

ALDERSHOT TOWN CENTRE PROSPECTUS

Supplementary Planning Document

January 2016



Image: Victoria Day in Aldershot

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

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

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

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

1. A revitalised town centre offer

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

2. Town centre living

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

3. A family-friendly town centre

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

4. An improved cultural offer

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

5. Investing in streets and spaces

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

6. Affirming the Victorian heritage

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



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

These sites are considered to be transformational and include:

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

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

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

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

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

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

A 'Making it happen' section at the end of the document identifies potential funding sources, delivery partners, viability considerations and the next steps for delivering the schemes.

INTRODUCTION

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

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

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

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

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

A CLEAR POLICY CONTEXT

National policy

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

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

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

Local policy

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

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

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

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

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

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

PROUD PAST



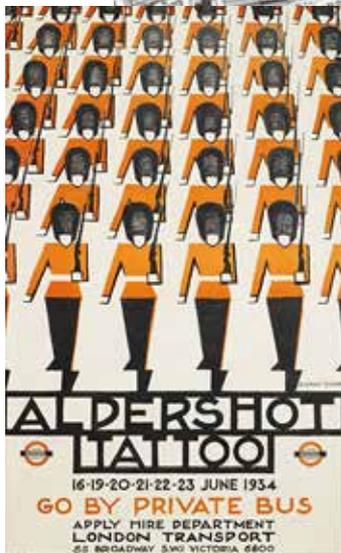
Union Street pre-1920

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



Aldershot map from 1909

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

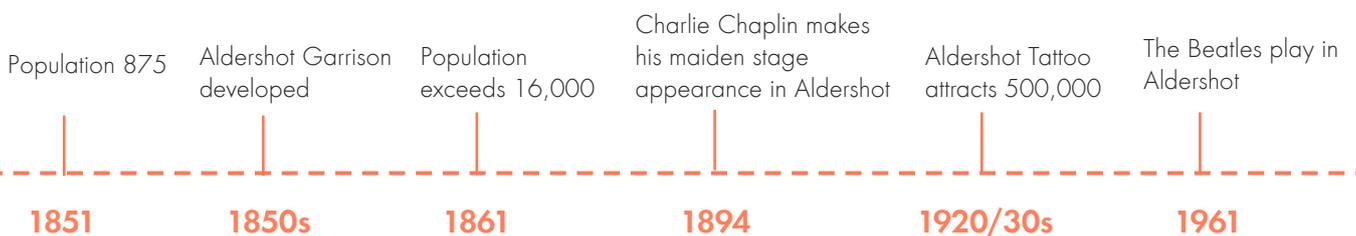


Aldershot Tattoo poster 1934

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



Flyer for Beatles Concert



CONFIDENT FUTURE

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

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

Aldershot is a diverse and growing town and the Prospectus sets out the key investment priorities for the town's future evolution - drawing on its strengths and addressing challenges.

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



Refurbished Cambridge Military Hospital



Artist's impression of new homes at Wellesley



Artist's impression of refurbished Princes Hall



A GOOD PLACE FOR INVESTMENT

Enterprise M3 LEP step-up status

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

A growth package has been developed, with investment of £54-63 million in the town up until 2021, of which, £7.3-£8.3 million will be funded by the LEP¹. The package includes new town centre homes, transformation of the rail station area, £3 million investment in streets, spaces and shop fronts and development at four key sites in Aldershot town centre.

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

¹ Working for a Smarter Future: The Enterprise M3 Delivery Plan - 2014-2020

A changing demographic

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

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

Rushmoor Borough Council's Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA) 2014 has identified a significant requirement for new homes in the town above this, and town centre living presents a key opportunity to meet this housing need.



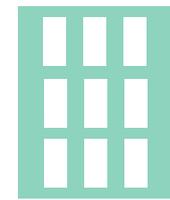
Aldershot is located central to the Enterprise M3 Local Economic Partnership

TOWN CENTRE OPPORTUNITIES FOR.....

NEW HOMES



OFFICE SPACE



LEISURE USES



RETAIL SPACE

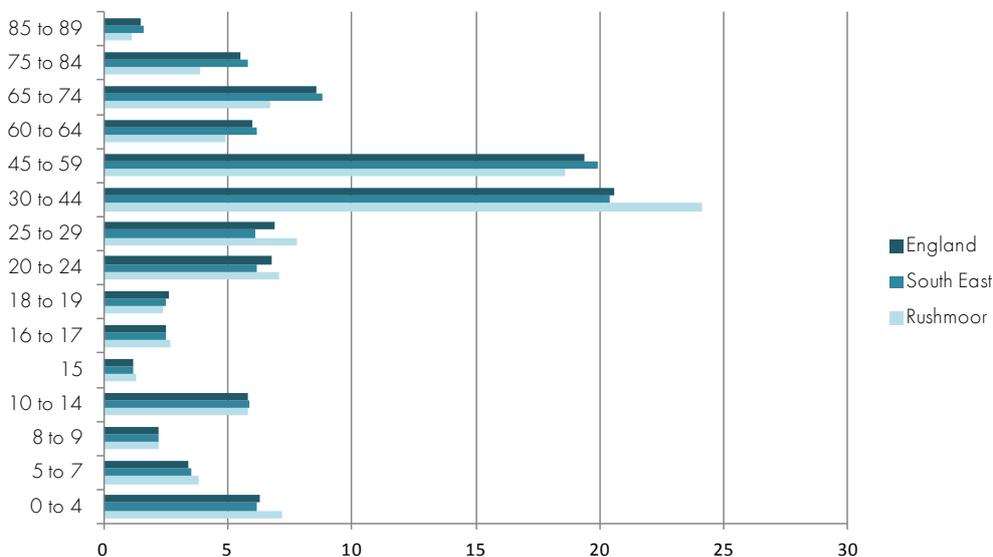


A pro-active town centre approach

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

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

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



Rushmoor Borough has a relatively young population with a particularly high proportion of 30-44 year olds (Source ONS 2011)

Well connected

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

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

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

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

A beautiful landscape setting

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





A growing community

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

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



A new home at Wellesley



Links to Aldershot Town Centre from Wellesley

THE VISION FOR ALDERSHOT

We want to see the heart back in Aldershot.

