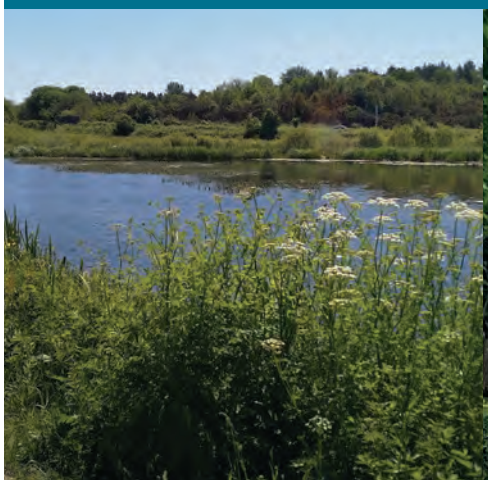
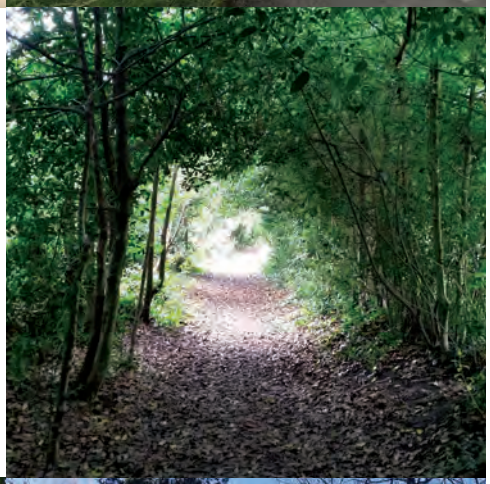
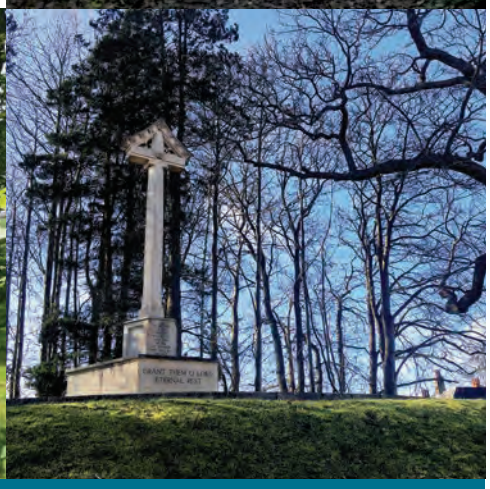
Rushmoor Local Plan



A Green Infrastructure Strategy for Rushmoor

July 2022



RUSHMOOR BOROUGH COUNCIL

Contents

Executive Summary

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Vision

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

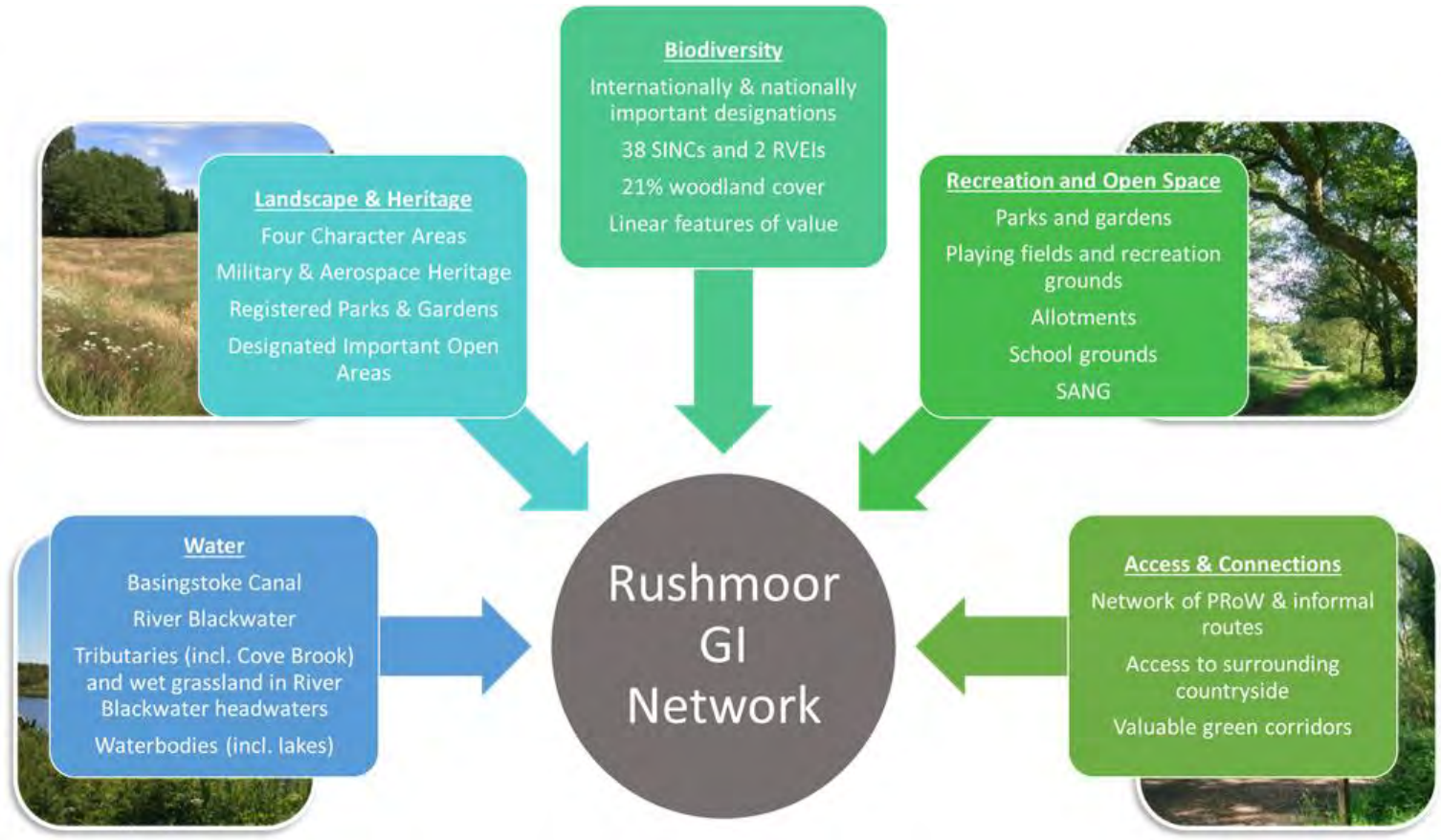
Objectives

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

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

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

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



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

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

- The need to mitigate and adapt to the potential impacts of climate change and to align with and support Rushmoor's Climate Change Action Plan and emerging Climate Change Strategy.
- The need to consider the emerging requirements of the Environment Act 2021.
- The need to protect the existing Green Infrastructure network.
- The need to ensure that biodiversity enhancements have regard to the River Blackwater Biodiversity Opportunity Area and the contiguous nature of Thames Basin Heaths and Thames Basin Lowlands across the Surrey/Hampshire borders, to ensure ecological connectivity and function across boundaries.
- Scope to improve and promote the walking and cycling network in partnership with Hampshire County Council.
- Scope to increase physical activity and overall improvement to the health and wellbeing of the local population.
- The need to improve the state of the natural environment, including improvements to air quality, tackling noise issues and enhancing biodiversity across the Borough.
- The need to protect, enhance and reflect local character.
- The need to improve ecological connectivity across the Borough, reduce isolation and address the vulnerability of our biodiversity to pressure from climate change and land use.
- The need to improve access and reduce the impact of physical or perceived barriers to sustainable movement across the Borough.
- The need to ensure the long-term sustainability of green infrastructure assets and take into account maintenance and management.
- Scope to inspire and educate people to value and care for their local Green Infrastructure Network.

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

Broad Priorities

- ⇨ Increase opportunities for people to connect with nature.
- ⇨ Identify opportunities and prioritise locations for enhancing biodiversity.
- ⇨ Identify opportunities to improve wildlife corridors and connections between the Borough's ecological assets.
- ⇨ Identify need and prioritise locations for new trees, hedgerows and woodland.
- ⇨ Deliver green infrastructure that protects and enhances important views and local landscape character.

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

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

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

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

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

Emerging Process Projects

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

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

Emerging Geographical Projects

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

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

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

1. Introduction

Introduction to the Strategy

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

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

Definition of Green Infrastructure

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

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

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

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

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

What can Green Infrastructure include?

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

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

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

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

Benefits of Green Infrastructure

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

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

[2] https://www.gov.uk/guidance/natural-environment

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

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

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

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

Aim of the Strategy

1.12 The overall aim of the Strategy is to:

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

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

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

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

Purpose of the Strategy

1.14 The purpose of the Green Infrastructure Strategy:

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

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

Approach to the Strategy

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

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

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

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

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

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

Stage 3 - Review assets by theme

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

The following themes have been identified:

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

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

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

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

Stage 5 - Identifying priorities and projects

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

2. Vision and Objectives

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

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

Vision Statement

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

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

Objectives

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

3. Review of Relevant Policies, Strategies and Evidence

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

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

National Legislation, Policy and Guidance

25 Year Environment Plan

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

Environment Act 2021

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

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

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

Agriculture Act 2020

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

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)

3.6 The National Planning Policy Framework states that:

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

3.7 It goes on to say that:

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

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

3.9 It sets out that plans should:

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

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

Natural Capital Approach Guidance

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

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

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

Natural England Green Infrastructure Framework

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

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

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

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

Regional Policy and Guidance

South East Plan

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

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

TBH SPA Delivery Framework 2009

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

South East Green Infrastructure Framework

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

Local Policy

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

Policy NE1 – Thames Basin Heaths Special Protection Area

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

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

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

Policy NE2 – Green Infrastructure

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

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

3.28 The Policy itself requires that development:

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

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

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

Policy NE4 – Biodiversity

3.29 The policy states that:

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

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

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

Rushmoor Strategies and Evidence

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

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

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

- ⇨ Opportunities for Suitable Alternative Natural Greenspace (SANG), including SANG networks, linear SANG and/or smaller SANG identified through the HRSH SPA Mitigation Project and supported by Natural England's updated guidelines
- ⇨ Recommendation that a comprehensive review of available sites is undertaken to explore opportunities for SANG, including the opportunities for SANG networks, linear SANG and/or smaller SANG (potential project)
- ⇨ A need to ensure the Strategy supports the Important Open Area and Green Corridor designations in the Rushmoor Local Plan
- ⇨ Opportunities to enhance Rushmoor's existing network of open spaces, based on the identified deficiencies identified in the Rushmoor Open Space, Sport and Recreation Study 2014 (where the findings are still considered relevant)
- ⇨ Opportunities to identify where there can be an increase in access to existing open spaces (e.g. school playing pitches)
- ⇨ A need for the Strategy to align with and support Rushmoor's Climate Change Action Plan and emerging Climate Change Strategy.
- ⇨ Opportunities to deliver or support any actions identified in the Rushmoor Biodiversity Action Plan

⇨ Opportunities to improve connections with the Green Infrastructure being delivered as part of the Wellesley development.

Adjoining Authority Evidence and Strategies

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Other Relevant Evidence and Strategies

3.34 The following project reports, strategies and evidence prepared by other organisations, which are considered relevant to Rushmoor, formed part of the review (more detail is provided in Appendix 2):

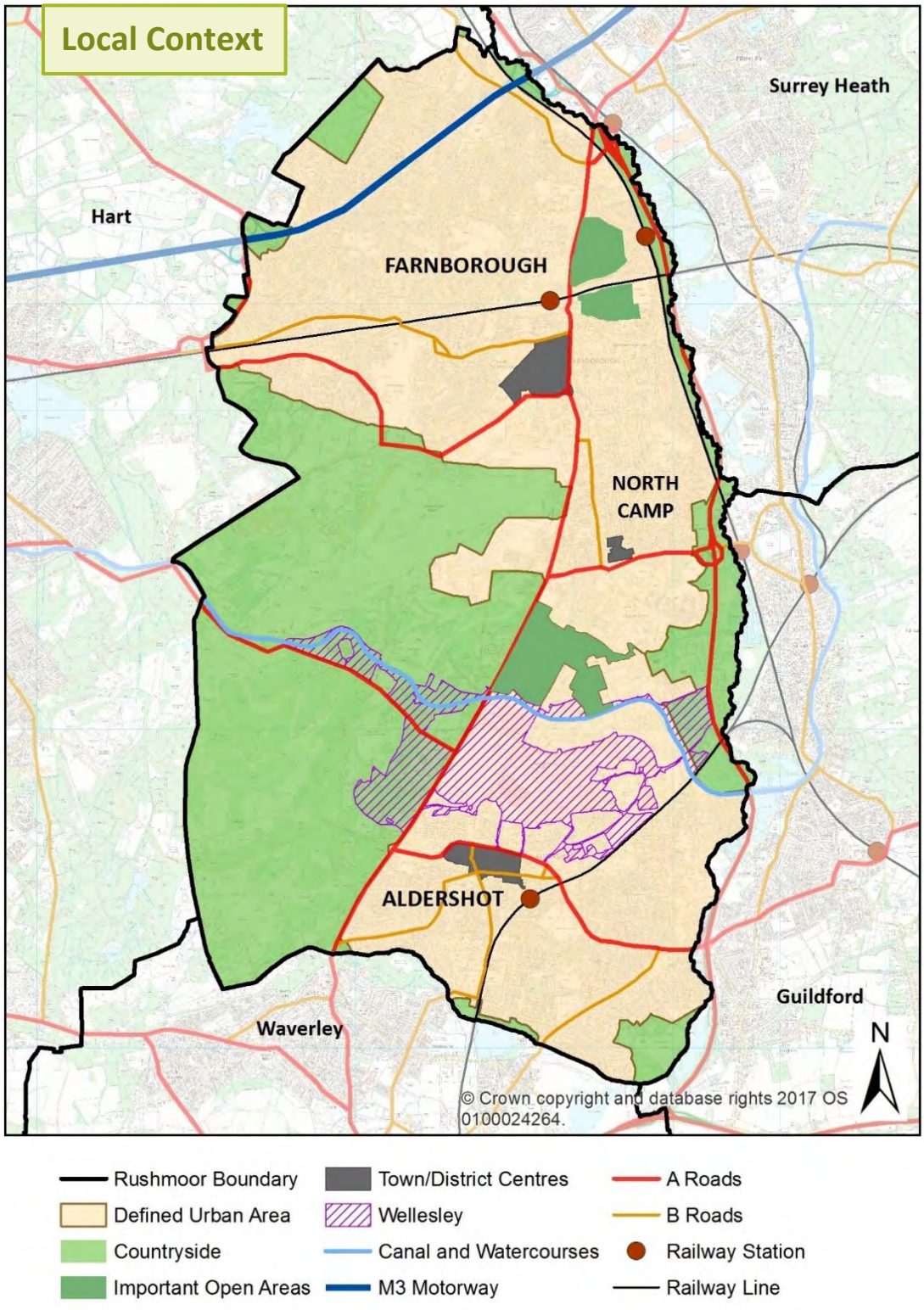
- Hampshire Strategic Infrastructure Statement (HSIS) (April 2019)
- Hampshire Cycling Strategy 2015
- Hampshire Walking Strategy 2016

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

Summary of Issues and Opportunities Identified through the review of other relevant evidence and strategies

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

4. Local Context



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

People

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

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

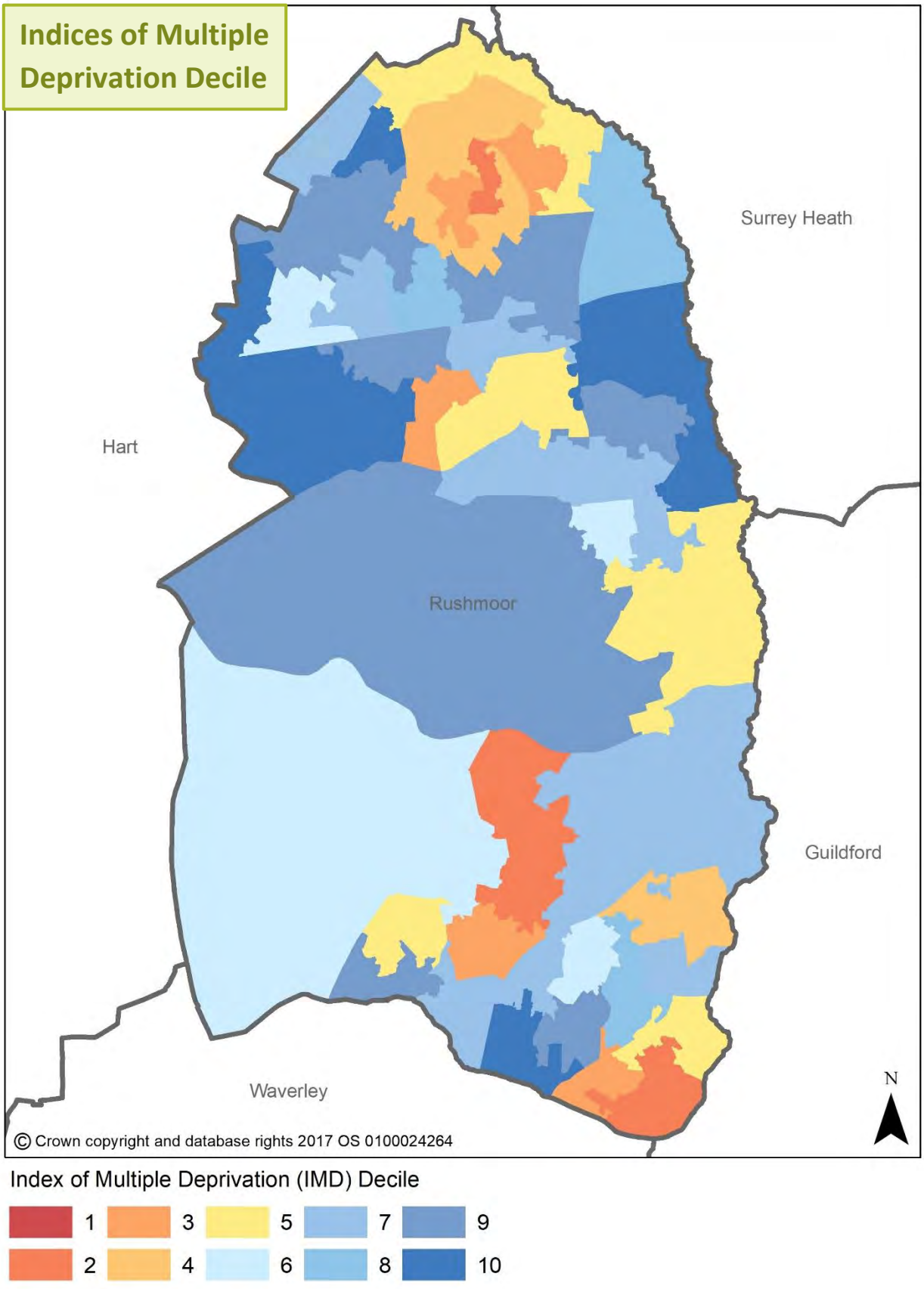
4.3 Rushmoor has the same proportion of White: English/Welsh/Scottish/Northern Irish/British residents (80.5%) as the national average. However, since 2001, the Rushmoor population has become more ethnically diverse. This is partly due to an increase in Nepali residents in the area. The Nepali community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

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

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

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

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



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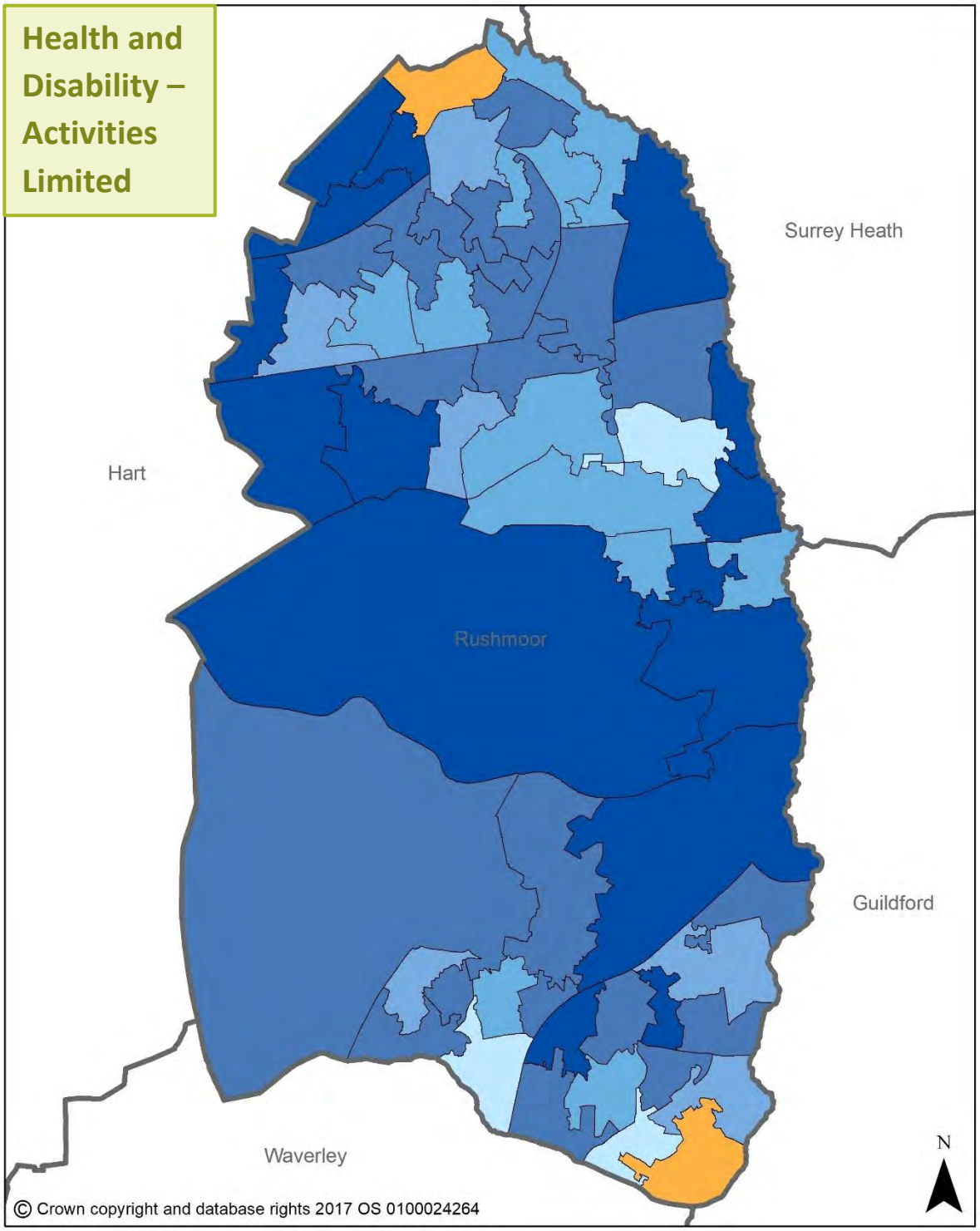
4.6 The Rushmoor Health and Wellbeing Partnership aims to improve health outcomes and reduce health inequalities within Rushmoor. Informed by the latest data and findings from Public Health England and the Hampshire Health and Well-Being Board, its priorities are focused around the issues of mental health,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

