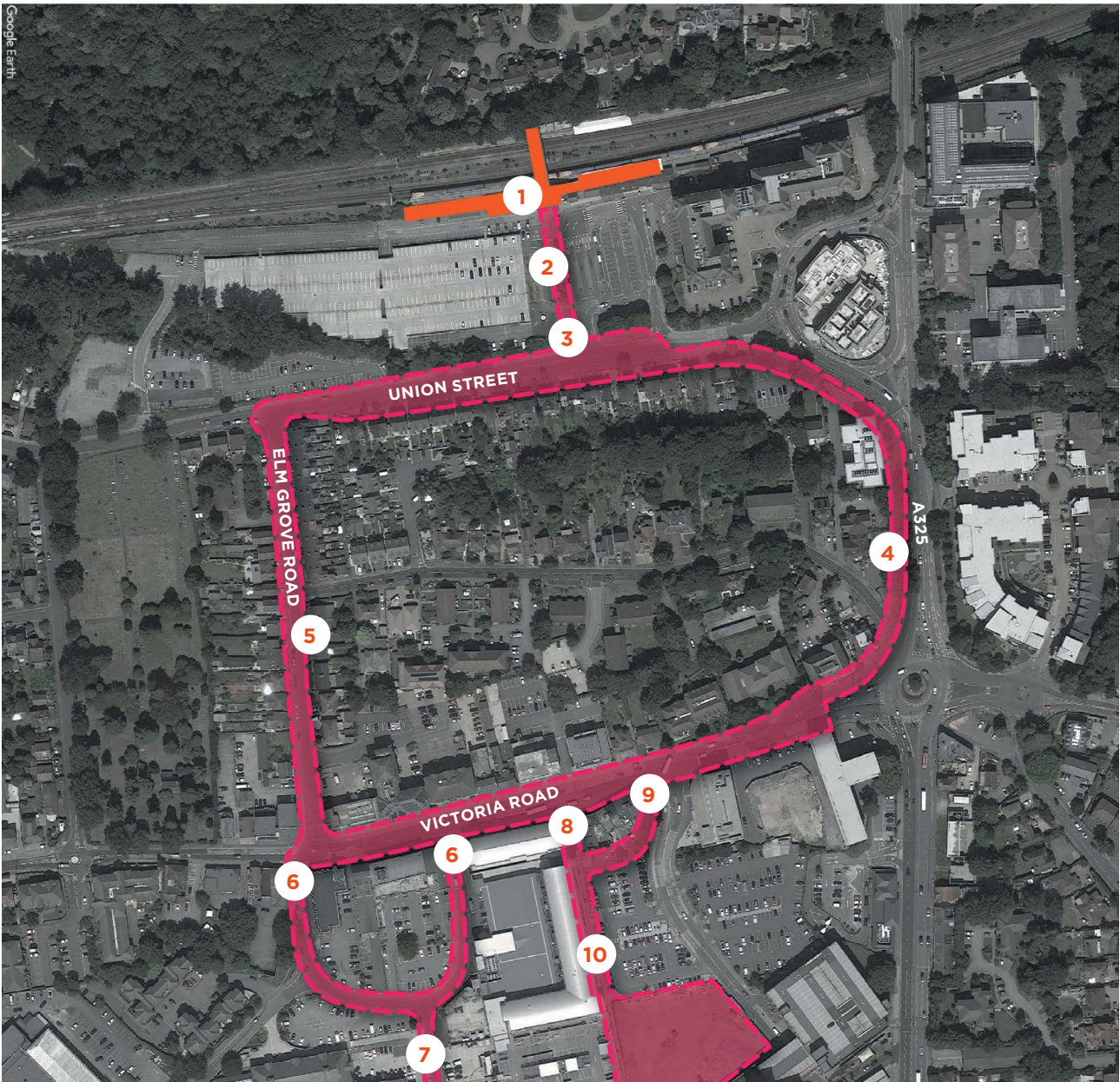
LONGER TERM OPPORTUNITIES - WESTMEAD CAR PARK? THE MEADS?

6.25 As the town centre changes with the development of the Civic Quarter, and the focus for arrivals and transport moves towards the new transport hubs, it is likely that the next area that may be considered for redevelopment in the longer term could be Westmead car park. This will offer an opportunity to expand and improve the Victoria Road frontage and create a more outward facing link to existing residential areas and towards the Station.

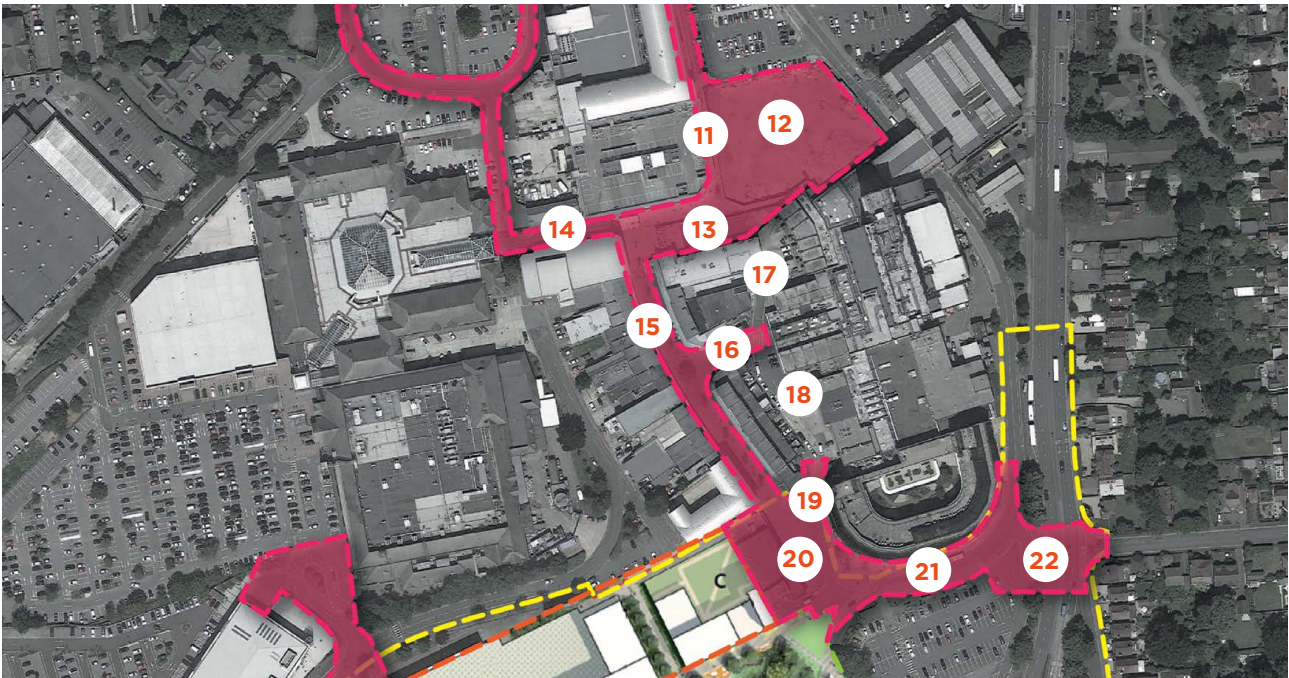
6.26 Similarly, as other areas of the town improve, and the nature of Farnborough town centre changes The Meads may start to look like an opportunity for investment. Monolithic single building shopping/leisure provision in town centres is now considered somewhat dated, and does not offer the flexibility for incremental change that smaller blocks of street based development can enable. In the longer term we anticipate that The Meads may therefore come forward for remodelling or redevelopment to meet the changing standards and quality of the rest of the town

CONCEPT PLANS ILLUSTRATING IDEAS FOR INTERVENTION

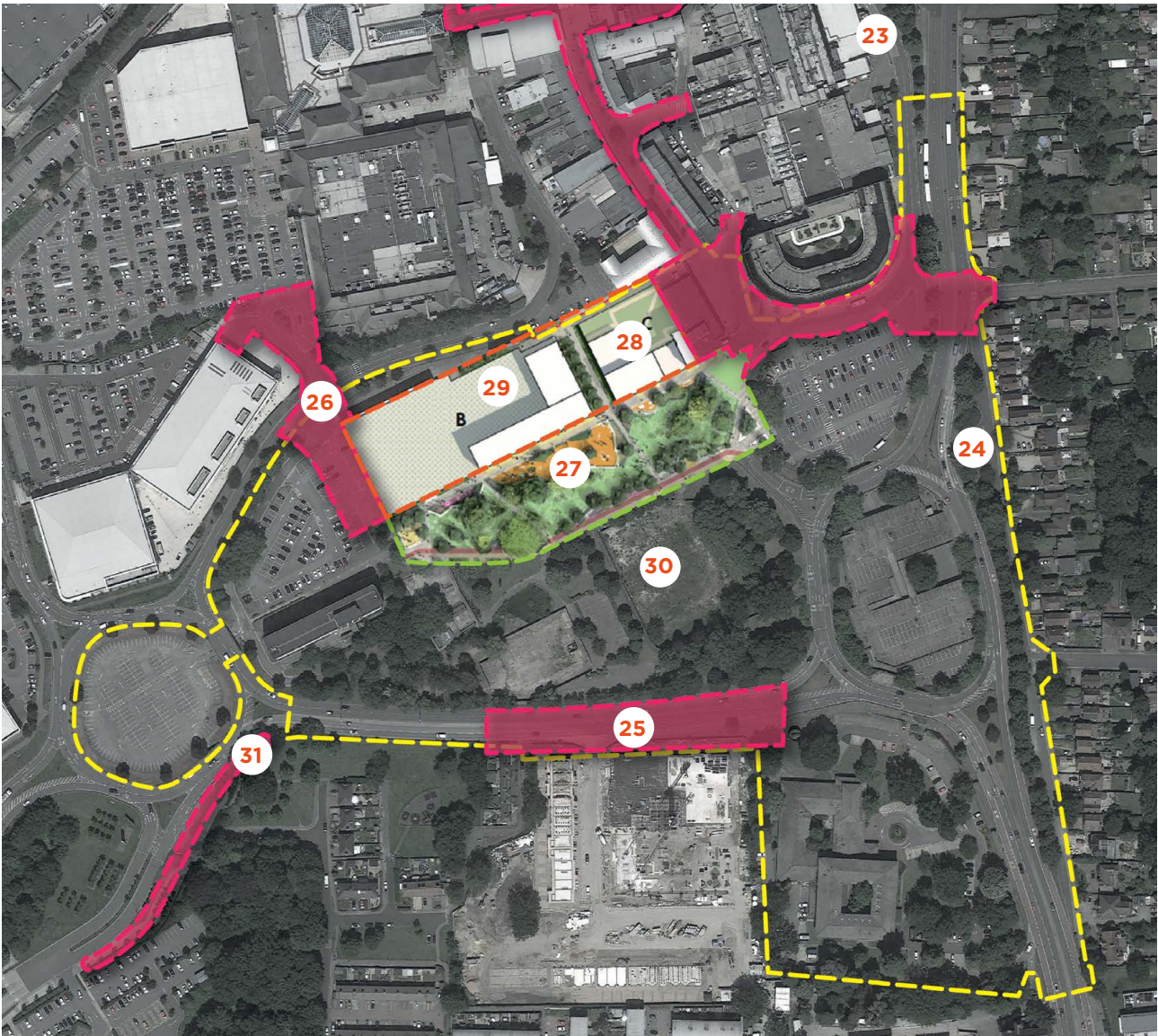
6.27 The following concept plans illustrate spatially the core ideas and opportunities identified in the themes and development opportunities set out above.