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

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

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



THEMES OF THE VISION

1 A revitalised town centre offer

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



2 Town centre living

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



3 A family-friendly town centre

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





4 An improved cultural offer

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



5 Investing in streets and spaces

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



6 Affirming the Victorian heritage

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

1 A REVITALISED TOWN CENTRE OFFER

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

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

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

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

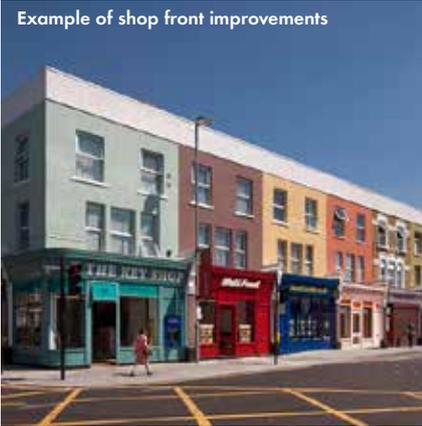
Many shopping areas coordinate efforts to raise their profile and improve the trading environment by forming a Business Improvement District (BID) and the Council will explore the feasibility of this for Aldershot.

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



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

Example of shop front improvements



Supporting independent businesses

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



Improving the trading environment

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

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



Bringing vacant buildings into use

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



A clear retail hierarchy

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



2 TOWN CENTRE LIVING

Homes for all ages

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

Aldershot has a number of suitable town centre sites that can provide homes, ranging from those for young people starting out to older people wishing to downsize. In each case, high quality apartments and mews houses in the town centre can provide shops and services in easy reach, proximity to the rail station and a sociable environment. Opportunity also exists to make better use of vacant floors above shops in the town centre. These spaces would have provided homes when built, and refurbishment would make better use of existing buildings, provide much needed homes and support the town centre.

The SPD has identified potential for new homes in the town centre from the key sites set out on pages 42-43. The Council is not able to bring all of these homes forward itself but is committed to working with developers to deliver new homes through an approach that responds to Aldershot's historic character and Victorian market town scale.

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

*Rushmoor Car and Cycle Parking Standards SPD



Highbury Square, Arsenal



St Andrew's, Bow



New town centre family homes in Barking Riverside

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



3 A FAMILY FRIENDLY TOWN CENTRE



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

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

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



Sports and leisure

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

Connections to the walking routes that surround the town are to be improved in the longer term, with better signage and communication to raise the profile of these and path maintenance and enhancement, as funding becomes available. The Wellesley Heritage Trail is one example of this initiative and a green link from Hospital Hill to the centre and from the canal and training heaths to the centre will also be explored.

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

Accessibility

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

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

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



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



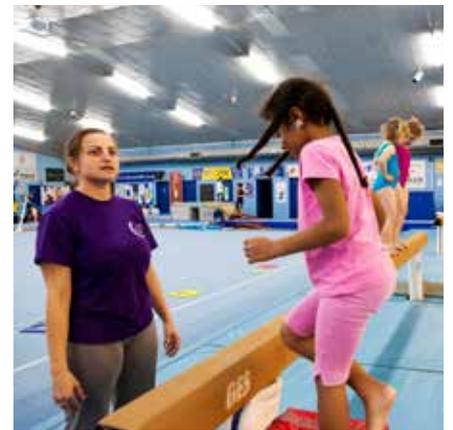
Sports on the doorstep

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



The great outdoors

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



4 AN IMPROVED CULTURAL OFFER

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

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

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

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





A refurbished Princes Hall

Princes Hall theatre has served Aldershot well for the last 40 years, with popular shows appealing to a range of audiences. With the anticipated closure of the Police Station and potential for new homes, the council is exploring the opportunity for refurbishing the theatre so that it can continue to serve audiences in the future.



New restaurants and cafes

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



Expanding the cultural and events programme

Aldershot has a full programme of cultural events and activities at venues such as the great West End Centre and on-street. These all celebrate the town's heritage, its diversity and its talent and creativity. The Council will continue to support and promote events in the town centre that animate public spaces and reflect the town's growing community.