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

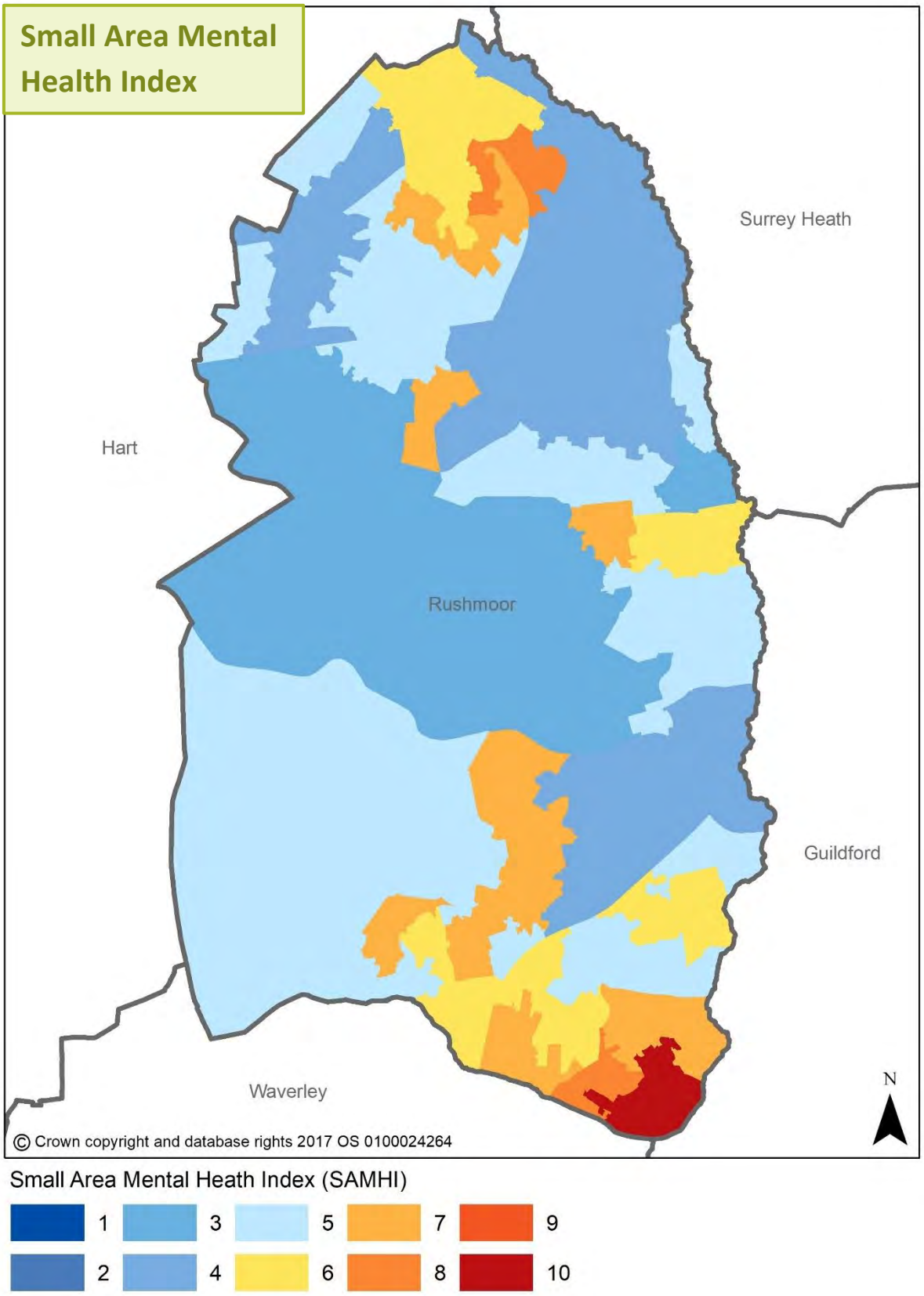
4.8 As part of recently published data, Natural England have classified LSOAs based on the proportion of residents with long-term health problems and disabilities which limit activities. This identifies areas to the south of Aldershot, the Farnborough Park area and north of Farnborough (west of Fernhill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

Health and Disability – Activities Limited



Health and Disability - Activities Limited a Lot

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



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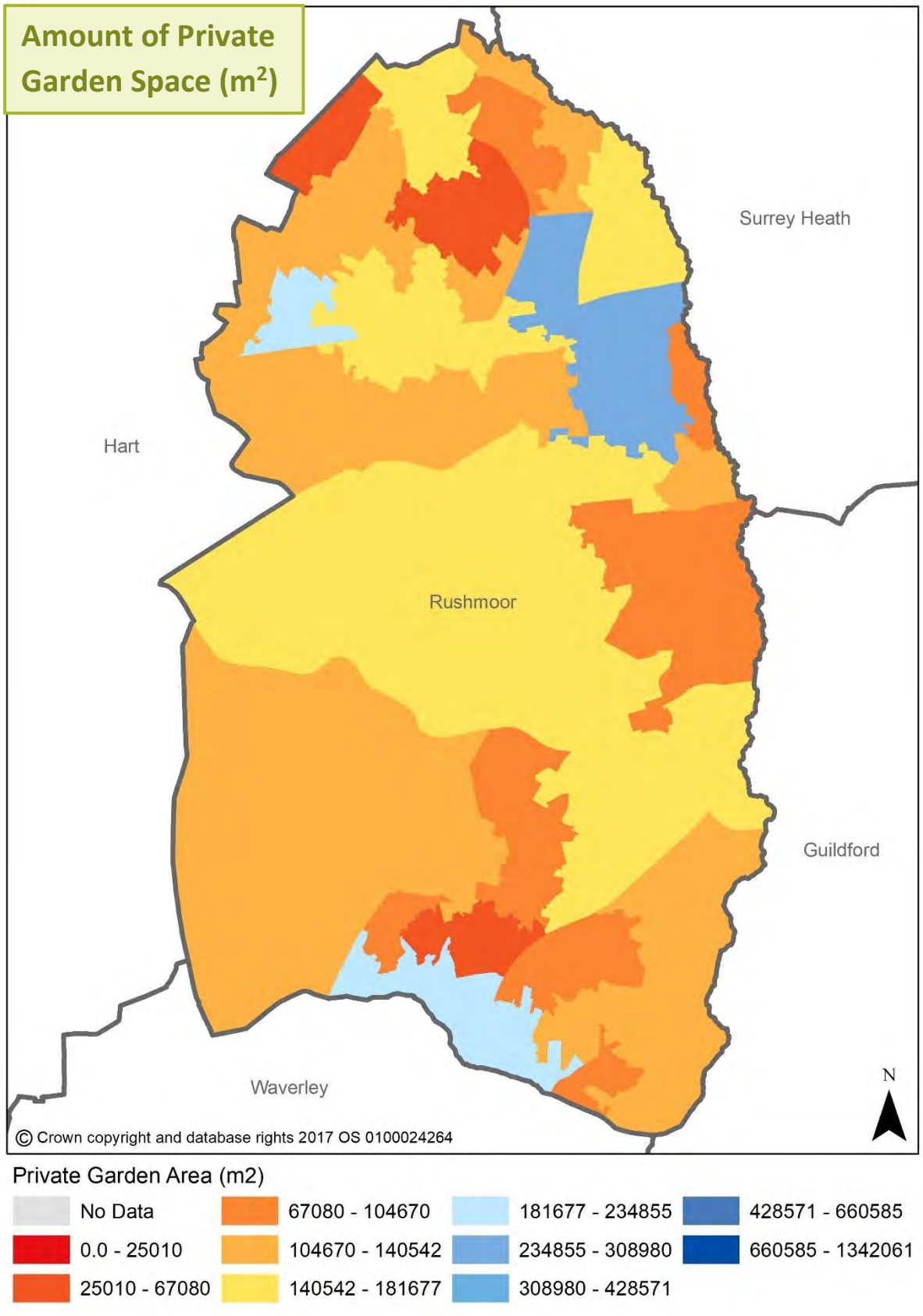
4.9 Natural England Green Infrastructure mapping gives an indication of the extent of private gardens across the Borough and identifies that the following areas have more limited access to gardens:

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



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Place

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

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

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

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

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

Nature

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

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

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

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

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

5. Green Infrastructure by Theme

Landscape and Heritage

Introduction

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

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

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

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

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

Assets within and around the Borough

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

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

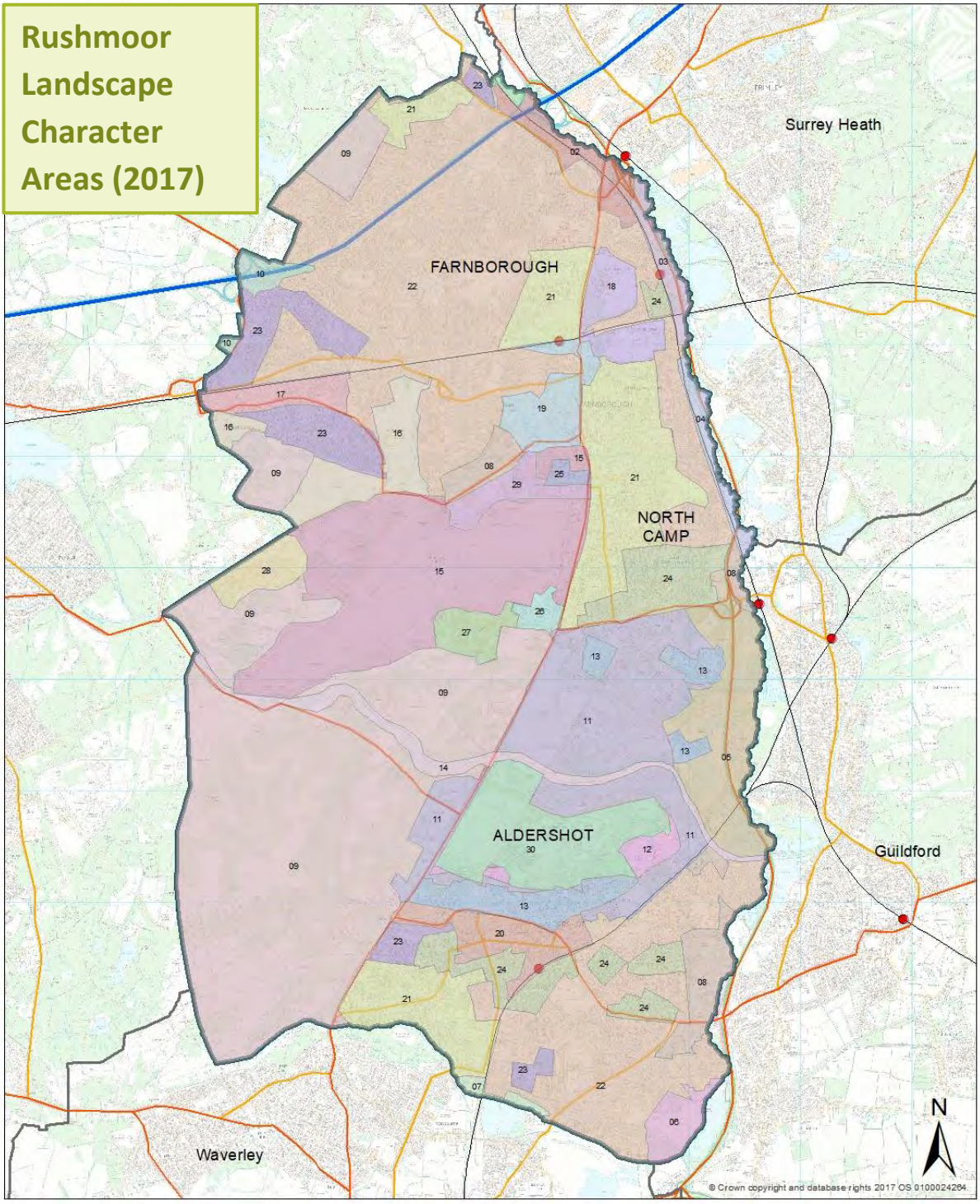
5.7 A Borough wide assessment was undertaken by RPS Watson (1994), which was used to confirm details such as the boundary between the built-up area and important open spaces. This study identified that the three landscape types identified in the "The Hampshire Landscape' (1993) could be sub-divided into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

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

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

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

Rushmoor Landscape Character Areas (2017)



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

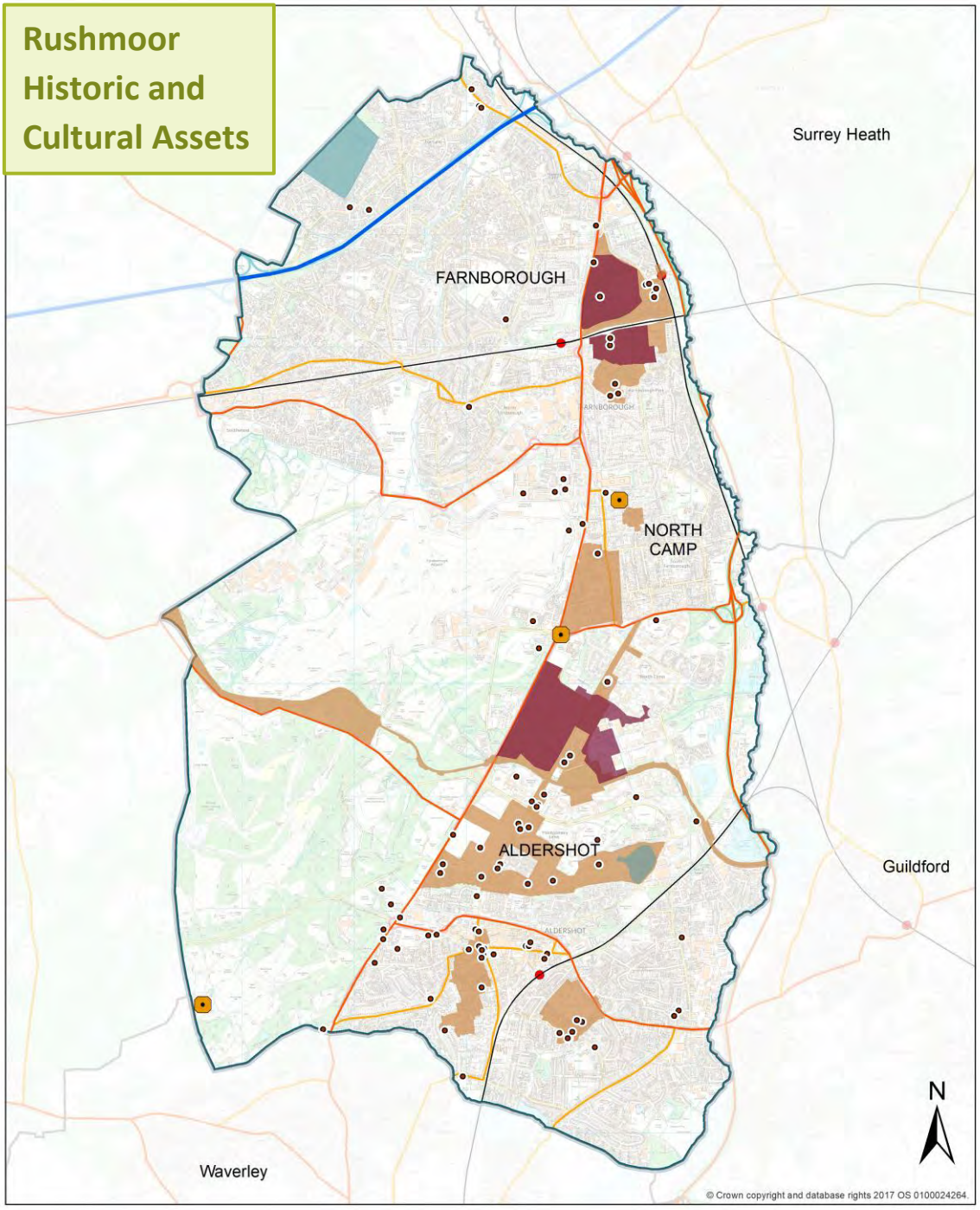
5.11 The historic identity of the area is traditionally attributed to three significant characteristics of the area:

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

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

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

Rushmoor Historic and Cultural Assets



Schedule Ancient Monuments
Listed Buildings
Important Open Areas
Historic Parks and Gardens
Conservation Areas

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

Strengths and Opportunities

- ⇨ Opportunities to enhance or restore historic links between and improve access to heritage assets
- ⇨ Opportunities to enhance the setting of heritage assets
- ⇨ Opportunities to restore historic landscape features (e.g. the restoration of hedgerows as part of Southwood and Cove Brook Floodplain Enhancement Project)

Weaknesses and Threats

- ⇨ Need to reflect local character
- ⇨ Hedgerow removal
- ⇨ Potential for fragmentation of existing green spaces

Biodiversity

Introduction

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

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

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

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

Assets within and around the Borough

National Character Areas

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

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

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

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

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

- Manage and create woodlands and highway verges to intercept run-off and filter pollutants.
- Within the heavily developed floodplains of the Blackwater Valley, adapt the urban environment to manage floodwaters, and restore and enhance modified watercourses.
- Management of woodlands to enhance biodiversity, manage for timber and other ecosystem services such as soil and water conservation.
- Provide good quality green infrastructure (incorporating commons, woodlands and restored gravel pits) to seek benefits for public engagement, wildlife, water quality, flood amelioration and climate regulation.

5.21 The southern areas of Aldershot fall within and adjacent to National Character Area 114 'Thames Basin Lowlands' which is a low lying plain within the London Basin stretching from South Norwood in the East to Hale on the Surrey/Hampshire border in the west.

5.22 The NCA identifies key characteristics as:

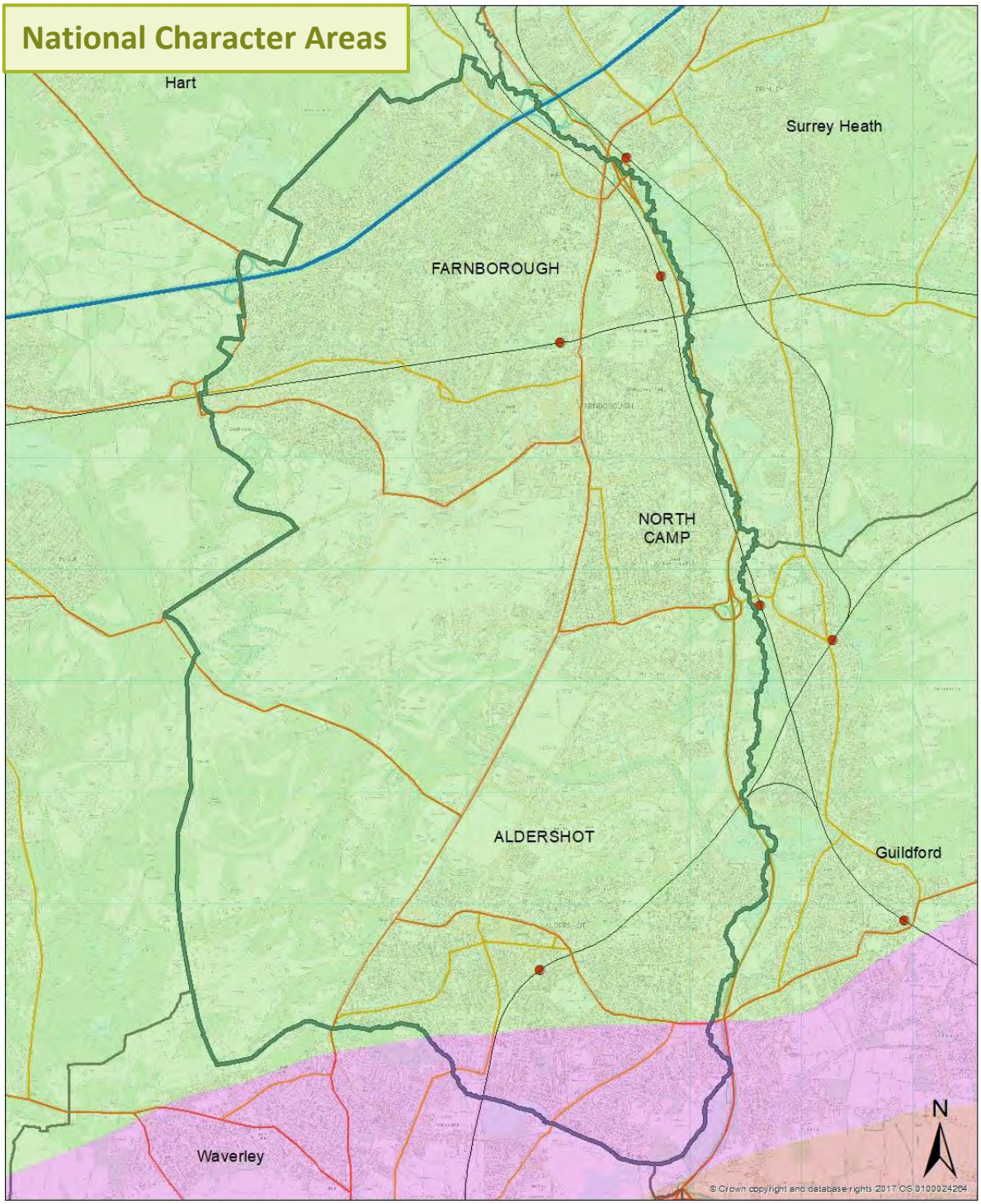
- Geology largely London Clay and river gravels forming gently undulating valleys with broad flat valley plains.
- Modified and straightened rivers marked by riparian woodlands and meadows in places.
- Land use primarily farmland, woodland and commons, increasing fragmented by urban development and numerous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

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

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

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

National Character Areas



North Downs
Thames Basin Heaths
Thames Basin Lowlands
Rushmoor Boundary
Rail_Station
Rail_Line
B_Road
A_Road
Motorways