1. Farnborough Rail Station.
2. Public realm improvements to prioritise pedestrian movements from rail station entrance to Union Street.
3. Improved pedestrian crossing to be made across Union Street.
4. Improvements to footpaths along with increased signage to enhance experience of walking from the rail station towards the town centre along A325.
5. Narrow footways and highway in existing residential area potentially restrict pedestrian movements along Elm Grove Road which is a quieter alternative route to the town centre than alongside A325. Improved signage could help people navigate towards the town centre.
6. Crossing Victoria Road into Northmead and Westmead are highway dominated and could be enhanced to improve pedestrian cycle crossings. Whilst these routes link into Princess Mead Shopping centre, Northmead and Westmead they do not currently present an attractive route into the Princes Mead Shopping Centre.
7. Improvements to be made to better identify entrance into Princes Mead Shopping centre.
8. Access alley to Queensmead is acceptable albeit it doesn't present an attractive arrival route and is not overlooked so not secure.
9. Potential to major on this route along Kingsmead to provide a more positive, obvious and welcoming arrival experience into the top of the town centre.
10. Existing Kingsmead pedestrian route to be enhanced with street tree planting and seating.



11. Consider widening pedestrian route to allow for enhanced movement and street tree planting.
12. Major opportunity site. Important that development, aside having the right mix of uses, provides active ground floors and an obvious and welcoming entrance to the Meads Shopping Centre, and considers alternative servicing designs to enable removal or reduction of service road access at southern end of Queensmead .
13. Potential for an enhanced and enlarged public space to anchor the northern end of the Queensmead. Proposals to include high quality public realm with new soft planting, coordinated street furniture that can connect through and down the Queensmead and down into the Civic Quarter creating a seamless environment.
14. Improvements to existing public realm to connect into Princes Mead Shopping Centre.
15. A coordinated approach is required to modernise the Queensmead to improve its environment. New high quality public realm with soft landscaping and new street furniture will create a new feel for the Queensmead, coupled with investment in the shop frontages. Stevenage has undertaken a similar process on their listed Town Centre. <https://stevenage-even-better.com/stevenage-regeneration-schemes/>
16. The ability to access and exit the shopping centre onto the Queensmead is positive but the public realm needs to connect right up to the entrance of the Meads Shopping Centre to improve the arrival experience. This is impacted by the service yards to The Meads and the Queensmead being accessed across this route.
17. Service yards to the Meads and Queensmead stores require either alternative access or its use limited to key business hours to reduce the conflict between vehicles and pedestrians at the southern end of Queensmead, and to enable better use of the public realm.
18. See above.
19. See above
20. Scope to modify existing proposed replacement Iceland unit to create an enlarged public space and southern anchor to Queensmead. Critically this could enhance the physical and visual link between the Queensmead and the proposed new park that sits at the heart of the new Civic Quarter.
21. Major modifications are required to the existing highways to transform a road dominated environment into a more pedestrian focussed welcoming place. Access and servicing can be permitted but restricted where alternative arrangements are not possible.
22. To improve connectivity for the town's residents with their town centre and to increase overall patronage, targeted yet significant alterations are suggested across the A325 to create direct and convenient access for residents and remove the need to resort to inadequate and unsafe subways that are not on direct desire lines.



23. New arrangements should be explored for servicing access along Kingsmead off the A325.

24. Remove existing subways under A325 & A327 once surface level crossings are established.

25. Consider major alterations to this section or part of the A327, akin to the transformation of the Ashford Ring Road with the establishment of super-crossings to prioritise pedestrian and cycling movements from the south into the Civic Quarter and onwards in the Town Centre.

26. Initiate major public realm improvements across Westmead to enhanced pedestrian crossings between the Civic Quarter and Princes Mead Shopping Centre and the western retail parks. This will hopefully help establish a “retail circuit” and connect key locations within the town centre. This may benefit from an enhanced public realm and the introduction of additional family focussed activities alongside the proposed skatepark as part of the first phase of the wider civic offer. Explore how to establish Central Park as early in the process as possible as this will

form a key destination. Consideration should be given to how the Central Park could be marketed as an attraction in its own right for Farnborough Town Centre, as well as forming an integral part of the Civic Quarter.

27. Consider redesign of new replacement building (presently shown as ground floor retail and entertainment) to enable improved physical and visual connection between the High Street and the Central Park and Civic Quarter.

28. Early phased delivery of Civic Hub and Library and associated cultural and leisure facilities and works to show commitment and momentum in delivery of the Civic Quarter.

29. Phased delivery of the remainder of the Civic Quarter, including major highway remodelling at the Queensmead and Pinehurst roundabouts.

30. Once modifications have been made to the A327 to improve crossing for pedestrians and cyclists it is desirable to encourage people from Farnborough Business Park and beyond to use the surface level crossing as opposed to an underpass

PROJECT: Queensmead and The Meads Shopping Centre



Location Plan

This location is a critical cross roads for pedestrian movement within the town centre providing North - South and East - West links and so has huge potential to capitalise on this and help boost footfall through the town centre, especially if a new retail circuit can be delivered. The space itself however is currently disappointing. Whilst the scale of the space is appropriate and will act as a good bookend for the proposed [and enlarged] urban space to the south of Queensmead and in the Civic Quarter the southern elevation is defined by a blank façade which does nothing to encourage people to dwell and meet.



An urgent action would be to look at creating a new active edge to the southern side of the square. There is also minimal street furniture and street trees to enliven the space. A potential model to learn from is work undertaken at Stevenage as part of their town centre regeneration. They have been bold to appeal to a younger generation and have added new play areas for children, and provided attractive street furniture to encourage people to spend longer in the town with the aim of boosting footfall.

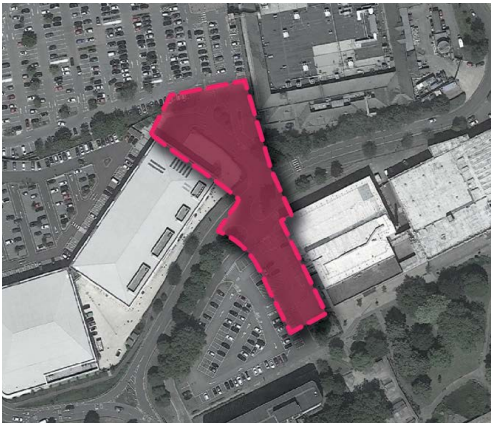


New play areas in primary shopping streets in Stevenage



Play area and activity wall at Fosse Park, Leicester

PROJECT: Westmead - Civic Quarter



Location Plan

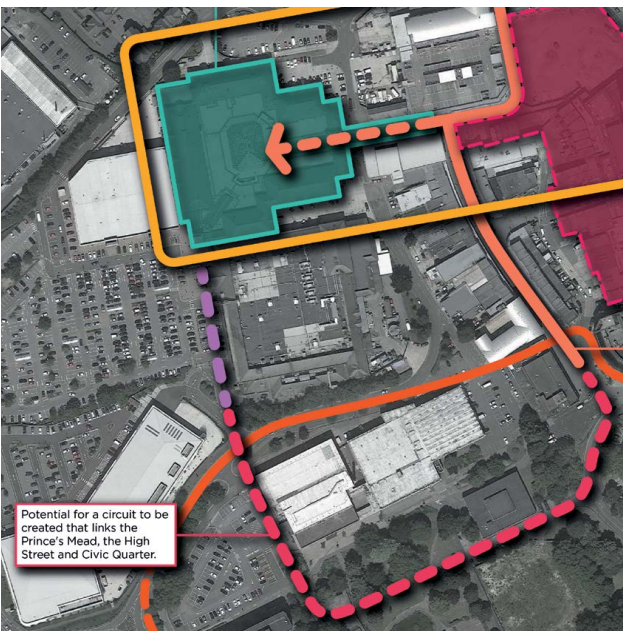
The ability to connect sites together and create a retail circuit needs to be considered. Whilst the Princes Mead Shopping Centre and the surrounding retail parks are an out-of-town environment they are a popular attractor, they also offering ample car parking that could benefit the town centre activities more than they do at present. Providing better pedestrian links and improving the public realm and attractions in the vicinity of the proposed skate park as a part of the Civic Quarter could help create an important missing link in the town's retail circuit.