PRINCES HALL: POTENTIAL FOR TRANSFORMATION

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

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

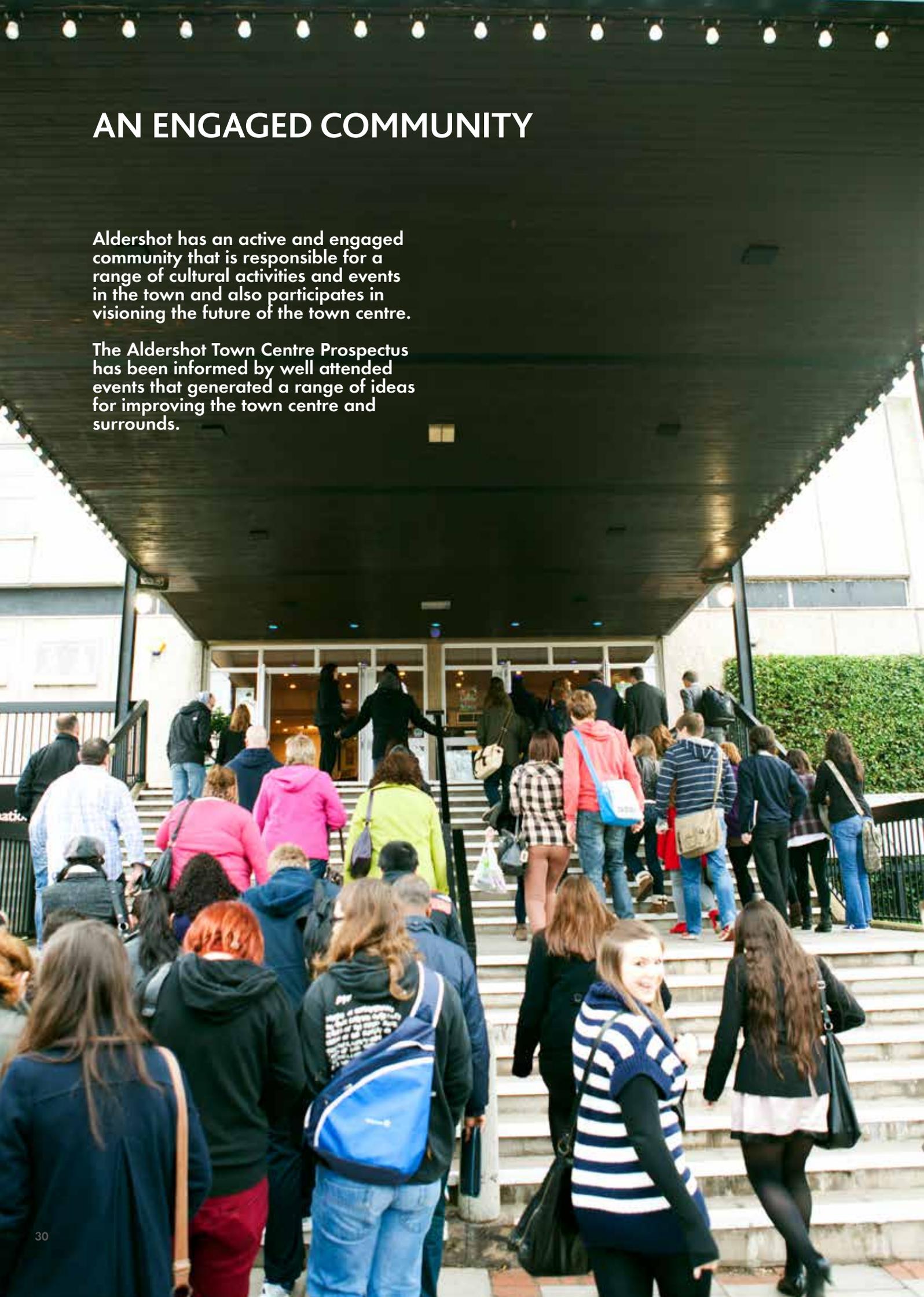




AN ENGAGED COMMUNITY

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

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





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

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



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



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



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

5 INVESTING IN STREETS AND SPACES

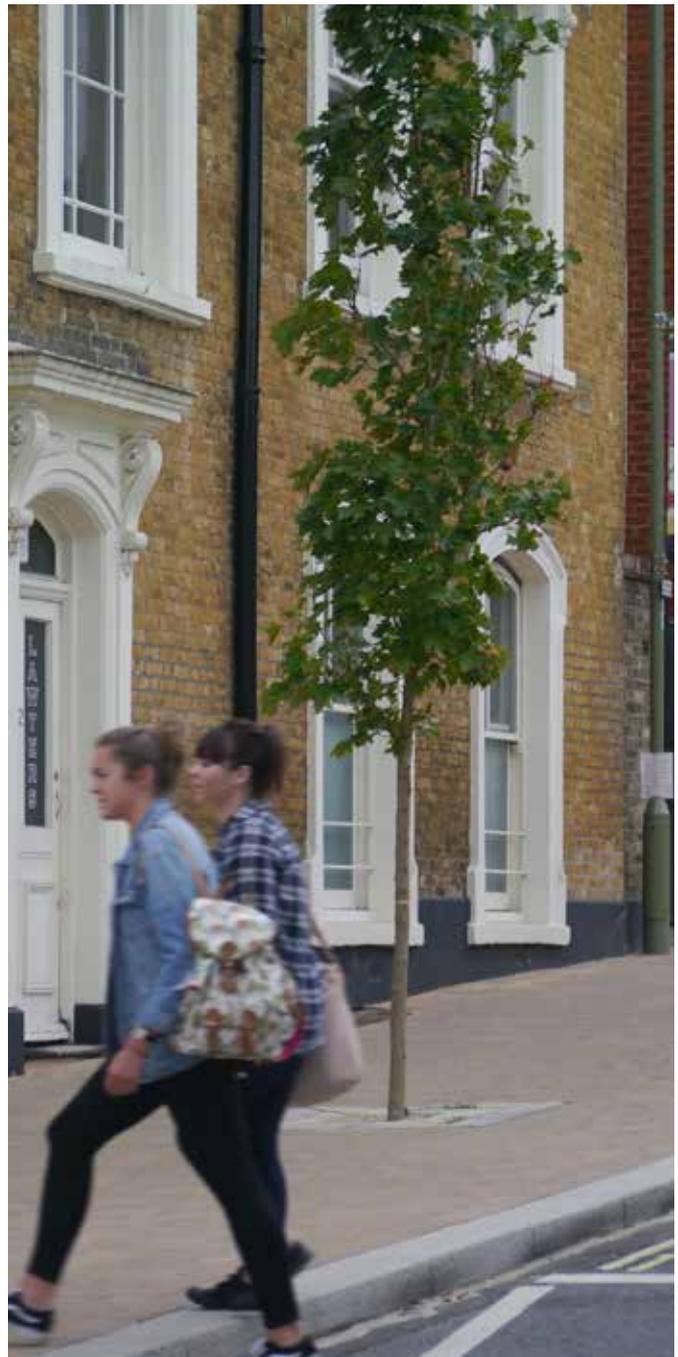
Some of Aldershot's streets and spaces have been enhanced during 2015 through the Activation Aldershot programme following a successful LEP funding bid. Union Street has been re-paved and trees replaced with species more suitable for the space available. Landscaping has also improved in the areas between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