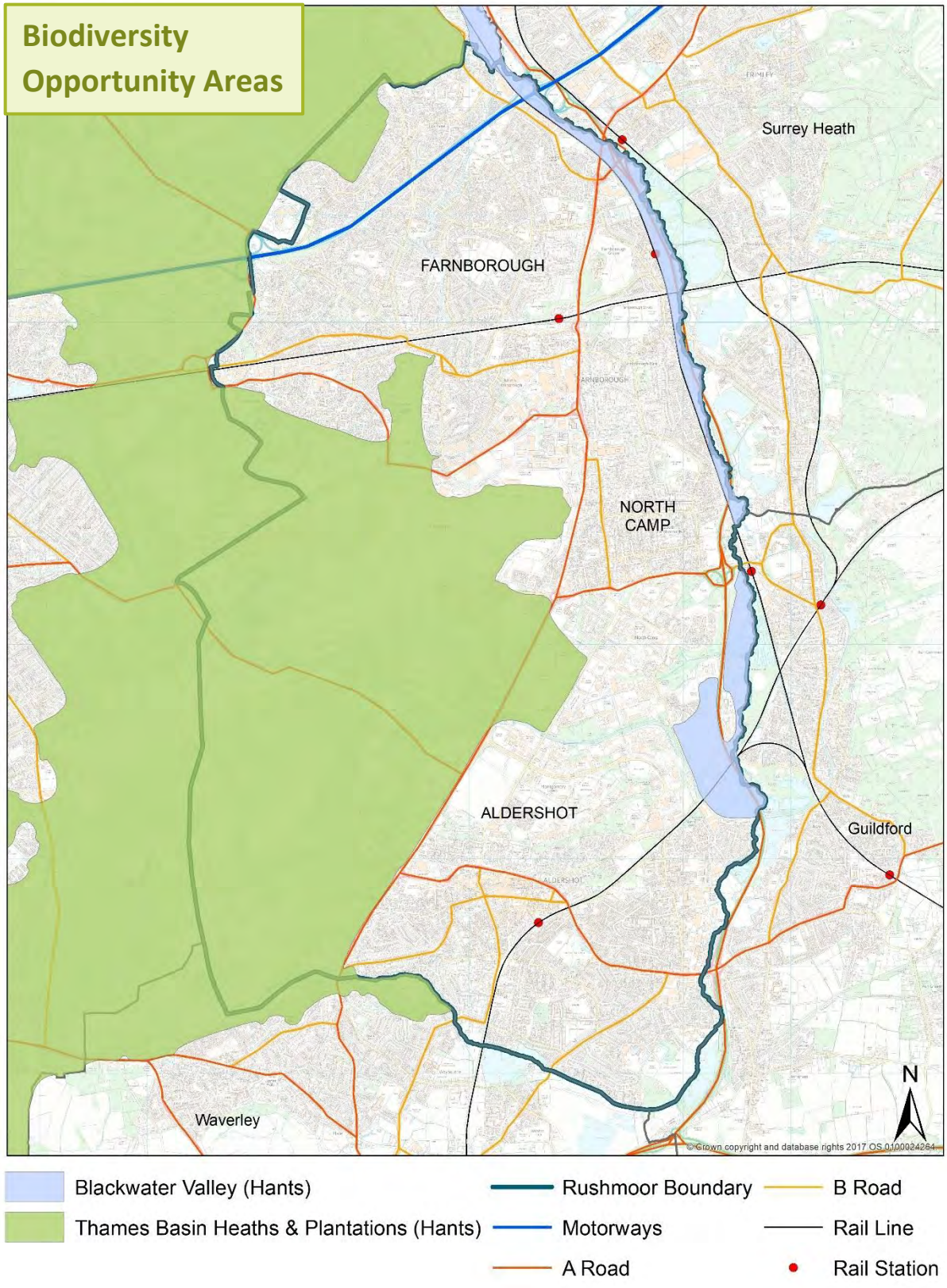
Biodiversity Opportunity Areas

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

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

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

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


Biodiversity Opportunity Areas
Surrey Heath
FARNBOROUGH
NORTH CAMP
ALDERSHOT
Guildford
Waverley
N
© Crown copyright and database rights 2017 OS 0100024264
Blackwater Valley (Hants)
Thames Basin Heaths & Plantations (Hants)
Rushmoor Boundary
Motorways
A Road
B Road
Rail Line
Rail Station

Statutorily Protected Habitats

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

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

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

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

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

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

5.33 Foxlease and Ancells Meadows SSSI is a fragmented site of which only one compartment is within Rushmoor Borough, to the west of Farnborough near the M3 4a junction. The rest of the SSSI extends west into Hart District. The SSSI is designated for it's mosaic of acid grassland, wet heath and mire plant communities, hosting an impressive and important

diversity of wetland grassland species. Natural England have assessed the condition status of this SSSI as being in 'unfavourable – recovering' status over 95% of the site. Nearly 5% continues to decline in ecological quality.

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

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

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

Non-statutory Protected Sites

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

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

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

RVEI - Shoe Lane	RVEI - A325 Slip to Alison's Road

P340 Shoe Lane, Aldershot

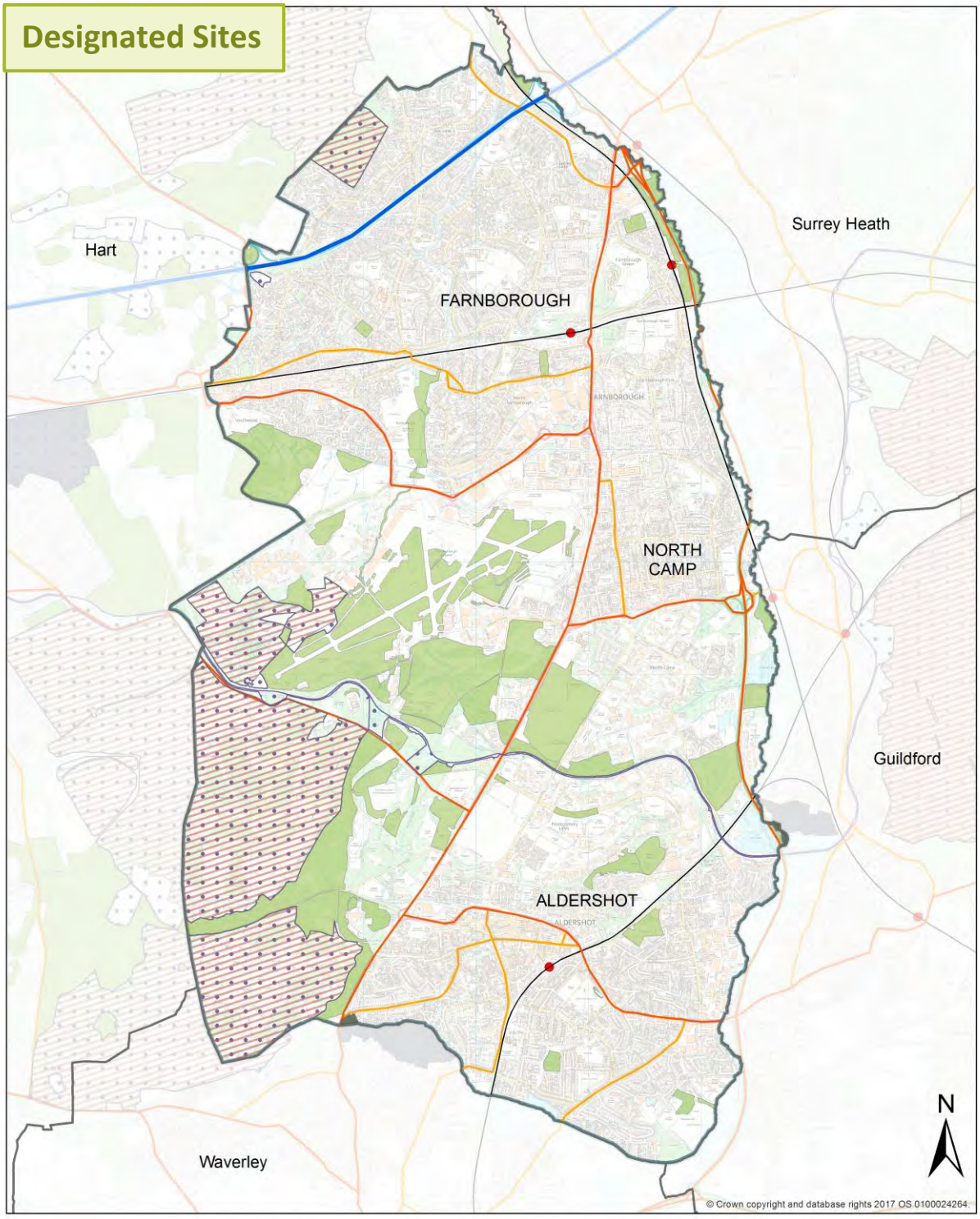
A325 Slip to Alison's Road

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

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

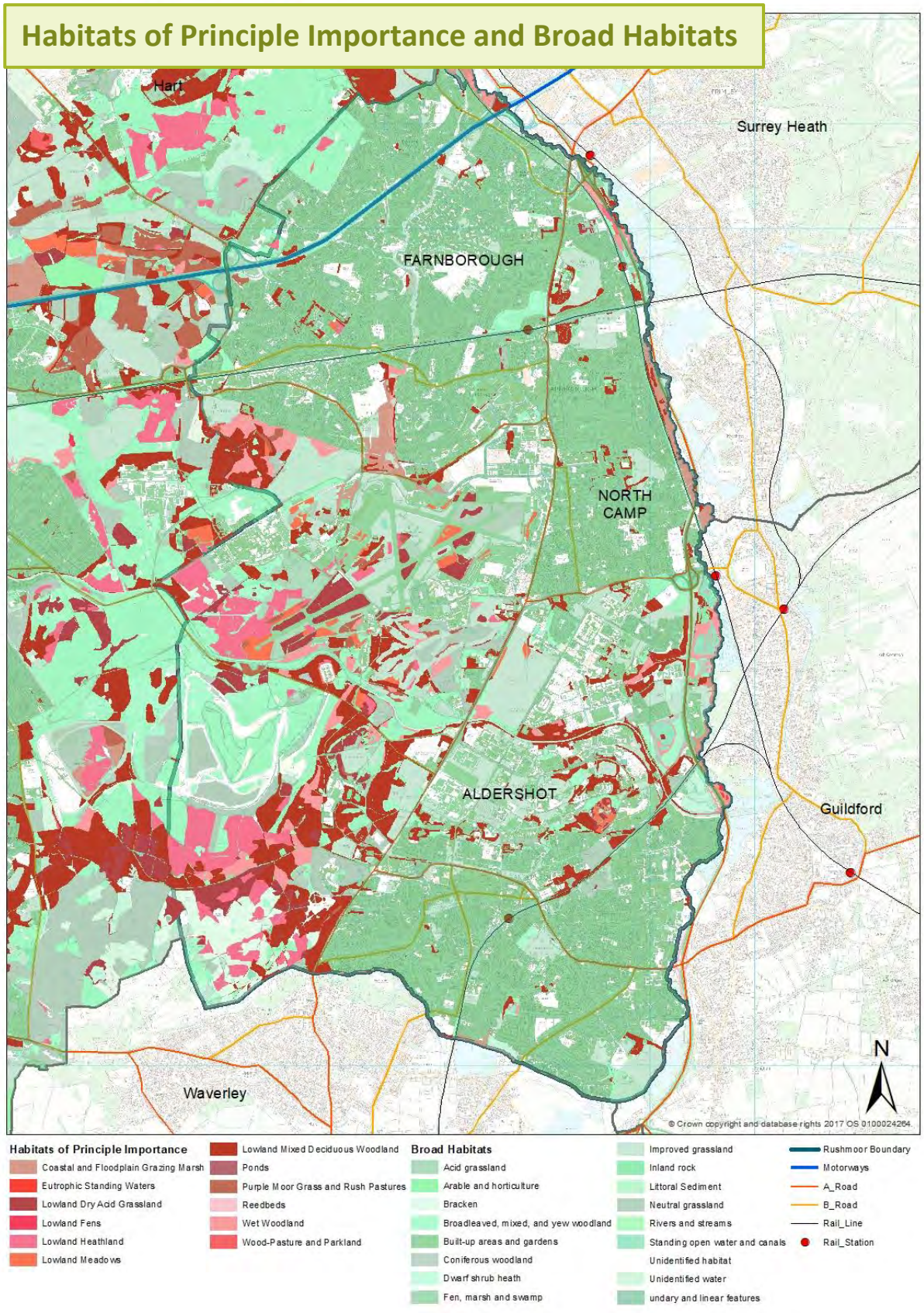
‘Habitat of Principle Importance’ status are present within protected sites. However, this leaves 33% of our most valuable habitats unprotected and vulnerable to loss or deterioration.

Designated Sites



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

Conservation Importance (SNCIs) in Surrey.

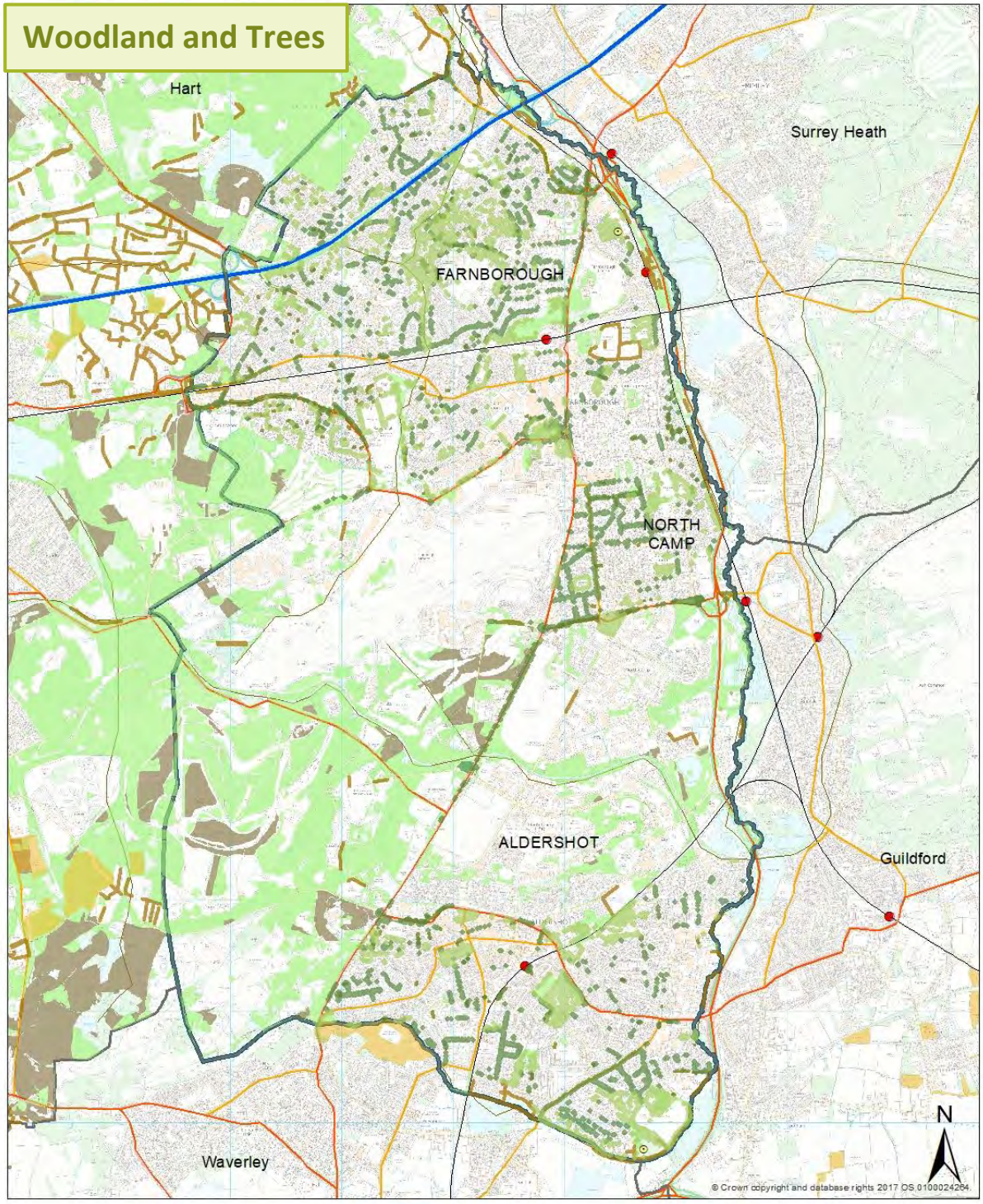


Woodland

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

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

Woodland and Trees



Wildlife infrastructure corridors

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

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

Ecosystem services

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

- Our watercourses and associated wetlands which can filter and reduce pollutants, regulating water quality, enabling them to function appropriately within their natural floodplains regulates water quantity, reducing risk of flooding.
- Management of our woodland and wooded heathlands can produce raw materials in the form of timber. Trees can influence the availability of water and help regulate air quality, reducing aerial pollutants. Their shade in our towns can help with urban cooling. Their growth stores carbon helping to regulate our climate.
- Our wildflower meadows and grassland habitats provide nectar and pollen sources for pollinators, essential for food production and plant diversity.
- Green open spaces provide places for education, relaxation, exercise and recreation. Access to nature is proven to enhance our physical and mental well-being.

Strengths and Opportunities

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

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

Weaknesses and Threats

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

Water

Introduction

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

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

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

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

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

Assets within and around the Borough

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

- River Blackwater (Aldershot to Cove Brook confluence at Hawley) achieved 'moderate' ecological status in 2019, up from 'poor' in 2016 but failed the assessment of chemical status in 2019, a reduction from 'good' in 2016.
- Cove Brook achieved 'poor' ecological status in 2019 an improvement from 'bad' in 2016 and failed the assessment of chemical status in 2019, a reduction from 'good' in 2016.
- Basingstoke Canal achieved moderate ecological status in both 2016 and 2019, but failed the assessment of chemical status in 2019 down from 'good' in 2016.

Please note that reductions in chemical status within waterbodies as recorded within 2019 reports is a likely reflection of the inclusion of a new suite of pollutants, testing methodologies and standards since 2016 surveys were completed which resulted in widespread chemical status failure across England.

5.56 The Rushmoor Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (2015) identifies that the majority of the Borough is located within Flood Zone 1, with only a very small area located in Flood Zone 2, 3a and 3b (functional floodplain). Future development should therefore be steered towards Flood Zone 1, with only water-compatible and essential infrastructure located in Flood Zone 3b.

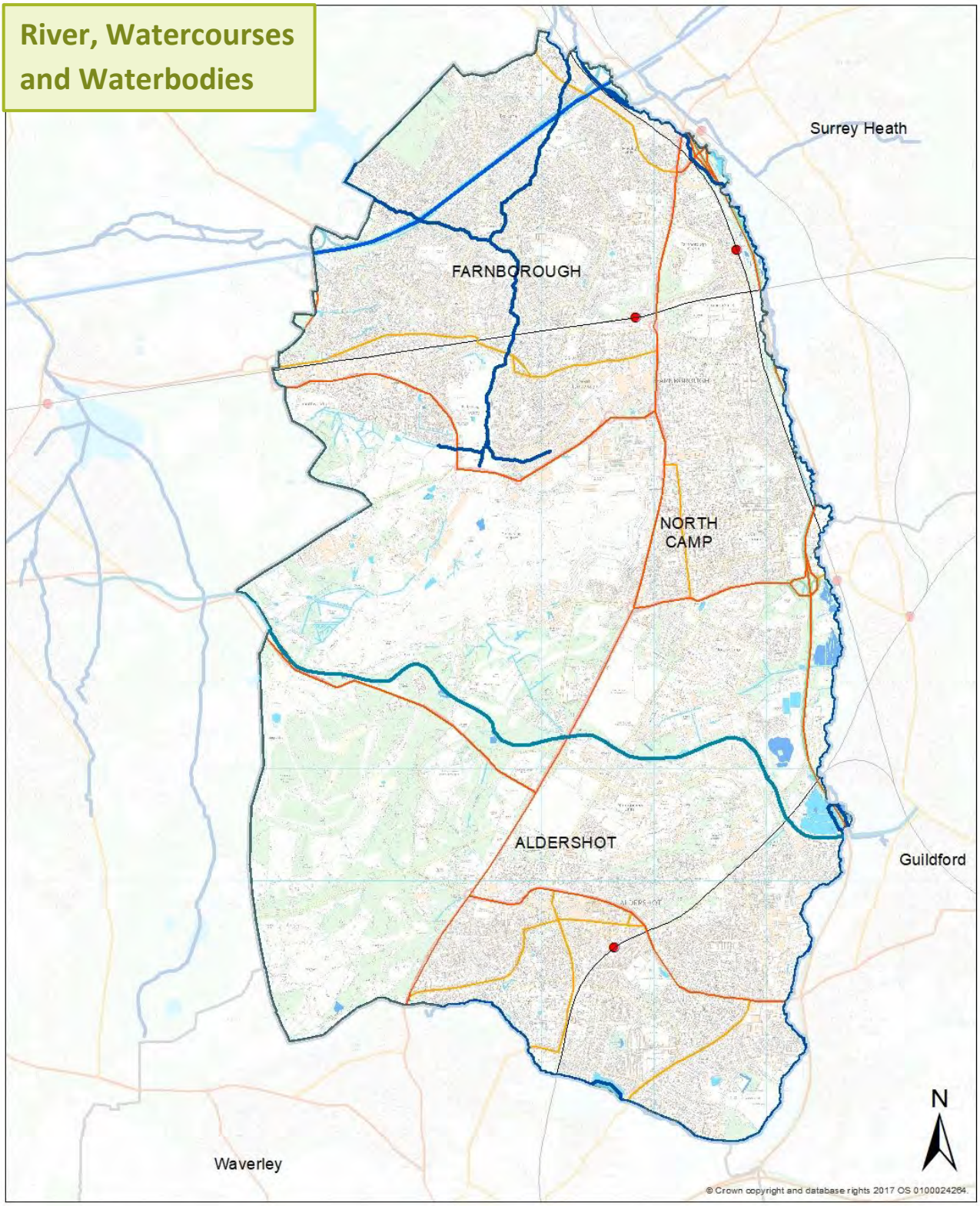
5.57 The Rushmoor Borough Council Level 1 Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (2015) considers flood risk from surface water and all other sources. The assessment identifies eleven sites that have a significantly higher 'risk index' of surface water flooding than other parts of the Borough. The Local Plan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

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

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

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

River, Watercourses and Waterbodies



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

Floodzones

Floodzone 3 Floodzone 2

Strengths and Opportunities

- ⇨ Basingstoke Canal, Blackwater Valley and Cove Brook provide valuable recreational resource. There are opportunities to improve connections with adjoining authorities to enhance these green corridors.
- ⇨ Southwood and Cove Brook Floodplain Enhancement Project.
- ⇨ Promotion of access to rivers and the canal.
- ⇨ River valleys should be protected and managed to promote natural flood alleviation.
- ⇨ Work with key partners to deliver improvements for the Water Framework directive and to deliver actions from the catchment Flood Management Plans and River Basin Management Plans.
- ⇨ Opportunities to promote benefits through appropriate SuDS design.