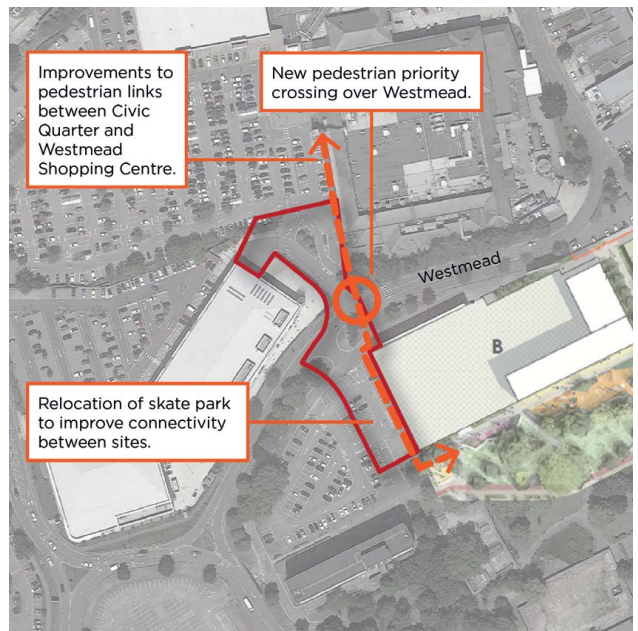
View looking westward along Watermead Road - a highway dominated environment with limited provision for walking and cycling



A more direct and visible route, potentially retaining some of the existing trees could be created to enhance the experience of walking between the two areas of the town centre.



Scope to establish a missing link for the towns retail circuit



Sketch Layout

PROJECT: A327



Location Plan

The A327 is a major highway that runs to the south of the town centre. It effectively cuts off North - South pedestrian and cycle movement from both the existing and anticipated residential communities to the south and also the numerous businesses that occupy the Farnborough Business Park and further afield Farnborough Airport. Better accessibility could impact on the vitality of the town centre and the potential spend from people who otherwise are deterred from the experience of the route into the town centre and what it has on offer. The proposed Civic Quarter will play a positive role in changing the offer

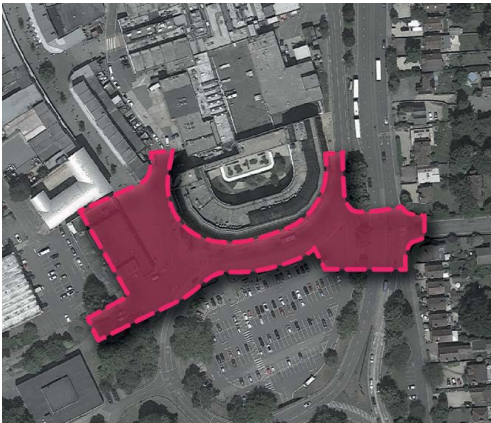


Image of A327 - Meudon Avenue looking westwards; with 5 lanes of traffic.



Image from the A4 - Wellington Street, Slough showing how high quality public realm, landscaping and super crossings alongside active travel and public transport measures can create an enhanced setting and encourage people to cross over and connect with the Civic Quarter and town centre.

PROJECT: Oak Road > Kingsmead > High Street

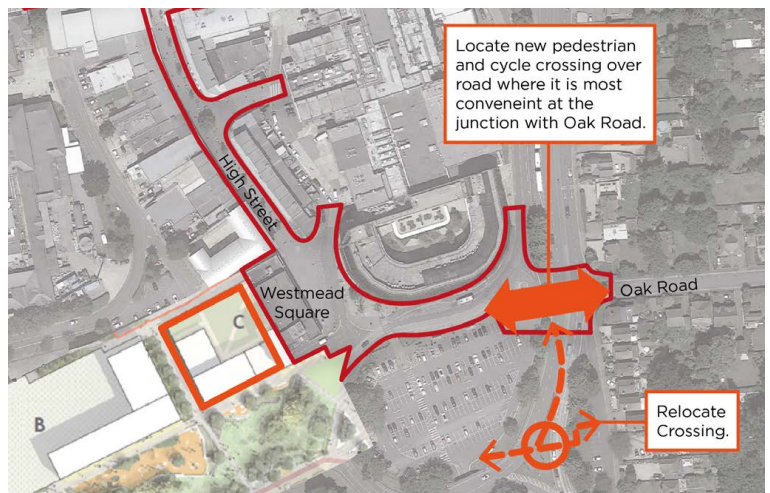


Location Plan



Existing view looking towards the town centre from Oak Road.

Residents living to the east of the town centre currently have to cross the A325 – Farnborough Road through a series of underpasses. Oak Road is a prominent residential street that connects with the town. It is proposed that instead of an indirect dogleg movement being required to reach a new surface level crossing, a new direct route is provided that lead straight into the proposed new Square that sits of the bottom of Queensmead.



Potential view that would great residents from Oak Road and adjoining area when walking to the town centre.



Illustrative Sketch: Image of an alternative, more direct pedestrian and cycle link into the town centre

CHAPTER 7:

DELIVERY

INDICATIVE SEQUENCING AND ANTICIPATED TIMESCALES FOR DELIVERY

7.0 With the quantum and extent of regeneration planned for Farnborough Town Centre the sequencing of delivery will be important in making sure that not all of the town centre suffers upheaval at once. Ideally, there will remain a critical mass of activity, and early evidence of improvements to maintain the shopping habit of users and generate interest in the change. Once shoppers and town centre users habits are altered, it can be difficult for them to re-establish.

7.1 The table sets out some indicative sequencing that aims to bring forward benefits whilst maintaining overall activity, and reflect the likely reality of development timescales:

EARLY WINS AND MEANWHILE USES

7.2 To generate early activity and demonstrate commitment to positive change it is useful to take actions that secure short term tangible improvement. This can stimulate a public conversation about the town centre, and can help engage people with the need for a comprehensive plan. Examples of early interventions that can make a difference include:

- Redecoration of the hoardings around the vacant town centre site – this could be achieved by way of a competition to design art for each subsection of the hoardings, involving local schools, colleges, art groups etc, with the winning entries then being implemented

- An alternative could be to use the hoardings to create a heritage trail/exhibition, using images from the FAST archive, setting out some of the key historical aviation history achievements and some interpretation of the contribution these have made to the UK
- Provision of some new seating in the town centre
- Time limiting the servicing at the southern end of Queensmead, and removal of the bollards to provide a space for exhibitions, and working with the exhibition centre to bring activity to the space that links with their programme
- Identifying busking locations in the town centre, and establishing a bookable busking programme, and auditions process
- Allowing pop up hot food/local produce providers in Queensmead one day month, possibly linked to a theme.
- Running a design competition for the branding of Farnborough, where each competitor provides a flag and an explanation of their design, which could then be exhibited in the concourse of The Meads, and voted on by the public
- Exploring opportunities for the use of coloured/dynamic lighting for areas of the town centre
- Extending the CCTV to cover all of Queensmead to improve security

Short term actions 1-3 years	Medium term actions 3-7 years	Longer term actions 7-12 years	Future opportunities to be planned for 12-15 years	Comments
Develop Branding				Priority
Commissioning public art/gateway markers	Implementation- public art, gateways			Subject to funding/sponsorship. Priority
TCM Programme of events				
Developing Social media profile				Ongoing - already initiated
Develop public realm strategy for town centre	Implementation greening town centre, Heritage trail, Selfie trail, selfie walls			Selfie trail/walls can be expanded and changed as development comes on stream
Wayfinding plan	Implementation of way finding linked to brand			
Transport Plan for Farnborough	Improved cycleways and crossings			NB some crossings linked to timetable for delivery of Civic Quarter
Redesign servicing for eastern side of Queensmead	Implement changes to servicing and development of new Events square			Priority
Secure development partner and Masterplan, for TC site at The Meads	Secure planning permission and implement development			Priority
Develop relationship with new owners of Princes Mead	Secure Masterplan for Princes Mead and planning permission	Implementation of Princes Mead redevelopment		
Develop relationship with Competitive leisure/competitive socialising market, and market The Meads for new leisure uses	Implement any changes required to accommodate new leisure uses			Priority
Research opportunity for more ambitious Skate park/multi use facility				More detailed planning and studies for key linkages
Refine plans for Civic Quarter	Civic Quarter implementation			
Specify new Leisure, library and cultural centre to incorporate capability as events location/music venue	Part of Civic Quarter implementation			
		Develop revised town centre strategy	Westmead Car park redevelopment	
			Redevelopment of The Meads	
Develop prospectus for Farnborough Town Centre, summarising the ambitious programme of work and regeneration				
	Masterplan for the existing Civic Offices site			Assuming new Hub includes relocated Civic Offices, or alternative town centre location is progressed

- Discussions with landlords of Princes Mead and Queensmead to secure permission for meanwhile uses in vacant shops, such as student exhibitions, makers spaces, artist studios etc., or where this is not possible the introduction of false shop fronts to animate the streetscape, using large scale images to introduce colour and interest.
- Temporary exhibition of a large physical attraction, such as an aircraft, within the town centre
- The introduction of a movable mini forest of potted trees along the centre of Queensmead, linked to information relating to the benefits of tree planting - after the period of exhibition these could be auctioned off

7.3 It is recognised that such meanwhile uses do not come for free. Options for funding could include sponsorship from local businesses, whose name/logo would appear as part of the event, linkage with local interest groups who may provide support/equipment, working with the colleges to link into their curriculum, asking for contributions from key anchor retailers, including those on the retail parks as well as those in the town centre as part of their Corporate Social Responsibility, Crowd funding.