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

- Enhanced landscaping, rationalisation of the road network as well as a new multi-storey car park will improve the experience of arriving in Aldershot by train and help to reduce the conflict between cars, buses and pedestrians in the area.
- Accessibility improvements that link to the new Wellesley development, pedestrian crossings on the high street as well as potentially new and improved pedestrian links between the High Street and Union Street.
- The active review of possibilities for establishing a public square in Aldershot town centre, through the sites that have been identified in the masterplan.

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

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





Improvements already under way

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



An enhanced setting for the rail station

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



A new public space for Aldershot

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



PUBLIC REALM INVESTMENT OPPORTUNITIES

Improvements to Princes Way to strengthen the links from Wellesley

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

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



- Improvements under way or complete
- Priority areas for landscape improvements
- Other areas for landscape enhancements

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



6 AFFIRMING THE VICTORIAN HERITAGE

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

Aldershot is well placed for this trend, with a collection of often overlooked historic buildings, including a clutch of Grade II Listed buildings and the Grade II* Listed Wesley Chambers church building and other buildings of local importance.

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

enhance the public realm at these points to reveal the attractive heritage, with improvements being made as funding becomes available. Key locations for this are illustrated indicatively in the plan below.

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

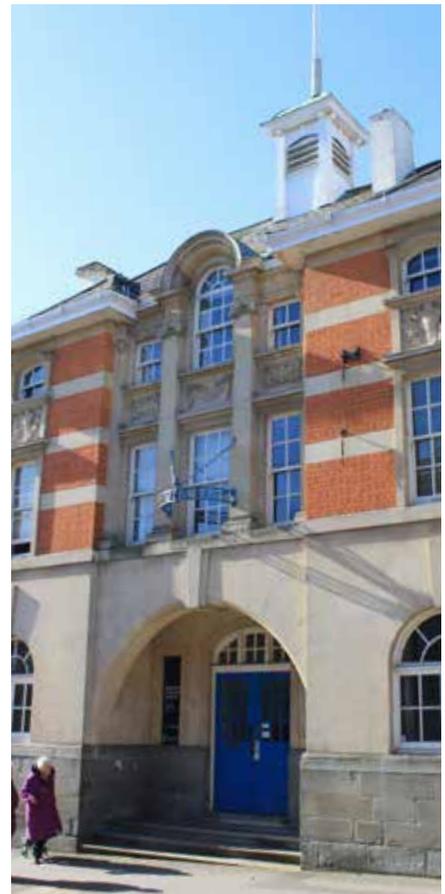


A broad indication of clusters of historically significant buildings at crossroads. Willow House on Victoria Road/Grosvenor Road is not historic but occupies a prominent location - redevelopment at this site is supported, to complete the setting of the three listed buildings.



A composite photo showing historic building facades along Wellington Street





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



PROMOTING, PROTECTING, ENHANCING AND PRESERVING

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

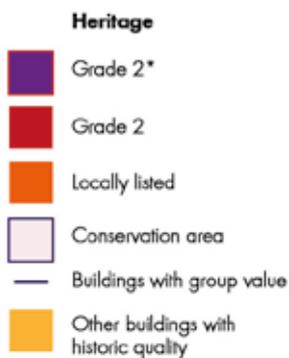
The Council will support preservation and enhancement of these buildings proportionate to their heritage significance and will seek to ensure that any conversions or refurbishment of historic buildings