Weaknesses and Threats

- ⇨ Issues with fluvial and surface water flooding and future impacts of climate change.
- ⇨ Many culverted and diverted natural watercourses.
- ⇨ Condition status of the Canal.
- ⇨ Poor/bad water body status (WFD).

Recreation and Open Space

Introduction

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

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

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

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

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

Assets within and around the Borough

Important Note

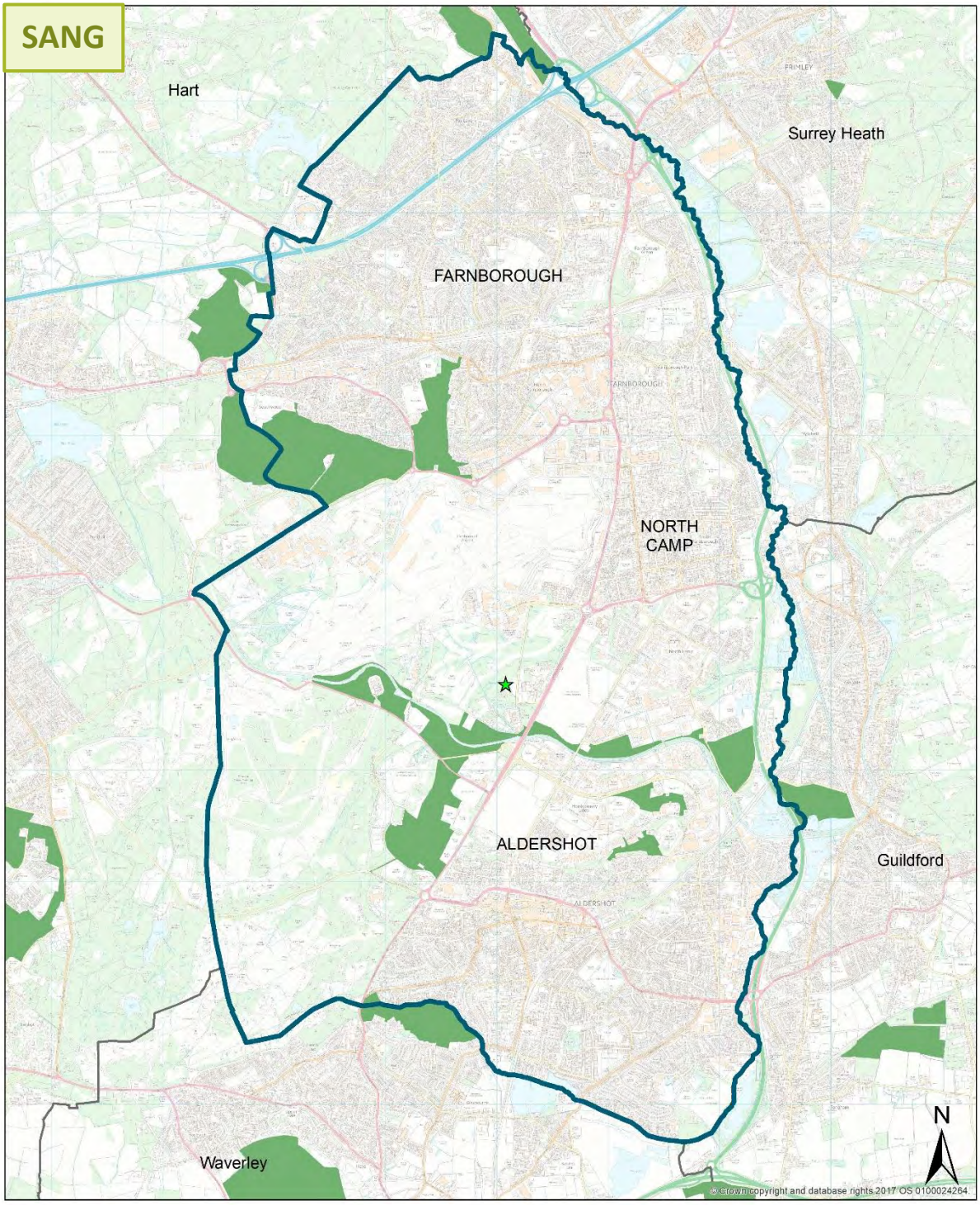
Reference is made below to the findings of the Rushmoor Open Space, Sport and Recreation Study 2014. However, more up to date information and standards on access to natural space has been published during the preparation of the Strategy. Therefore, this information will need to be considered in more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

SANG

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

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

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


SANG
Hart
Surrey Heath
FARNBOROUGH
NORTH
CAMP
ALDERSHOT
Guildford
Waverley
N
© Crown copyright and database rights 2017 OS 0100024264
SANGs
Blandford House SANG

Parks and Gardens

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

Borough Scale

- Queens Parade Playing Fields

Local Scale

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

Small Scale

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

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

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

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

- The majority of Rushmoor is within the catchment area is of a local park or garden. It recognises the importance of local parks and gardens increased due to the limited provision of larger scale Borough and Regional parks and gardens. The study notes the range of facilities provided on these sites and how they often host local events and activities.
- Only some parts of the Borough are within the 400m catchment area for small local parks and gardens. Areas outside of these catchments include:[9]
    - Cove
    - Parts of West Heath (west of Fernhill Lane)
    - South West of Farnborough Town Centre (around Elles Road)
    - South of Aldershot (along the Surrey border)
- The majority of the above sites are owned and maintained by Rushmoor Borough Council. However, there are a number of playing fields and recreation grounds that are owned and managed by the Ministry of Defence, such as Queens Parade Playing Fields.

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

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

Natural and Semi-Natural Greenspaces

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

Regional Scale

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

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

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

Borough Scale

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

Local Scale

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

Small Scale

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

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

- The majority of the Borough is within the 5km of a Regional Scale site owned by Rushmoor Borough Council. At the time of assessment, it also noted that Southwood Woodland and Rowhill Nature Reserve achieved the required benchmarks for quality and value and that this reflects the importance of these sites as SANG.
- The whole of the Borough is within the 4km catchment of Borough scale sites.
- Highways and railway lines within Rushmoor restrict accessibility to local natural and semi-natural green space.
- The north-eastern part of the Farnborough sits outside the catchment area of all Local scale sites, which is partly due to the presence of the M3 corridor and the railway line.
- The majority of Aldershot is within the catchment area of a local natural and semi-natural green space.
- Much of the borough is outside the catchment area of small local natural and semi-natural green spaces.

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

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

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

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

Amenity Green Space

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

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

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

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

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

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

Cemeteries and churchyards

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

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

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

Allotments

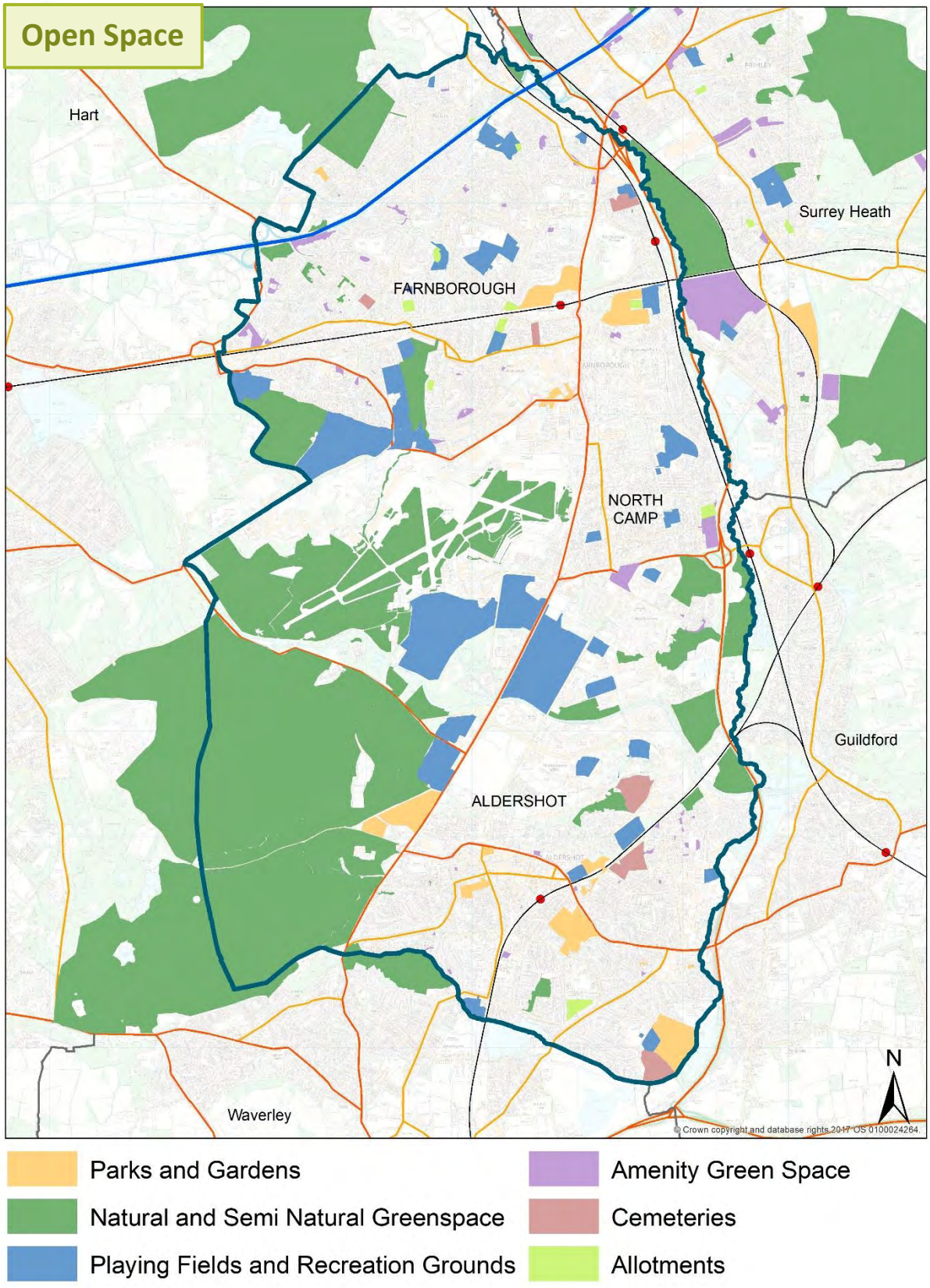
5.83 There are 11 allotment sites in Rushmoor, including:

- Cove Green, Farnborough
- Church Road Allotments, Aldershot
- Cherrywood Road, Farnborough
- Ratcliff Road, Farnborough
- Prospect Road, Farnborough
- Brookhouse Road, Farnborough
- Jubilee Allotment Gardens, Farnborough
- Fernhill Road, Farnborough
- Alexandra Road, Aldershot
- Park Road, Farnborough
- Birchett Road, Farnborough

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

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

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


Open Space
Hart
Surrey Heath
FARNBOROUGH
NORTH CAMP
Guildford
ALDERSHOT
Waverley
N
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Parks and Gardens
Natural and Semi Natural Greenspace
Playing Fields and Recreation Grounds
Amenity Green Space
Cemeteries
Allotments

Green Corridors

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

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

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

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

School Grounds

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

Updated Access to Natural Greenspace Standards (ANGSt)

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

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

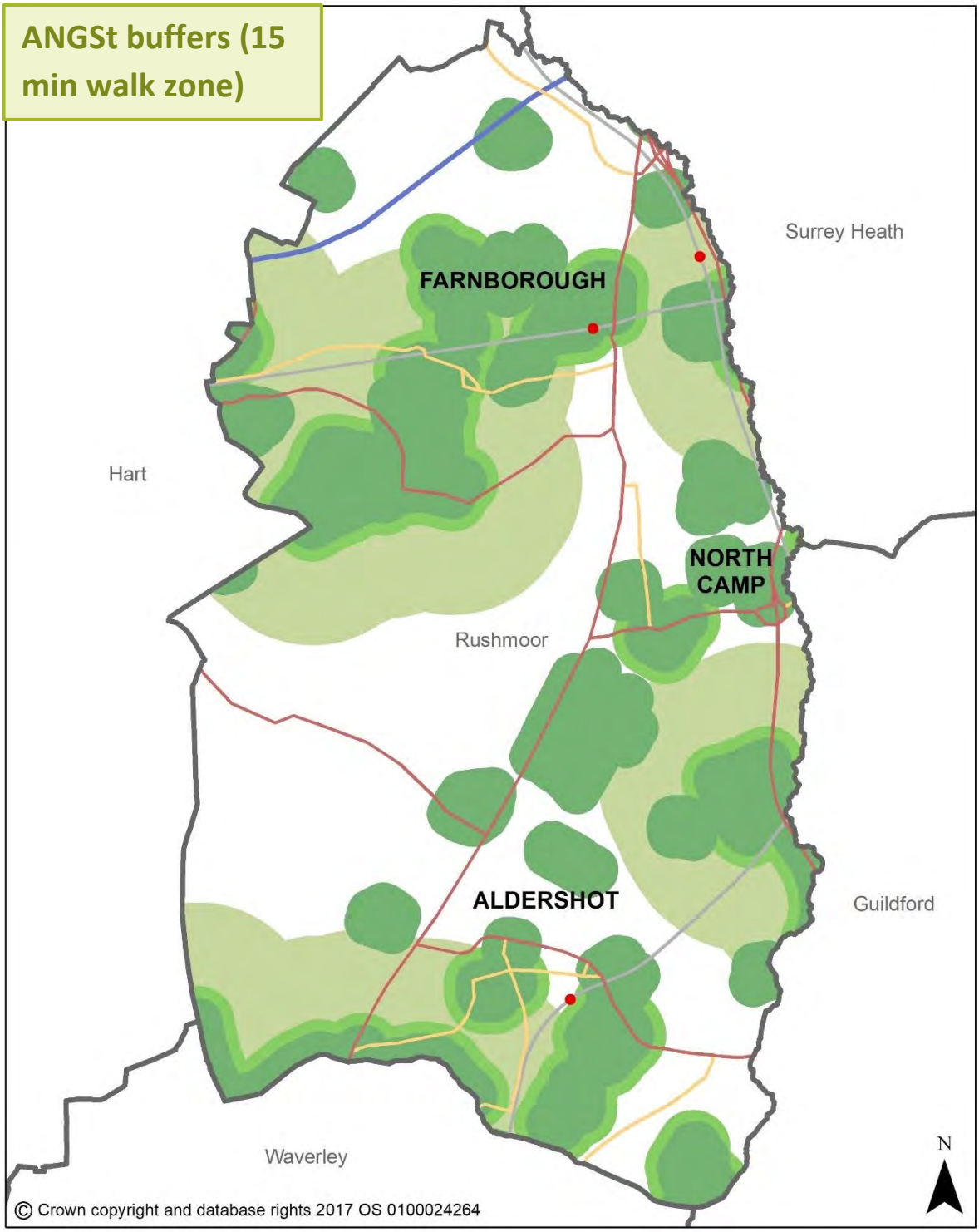
5.91 Natural England have focussed on the three most local ANGSt buffers to form a composite picture of access to different sizes of green space within a '15-minute walk zone'. Nationally they have identified that:

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

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

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

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

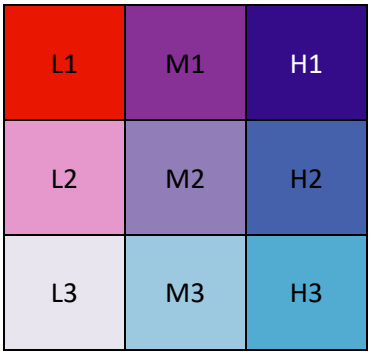


ANGSt Buffers (15 minute zone)

- Doorstep (0.5ha within 200m)
- Local (2ha within 300m)
- Neighbourhood (10ha within 1km)

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

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



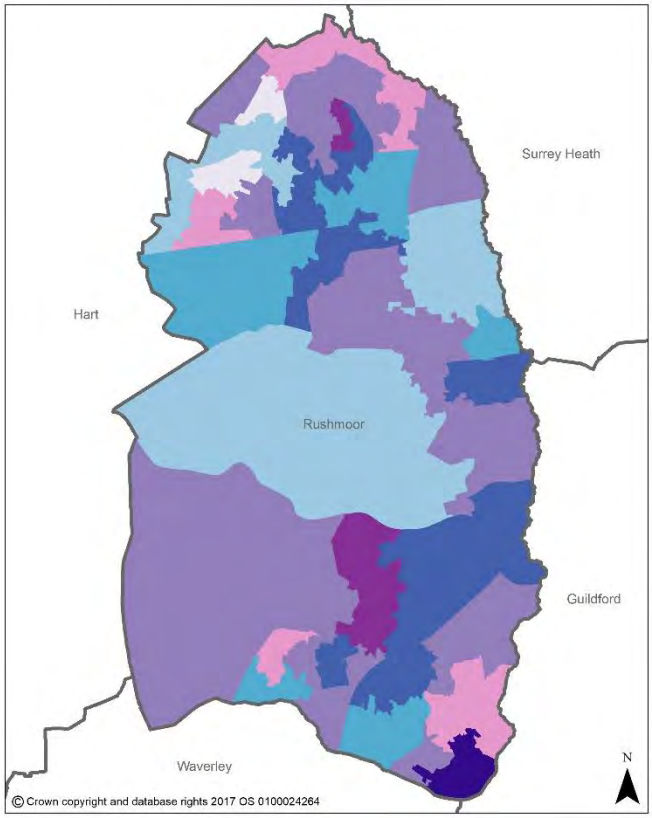
5.95 In Rushmoor, those areas identified as being in the least favourable position in relation to being more deprived, and having limited access to greenspace (including Doorstep, Local Natural and Neighbourhood Natural Green Spaces) are:

- Northern parts of Farnborough
- Western part of Farnborough (between Minley Road and Fleet Road)
- Areas north and South of Ash Road in Aldershot
- Northern parts of North Camp
- Parts of the area being redeveloped at Wellesley

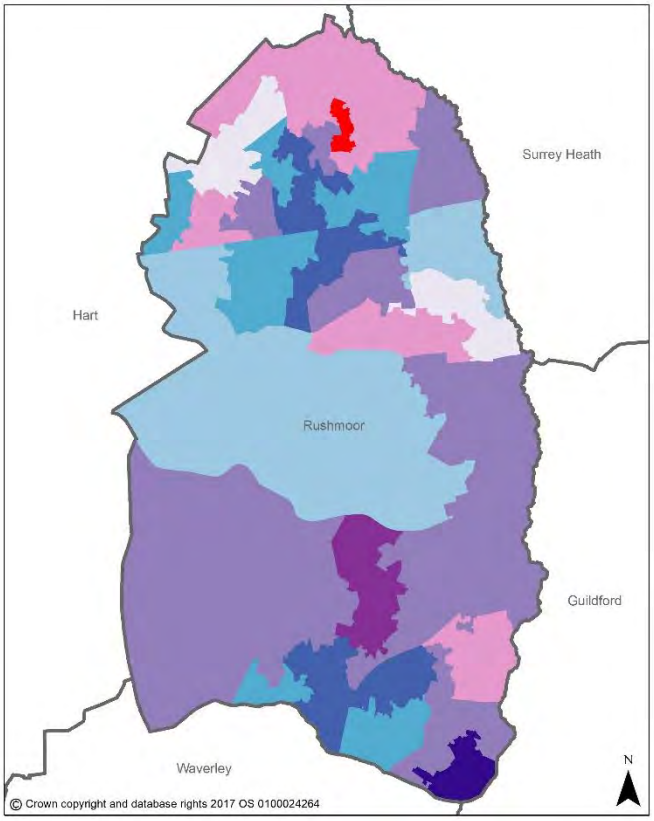
5.96 In Rushmoor, those areas identified as being the least favourable position in relation to being more densely populated and having limited access to greenspace (including Doorstep, Local Natural and Neighbourhood Natural Green Spaces) are:

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

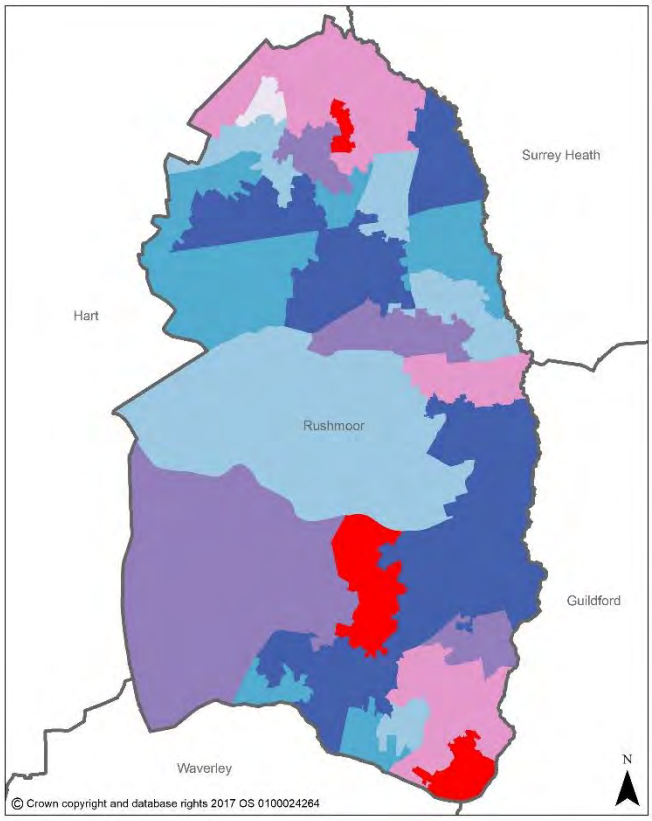
Doorstep Coverage and IMD decile

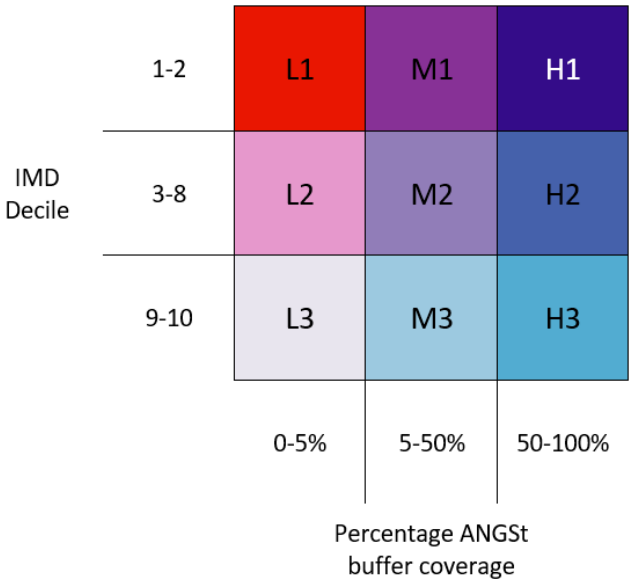


Local Coverage and IMD decile

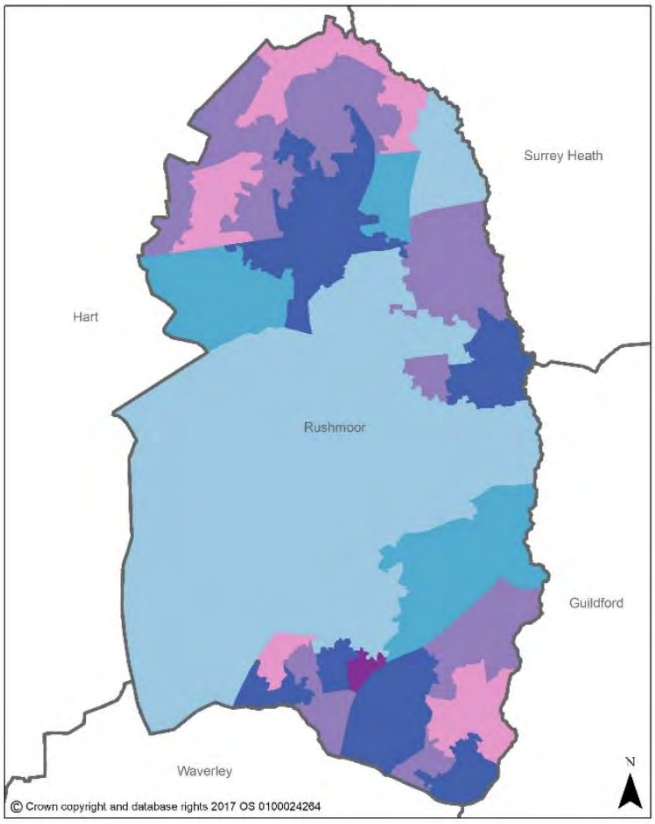


Neighbourhood Coverage and IMD decile

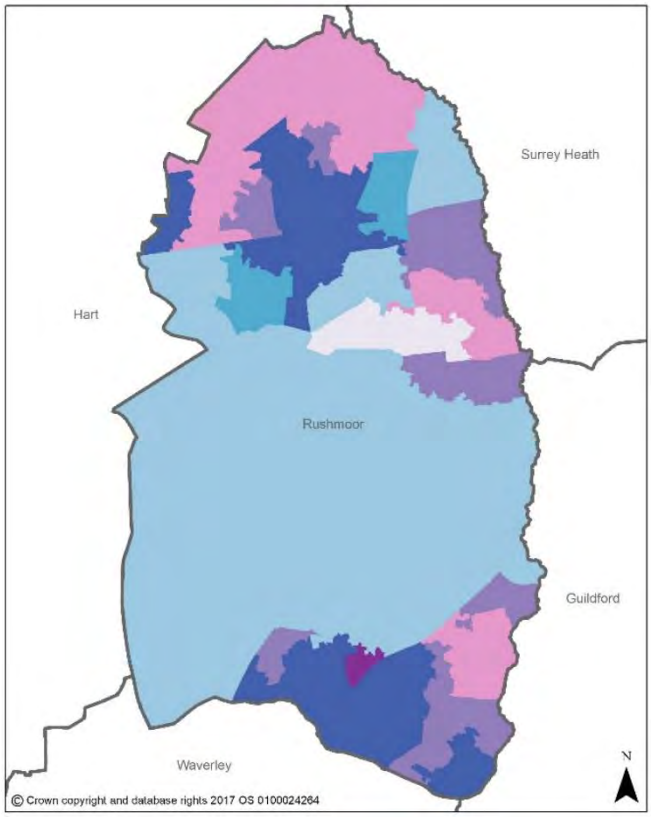




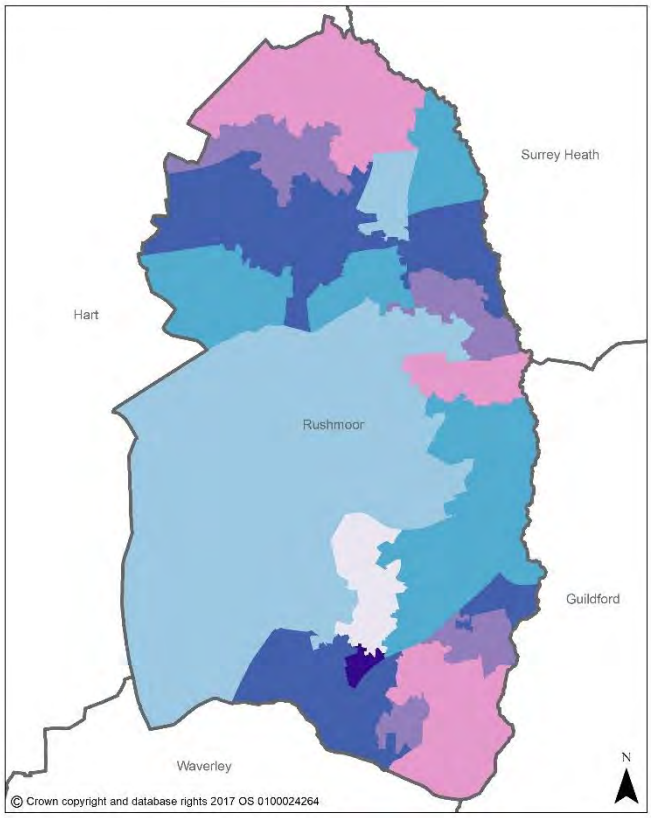
Doorstep Coverage & Population Density



Local Coverage & Population Density



Neighbourhood Coverage & Population Density

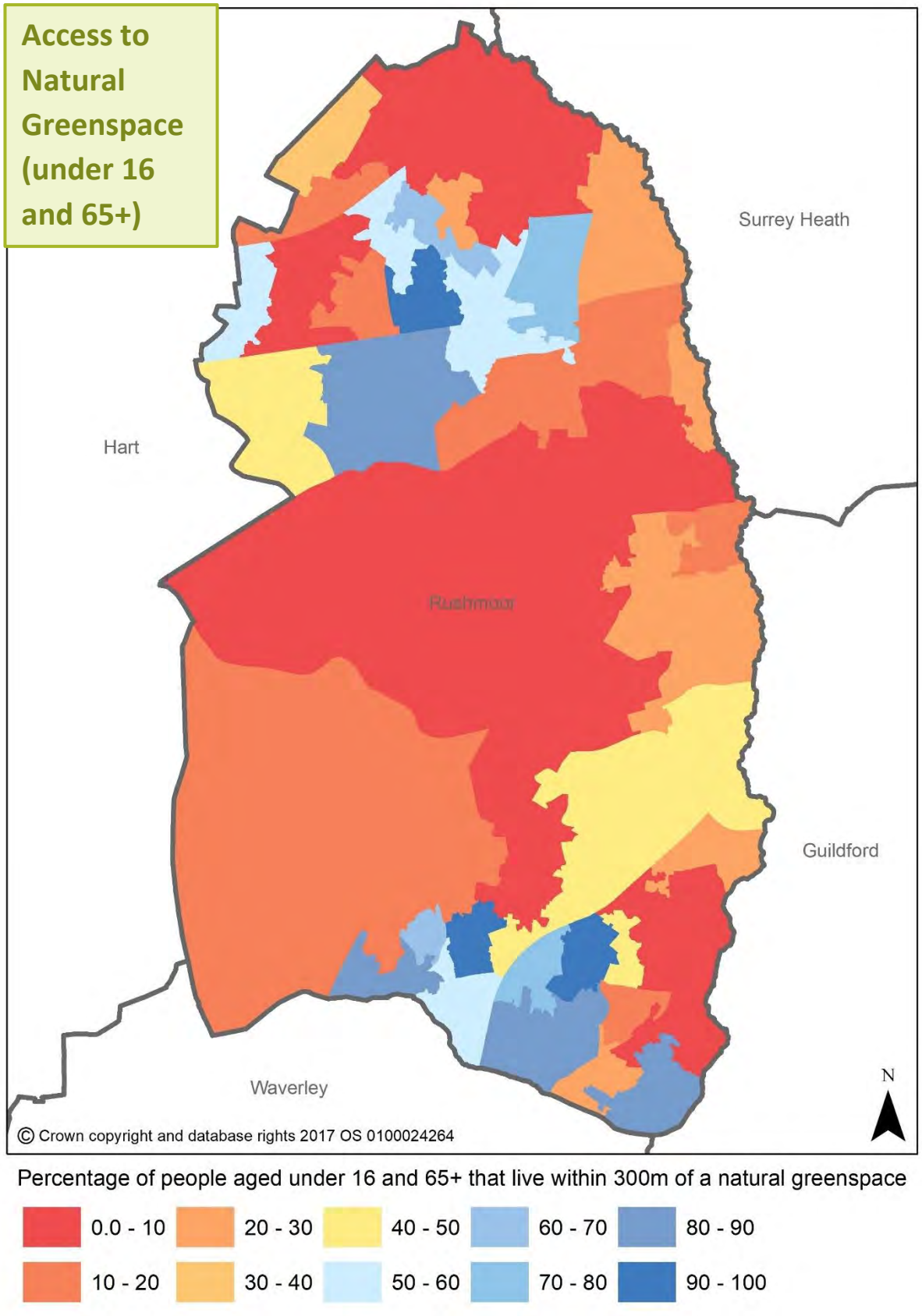


Population Density (population per Km^2)	0-5%	5-50%	50-100%
10,000+	L1	M1	H1
2,500-10,000	L2	M2	H2
0-2,500	L3	M3	H3

Percentage ANGSt buffer coverage

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

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



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Strengths and Opportunities

- ⇨ Diverse range of public open spaces within the management or ownership of the council, including nature reserves, recreation grounds and green spaces.
- ⇨ Sizable areas of open space within the ownership of the Ministry of Defence that are accessible to the public, including Queens Parade Playing Fields and Ramillies Park
- ⇨ A number of SANGS in and around the Borough which provide a diverse recreational resource for residents.
- ⇨ Opportunities to create new or improved open spaces or allow access to more open space, through development in the borough, specifically those that deliver public open spaces or additional SANG.
- ⇨ Opportunities to connect existing SANG to create a wider network with other sites in and around Rushmoor
- ⇨ Opportunities to enhance biodiversity of open spaces, specifically beyond the formal pitch and safety margins of sports pitches that are managed as informal open space

Weaknesses and Threats

- ⇨ Some localised areas of open space deficiency, including areas which are outside of the '15-minute walk zone' of a green space
- ⇨ Indications of potential open space deficiencies, which are linked to more deprived areas and areas with a higher population density
- ⇨ Accessibility of open space
- ⇨ Appropriate balance between enhancing resources for people and wildlife

Access to the Outdoors and Connections

Introduction

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

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

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

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

Assets within and around the Borough

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

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

Public Rights of Way

5.104 A public right of way is a highway which can be used by anybody at any time to make a bona fide journey, taking a reasonable rest along the way. The classification of a right of way is determined by the nature of the public rights along them. There are four different types of PRoW:

1. footpaths - for walking, running, mobility scooters or powered wheelchairs.
2. bridleways - for walking, horse riding, bicycles, mobility scooters or powered wheelchairs.
3. restricted byways - for any transport without a motor and mobility scooters or powered wheelchairs.
4. byways open to all traffic - for any kind of transport, including cars (but mainly used by walkers, cyclists and horse riders).

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

Identified access routes

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

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

Green spaces with Public Access

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

Green spaces with No Access – Airport Land

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

Green spaces with No Access – MoD

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

Green spaces with Identified Restricted Access

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

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

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

[10] Ramblers guidance on walking on military sites: https://www.ramblers.org.uk/advice/safety/walking-on-military-sites.aspx

[11] MoD byelaws: https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/byelaws-south-east

[12] MoD firing and closure times: https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/south-east-training-estate-firing-times

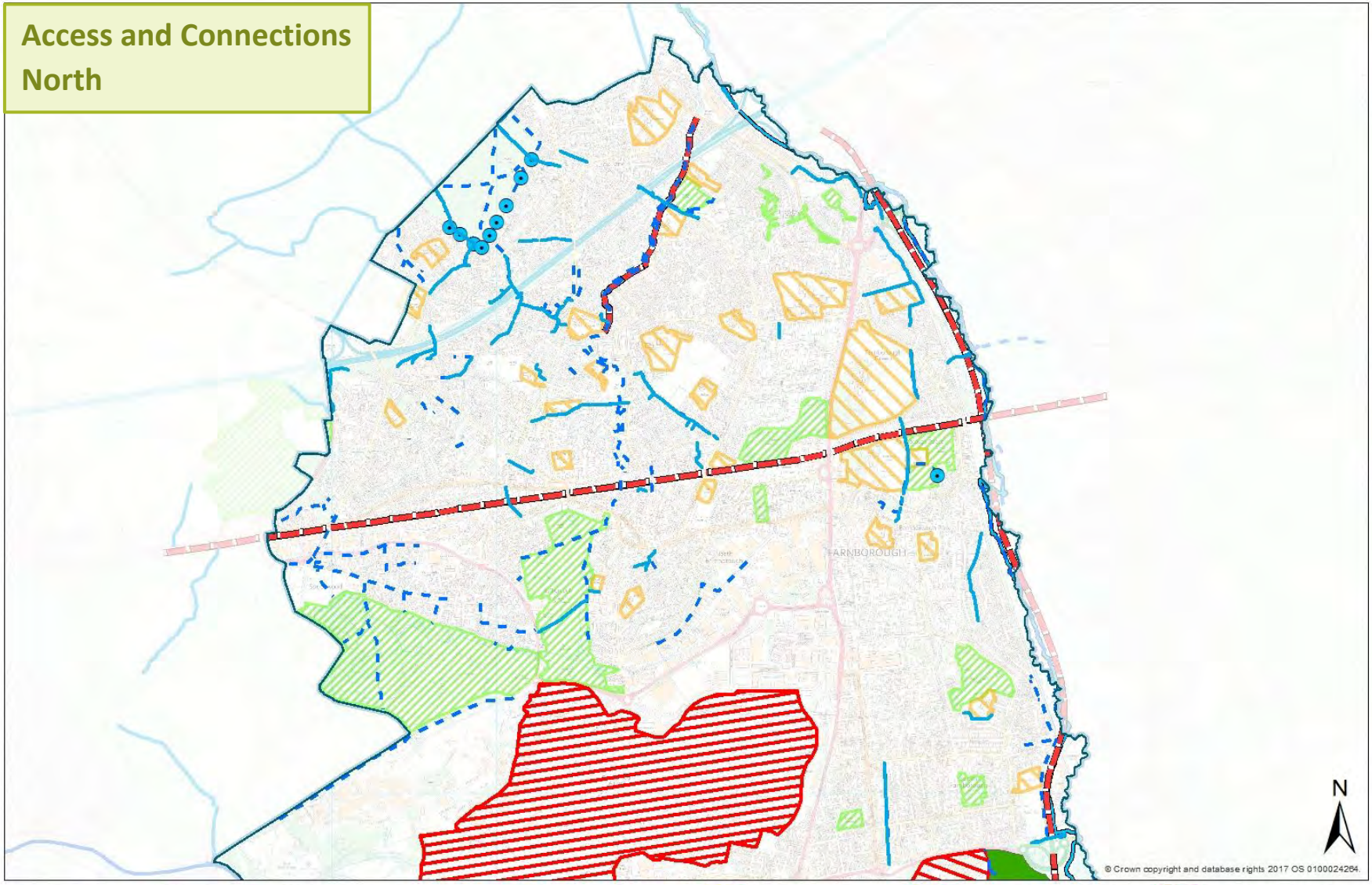
Identified Barriers

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

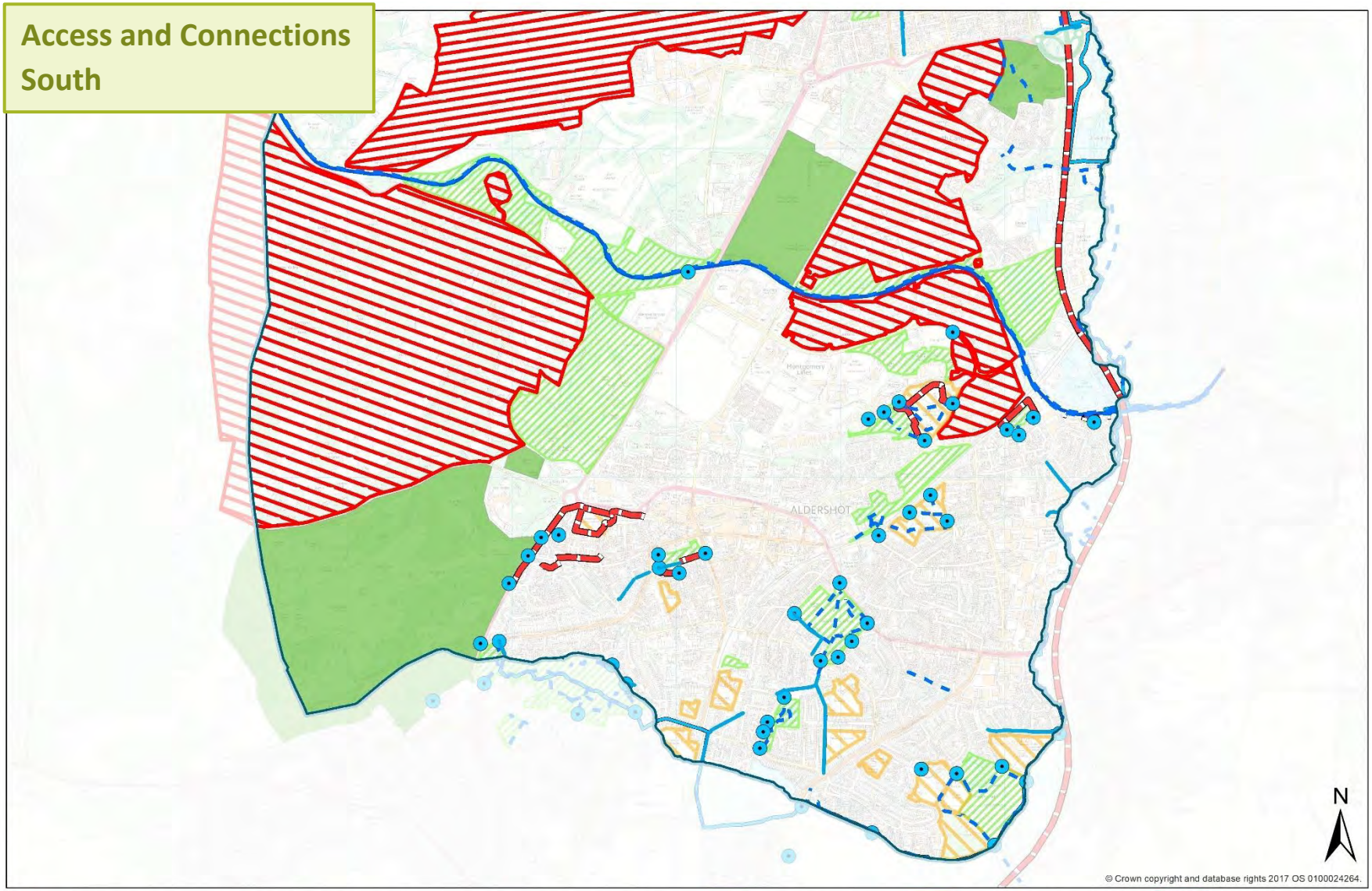
5.114 The following significant barriers have been identified:

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

Access and Connections North



Access and Connections South



Strengths and Opportunities

- ⇨ Relatively compact Borough with good opportunities to walk/cycle.
- ⇨ Existing longer routes available, for example via the Basingstoke Canal and Blackwater River. Potential to improve connections with adjoining authorities and open space beyond the boundary.
- ⇨ Opportunities to promote and improve access to the large areas of countryside surrounding the Borough, whilst acknowledging those areas which are internationally protected and vulnerable to recreational impact.
- ⇨ Opportunities to improve access and reduce the impact of barriers across the Borough.
- ⇨ Opportunities to better provide access for all
- ⇨ Opportunities to better promote the network of Rushmoor's greenspaces and the informal connections between them (for example, through the creation of an interactive map)
- ⇨ Opportunities to improve GI connections to key destinations, such as schools, railways stations and town centres.
- ⇨ Opportunities to improve signage and information to inform residents of walking and cycling routes to key locations (e.g. schools, town centres and railway stations)

Weaknesses and Threats

- ⇨ PRoW network is fragmented and the Borough as a whole has a low density of PRoW.
- ⇨ There are a number of barriers (i.e. railway lines, M3, A331) which sever ecological networks and act as barriers to accessing open space.
- ⇨ Some access routes, including PRoW may not be attractive to users
- ⇨ Some open spaces and walking/cycling routes are in close proximity to busy roads, which could discourage local people from adopting healthy transport options, such as cycling and walking.

6. Priorities and Emerging Strategic Projects

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

Broad Priorities

- ⇨ Increase opportunities for people to connect with nature.
- ⇨ Identify opportunities and prioritise locations for enhancing biodiversity.
- ⇨ Identify opportunities to improve the wildlife corridors and connections between the Borough's ecological assets.
- ⇨ Identify need, and prioritise locations for new trees, hedgerows and woodland.
- ⇨ Deliver green infrastructure that protects and enhances important views and local landscape character.
- ⇨ Review maintenance and management policies for open space.
- ⇨ Protect the existing Green Infrastructure network, including Important Open Area and Green Corridors designated in the Local Plan.
- ⇨ Identify opportunities to remove barriers to sustainable movement and improve access to existing open spaces.
- ⇨ Promote appropriate Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems (SuDS) and identify opportunities for natural flood alleviation measures.
- ⇨ Increase usage of green travel corridors.
- ⇨ Identify opportunities to deliver Green Infrastructure enhancements that will improve the state of the natural environment, including air quality and noise issues.
- ⇨ Identify how new developments can connect to and enhance the existing Green Infrastructure network.
- ⇨ Identify opportunities to deliver new Suitable Alternative Natural Greenspace (SANG) and improve connections between existing SANG.
- ⇨ Work with partners to improve and enhance the Green Infrastructure network within and beyond the Borough, with a focus on those areas where this will address existing deficiencies and/or provide benefits for deprived areas and for disadvantaged groups.
- ⇨ Work with partners to deliver actions arising from other Strategies which will support the vision and objectives of the Green Infrastructure Strategy.