PROCESS FOR DELIVERY

7.4 This Strategy is the first stage in a process which seeks to determine what the town centre will look like in the future, how it will perform, and the overall vision for its transformation. It sets the direction and aspiration, which will rely on progress being made across a number of areas, in summary as follows:

- **Policy development:** Building on Local Plan Policies and refining the development principles to

enable managed implementation through the preparation of a comprehensive Farnborough Town Centre Masterplan. This will set out a more detailed development framework for Farnborough guiding the qualitative and spatial approach to development whilst retaining the flexibility to adapt as the dynamics of the market evolve. The masterplan will be supported by a suite of more detailed studies, ideally including:

- o A Public Realm Strategy
- o A Wayfinding Strategy
- o A Farnborough Transport Plan
- o Design principles for Town Centre living
- o Completion of the draft Cultural Strategy

Ideally, the Masterplan will be developed in collaboration with the emerging new owners of Princes Mead, who are looking to redevelop, and with involvement of any development partner for The Meads, the involvement of the Civic Quarter partnership to ensure that the benefits of this development are maximised and (if achievable) in collaboration of the owners of Queensmead. All have a vested interest in the ongoing success of Farnborough, so should be prepared to invest in determining its future

- **Town Centre Management:**

Expanding the focus on town centre management for Farnborough, and developing a programme of activities, including meanwhile uses and longer term actions to enliven the town and increase footfall and trade. As activities increase and benefit is proven, an aspiration would be to involve the retailers more positively in the management of the town, with a view to moving to a position where a Business Improvement District could be successfully established.

- **Development areas:** Progress on each of the development areas will take place through the leadership of a range of different organisations:
 - o Civic Quarter – through the ongoing delivery programme with the RDP, which involves direct involvement of the Council
 - o Princes Mead – Lead by the new owners, but subject to a proactive process of engagement led by the Council and starting with discussions regarding the preparation of a town centre masterplan
 - o Queensmead – Proactive engagement led by the Council to secure involvement in the masterplan, and specifically on the need for environmental and public realm improvements and activities
 - o The Meads – finalisation of council considerations relating to direct involvement leading to a range of options for delivery:

Method	Description	Pro's	Cons
RBC Direct development	RBC take the lead in the development and procure its design, planning and delivery	RBC maintains full control and reaps long term financial benefits, guarantees compliance with all policy requirements, subject to financial sustainability.	RBC assumes all the risk High resource implications with impact on budgets Potential problems securing and retaining appropriate expertise. Arguably not the role of a LA to take such risk
Joint Venture/ Development partnership	Partnership established whereby each party contributes resources. A joint venture is created whereby parties collaborate to share the risks and benefits of the venture. Council would contribute land and potentially further funding Developer provides funding expertise and project management. It will be important to set clear quality and mix aspirations before securing a partner by competitive procurement. If sought at an early stage Partners can contribute financially to the development of the Masterplan and any more specific development principles for the site and can work with the Council to secure the right design team for the scheme.	Council has a direct stake in the development and shared control of delivery. Council can secure financial benefits for the short or longer term depending on the structure of the partnership, and whether the Council is seeking income or capital receipt. Shared risk – reduced risk to Council and Development partner	Development Partner will want at least 50% share in control and design process. May be differing qualitative aspirations. Some Developers will want to bring their own design team. No guarantee the partnership will succeed if external influences impact on the private sector Development Partner's commitment or ability to proceed.
Sale/ partnership via Development Competition	Council develops a detailed brief for the site, and holds a competition to secure a development delivery team including design. The brief will set out the development and financial requirements, which could include a range of options such as sale of land by the Council on satisfactory completion (can be problematic and may need to be phased where residential involved), shared income approach, or share of completed development.	In a strong market this can generate a lot of interest and lead to a high quality outcome. Reduced or managed risk to the Council, as established in the brief ahead of marketing. Requirements clear from the outset.	Market may not respond where there is perceived to be a high risk of abortive work, or may require payment for abortive work. In a weak market, Council may have Hobson's choice after a very public process. High degree of preparation work required by Council.

Organisational implications

7.5 The development of the strategy has highlighted a number of areas in which the Council's organisation for delivery of town centre regeneration may need to be reinforced. To achieve the ambitious changes identified will require the following:

- An adequately resourced Town Centre Management and promotion function
- An adequately resourced development team and pro-active planning team
- A dedicated bids manager to fully exploit funding opportunities – this is a role currently being developed in many local authorities to ensure that all funding opportunities are identified and prioritised, and to increase chances of success through expertise
- An ongoing pro-active approach to developing new partnerships and collaborative working with landowners, development promoters, and occupiers, and to taking the lead in the direct development of projects

To secure commitment from investors and partners, the Council will need to be seen to deliver, as has been the case for the Civic Quarter. Without long term resourced commitment and a recognition of the need for hands on involvement in the curation and operation of the town centre, the benefits that can be reaped will not be maximised. It is now widely understood that securing a successful town centre cannot be left purely to commercial intervention as was the case in the 1980's and 1990's, but requires the long term commitment and leadership of those who are responsible for its continued governance.

CHAPTER 8: CONCLUSIONS

8.1 This strategy sets the overall direction of work required to achieve improvement to Farnborough Town Centre, building on and pulling together the array of policies and activities already underway. It identifies 5 key themes for action which collectively promote a step change in the function and performance of Farnborough Town Centre.



8.2 The suggested actions are indicative of the types of interventions that can be made to secure sustainable regeneration. The aim is to bring the town centre to the level of quality that the town and those who live and work in it, and visitors to it demand and deserve. Whilst ambitious, the level of interest in Farnborough town centre, its economic context, and the activity already instigated suggest it is eminently deliverable.

8.3 As for any strategy, the messages are intended to be clear and high level but the devil will be in the detail. This is the start of a process which sets out the areas of work that will need to be taken forward for this to be a reality. It is recognised that funding is an issue, however in the longer term, the development and increased expenditure and footfall in the town centre, and the improvements in its environment will reap long term financial, economic and social rewards.

8.4 Commitment to the delivery of the strategy and a clear direction of travel will provide confidence for investors and development partners that the Council has a plan for the town centre, knows what it wants to achieve, is developing more detailed plans for how it will get there and communicates it with a united voice.



APPENDICES

Appendices to Farnborough
Town Centre Strategy Report:

Appendices to Farnborough Town Centre Strategy Report:

Appendix 1: Policy Context

Information	Source	Summary	Issues and Opportunities
NATIONAL			
National Planning Policy Framework (June 2021)	Government	<p>Sets out national policy for town centres and requires policies to take a positive approach to their growth, management and adaptation and provides wider relevant policies that relate to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Building a strong, competitive economy; • Ensuring the vitality of town centres; • Promoting healthy and safe communities; • Promoting sustainable transport; • Achieving well designed places; • Conserving and enhancing the historic environment 	Provide a high level context of national policies for guiding the development of local plan policies, strategies and proposals, and for guiding decision making on planning applications.
National Planning Practice Guidance	Government	<p>Provides further detailed guidance to support the National Planning Policy Framework and is set out under a number of categories which are relevant to town centres with those (not exclusively) including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Advertisements; • Design; • Healthy and safe communities; • Historic environment; • Planning obligations; • Town centres and retail 	Provides additional more detailed guidance to the policies set out in the NPPF for guiding local plan policies, strategies and proposals and for guiding decision making on planning applications.
National Design Guide, National Model Design Code & Guidance Notes for Design Codes	Government	<p>Sets out how well-designed places that are beautiful, healthy, greener, enduring and successful can be achieved in practice.</p> <p>Forms part of the Government's collection of planning practice guidance to be read alongside the separate planning practice guidance on design process and tools.</p>	<p>Valuable resources for understanding the widely held principles for good urban design for all aspects including town centres and set out ten characteristics of well-designed places.</p> <p>The model design code sets out the process for coding at town wide with area types including town centres, and guidance notes for the possible contents of design codes that are modelled on the ten characteristics of well-designed places.</p>

			Has the potential to inform more detailed design guide that is relevant and specific to Farnborough Town Centre without overly repeating the guidance that exists at a national level.
The High Street Report	Government	<p>Report of an Expert Panel Chaired by Sir John Timpson – set up at the request of the High Streets Minister, Jake Berry in July 2018 to diagnose issues facing high streets and town centres. Key recommendations include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establishing the High Streets Task Force – to provide support for collaborative efforts for high streets and town centres; • Future High Streets Fund – to support town centres with viable visions for their high streets and town centres; • Short term measures – including day to day cleaning and maintenance, meanwhile use of empty properties, and reviewing parking provision and restrictions. 	Underpins the importance of creating a Vision and Strategy for the town centre, even without the direct funding support from the High Streets Task Force.
High Streets Task Force	High Streets Task Force	<p>Commissioned by government in 2019 as part of its plan for the High Street in response to The High Street Report, by the High Streets Expert Panel. Run by the Institute of Place Management with an alliance of place making experts.</p> <p>Is a resource that provides guidance, tools and skills to support the transformation of the High Street with an extensive knowledge base for all to draw upon. Four objectives:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Boost local authority capacity – providing expert knowledge and support to solve problems holding places back; • Build place making skills – of organisations and groups to deliver effective strategies; 	<p>Whilst Farnborough is not one of the towns identified for direct support, it underpins the importance of evolving a strategy for Farnborough Town Centre and one that is tailored and unique to the context of Farnborough.</p> <p>Valuable resource to draw upon in developing the town centre strategy follow on actions.</p>

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Coordination – connecting local and national decision makers and those that can influence high streets, as well as promoting positive messages about towns and cities; • Information and data sharing – vetting, integrating and providing data and evidence to people making important decisions about the future of their high streets, towns and city centres. <p>Specific direct support provided to 70 local authorities, selected based on need following support in pilot locations. Further authorities to be nominated in mid-2022</p>	
Health on the High Street (December 2020)	NHS Confederation	<p>Summary of roundtable discussions involving local government, community businesses and range of experts invited to discuss the role of health in the revitalisation of the high street.</p> <p>Includes recommendations for how health, local authority and LEPs can integrate health as an element of town centre regeneration, whilst increasing health service delivery capacity and addressing health inequalities. Linked also to the structural changes in health care provision with a shift from CCGs to ICPs and seeks to align service delivery with local authorities and other partners.</p> <p>NHS has a role in the high street policy agenda by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Running health services from vacant property, including vaccination programmes; • Broadening the range of services provided within communities; • Supporting and participating in the design of healthy communities and places 	<p>.</p> <p>Highlights a key opportunity to explore how health and health service provision could have a greater presence in Farnborough and how this relates to the existing estate used for health care provision.</p> <p>Highlights the possibility for running health services from vacant properties.</p> <p>CCG recently obtained funding to improve facilities at the District Hospital which may involve repurposing of buildings.</p> <p>Opportunity to discuss with the CCG potential future intentions of the site and also it aims to act on the Health on the High Street Agenda in terms of using vacant spaces on a temporary basis or for more permanent forms of health service delivery.</p> <p>This may not be clear until the transition to Integrated Care Partnerships is complete in 2022 but will be worth exploring, as part of efforts to diversify the town centre offer.</p>