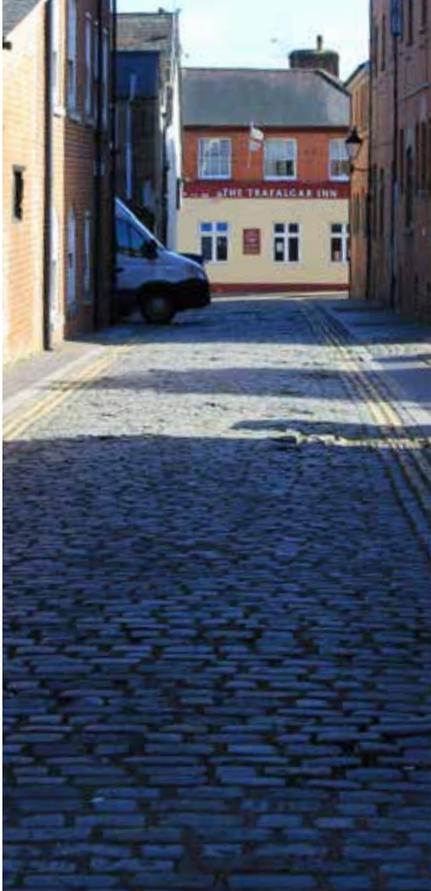
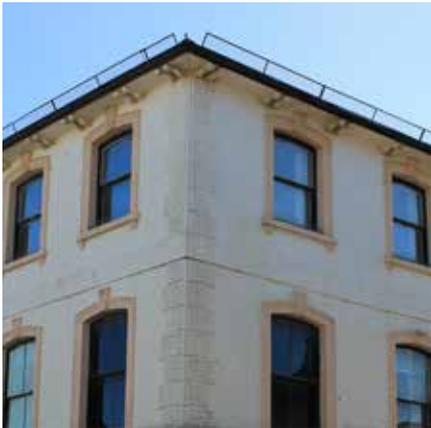
are made sensitively. Grosvenor Road has been identified as a priority for ensuring interventions do not undermine the historic integrity of buildings and streets.

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



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

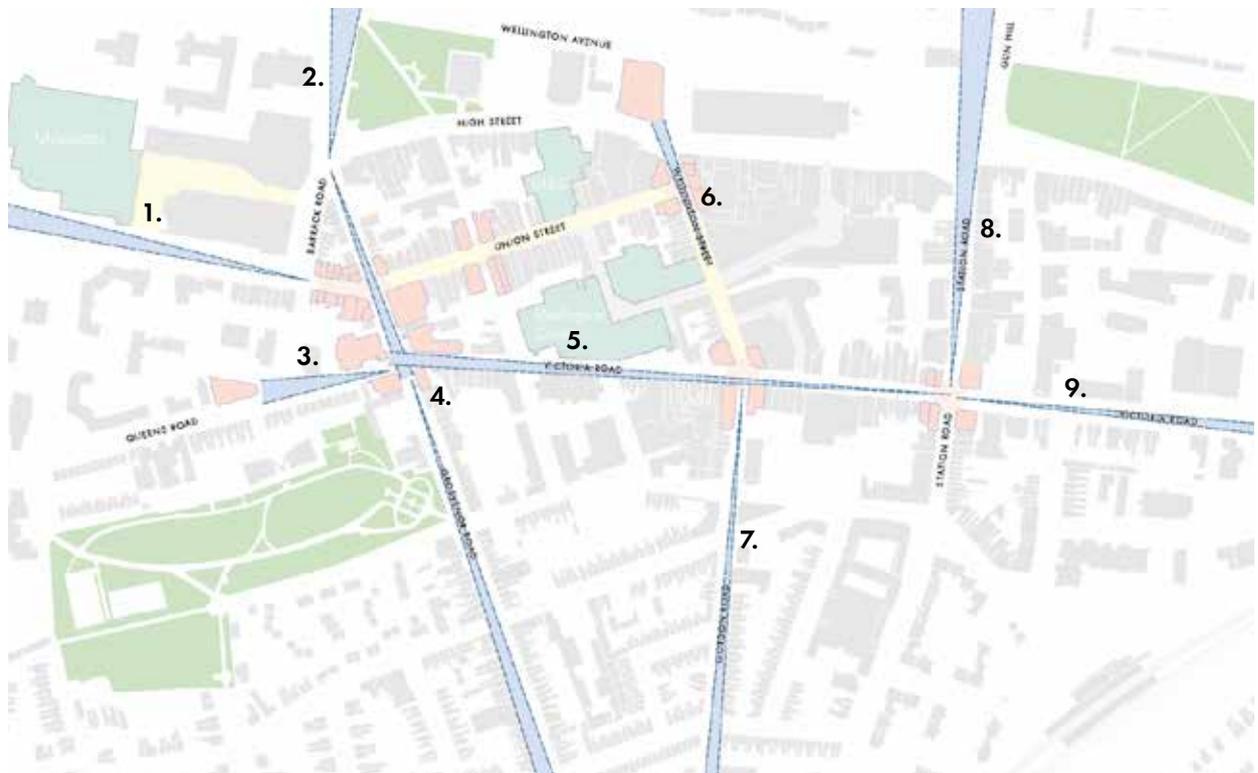




PRESERVING AND ENHANCING VIEWS

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

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



Plan indicating some of Aldershot town centre's significant views

Key views

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



View of Wesley Chambers east along Victoria Road

THE MASTERPLAN FOR ALDERSHOT

Princes Hall area:

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

Former Kings Centre:

established as The Empire community, outdoor play and events venue

Union Street:

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

Marks and Spencer building:

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

Victoria Road:

Corner infill development opportunity

Birchett Road:

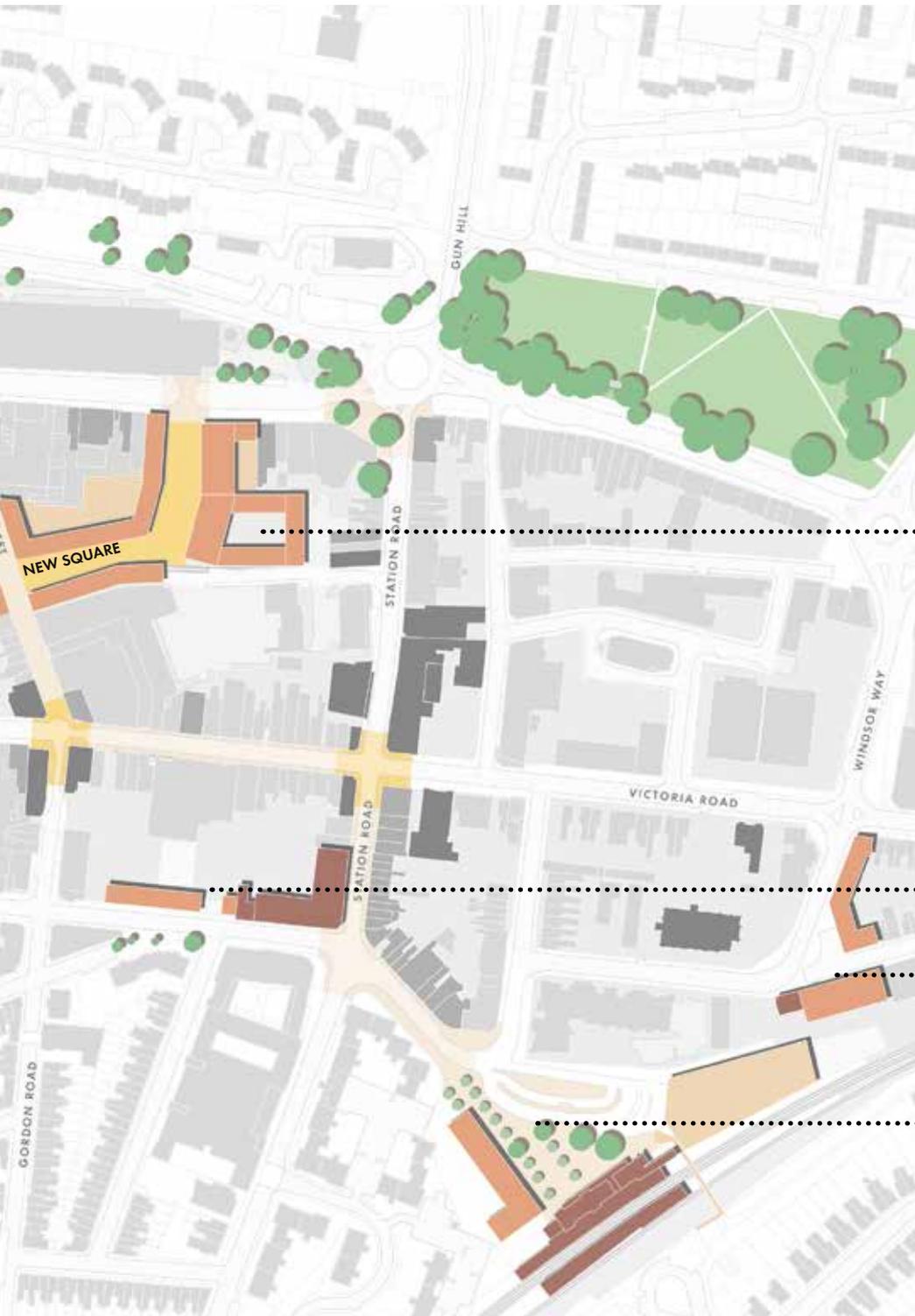
Redevelopment of the former warehouse as a residential site



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

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

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



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

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

Windsor Way: Corner infill development opportunity

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

The Galleries

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

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

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

The eastern part of the site provides the opportunity for a larger use fronting onto the new square. This could provide a suitable location for new retail development and new residential development. Potential also exists for a commercial leisure centre within new development. Visitors would be able to make use of the existing car parking capacity in the High Street car park and the facility would act as a non-retail draw for the town centre, with potential to attract people seven days a week.

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

Cycle parking should be included in any scheme here.