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

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

Emerging Process Projects

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

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

Emerging Geographical Projects

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

- ⇨ GP1 - Southwood and Cove Brook Floodplain Enhancement Project (under way)
- ⇨ GP2 - Blackwater Valley Enhancement Project
- ⇨ GP3 - Enhancing the Basingstoke Canal Project
- ⇨ GP4 - Cove Brook Greenway Project
- ⇨ GP5 - Urban Greening/Hedgerow Project
- ⇨ GP6 - Southwood/Bramshot SANG Network Project

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

7. Implementation and Delivery

Who

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

Funding

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

The Green Infrastructure Delivery Plan

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

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

Glossary

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Stewardship
Taking care of the land

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Appendix 2: Review of Relevant Evidence and Strategies

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

Rushmoor Evidence and Strategies

Hart, Rushmoor and Surrey Heath SPA Mitigation Project

The Hart, Rushmoor and Surrey Heath Councils worked together with Natural England to complete a project reviewing the approach to mitigation within the Thames Basin Heaths. The work analysed eleven potential alternative options when it comes to delivering SPA mitigation. The report concluded that the role and design of SANG could be clarified further.
Natural England make clear in the updated Guidelines for the creation of Suitable Accessible Natural Greenspace (SANG) (page 8) that there remains a hierarchy of SANG provision and states:

> *"Great weight will be given to those SANGS meeting all the existing quality criteria (shown in Appendix 1 of the Guidelines) which should be delivered in the first instance. Only if this is not possible, for clearly established reasons, should the delivery of the options outlined in the section below be considered. If any proposed SANGS do not meet all of the Appendix 1 quality criteria, then these SANGS will continue to be assessed on a case-by-case basis and should be agreed with both the competent authority and Natural England.*
>
> *The proposal will need to demonstrate equivalent effectiveness of mitigation being provided to ensure a robust, consistent approach continues. Any shortfall in SANG criteria should be offset by other complementary means, such as an elevated provision rate, size or high-quality features."*

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

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

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

SANG Networks

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

Linear SANG

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

Small SANG

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

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

Identifying additional SANG

SANGs are currently identified and delivered in three ways:

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

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

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

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

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

Rushmoor Local Plan Designation Review

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

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

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

Rushmoor Landscape Character Assessment

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

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

Rushmoor Open Space, Sport and Recreation Study 2014

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Rushmoor Playing Pitch Strategy 2014-2020

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

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

Rushmoor Climate Change Action Plan 2020-2030

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

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

Rushmoor Biodiversity Action Plan

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

Wellesley Green Infrastructure Strategy

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

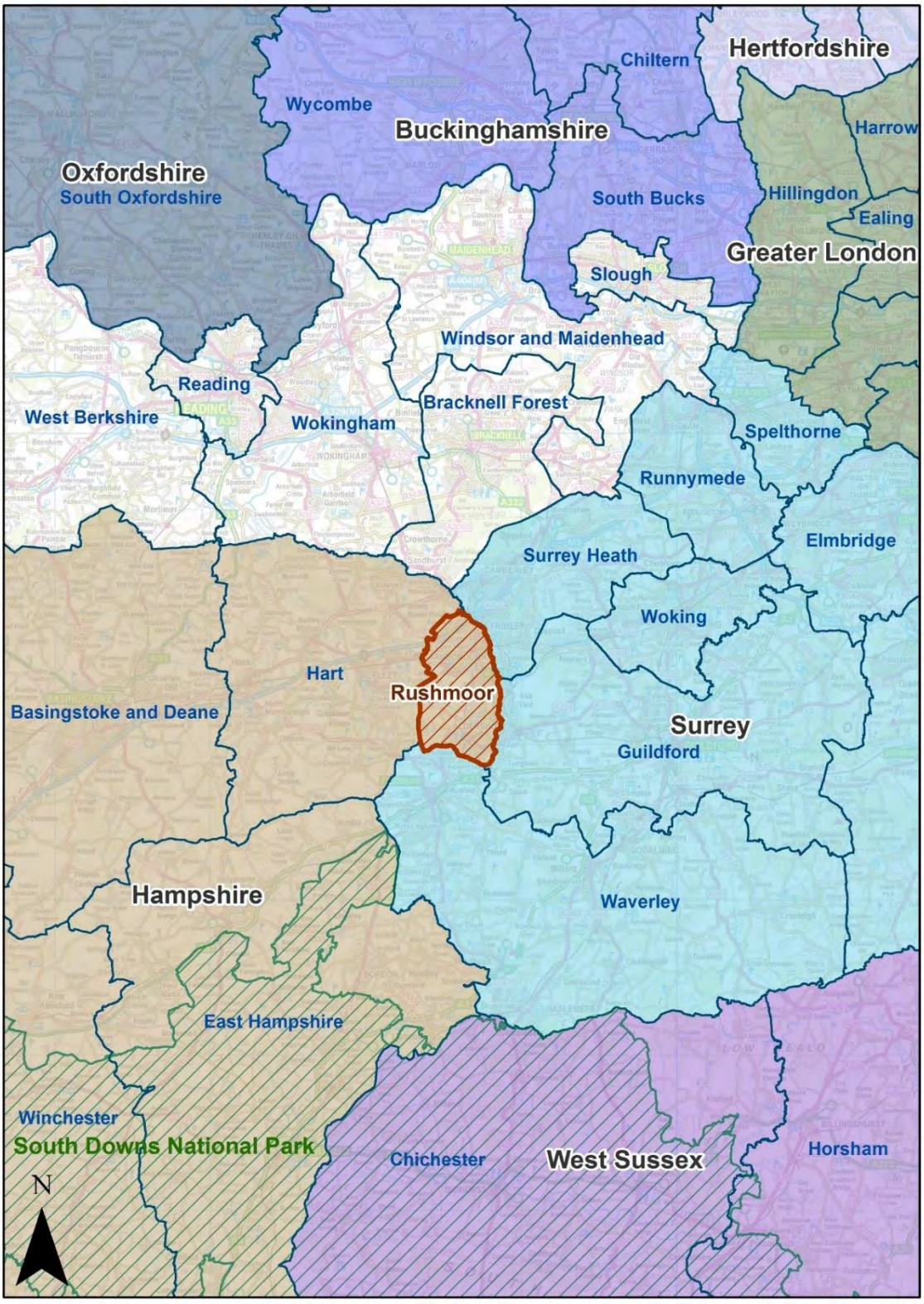
In July 2013, a hybrid scheme for development at Wellesley was granted planning permission for 3,850 new homes, retail, community facilities, employment land, SANG provision and open space, recreational facilities and allotments. A Green Infrastructure Strategy was prepared for the area and submitted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

This Strategy included the provision of the following Green Infrastructure:

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

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

Adjoining Authority Evidence and Strategies



Surrey Natural Capital Investment Strategy

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

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

Surrey Country Council Rights of Way Improvement Plan (2014)

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

Five main objectives have been identified:

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

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

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

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

Surrey Biodiversity Opportunity Areas

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

What assets are identified which connect with or surround Rushmoor?

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

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

Hart Green Infrastructure Strategy 2017

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

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

What assets are identified which connect with or surround Rushmoor?

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

Hart Green Grid

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

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

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

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

Guildford Infrastructure Delivery Plan 2017

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

What assets are identified which connect with or surround Rushmoor?

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

Guildford Assessment of Sites of Amenity Value 2017

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

Guildford Open Space Sports and Recreation Assessment (2017)

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

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

What assets are identified which connect with or surround Rushmoor?

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

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

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

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

What assets are identified which connect with or surround Rushmoor?

- Two areas of natural and semi-natural greenspace adjacent to Rushmoor (Blackwater Valley River Route and Watchmoor Reserve)
- Thames Basin Heaths and SPA and component SSSIs
- Three Parks and Gardens close to the Rushmoor boundary (Crabtree Park and Mytchett Recreation Ground)

Surrey Heath SANG Strategy 2020

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

Farnham Potential New SANG Assessment (AECOM) 2015

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

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

Other Relevant Evidence and Strategies

Hampshire Strategic Infrastructure Statement (HSIS) (April 2019)

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

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

Hampshire Cycling Strategy 2015

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

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

The vision for cycling in Hampshire is that:

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

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

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

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

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

Hampshire Walking Strategy 2016

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

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

- realising additional funding opportunities for walking measures

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

The vision for walking in Hampshire is that:

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

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

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

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

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

Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan (LCWIP)

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

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

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

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

Local Transport Plan and Rushmoor Transport Statement

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Town Access Plans

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

Aldershot Town Access Plan (2012)

The Aldershot TAP identifies the following relevant objectives:

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

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

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

Farnborough Town Access Plan

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

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

Hampshire Healthy Weight Strategy 2015-19

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

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

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

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

Hampshire Physical Activity Strategy 2018-21

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

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

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

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

State of Hampshire's Natural Environment (2020)

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

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

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

Air Quality

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

Noise

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

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

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

Biodiversity

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

Recreational Use of the Natural Environment

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

Hampshire County Council Climate Change Strategy 2020-2025

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

- 2050 Carbon neutrality
- 2^{o}C preparing to be resilient to the impacts of temperature rise

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

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

Hampshire Biodiversity Opportunity Areas

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

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

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

Hampshire Tree Strategy 2020

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

The approach will include:

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

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

Hampshire Ecological Network Map (March 2020)

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

The network is hierarchical with the following components:

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

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

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

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

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

Basingstoke Canal Conservation Management Plan 2018-2028

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

Local Flood and Water Management Strategy

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

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

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

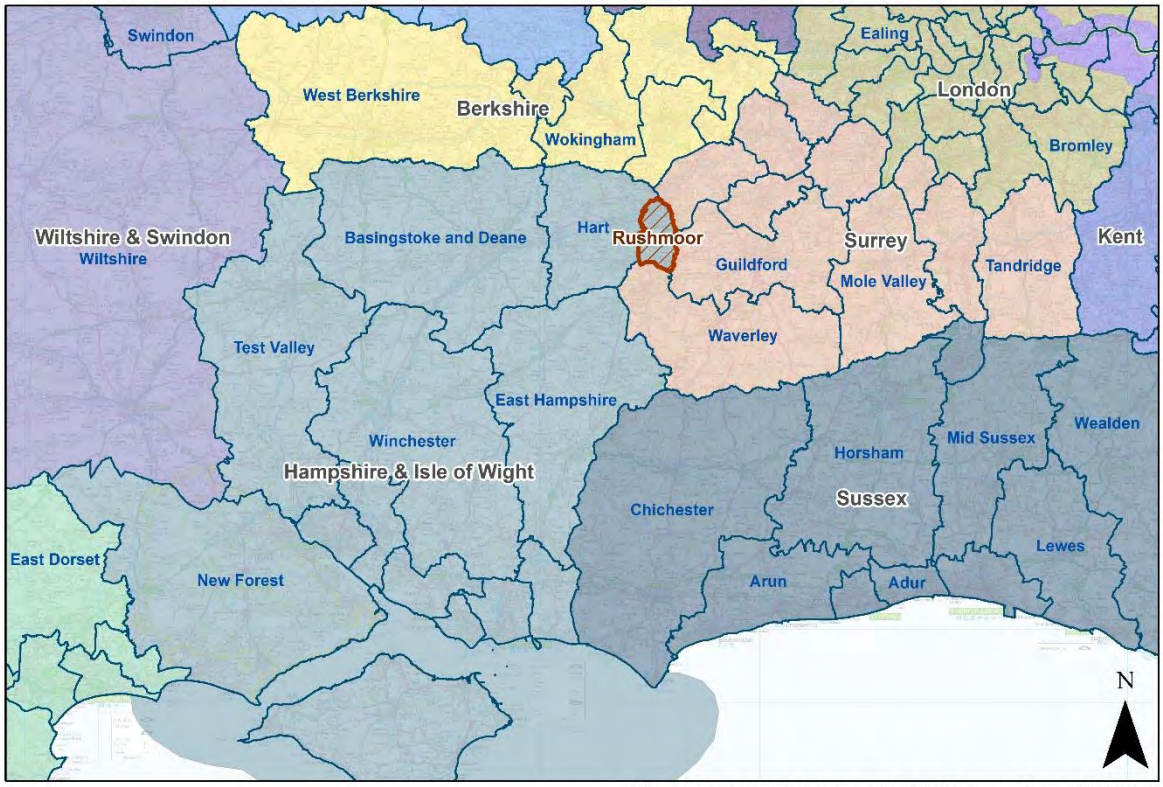
Hampshire Countryside Access Plan 2015-2025

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

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

Local Nature Partnership

The Government's Natural Environment White Paper "The Natural Choice: securing the value of nature" was first published in June 2011. The White Paper made a series of commitments, including providing a one-off fund to help local communities set up Local Nature Partnerships. The aim of Local Nature Partnerships is that they bring together a broad partnership of organisations to work at a strategic landscape scale to deliver a stronger natural environment.



The Hampshire Local Nature Partnership is coordinated by a Board which meets on a regular basis to provide strategic leadership, review priorities, commission projects and to encourage action across

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

Appendix 3: Emerging Strategic Project Profiles

Emerging Process Project

PP1 – An Interactive Green Infrastructure Mapping Project

Project Summary

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

Status

Planned

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

Delivery

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

Timescales

Short (0-5 years)

Potential Partners

Hampshire Biodiversity Information Centre (HBIC)

GI Outcome

Emerging Process Project

PP2 – A Development Management Green Infrastructure Toolkit

Project Summary

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

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

Status

Planned

Delivery

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

Timescales

Short (0-5 years)

Potential Partners

Development sector

GI Outcomes

Emerging Process Project

PP3 – A Biodiversity Net Gain Off-Site Scoping Project

Project Summary

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

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

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

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

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

Status

Planned

Delivery

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

Timescales

Short (0-5 years)

Potential Partners

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

GI Outcomes

Emerging Process Project

PP4 - Access to the Outdoors Project

Project Summary

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

It could include the following:

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

Status

Planned

Delivery

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

Timescales

Short (0-5 years)

Potential Partners

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

GI Outcomes

Emerging Process Project

PP5 - Connecting Rushmoor's Ecological Network

Project Summary

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

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

Status

Planned

Delivery

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

Timescales

Short (0-5 years)

Potential Partners

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

GI Outcomes

Emerging Process Project

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

Project Summary

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

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

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

> *"Great weight will be given to those SANGS meeting all the existing quality criteria (shown in Appendix 1 of the Guidelines) which should be delivered in the first instance. Only if this is not possible, for clearly established reasons, should the delivery of the options outlined in the section below be considered. If any proposed SANGS do not meet all of the Appendix 1 quality criteria, then these SANGS will continue to be assessed on a case-by-case basis and should be agreed with both the competent authority and Natural England.*
>
> *The proposal will need to demonstrate equivalent effectiveness of mitigation being provided to ensure a robust, consistent approach continues. Any shortfall in SANG criteria should be offset by other complementary means, such as an elevated provision rate, size or high-quality features."*

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

Status

Planned

Delivery

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

Timescales

Short (0-5 years)

Potential Partners

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

GI Outcomes

Emerging Process Project

PP7 - Carbon Reduction through Tree Planting Feasibility Project

Project Summary

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

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

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

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

Status

Planned

Delivery (including funding)

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

Timescales

Short (0-5 years)

Potential Partners

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

GI Outcomes

Emerging Geographical Project

GP1 - Southwood and Cove Brook Floodplain Enhancement Project

Project Summary

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

- Improve the Water Framework Directive Status of the Cove Brook and its tributaries through physical habitat enhancement
- Enhance the biodiversity and ecosystem functioning of the project area
- Re-establish hydrological connectivity between the river and its floodplain (where this does not compromise the SANG)
- Increase tree cover within the former golf course to provide woodland and wet woodland habitat within the headwaters
- Create opportunities for nature-based recreation and education
- Identify any opportunities to secure flood risk benefits for local people (including the consideration of natural flood management interventions)
- Improve the biodiversity value of the four associated Sites of Importance for Nature Conservation (SINC) namely
    - Cove Valley, Southern Grassland
    - Cove Brook Grassland
    - Southwood Woodlands (adjacent)
    - Southwood Country Park
- Improve the landscape value of the project area

Status

Under way

Delivery

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

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

Timescales

Short (0-5 years)

Potential Partners

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

GI Outcomes

Emerging Geographical Project

GP2 - Blackwater Valley Enhancement Project

Project Summary

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

These initial discussions were focussed on three key areas:

- Climate change resilience – identifying opportunities to adapt to climate change
- SANG – identifying and linking SANG
- Biodiversity Net Gain – identifying existing and aspirational projects to create and enhance habitats.
- Leisure and access – identifying, linking and improving access to the Blackwater Valley for general recreation.

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

- Review of Potential Suitable Alternative Natural Greenspace (SANG) Sites
- Connecting Rushmoor's Ecological Network
- Access to the Outdoors Project

Status

Planned

Delivery

The Council will approach those previously involved in initial discussions to understand the potential for joint working on this project. Further discussion will need to take place to understand leadership, governance, funding and capacity amongst key partners to progress this project.

Timescales

Medium (6-10 years)

Potential Partners

Blackwater Valley Countryside Partnership, Wildlife Trusts, RSPB, Biological Records Centres for the three counties, Farnborough Airport, SE Rivers Trust, Thames Water, Environment Agency, Natural England, local authorities within the Blackwater Valley.

GI Outcomes

Emerging Geographical Project

GP3 - Enhancing the Basingstoke Canal

Project Summary

There is potential to further enhance the Basingstoke Canal by improve its value as a linear green infrastructure asset and valuable green corridor which connects with green infrastructure beyond the Borough. This project has potential to link with a project identified in the Hart Green Infrastructure Strategy 2017.

There is also the potential to link this project with the project identified above relating to identifying SANG networks. However, it should be recognised that parts of the Basingstoke Canal already form part of or connect elements of the Wellesley SANG.

Status

Planned

Delivery

Initial scoping of this project, understanding of overlaps with other projects and discussions with key partners, including the Basingstoke Canal Authority and Hart District Council is required.

Timescales

Medium (6-10 years)

Potential Partners

Basingstoke Canal Authority, Grainger, Hart District Council, other local authorities (Guildford, Surrey Heath, Woking and Runnymede), Environment Agency, Natural England.

GI Outcomes

Emerging Geographical Project

GP4 – Cove Brook Greenway Project

Project Summary

The Cove Brook is a tributary of the River Blackwater, part of the wider Loddon and Thames catchments. Working closely with the Cove Brook Greenway Group, this project will explore the potential to enhance Cove Brook and improve its value as a linear green infrastructure assets and valuable green corridor. The focus of the project will be on areas of the Brook not covered by the Southwood and Cove Brook Floodplain Enhancement Project (GP1).

Status

Planned

Delivery

Initial scoping of this project will take place following discussion with the Environment Agency and the Cove Brook Greenway Group.

Timescales

Short (0-5 years)

Potential Partners

Environment Agency, Cove Brook Greenway Group

GI Outcomes

Emerging Geographical Project

GP5 - Southwood/Bramshot SANG Network Project

Project Summary

This project will explore the potential to formally identify and agree a SANG network with Natural England, which incorporates existing and potential SANG within Hart and Rushmoor (including Southwood Woodlands, Southwood Country Park, Hartland Country Park and Bramshot County Park). This is expected to be a geographical project which will be identified and supported by the project identified above - Review of Potential Suitable Alternative Natural Greenspace (SANG) Sites.

Status

Planned

Delivery

The potential for establishing a network has been part of previous discussions between officers at Hart District Council and Rushmoor Borough Council. Further discussions will need to take place between the two authorities and Natural England prior to progressing this project.