<p>Grimsey Review 1 (2013)</p> <p>Grimsey Review 2 (2018)</p> <p>Grimsey Review Build Back Better – Covid 19</p> <p>Against All Odds: How independent Retail, Hospitality, and Services Businesses have adapted to survive the pandemic (Grimsey Review) (2021)</p>	<p>Grimsey Review Team</p>	<p>Grimsey Review (2013) Report provides 31 recommendations on transforming high streets with three overarching conclusions. High Streets and Multifunctional Hubs, the need for radical government action and importance of local authority plans, visions and partnership working.</p> <p>Grimsey Review 2 (2018) Builds on the first review, reflecting on progress being made and offers 25 recommendations for transforming town centres which are grouped into four overall key findings:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Transforming places into community hubs – town centres as multi-functional community hubs; • Strong leadership and vision – local authorities and place leaders to collaborate to create longer-term visions; • Establishing place distinction and unique heritage – consider the unique offer and heritage of a place, to provide a unique experience; • Support from an independent body – sharing, data, evidence, and best practice. The High Streets Task Force is a resource to support revitalising town centres. <p>Grimsey Review Build Back Better – Covid 19 Supplement for town centres (2020) Sets out a suggested approach to revitalising town centres in the context of the Covid 19 Pandemic and its opportunities for an alternative locally driven approach towards recovery that embraces sustainability, quality of life and experiences and local leadership.</p>	<p>Town centres need to rely less on retail and become multifunctional hubs. Farnborough Town Centre has the potential to further evolve as a multi-functional hub. The Grimsey review papers highlight the opportunities to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Explore the potential to strengthen health, entertainment, education, leisure and business. Further draw on and celebrate Farnborough’s unique history and heritage;
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		<p>Against All Odds: How independent Retail, Hospitality, and Services Businesses have adapted to survive the pandemic (Grimsey Review) (2021)</p> <p>Research on how small independent retail, hospitality, and services businesses have survived the pandemic and what the future looks like for them. Emphasises the importance of these types of small businesses in creating unique experiences in town centres and the need for support given the impacts of the Covid-19 Pandemic. Requires their involvement in the process of revitalising town centres.</p>	
High Street 2030: Achieving Change (December 2018)	Institute of Place Management	<p>Takes a people and place-based approach to understanding the changes in town centres. Summarises the findings of surveys from participants in five different town types including Bolton Teenage Market.</p> <p>Important attractions to retain include: independent shops; community atmosphere; music venues; key service provision; markets; leisure and entertainment; good public transport; heritage; unique features that create distinctiveness (often related to greenspace or waterways).</p> <p>Young people interviewed on the Teenage Market. Bolton supportive of many of these attractions, including food, leisure and entertainment offers, public transport access, and the improved public realm.</p> <p><u>Other findings:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create more of an experience • Improve accessibility that is more environmentally-friendly • Create public spaces or areas, centres that better serve older people • More central services 	<p>Highlights that all town centres and different – a one size fits all approach is not appropriate.</p> <p>Key findings and principles are relevant to Farnborough in terms of focussing on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Providing an experience • Potential of independent shops • Ensuring that the town centre can continue to facilitate events • Exploring the potential for key service provision to be based in the town centre • Accessibility - walking and cycling in a 20 minute catchment, car parking, bus station and rail station <p>Drawing out the aspects of Farnborough that are unique to the towns identity, that includes heritage and culture.</p> <p>Facilitating residential development positively that does not compete or constrain other town centre uses and activities.</p> <p>Further exploring the potential for pop up retail and leisure.</p>

		<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Town centre living• Create places for entertainment and leisure• More frequent use of pop-up retail and entertainment. <p>Whilst retail was still seen as an important element, participants saw high streets offering other activities that served the community – places where individual and collective experiences should happen.</p> <p>Fundamental principles identified that can apply to all places include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Leadership and partnerships: network rather than hierarchy, with place leaders, acting together, achieving change• Blending local and expert knowledge: identify solutions that are appropriate for their location using data and involving expert.• Communication: sharing and discussing knowledge, ideas, data, plans, achievements and problems – facilitated by good, active, place leadership• Young people: contributing to the evolution and development of town centres that they will inherit – encouraged with innovative active engagement methods• Places served by place professionals: from different backgrounds acting in the long-term interest of the place, being part of the leadership, engendering trust, sourcing knowledge and communicating with all to provide professional support for place change	
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<p>Revitalising Town Centres: A handbook for council leadership (May 2018)</p>	<p>Local Government Association</p>	<p>Accompanied with an online toolkit, offers guidance on the role of governance in approaching the revitalisation of town and city centres by delivering long-term impacts and using broad principles that can be tailored to meet local needs.</p> <p>Provides a high-level overview to guide councils in taking a strategic and evidence-based approach. Contains suggestions of further reading, resources and examples of good practice that can be accessed through the online toolkit.</p> <p>Includes a Town Centre Checklist structures around key 'Factors' that cut across many functions underpinning the importance of a joined-up approach to town centres.</p>	<p>Underpins the importance of this study in forming an assessment of current activities taking place in Farnborough Town Centre and further work that is necessary to secure the ongoing improvements to the town centre in a context that has since been affected by the Covid-19 pandemic in addition to the ongoing and accelerated restructuring of the retail sector.</p> <p>Many of the key notes in the document further support the development of a town centre strategy.</p>
<p>Active Design 2 (2015)</p>	<p>Sport England</p>	<p>Report which promotes the opportunities to encourage and promote sport and physical activity through the design and layout of the built environment.</p>	<p>Efforts have been made by the Council to improve walking and cycling provision across the town centre. The report utilises case studies across England which could help to inform development specific improvements that would assist in further improving active transport activities as part of the built environment. The concepts taken from AD2 could be expanded to develop town wide principles.</p>
Rushmoor Borough Council DEVELOPMENT PLAN			
<p>Rushmoor Local Plan 2014-2032</p>	<p>RBC Planning Policy</p>	<p>Adopted in February 2019, the Local Plan sets out a vision, spatial objectives, supporting development across the borough, as well as providing specific policy support for the regeneration of Farnborough town centre, including development management policies designating Primary and Secondary Frontages.</p>	<p>In recent years there have been significant global and market changes that have had an impact on town centres, including Covid-19, the rapid expansion of online retail and a focus on climate impacts. The Local Plan although adopted in 2019, already holds content which may no longer seem in-keeping with policy and these changes.</p> <p>Section 7 of the Local Plan focuses Shaping Places, to which Policy SP2, identifies the need for the revitalisation of Farnborough Town Centre. Any proposed regeneration strategy will need to aim to achieve each of the broad objectives within the policy to be able to be seen as a success.</p>

			<p>The broad objectives are closely aligned to several of the design criteria of the Civic Quarter redevelopment, including enhancing accessibility for all into and around the Town Centre by providing better connections to surrounding commercial and residential areas.</p> <p>Policies SP2.1 and SP2.2 do place some limitations as to potential opportunities for development by stating which areas which are primary and secondary frontages, rather thinking forward as to where may be better for the frontages to be focused. Furthermore, as consumer trends have shifted to a desire for small scale, local, independent retailers, there is less of a demand for large store units, which many of the secondary frontages are.</p>
Affordable Housing SPD (September 2019)	RBC Planning Policy	<p>The purpose of this SPD is to provide further guidance to support the implementation of the affordable housing policies of the Rushmoor Local Plan and housing delivery objectives of the Rushmoor Housing and Homelessness Strategy 2017-2022.</p> <p>A core purpose of this SPD is to ensure the delivery of affordable housing that meets residents' needs and aspirations, and which supports the delivery of sustainable, inclusive communities.</p>	<p>Consideration will need to be given as to how much of any potential development within the town centre will be appropriate for affordable housing, particularly as there is an increasing focus on providing residential units within town centres for vitality.</p>
Car and Cycle Parking Standards SPD (November 2017)	RBC Planning Policy	<p>Sets out the Council's approach to car and cycle parking in new development. The SPD provides information about the Council's expectations for car and cycle parking in new residential and non-residential development and support the implementation of the parking standards.</p>	<p>The SPD will need to be appropriately considered as to the potential for any parking for new development within the town centre. The significant amount of existing public car parking is set to be removed through the Civic Quarter redevelopment, will have likely have an impact on the opportunities for car-focused development.</p> <p>It is positive to see that in-keeping with the Council's Climate Emergency that the SPD does have a focus on cycle parking standards as well as car parking. As part of the regeneration of the town centre, any opportunity to provide cycle parking should be used to evidence best case</p>

			examples for what the Council expects for future development.
Farnborough Civic Quarter Masterplan SPD (June 2015)	RBC Planning Policy	<p>The SPD will act as a material consideration for Rushmoor Borough Council in decision making regarding planning applications for proposed development in the Civic Quarter area. The SPD has been developed to supplement policy SP4 of the Rushmoor Core Strategy (2011) and the principles of the document will be carried forward within the emerging Local Plan, which will inform planning decisions in the area.</p> <p>A number of principles and development priorities are:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Re-establish a network of connected streets and spaces that historically existed in the area but were lost over time. 2. Integrate the site with its context and adjoining streets to overcome its current disconnection for pedestrians and cyclists. 3. Enhance the central green space and retain significant trees in the area. 4. Establish a balance of uses that contributes to Farnborough's long term vitality. 5. Ensure continuity of existing community uses as sites within the area come forward and are redeveloped. 6. Deliver practical development plots that can come forward flexibly to accommodate different uses. 7. Work within existing ownership and occupancy boundaries as much as possible to facilitate the re-provision of community services. 	<p>Provides a useful context for the current focus and goals in terms of regenerating the town centre.</p> <p>As the SPD has been carried forward into the current Local Plan there is strong opportunity to expand upon the design criteria and proposals to develop a holistic approach to the wider town centre. This would enable the Council to look at focusing on which sections of the town centre could be better focused and where appropriate concentrations of retail provision, restaurants and residential units could be placed.</p> <p>It would also enable a cohesive design of the town centre rather than the currently piecemeal design and development, which although shows the history of the development of the town, has not enable the town centre to naturally adapt to market / cultural changes.</p>