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

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



Option 1



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

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

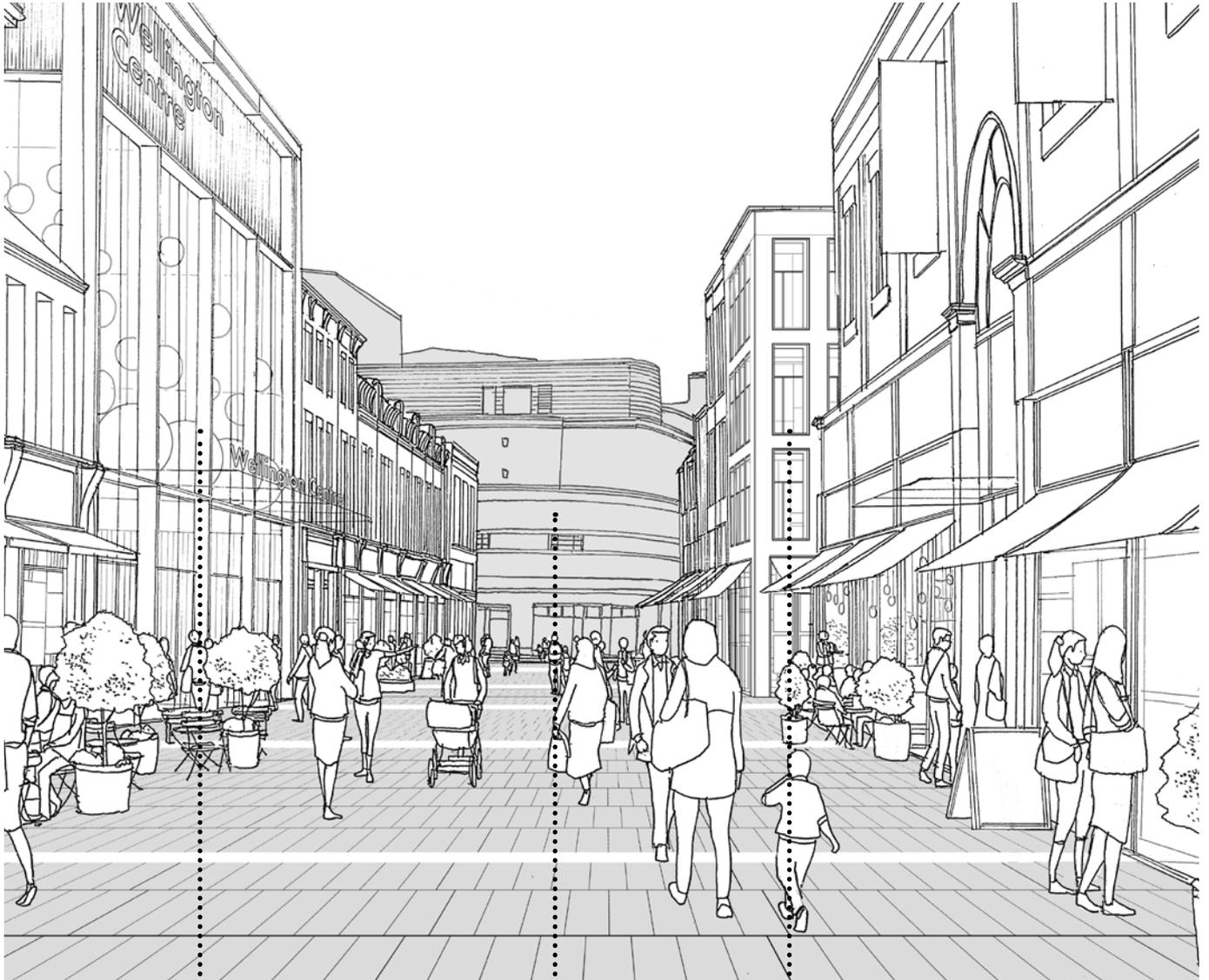
Key information and delivery approach

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

Existing view of Wellington Street towards the Gala Bingo building



Potential improvement to Wellington Street with redevelopment of the Galleries site



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

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

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

Union Street and former Marks and Spencer building

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

Another important aspect of the Union Street block is that it contains several attractive historic buildings. Retaining and refurbishing these to bring them back into active use is an important part of the Council's preferred strategy for Aldershot's future. Options exist to refurbish the buildings in their current configuration, or to retain the facades and as much of the original buildings as possible, whilst reconfiguring the site to create modern retail spaces and residences.

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

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

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



Option 1



Option 2



Above: high quality historic fabric above the shop fronts

Key information and delivery approach

<p>Project Description</p>	<p>Two significant development/refurbishment opportunities for mixed retail, active town centre uses, leisure and residential purposes. Retail, leisure, service, cafe, restaurant or other active town centre use at ground floor with residential on upper floors. These could come forward as one scheme.</p> <p>Union Street East (54-62).</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Refurbishment of retail at ground floor with office/storage above 2. Mixed retail/other active town centre uses/leisure with residential above <p>Former Marks & Spencer. Two options considered:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Re-configuration/reuse of retail space with office/storage space above 2. Redevelopment of building with ground floor active town centre use and residential above
<p>Potential uses</p>	<p>Union Street East:</p> <p>Option 1: 500 sqm residential (est 6 units); 2,600 sqm retail/leisure space refurbished; 4,400 sqm office/storage space</p> <p>Option 2: 4,600 sqm residential (est. 50 units); 2,600 sqm retail/active town centre use/leisure service</p> <p>Former M&S:</p> <p>Option 1: 2,300 sqm reconfigured retail and 2,200 sqm office/storage above</p> <p>Option 2: 1,500 sqm retail/town centre uses; 3,700 sqm residential (est 40 units) above</p>
<p>Current Uses</p>	<p>Union Street East – Unit retail, with significant vacancies</p> <p>Former M&S – Retail/cafe (Department/Variety Store)</p>
<p>Ownership</p>	<p>Union Street East - complex privately owned multi-owned block with sub interests.</p> <p>Marks & Spencer: private ownership.</p>
<p>Delivery Approach</p>	<p>Union Street East: Public sector led developer partner procurement</p> <p>Former M&S site: Private sector developer</p>
<p>Delivery Timeframes / Phasing</p>	<p>Union Street East – 0-5 years</p> <p>Marks & Spencer – 0-2 years (assuming reuse of building)</p>

The Rail Station

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

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

A funding bid has been submitted to the Enterprise M3 Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) by Rushmoor Borough Council in partnership with Network Rail, South West Trains, Stagecoach, Hampshire County Council plus private landowners. The proposals within the bid include a new area for taxis and buses directly in front of the station, framed by new buildings on either side. The proposal involves significant changes to the existing forecourt of the railway station, by way of public realm improvements, that will result in a pedestrian friendly environment supported by a realigned public transport interchange that incorporates buses, taxis, cycling and a 'kiss and drop' facility and the provision of a new decked car park to offset the loss of existing car parking spaces. Additional cycle parking should be included in any landscaping designs, to maximise sustainable links to the rail station and minimise congestion at peak commuting times.