Timescales

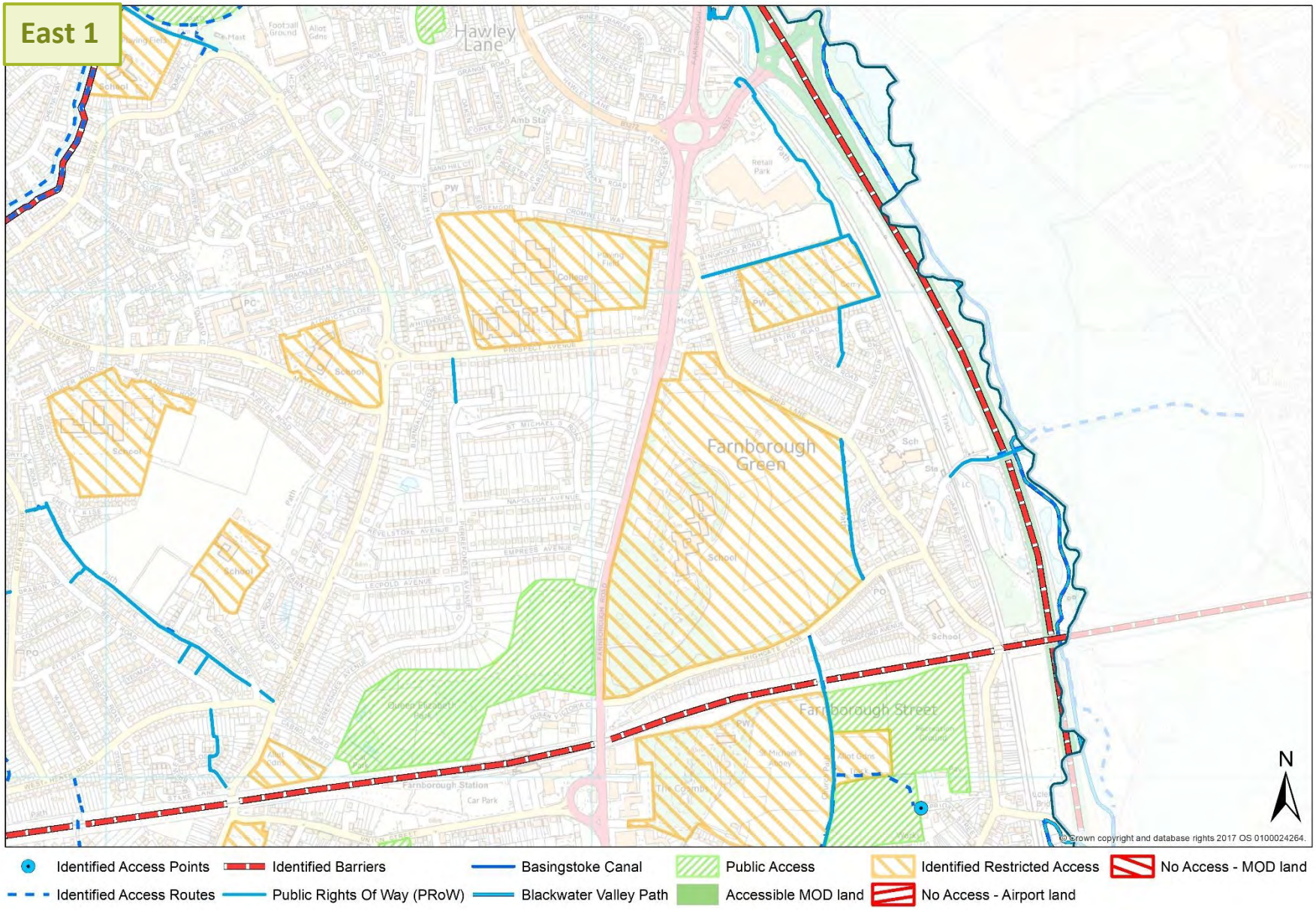
Short (0-5 years)

Potential Partners

Hart District Council, Natural England, Blackwater Valley Countryside Partnership

GI Outcomes

Appendix 4: Area Maps Showing Access, Ownership and Barriers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Hawley Lane
Farnborough Green
Farnborough Street
Farnborough Station
Car Park
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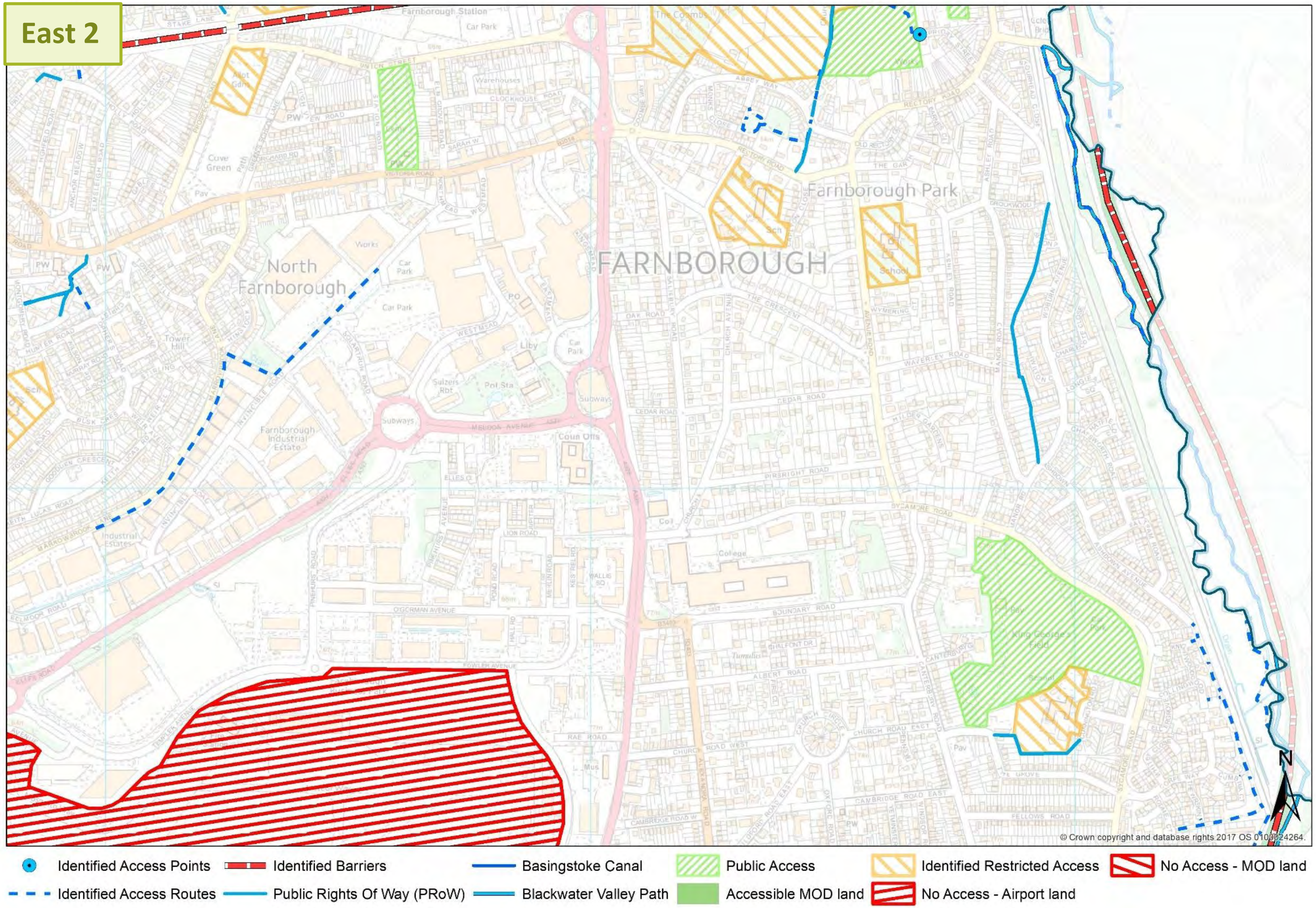
© Crown copyright and database rights 2017 OS 0100024264.
Identified Access Points
Identified Barriers
Basingstoke Canal
Public Access
Identified Restricted Access
No Access - MOD land
Identified Access Routes
Public Rights Of Way (PRoW)
Blackwater Valley Path
Accessible MOD land
No Access - Airport land



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North Farnborough
FARNBOROUGH
Farnborough Park
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Identified Barriers
Basingstoke Canal
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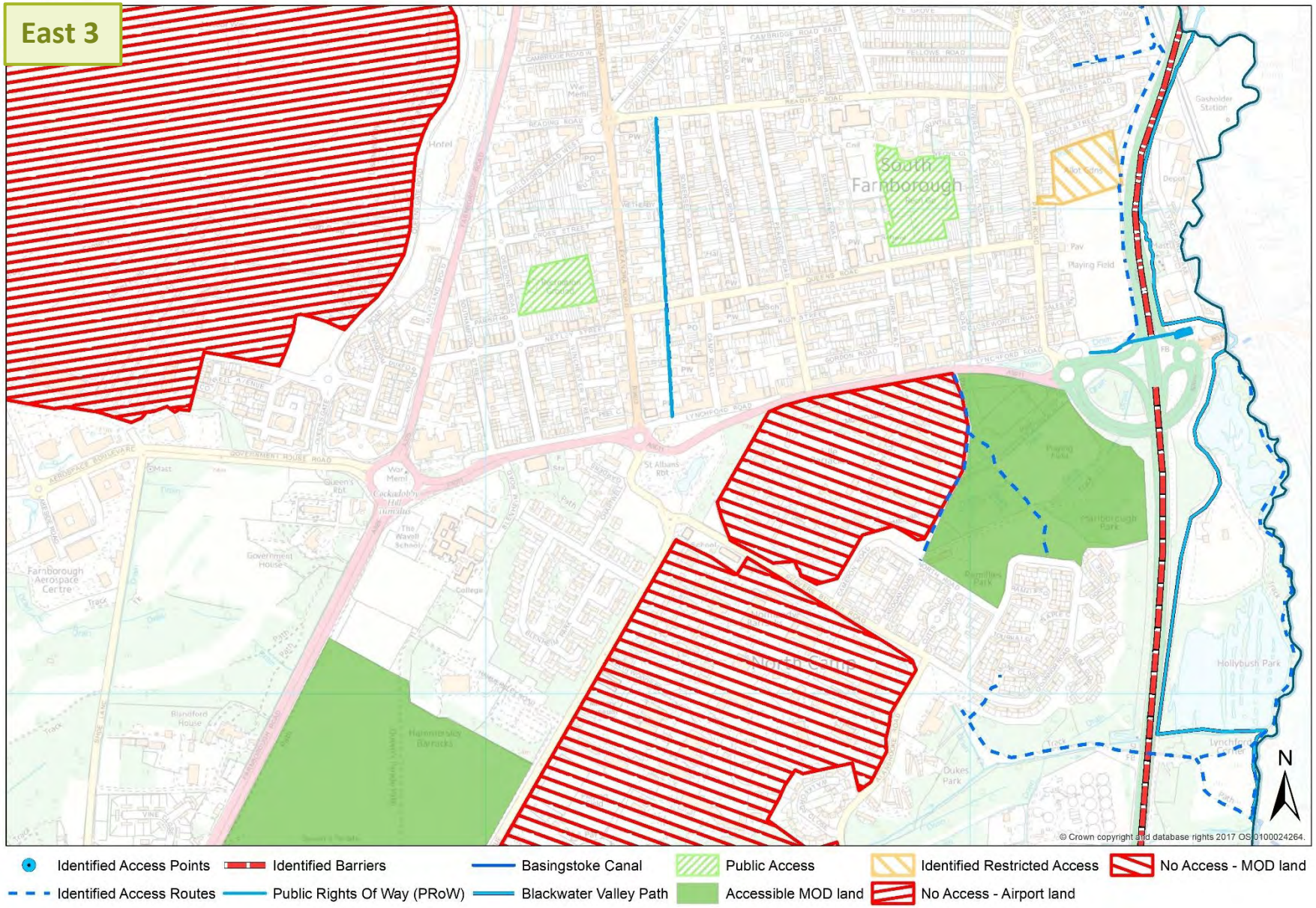
Identified Restricted Access
No Access - MOD land
Identified Access Routes
Public Rights Of Way (PRoW)
Blackwater Valley Path
Accessible MOD land
No Access - Airport land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South Farnborough
North Camp
Identified Access Points
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Basingstoke Canal
Public Access
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Public Rights Of Way (PRoW)
Blackwater Valley Path
Accessible MOD land
No Access - Airport land
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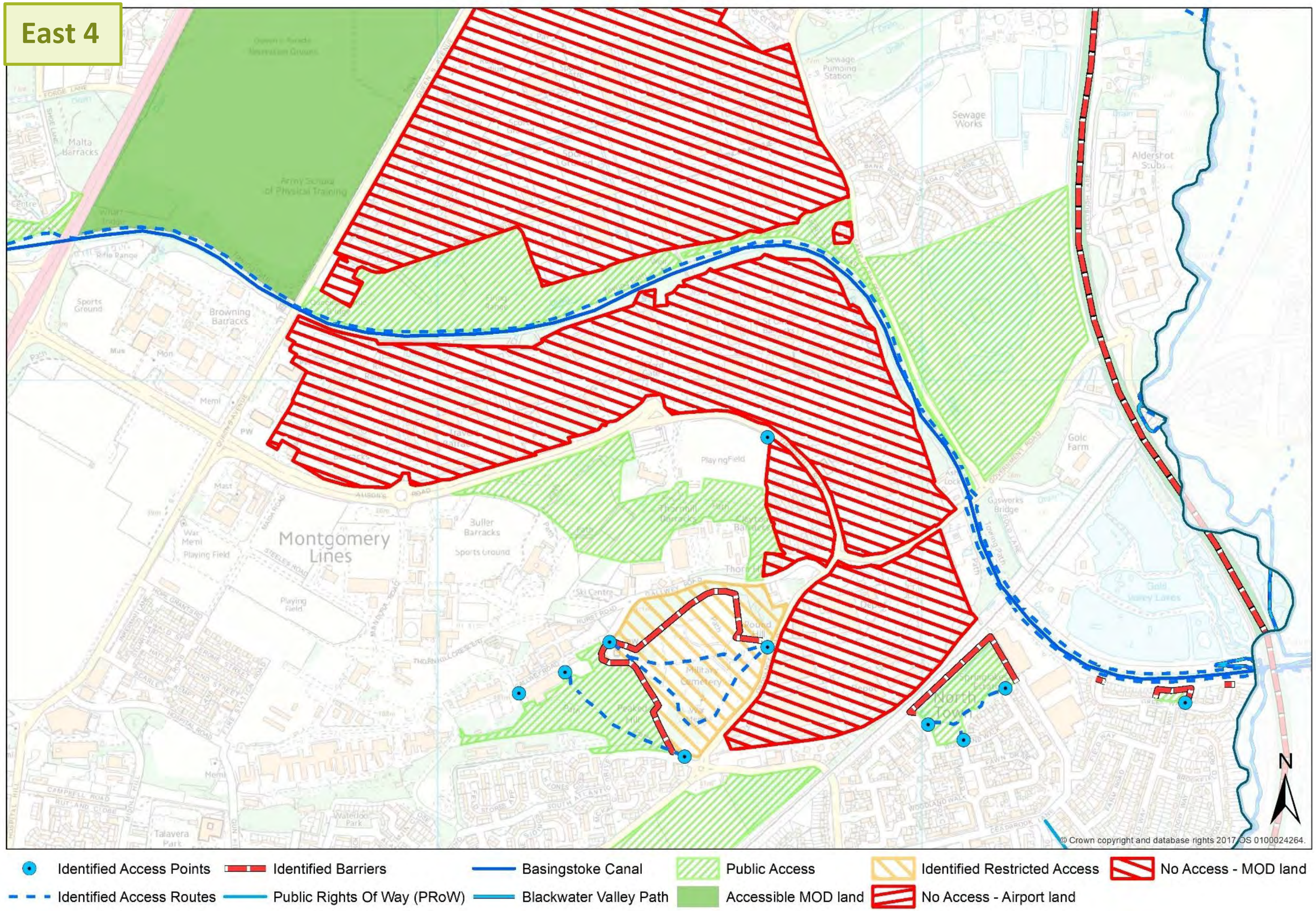
East 4
Montgomery Lines
Sewage Works
Malta Barracks
Browning Barracks
Army School of Physical Training
Buller Barracks
Playing Field
North Town
N
© Crown copyright and database rights 2017 OS 0100024264.
Identified Access Points
Identified Access Routes
Identified Barriers
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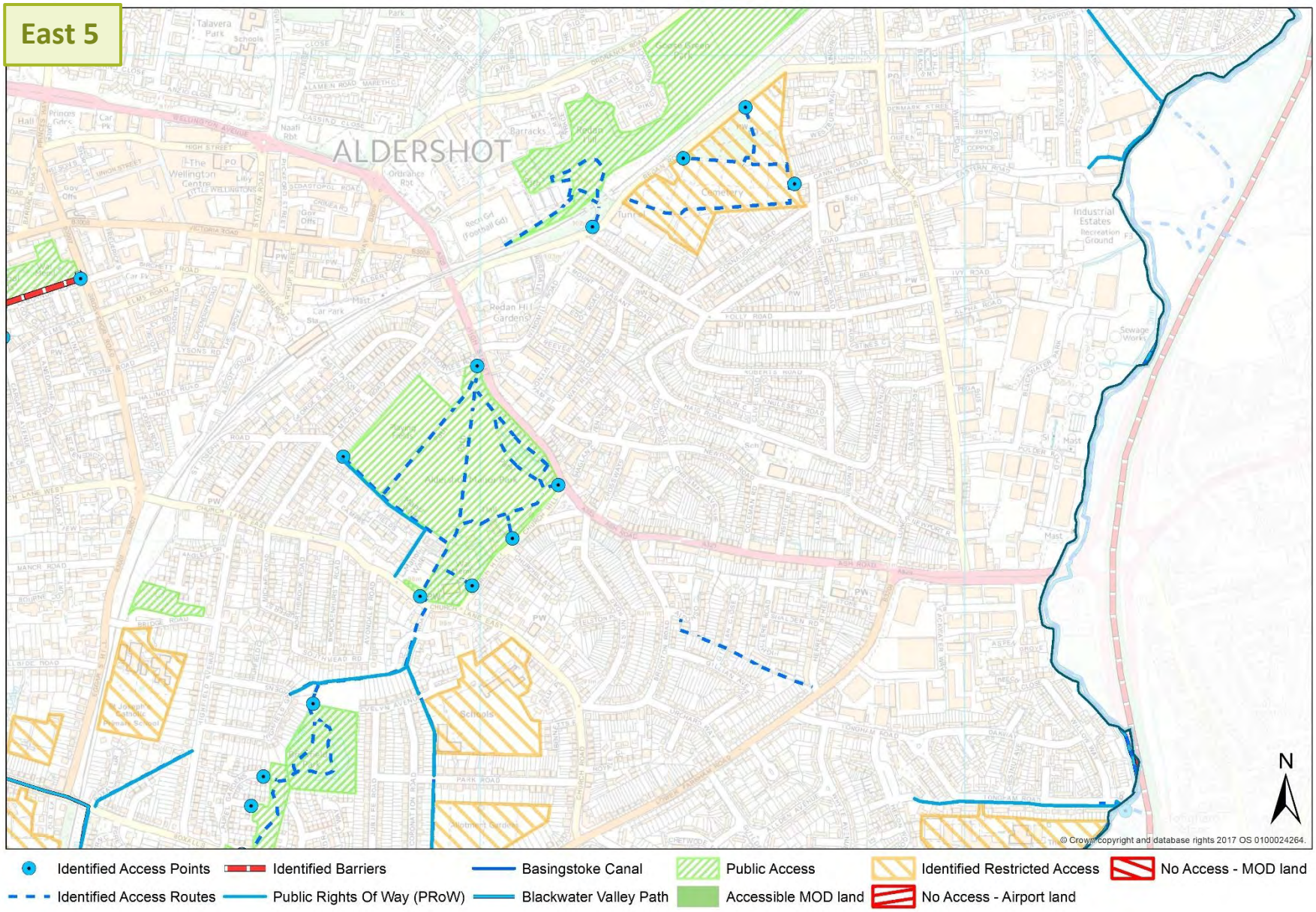
Basingstoke Canal
Blackwater Valley Path
Public Access
Accessible MOD land
Identified Restricted Access
No Access - Airport land
No Access - MOD land


East 5
ALDERSHOT
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Identified Access Routes
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Blackwater Valley Path
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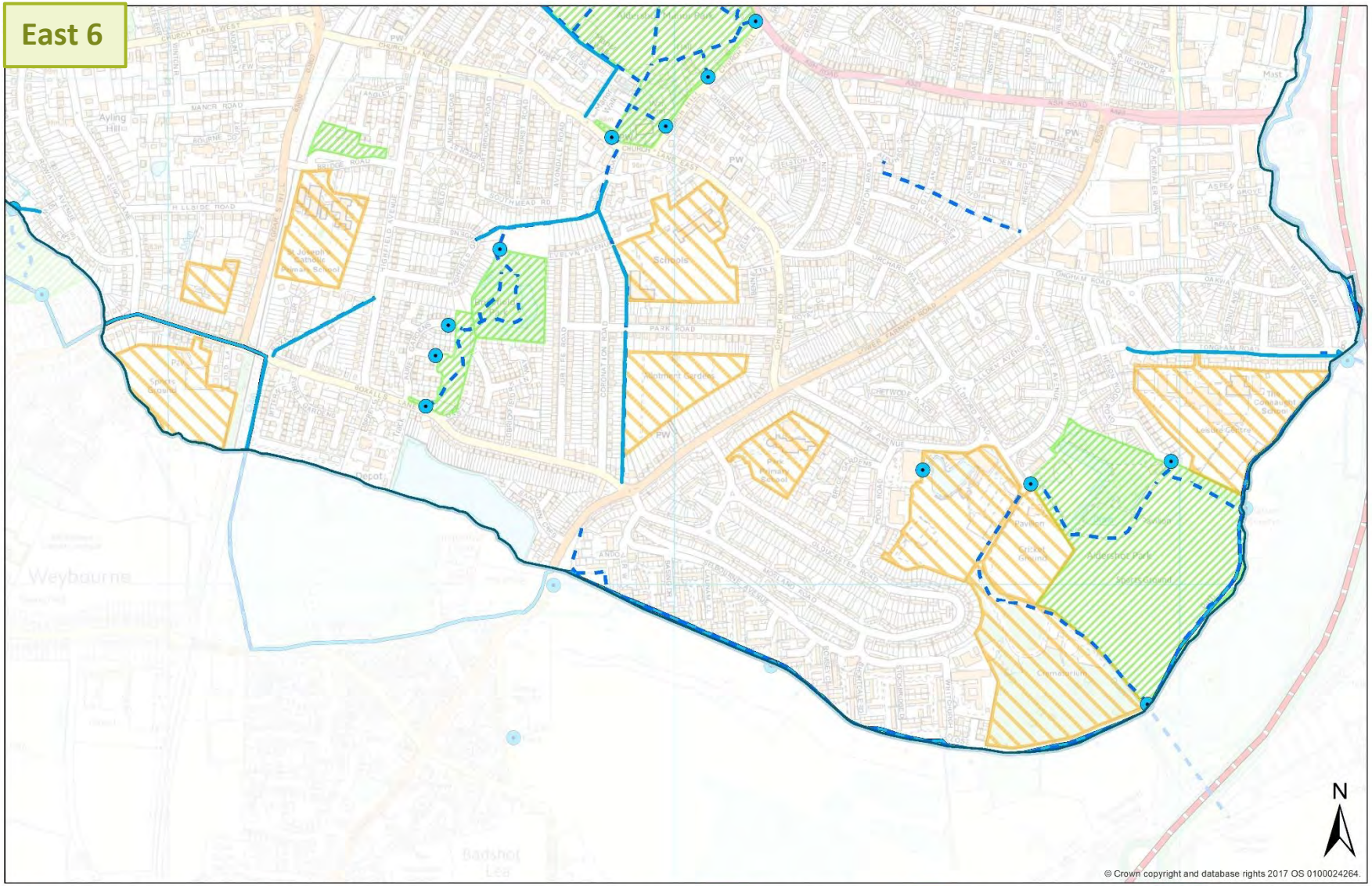
No Access - Airport land