		<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 8. Be as flexible as possible in terms of phasing, to respond to opportunities and necessities as they arise. 9. Enable as much change as possible in terms of redevelopment before requiring major infrastructure investment 	
Farnborough Town Centre SPD (July 2007)	RBC Planning Policy	<p>The SPD sets out the Council's Eight strategic objectives:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. To encourage and facilitate the revitalisation of Farnborough town centre by developing a robust retail core with a broad range of shops and services; 2. To create a high quality network of streets and spaces to provide a more attractive town centre environment; 3. To encourage the development of the evening economy; 4. To enhance accessibility into and within the town centre by all means of transport; 5. To create a unified and coherent civic quarter; 6. To ensure that the town centre meets the needs of all sectors of its community; 7. To support partnership working; and 8. To promote the town centre as a shopping and leisure destination. <p>The SPD also separates the town into 6 key development areas:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Area 1: Union Street/Station Environs (priority) Area 2: Farnborough Road North Area 3: Town Centre (Priority) Area 4: Princes Mead West Area 5: Civic Quarter (Priority) Area 6: Farnborough Business Park North 	The document is now 15 years old and much of the document has now either been achieved or superseded by more recent applications/SPD's such as the Civic Quarter Masterplan.

<p>Farnborough Town Centre Prospectus SPD (May 2012)</p>	<p>RBC Planning Policy</p>	<p>Provided an update on the on-going proposals following the 2007 Town Centre SPD, it split the priority areas further, as well as highlighting individual developments/building which could be brought forward and regenerated.</p>	<p>The supplementary prospectus supports the original town centre SPD and can be used to highlight what the council has achieved since its publication. Similar to the 2007 SPD many of the actions within the report have been delivered. Some actions however still remain relevant and include bringing forward sites</p> <p>The Town Centre Strategy will in effect update the Farnborough Town Centre Prospectus SPD.</p>
<p>Shop Front Design Guide (February 2015)</p>	<p>RBC Planning Policy</p>	<p>The SPDs purpose is to provide design guidance on the alteration or installation of shop fronts and shop signage in order to maintain or raise the design quality of these features of the townscape. It applies to all buildings in Use Classes A1 (shops), A2 (financial and professional services), A3 (restaurants and cafes), A4 (drinking establishments) and A5 (hot food take-aways). It will also apply to other town centre uses that require an active ground floor frontage.</p>	<p>Shop Front Audit would provide a useful evidence base of the issues with shop front design and inform improvements and measures necessary.</p> <p>More control and opportunities to secure improved shopfront design could be achieved by designating an Area of Special Control of Advertisements (ASCA), evidenced with a shop front survey. Example where this has been used includes Wellingborough. See: https://www.wellingborough.gov.uk/downloads/download/2360/area_of_special_control_of_advertisements</p>
<p>Locally Listed Heritage Assets SPD (December 2020)</p>	<p>RBC Planning Policy</p>	<p>Sets out the criteria for identifying buildings and structures of local importance and the procedure for adding them to our Local List. It also identifies the relevant conservation principles which apply to these buildings.</p> <p>The key objectives of this SPD are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To raise the profile of, and give recognition to, buildings and structures that contribute to the special local character and distinctiveness of an area; • To encourage the preservation and repair of buildings and structures of local historical and architectural importance; • To provide clear guidance to the Council's Development Management Team and developers on alterations to 	<p>Several heritage assets are within close proximity to the town centre, including St Michaels Abbey, The Tumble Down Dick and the Farnborough Airship Hangar Frame, all of which can play a role in developing the distinctiveness and character to the town centre.</p> <p>There could be an opportunity to expand upon the importance of these buildings and assets through improved signage and routes directing individuals to them and explaining their history and context. A heritage walking route or as part of an improved wayfinding network could be implemented so as to better connect the history of the town whilst also improving active travel connections to the town centre.</p>

		<p>such buildings and structures where planning permission is required;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To enhance the appearance of the Borough's built environment; • To ensure that developments are sympathetic and appropriate to the character of the Borough's locally important historical buildings and structures. 	
Draft Green Infrastructure Strategy (February 2022)	RBC Planning Policy	The GI Strategy is currently in draft form but set to be adopted in 2022. It follows the Council commitment in the Rushmoor Local Plan (2019) to produce a GI strategy, and will be used to inform spatial planning and development management decisions in Rushmoor. The Report and evidence base aims to identify key Green Infrastructure in and around the Borough, seeking to protect, harness and sustain the benefits it provides, and identify opportunities for enhancement.	As the draft strategy is in its final stages before being approved, any development or strategy-based decisions should take the GI strategy into account with significant weight. Furthermore, through effective use of the GI Strategy, the Council would be in a position to advance its climate change credentials as well as improving the streetscape for residents, and work to support the local ecology / biodiversity within the Thames Basin Area.s.
WIDER EVIDENCE BASE			
Climate Change Action Plan (November 2020)	RBC	The aim of the Action Plan is to ensure that the Borough meets the target of becoming greener and more sustainable and that the Council's operations become carbon neutral by 2030.	<p>This is a continuation of the early adoption of Rushmoor Borough Council in becoming greener and more energy efficient since the first plan in 2008. This could help to form the basis for a future strategy for the town centre through incorporating the goals and aims of the action plan to help Farnborough become an exemplar town.</p> <p>There is an opportunity for RBC to embrace the concept of 20-minute neighbourhood to create a "20-minute Farnborough" which fundamentally advocates less use of the car with a preference to more sustainable modes of transport. There is a large catchment of residential areas that are accessible on foot to the town centre with a wider area beyond that is accessible for cyclists. This underpins efforts for the town centre to become an accessible multifunctional hub.</p> <p>Achieving a "20-minute Farnborough" will be reliant on maximising accessibility with good quality walking and</p>

			<p>cycling connections, measured in terms of quality of experience, continuity, perceptions of safety and ease of movement.</p> <p>New developments within 20-minute walking and cycling catchments could provide opportunities to capture value to invest in maximising the accessibility of the town centre through new links and enhancing existing links and with investment in public transport infrastructure.</p> <p>Improved footpath and cycle links, in encouraging local trips would support the availability of car parking for visitors who do not have access to other modes.</p> <p>Car Parks include EV charging spaces, which begins a transition towards electrified mobility. In response to questions on utilisation of EV spaces some flexibility in managing the use of these spaces could be considered to ensure use of space is optimised, and in turn to feed into expansion of EV spaces in due course.</p> <p>Other potential measures that may include solar installations, micro wind generation. Parking standards that include EV charging and enhancing green landscaping in context with wider objectives of the updated strategy.</p>
<p>Retail, Leisure and Town Centres Study: Part 2 - Town Centres (June 2015)</p>	<p>RBC</p>	<p>Part 2 of the study provided an audit and review of the existing centres within the two separate authorities, as well as identifying the capacity of centres to accommodate the new town centre development requirements.</p> <p>Key objectives</p>	<p>Produced in context of the wider restructuring of retail although this was prior to the COVID 19 Pandemic and changes to the NPPF and Use Classes Order. Whilst some of the findings and recommendations remain relevant the study will be out of date.</p> <p>The report highlights that Farnborough Town Centre has good levels of comparison shops and floorspace and good provision of mainstream/middle-market multiple retailers. The range and choice of shops is reasonable for the size of the Centre, and there is a good selection of food stores. Farnborough also has a good range of non-retail service uses. However, the proportion of restaurants and cafés is significantly below the national average, whilst fast-food outlets, takeaways, banks and other financial services are significantly above the national average.</p>

			<p>Therefore, the regeneration strategy should take the opportunity to rebalance the unit types and shopping opportunities within the town centre.</p> <p>Now a shift from planning for new floor space to planning to consolidate the supply of floor space and provide a composition of spaces that will best respond to the change. This includes adapting to a receding representation of national retailers that rely on larger, purpose built and more rigid formats to smaller and adaptable forms of provision.</p> <p>It is more likely that a planned response is to favour a consolidation of retail with a focus towards a more local and concentrated independent offer of retail and supporting uses that support an ongoing process of diversification.</p> <p>Changes to national policy will undermine the purpose and objectives of primary and secondary frontage designations although this could be managed e.g. through Article 4 directions which will have to be robustly justified. The Town Centre Strategy could support this justification and could be balanced out by being clear where non-retail could be focussed.</p>
South East Plan: POLICY NRM6: THAMES BASIN HEATHS SPECIAL PROTECTION AREA	Regional Planning Policy	The only remaining policy from the former South East Region wherein, any new residential development which is likely to have a significant effect on the ecological integrity of Thames Basin Heaths Special Protection Area (SPA) will be required to demonstrate that adequate measures are put in place to avoid or mitigate any potential adverse effects. Such measures must be agreed with Natural England.	<p>Being within the Thames Basin Heaths Special Protection Area creates an additional challenge in that all development will need to demonstrate adequate measures to mitigate or avoid any potential adverse effects.</p> <p>However, on the flip side, this challenge could be utilised as an opportunity to boost Farnborough's green credentials, particularly in relation to the Climate Emergency and offer significant biodiversity improvements throughout the town centre.</p>
Hampshire Climate Change Strategy	Hampshire County Council	<p>Key principles are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Carbon Hierarchy • Co-benefits • Proportionate, Affordable, Equitable • Accelerate Where Appropriate 	