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

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



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

Bottom: The existing Victorian Station building



Key information and delivery approach

Project Description	<p>A number of projects focussing on improvements to the train and bus station, comprising:</p> <p>Refurbishment of the train station and associated facilities. Decked car park Reconfiguration of the public transport interchange and release of existing bus station site for residential/retail development</p>
Project Outputs	<p>car park 2,800 sqm gross residential (est. 28 units); small scale/ancillary retail or service uses</p>
Current Uses	<p>Train and bus stations and associated facilities</p>
Ownership	<p>Principally in ownership of Network Rail (station and car park) and Stagecoach (bus station)</p>
Delivery Approach	<p>Public Sector led (Network Rail/Train Operating Company/South West Trains) contractor procurement</p> <p>Public Sector led (Network Rail/Train Operating Company/South West Trains) contractor procurement</p> <p>Private sector developer</p>
Delivery Timeframes / Phasing	<p>Assumes to be delivered as separate phases:</p> <p>Train station refurbishment: 0-5 years Decked car park: 0-5 years Reconfigured public transport interchange: 0-5 years Redevelopment of bus station: 0-5 years</p>

Princes Hall and Police Station

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

The Police Station is anticipated to close as part of a wider strategy for policing. However the Magistrates Court is expected to remain in use so there is an opportunity to enhance and retain the Police Station for public sector community benefit. In the event of the relocation of the Magistrates Court, the site could have potential for residential redevelopment.



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

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

Bottom: Proposals for the remodelling of the Princes Hall

Key information and delivery approach

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

Birchett Road

The former warehouse on the north side of Birchett Road between Frederick Street and Heathland Street provides the opportunity for town centre living, and planning permission for residential redevelopment has previously been granted on this site.

Development would restore active frontage to the street, which is particularly important given the site's prominent location on a slight bend in the road, making it prominent in views from both east and west.

The four-storey listed terrace of Culdrose House to the west provides some guidance on scale, but buildings to the south and east are lower. Frequent front doors onto the street will be an important part of helping a new building to integrate with the prevailing Victorian character of the area.

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



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

Top: Proposals for new development on Birchett Road

Middle: The existing warehouse building

Bottom: How new homes could look at the site

Key information and delivery approach

Project Description	Development opportunity with strong residential potential on the north side of Birchett Road. Planning permission has been granted previously for a scheme but so far no development has been progressed.
Potential uses	5,200 sqm gross residential (est. 55 units)
Current Uses	Vacant warehouse
Ownership	Private ownership
Delivery Approach	Private sector developer
Delivery Time frames / Phasing	Short term 0-5 years

High Street

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

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

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

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

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



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

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

Key information and delivery approach

Project Description	<p>Site comprising three separate plots: King's Centre - Reuse and refurbishment for events Car Wash – A leisure use will be sought in the first instance. If this proves unviable then residential infill will be considered Gala Bingo - Longer term alternative leisure uses.</p>
Potential uses	<p>King's Centre – 3,900 sqm refurbished space (983 sqm over 4 floors) Car Wash – 780 sqm leisure Gala Bingo – 5,200 sqm refurbished space (1297 sqm over 4 floors)</p>
Current Uses	<p>King's Centre – community/events space Other plot uses as per description</p>
Ownership	<p>All sites in private ownership.</p>
Delivery Approach	<p>All sites expected to be private sector led delivery, with each site delivered separately.</p>
Delivery Time frames / Phasing	<p>King's Centre – 0-1 years Car Wash – 0-5 years Gala Bingo – 10-15 years +</p>

Hippodrome House area

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

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



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



Middle: Infill and refurbishment options for the Victoria Road block

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

Key information and delivery approach

Project Description	Redevelopment/refurbishment of blocks fronting Birchett Road Infill site plus refurbishment of Hippodrome House
Project Outputs	1,870 sqm gross new residential (est. 18 units) plus 4,840 refurbished/ converted space for residential (est. 47 units); 1,200 sqm retail/leisure.
Current Uses	Mixed: parking, retail, offices, leisure
Ownership	Two key private owners, with sub interests
Delivery Approach	Private Sector delivery
Delivery Timeframes / Phasing	Hippodrome House refurbishment (0-2 years); Birchett Road infill (0-5 years)



POST OFFICE

MAKING IT HAPPEN

Overview

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

Project Priorities

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

Priorities for the town centre are considered to be:

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

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

Project Linkages

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

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

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

Delivery mechanisms

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

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

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

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

The Council's role

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

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

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

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

Typically, Council's land ownership has been a driver for change in town centres. A clear example of this is Westgate development. Presently, however, the

Council's ownership in the key intervention areas in Aldershot is limited, so an overarching strategy the Council look to employ is the acquisition of strategic interests in the town.

Other delivery agencies

While the Council is expected to play a leading role in delivering the masterplan, the expectation is that it will need the active involvement of developers and other agencies – both public and private. A range of agencies will need to be involved with enabling, funding and delivering the projects. This could include, among others:

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

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

Viability and funding the masterplan's delivery

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

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

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

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

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

Potential Funding Options

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

The next steps

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

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

Planning

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

Property/Regeneration/Economic Development

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

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

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

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

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

Delivery Mechanisms

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

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

APPENDIX

PROPERTY MARKET REVIEW

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

- Retail
- Leisure
- Offices
- Residential

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

Retail

Recent key economic trends are:

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

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

Aldershot's Retail Offer

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

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

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

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

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

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

Rents and Yields

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

Retailer Demand

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

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

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

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

Leisure / health and fitness

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Hotels

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

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

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

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

Offices

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

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

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

Residential

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

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

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

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

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

Average House Prices - Aldershot

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

Average house prices in Aldershot, early 2015

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

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

Average rental costs in Aldershot, early 2015

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

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

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



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