East 6
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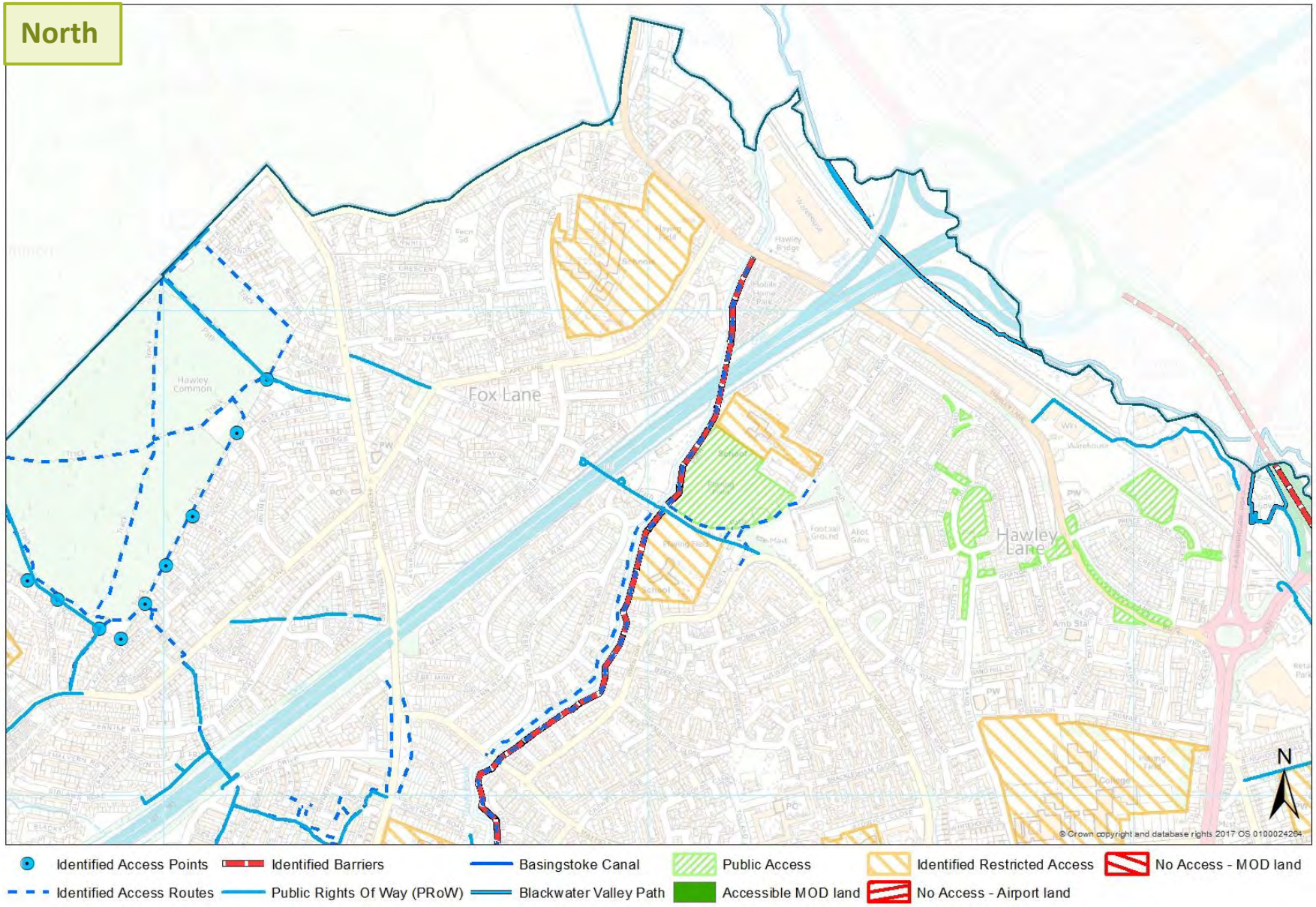
Blackwater Valley Path
Accessible MOD land
No Access - Airport land


North
Fox Lane
Hawley Common
Hawley Lane
N
© Crown copyright and database rights 2017 OS 0100024264
Identified Access Points
Identified Barriers
Basingstoke Canal
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No Access - MOD land
Identified Access Routes
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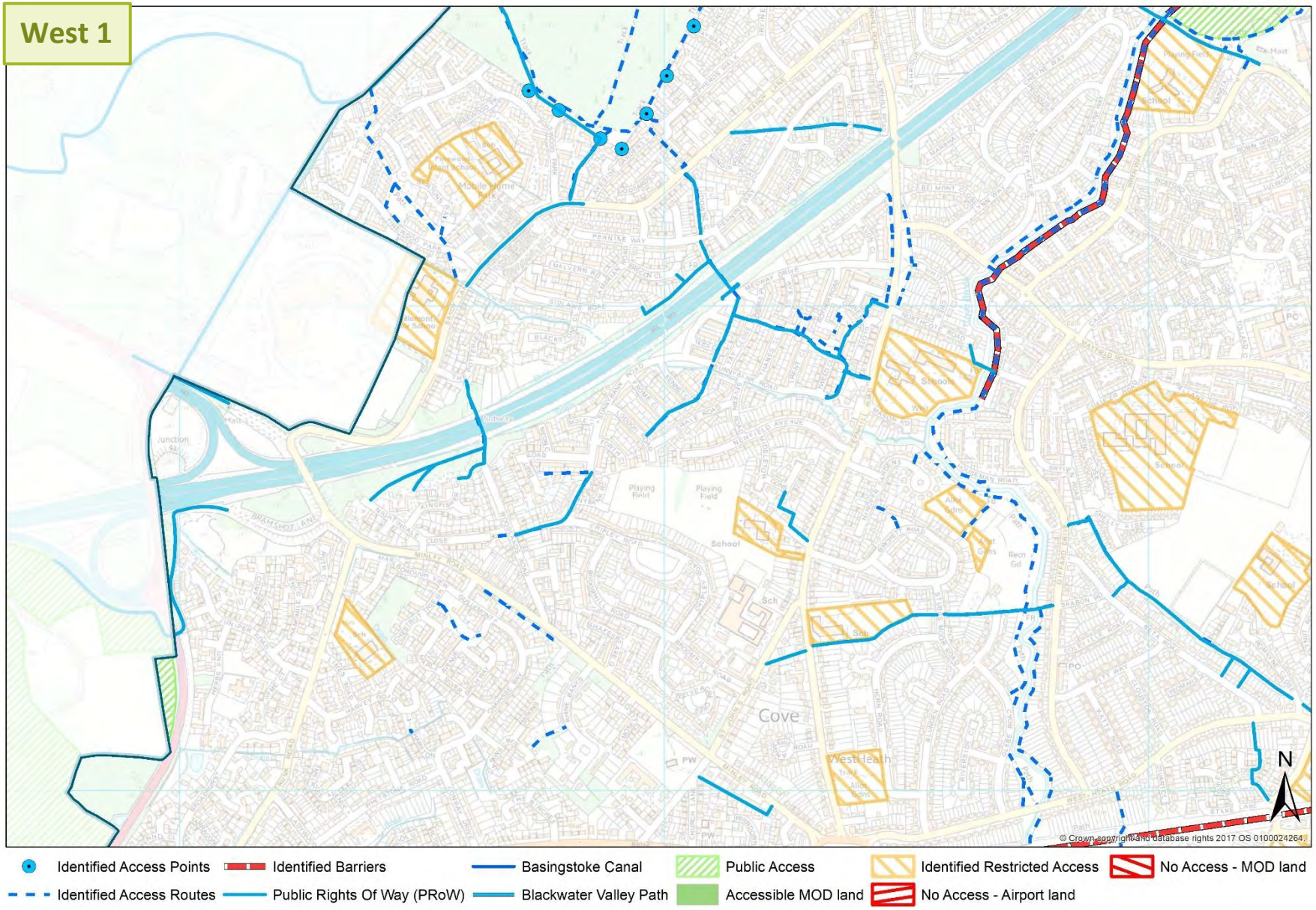
No Access - Airport land


West 1
Cove
N
© Crown copyright and database rights 2017 OS 0100024264.
Identified Access Points
Identified Barriers
Basingstoke Canal
Public Access
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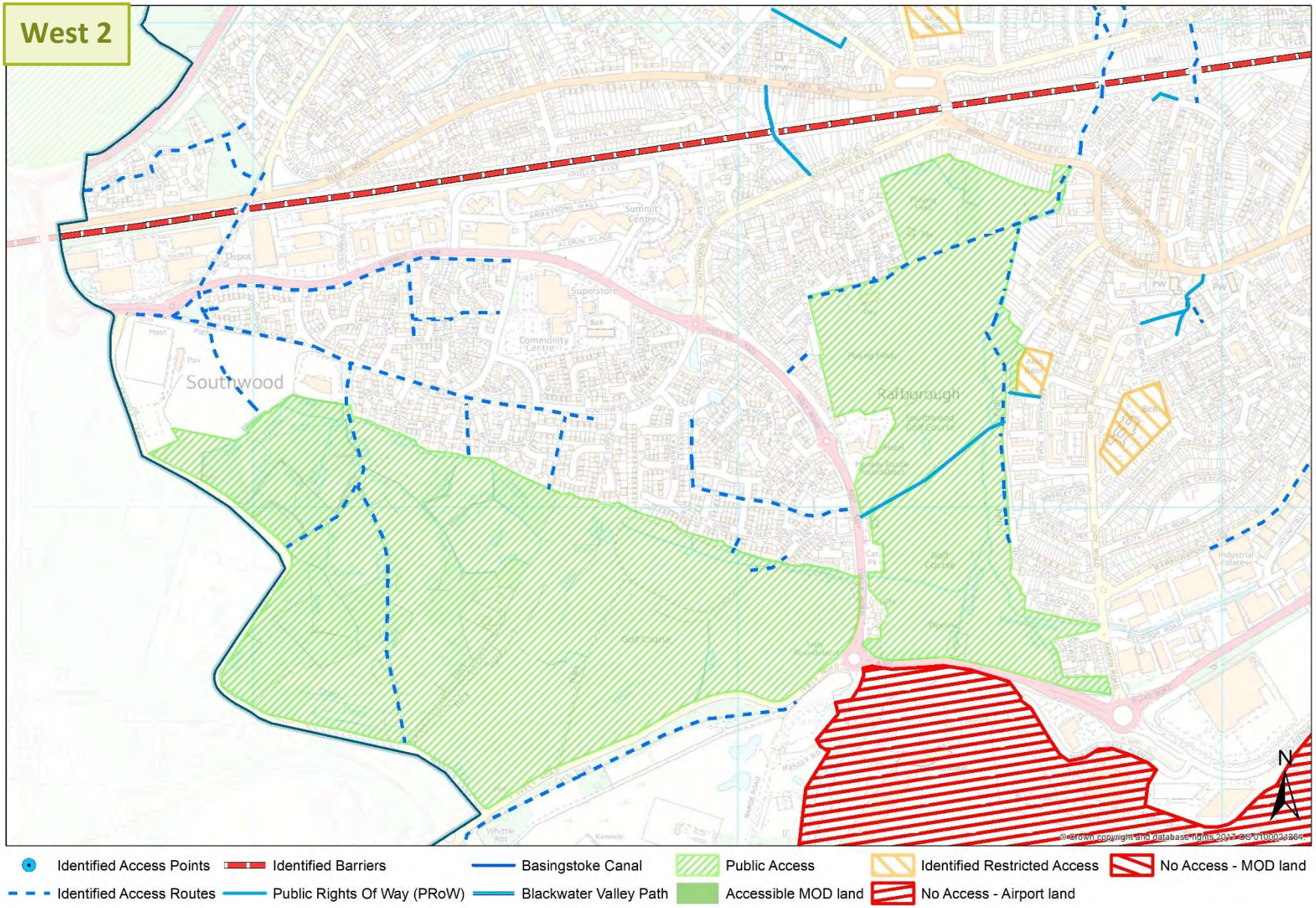
No Access - MOD land
Identified Access Routes
Public Rights Of Way (PRoW)
Blackwater Valley Path
Accessible MOD land
No Access - Airport land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Southwood
Rafborough
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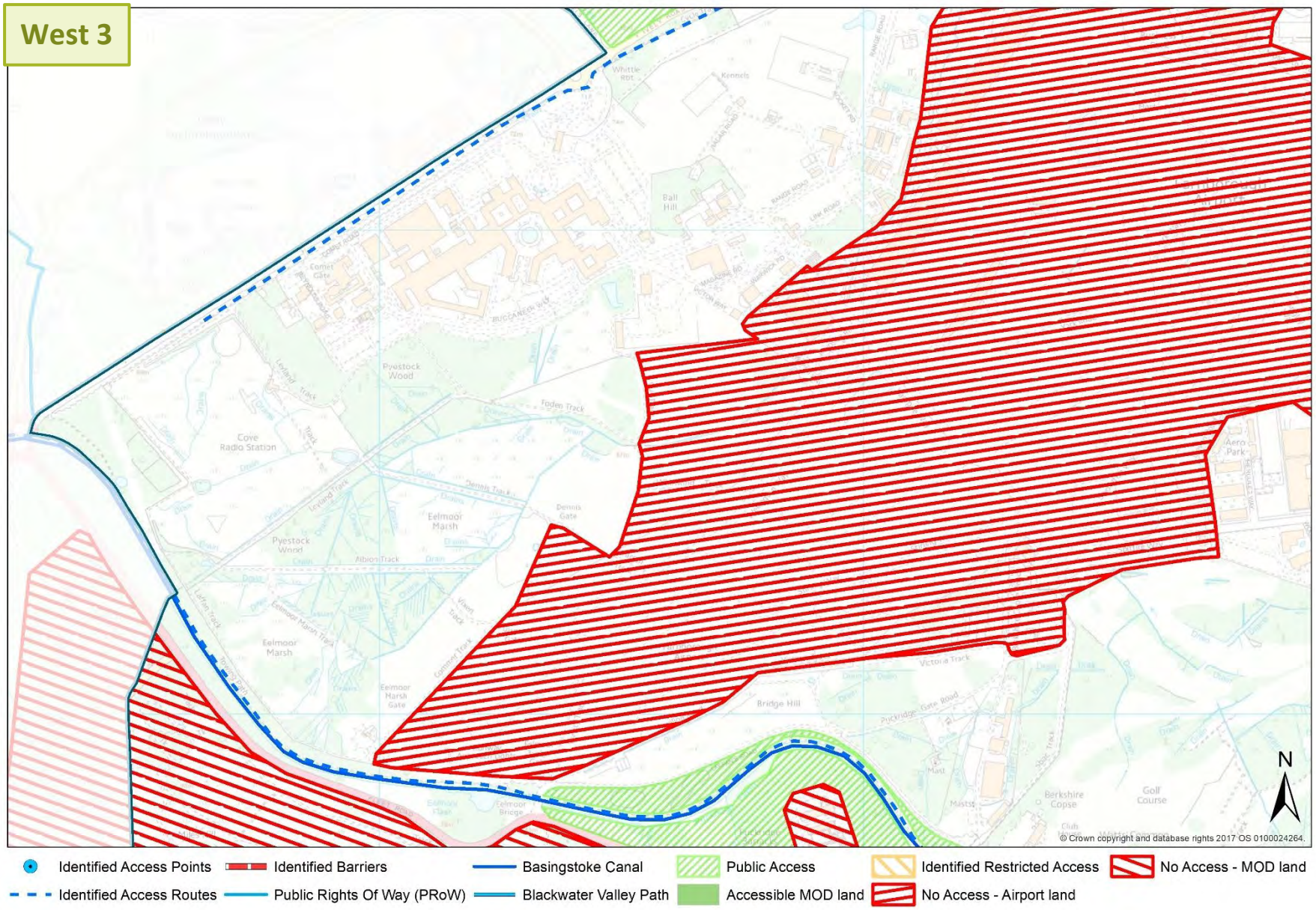
No Access - Airport land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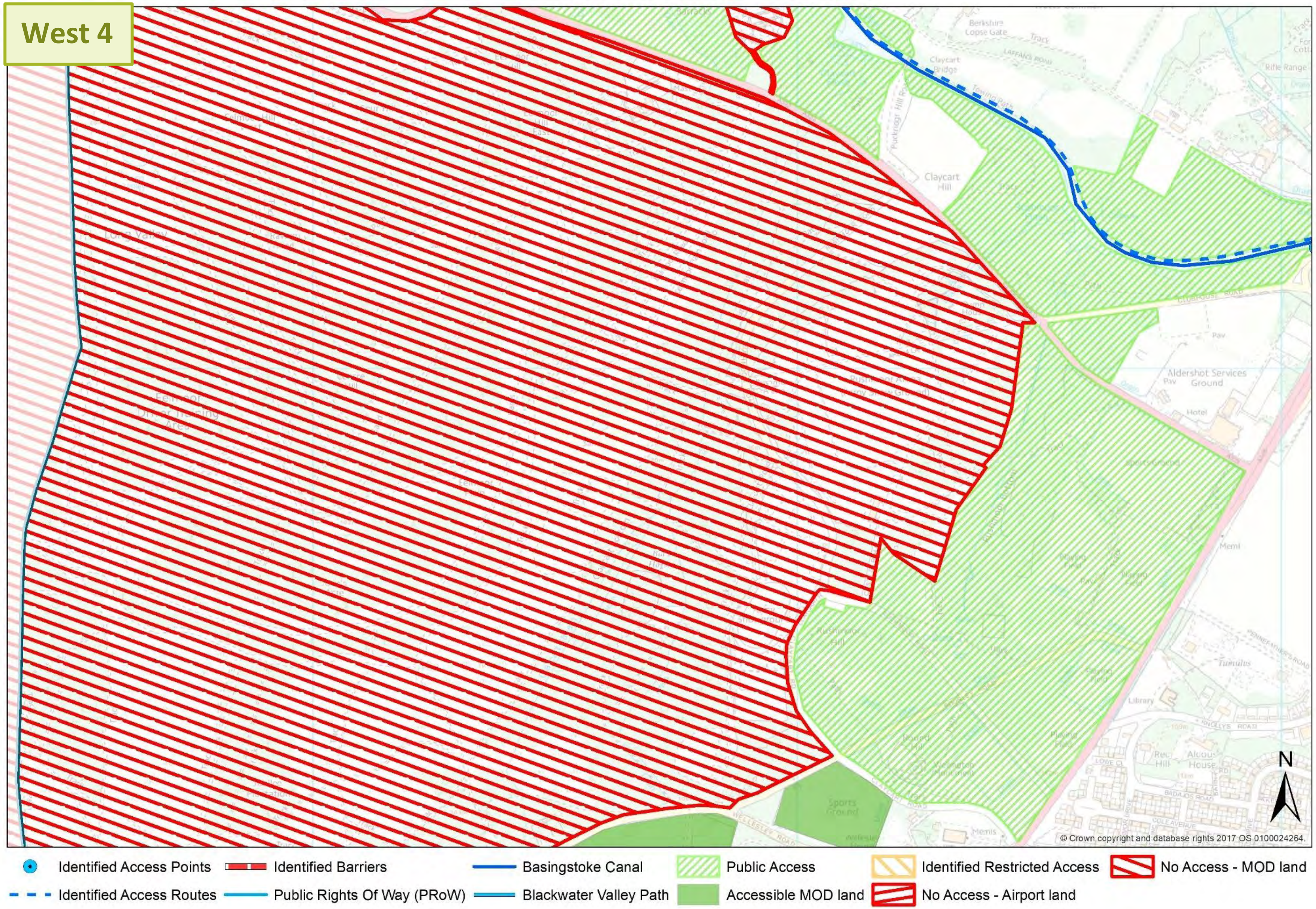

West 4
Berkshire Copse Gate
Claycart Bridge
Claycart Hill
Rifle Range
Long Valley
Aldershot Services Ground
Hotel
Tumulus
Library
Memi
Sports Ground
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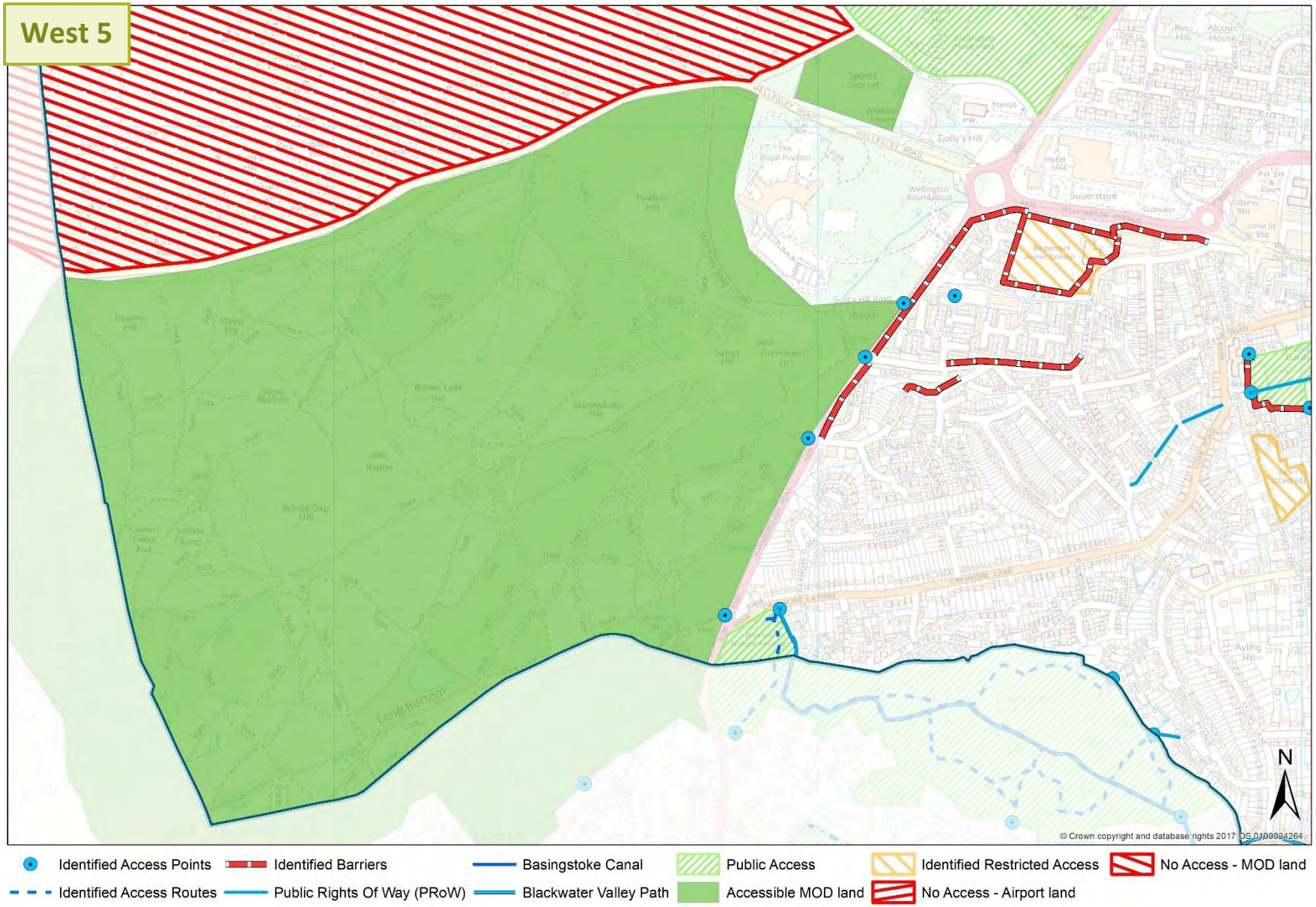
West 5
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February 2022