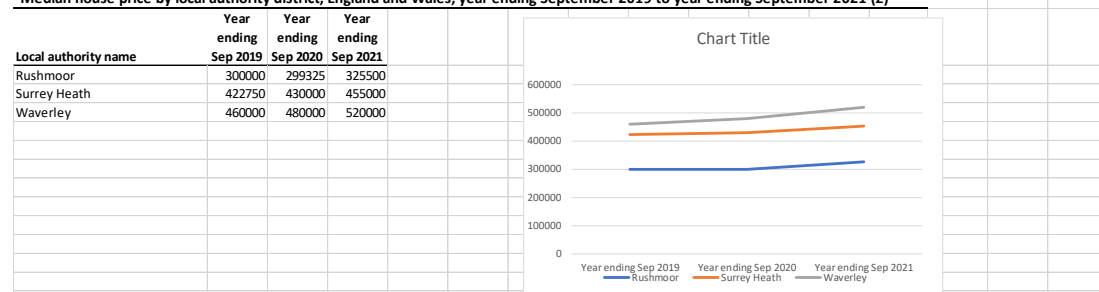
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • National Government - Policy and Funding • Digital and Innovation 	
Hampshire Climate Change Action Plan	Hampshire County Council	Progress report showing the wider goals for Hampshire County in achieving the goals set out in the Hampshire Climate Change Strategy.	Rushmoor Borough Council has created its own Climate Change Action Plan which is in line with the County Climate Change Action Plan.
Rushmoor Draft Cultural Strategy and Action Plan	RBC	Strategy to enable Rushmoor to become a stronger, more innovative and diverse creative society and economy by 2030. Potential for Arts Council funding.	Development of a Cultural Compact – Direct links to developing a programme of activities and events in the town centre and introducing art and culture as part of the programme.
TRANSPORT AND MOVEMENT			
Draft LTP 4	Hampshire County Council	Draft Transport Plan for Hampshire. Little specific on Farnborough. Key objectives of moving to a more people based sustainable transport network align with need for better pedestrian and cycle linkages to and through the town centre.	Opportunity to work with HCC to improve pedestrian and cycle facilities, and possibly to develop a Transport Plan for Farnborough

Appendix 2: Housing Market Analysis

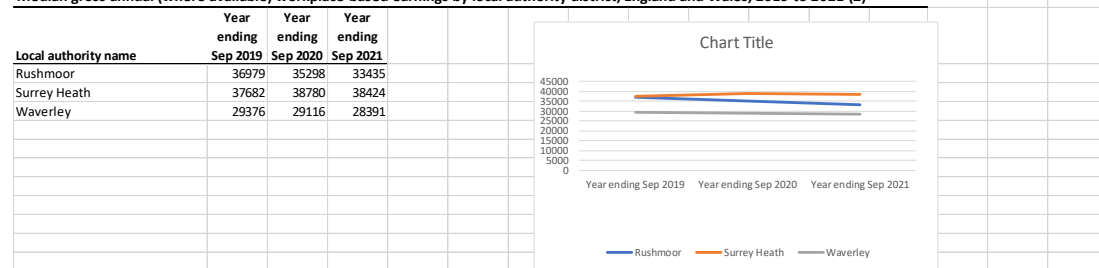
Farnborough Housing Market data

Affordability data Rushmoor

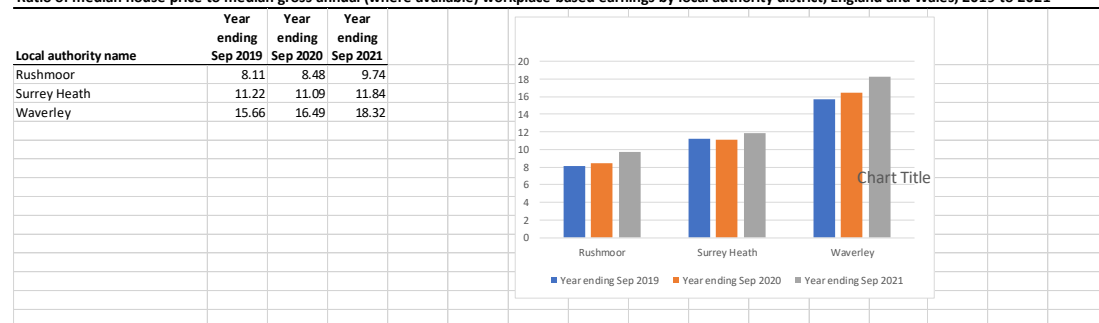
Median house price by local authority district, England and Wales, year ending September 2019 to year ending September 2021 (£)



Median gross annual (where available) workplace-based earnings by local authority district, England and Wales, 2019 to 2021 (£)



Ratio of median house price to median gross annual (where available) workplace-based earnings by local authority district, England and Wales, 2019 to 2021



Source:ONS

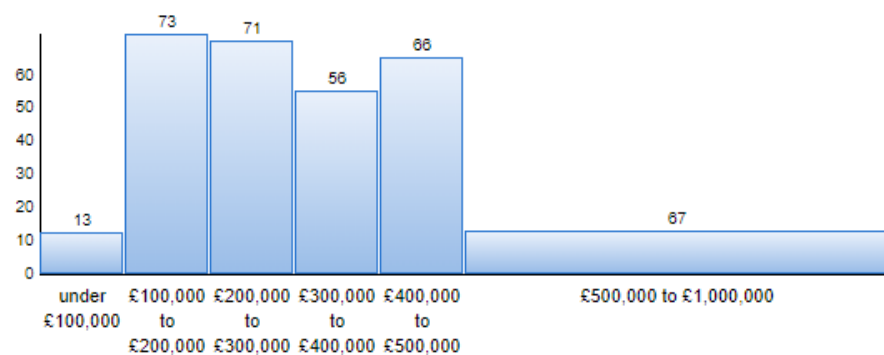
Farnborough

Data collated as at 04 April 2022

Summary of Properties for Sale in Farnborough

Total properties for sale in Farnborough:	348
Properties for sale in Farnborough listed in the last 14 days:	65
Average* price of properties for sale in Farnborough:	£360,617
Median* price:	£343,475
Average time on market (ToM) of unsold property in Farnborough†:	165 days
Median time on market (ToM) of unsold property†:	59 days

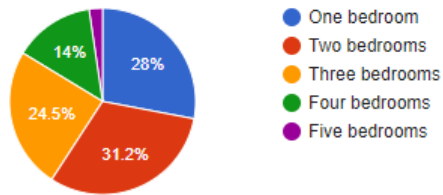
Properties for Sale in Farnborough by Price



Note: The area of each bar not its height represents the number of properties

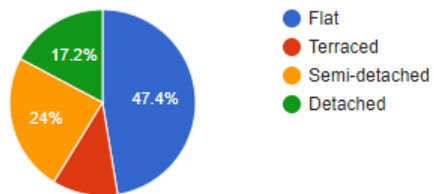
	No. of properties	Average ToM*
under £100,000	13	125 days
£100,000 to £200,000	73	236 days
£200,000 to £300,000	71	259 days
£300,000 to £400,000	56	109 days
£400,000 to £500,000	66	70 days
£500,000 to £1,000,000	67	132 days
over £1,000,000	2	149 days

Property Prices in Farnborough by Number of Bedrooms



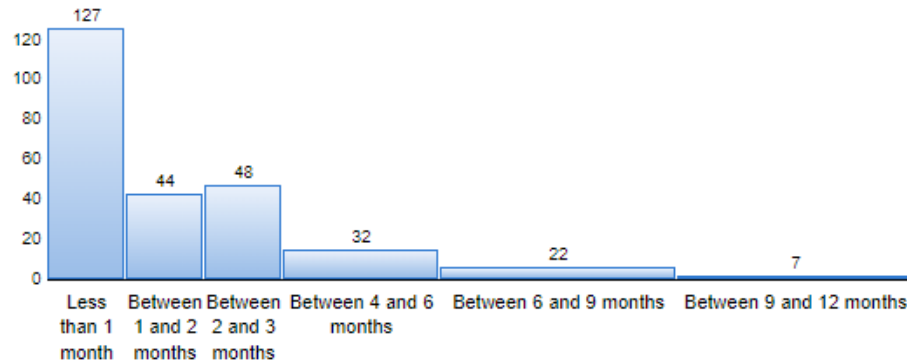
	No. of properties	Average price	Median price	Average ToM
One bedroom	96	£184,810	£177,500	201 days
Two bedrooms	107	£285,021	£275,000	224 days
Three bedrooms	84	£467,450	£450,000	87 days
Four bedrooms	48	£633,958	£600,000	102 days
Five bedrooms	8	£685,625	£700,000	189 days

Property Prices in Farnborough by Type



	No. of properties	Average price	Median price	Average ToM
Flat	146	£226,396	£210,000	222 days
Terraced	35	£371,541	£365,000	106 days
Semi-detached	74	£450,242	£450,000	98 days
Detached	53	£660,189	£625,000	123 days

Properties for Sale in Farnborough by Time on Market



Note: The area of each bar not its height represents the number of properties

	No. of properties
Less than 1 month	127
Between 1 and 2 months	44
Between 2 and 3 months	48
Between 3 and 4 months	18
Between 4 and 6 months	32
Between 6 and 9 months	22
Between 9 and 12 months	7
Between 12 and 18 months	10
More than 18 months	36

Note: The house prices for Farnborough were calculated by sampling over all properties for sale in the Home.co.uk property search within 2 miles of the centre of Farnborough

Appendix 3: Record of Stakeholder consultation

Record of stakeholder consultation on the Farnborough Town Centre - April/May 2022	
The stakeholders listed below were asked their feelings about the town as it is now and how it could be improved /changed. Reponses were either canvassed via remote discussions or received by email.	
What is good about the tow centre/works well?	Leisure - 24 hr gym above Sainsburys, 360 Play Centre good for young families, Vue Cinema Retail - Lower vacancy rate than a lot of towns, introduction of independent international food offer in some retail units. Good for homewares, DIY, garden things, supermarket shopping, pharmac. Transport links - close to motorways/ major road network, airport and railway station. Good parking facilities and bus access. Eclectic mix of usesaround the town - business park, schools and colleges choice of residential and the Abbey.
What is not good /doesn't work?	Poor appearance/impression no heart to the town. Although streets pedestrianised streets - not used enough Needs a better range of retailers/ restaurants not a good enough variety of quality shops or eateries, and there is no particular night-time economy apart from Wetherspoons and a couple of takeaways. Kingsmead in particular needs to look so dated – has no appeal and is a an eyesore with the dark red brick and adjoining car-park. Poor linkages makes town centre difficult to navigate. Poor connectivity to train station and business park Cold and lacks warmth, lack of green space Town centre after dark when things are closed can be quite deserted and intimidating. Lack of things to do for all age groups. Poor youth, health/well being facilities No visitor appeal - viewed as a transit location
What needs to be improved/ changed?	Approaches gateways - town needs arrival points. Better signposting. Provision of community/education space. Over dependency on car/ too many open car parks. Introduce EV charging points. Introduction of branding and identity - emphasis on heritage and culture Residents choosing to spend their money and leisure time elsewhere eg Farnham, Guilford, Woking and Reading. Need more choice of where to shop eat and stay if visiting. Demolition/facelifting of shopping centres Farnborough needs a USP and new infrastrucurebuildings should champion green living/working and travel. Safe walking/cycling routes to/from the station via the town centre (25min walk from exhibition centre to station) Pick up/drop off points for rental bikes or scooters in the town centre to encourage people to travel sustainably to the station/exhibition centre/college /business park. Introduce a diverse events calendar - live music, markets/pop up shops, cultural events with comedy/ story telling, family fun days. Create oportunities for pop up events - dedicated events area in town centre in a vacnt unit to promote larger events at the Exhibition Centre. Explore opps for events banners in town and around town centre. Large Gaming market in Farnborough should be developed (Educational gaming expo scheduled for November 2022). Gaming could create destination appeal and build on sector presence. Skateboarding - right facility could make positive impact and encourage younger demographic. New hotel to drive competition Opportunity to walk/cycle to town centre - more active travel
Developing Themes	
Accessibility	Linkages navigation wayfinding, green travel
Destination appeal	Greater choice - reasons to stay retail/ leisure offer/ events. Appealing to a wider demogrphic
Branding	Heritage (aviation links) cultural offer recognisable at Farnborough
Spaces & Places	Gateways, public space squares, green space for events. Atrative walking routes, quality buildings
Health and Wellbeing	
List of stakeholder consultees	
Policy and Project Advisory Board	
Councillor Munro	
Erin Edwards Interim - Town Centre Manager	
Carlo Zoccali - Farnborough International Exhibition Centre	
Emma Meredith - Regeneration and Development Manager HCC	
Tim Martienssen Asset Management and OPE Partnership HCC	
Emma Noyce - Assistant Director, Culture and Information Services HCC	
Bellway Homes	
Bob Gentry - Farnborough Air Sciences Trust	
Others were invited but did not respond	

Appendix 4: Views of DLA Young planners following study visit to Camberley, Aldershot, Farnham and Farnborough.

BRIEFING NOTE

FARNBOROUGH SITE VISIT

APRIL 2022

CONTEXT

A site visit was conducted by three assistant planners aged between 22-27, of whom only one had previously been to Farnborough or the surrounding towns. The purpose of the site visit was to consider the initial impression of the town, as well as what may be needed to attract younger people to visit again.

As part of the site visit, and to gain a greater understanding of the context of the town, three additional urban centres were visited. These towns were selected based on their proximity to Farnborough and being similar in size and role, the towns were Camberley, Aldershot and Farnham. Whilst reviewing the towns, we considered what each offer to residents in their immediate and wider catchment, how each supports the local and wider economy and if there is an identifiable role which Farnborough could use to stand out from the crowd.

Camberley

What do you like	What do you dislike	Opportunities/Development	What could be replicated
<p>There are small activity areas for young children within The Square, which gave the shopping centre a sense of vibrancy and life.</p> <p>As you walk through The Square, you can still see the history of the shopping centre, however small updates have been provided which</p>	<p>Active frontages along the main spine were limited to food/drink with retail mostly confined to the indoor centres.</p>	<p>At this point it was felt that the town centre was in a very strong position having been continuously updated since the millennium.</p>	<p>The town centre has been regenerated over the past decade but has managed to ensure that the Highstreet is connected to The Atrium through the subtle modernisation of The Square. Furthermore, the refurbishment of Park St, High Street was then also refurbished in a similar design to</p>

<p>connect it to the wider redevelopment of the town centre.</p> <p>Significant amount of parking is available however this is does not dominate the street scene as it is provided through.</p> <p>The town provided a clear sense of direction and arrival.</p>			<p>link the two. This is the same for the redevelopment of Princess Way.</p> <p>Utilising available office space as shared office space would attract individuals to come into the town more frequently. They can offer meeting spaces to those who work from home which has increased since covid, and don't require monthly payments.</p> <p>Park St is still accessible to certain vehicles, however it has been design for pedestrians, by placing street furniture in such a way as to act as car management tools.</p>
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Aldershot

What do you like	What do you dislike	Opportunities/Development	What could be replicated
<p>The town centre and wider town provides a strong connection to its military history throughout the public realm. The connection is not overbearing nor cheap in its vision but clearly shows a sense of local pride.</p> <p>Princes Green was a good space and showed a sense of pride in the town. Lovely flowerbeds and litter free area.</p>	<p>Westgate appears to be a reasonably new addition to the town centre, however it already shows signs of wear and neglect, including broken seating and empty units. Although the area creates a pleasant setting it feels disconnected from the rest of the town.</p> <p>Signs of economic decline in the limited variety in town centre offer, vacant/derelict properties and lack of public realm maintenance.</p>	<p>The opportunities provided by the current redevelopment at Union Street could offer significant regeneration potential.-</p> <p>Potential to use Princes Green area as an events space.</p>	<p>Although outside of current proposals Farnborough town centre could look to replicate the proposed redevelopment of The Galleries, both towns are centred around indoor shopping centres which appear dated and somewhat shabby. The opportunity to open Princes Meads to create a new outdoor shopping area could improve the connection between the Queens Mead as it would elongate the Highstreet.</p>

	<p>The town centre has provided communal herb gardens along Union Street which have not been maintained and appear to have become secondary waste bins.</p>		
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Farnham

What do you like	What do you dislike	Opportunities/Development	What could be replicated
<p>The town centre has maintained the historic buildings as much as it can, including the retention of small yards and courtyards in which pedestrians can walk through as well as shop.</p> <p>The small retail units provided along Castle Street act as a catalyst for small business to operate within the town centre. The design of the buildings is in keeping with the wider aesthetic of the town centre.</p> <p>Integration of local park with the town centre (with playful direction for children).</p>	<p>There is significant congestion that always encircles the town centre, with crossing points appearing to be more focused on vehicles, as they took a significant amount of time to change.</p>	<p>The provision of new retail units and a cinema in Farnham will lead to less of a reason for residents to venture from the more idyllic town</p>	<p>Farnham has implemented temporary road alterations to widen footpaths throughout the town centre. In pre-empting the alteration of the town centre roadways, it could prove beneficial to implement a similar approach in Farnborough to consider actual desire lines for cyclists and pedestrians rather than being reliant on models.</p> <p>Small retail units could be provided along Queensmead, wherein they could be used as pop-up shops or cheaper rented units for small businesses.</p>

Farnborough

What do you like	What do you dislike	Opportunities/Development
<p>The town centre feels spacious although dated, but offers</p> <p>The community centre/library was in a great position and well used at the time of the visit, although dated it provided a strong sense of community within the town.</p> <p>The skatepark was also use by a large number of people, this should either be expanded or maintained at the same size to continue to provided active leisure for the large number of 10-18 year olds in the town.</p>	<p>The Street scene is dominated by the car, whether the cars are in transit or parked. This is emphasised through the large amount of access gained through service yards as well as the car parks around the town centre, and dual carriageways which create a barrier to entry.</p> <p>Externally the most recent development (The Meads) felt somewhat dated and dirty whereas the brick-built buildings had aged more graciously and offer more of a sense of timelessness. Internally the newer development felt bland and underutilised as it does not form part of the natural flow of pedestrian traffic, with most shoppers remaining on Queensmead rather than going into The Meads unless for a specific purpose.</p> <p>The town centre is disconnected from the wider town and each of the meads, particularly due to the lack of cohesive design.</p> <p>Improvements are needed to the activities within the town centre, at the time of visiting there was the Skatepark, Cinema or Arcade, with the indoor go-carting located to the south of the retail park, but nothing else which could be enjoyed on a spur of the moment decision.</p> <p>Although a good selection of fast-food operators, there are limited choices for dining-</p>	<p>There is currently unused space behind hording near to Sainsburys, this could be utilised as additional green space within the town centre. There is currently only one green space, which is blocked from view by surrounding buildings, and has significantly limited links to the wider town.</p> <p>There is poor connectivity both within the town centre and to the wider town. The town centre is separated by dual carriageways and main roads which are too busy and inaccessible to pedestrians, and many are physical blocked off by fencing. As part of the Town centre regeneration strategy, active travel should be prioritised, including safe and accessible pedestrian, and cycling routes. Currently no cohesive network, which is easy to follow, is available within the town centre to wider areas. Therefore, the opportunity should be taken to develop a wholistic approach to the town centre, to include, either as a separate report or as a section within the main document, a town wide active travel network.</p> <p>The town centre already has one multistorey carpark, which sets the precedent for others to be provided, these would lessen the amount of space required for parking currently and could be utilised as mobility hubs or transport interchanges.</p>

	in, with only a Wetherspoons, Sticky Sisters or Prezzo within the town centre.	
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CONCLUSION

Farnborough Town centre suffers from several key issues which need to be addressed in order to attract those aged 16-29, those key issues are the poor retail offering, the poor restaurant offering and the limited leisure options. The opportunity for regeneration is significant, particularly given the limited cohesion of the three shopping areas within the town centre, and the potential to create link between each to draw shoppers into each area, rather than visiting the main supermarket on either side and not venturing further into town.

SW/RBC001

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